

Mercer County CDBG-CV Public Comment Responses

4_18_2024

- 1. Question: For the Hightstown Grant – If a business was registered before December 31, 2021 but was not located in Hightstown at that time – but are now located in Hightstown – is the location eligibility requirement met?**

Answer: Yes, the location requirement is met. The grant program is being run in the year 2024 – and is to serve all businesses currently located in Hightstown.

- 2. Question: For the Hightstown Grant – Comment was received concerning how to spread the limited grant funds amongst the pool of non-profits and small businesses located in Hightstown.**

Answer: Mercer County has taken the following into consideration: (1) pool of available, registered non-profits and small businesses located in Hightstown, (2) federal programmatic and regulatory restrictions on funding parameters per applicant, and (3) the likelihood of other COVID-relief funds that applicants had available and utilized. Based on these factors – the following per-applicant grant limits have been set:

- a. Non-profits are capped at \$40,000
- b. Microenterprises are capped at \$20,000
- c. Small Businesses without a storefront is capped at two jobs at \$10,000 each – for a maximum total of \$20,000
- d. Small Businesses with a storefront is capped at two jobs at \$20,000 each – for a maximum total of \$40,000

- 3. Question: If an applicant meets all other requirements (located in Hightstown, registered before Dec 31, 2021, and still active) – does it matter that the storefront was closed in March 2020?**

Answer: If all other eligibility qualification parameters have been addressed – it is not a requirement that an eligible business have a storefront. Businesses that work out of shared spaces, from a home or in a truck are all eligible if the ‘main office’ is located in Hightstown.

- 4. Question: If a business moved to Hightstown in November of 2023 from another, nearby town and otherwise meets all other eligibility requirements – is the location eligibility requirement met?**

Answer: Yes, the location requirement is met. The grant program is being run in the year 2024 – and is to serve all businesses currently located in Hightstown.

- 5. Question: What restrictions exist for employees’ positions for payroll assistance?**

Note that two public comment events were held to present the CDBG-CV1 and CDBG-CV2 funded projects and related policies and procedures. All questions were received at the first public comment event located at the Library in Hightstown, NJ. There was zero attendance at the second public comment event held at the Mercer County McDade Administrative building in Trenton, NJ. No questions were received via email.

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Answer: If a nonprofit has an income generating 'social enterprise' (such as a thrift store), then that income will be included in the profit/loss review of the applicant. If the income from a 'social enterprise' is kept separate and the 'social enterprise' is operated separately from the larger non-profit – as it's own, contained entity with income and expenses tracked separately – then it will not be included when reviewing the financial statements of the low-income service-providing non-profit.

6. **Question: If a non-profit has a 'social enterprise' business included as part of their financial model – how will it affect the grant calculation?**

Answer: If a nonprofit has an income generating 'social enterprise' (such as a thrift store), then that income will be included in the profit/loss review of the applicant. If the income from a 'social enterprise' is kept separate and the 'social enterprise' is operated separately from the larger non-profit – as it's own, contained entity with income and expenses tracked separately – then it will not be included when reviewing the financial statements of the low-income service-providing non-profit.

7. **Question: At the meeting presentation, Hightstown's selection as eligible for CDBG-CV1 funds was based on Small Cities Ranking criteria – can you please provide additional information on this topic?**

Answer: Per the [NJ 2019 Annual Consolidated Plan Amendment](#) the CDBG-CV1 funds were to be administered through the State's Small Cities CDBG Program. Awards were to be made on various factors, including the number of eligible communities with Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI) scores of 250 or less. Per the [Small Cities list of Eligible communities](#), Hightstown is the only municipality in Mercer County with an MRI rank below 250. The parameters of the State's MRI can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/home/MuniRevitIndex.shtml>

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