

**National Community Development Week celebrates supporting those in need**

As we observe National Community Development Week from April 1-5, it is a momentous occasion to recognize the pivotal role played by the municipal government of Oak Park in administering federal funds that bolster housing and create economic opportunities for our low-to-moderate income residents.

The Village of Oak Park is particularly delighted to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a pivotal program enacted by Congress in 1974 under the Housing and Community Development Act. Administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), this program provides essential funding to communities nationwide, including Oak Park. It addresses various community needs such as infrastructure, economic development, housing and support services for vulnerable populations.

Over the past five years, the Village has successfully allocated nearly $9 million in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds received from HUD.

These funds have been instrumental in supporting a multitude of services through local not-for-profit organizations, ranging from public education and mental health services to addiction counseling, fair housing access, food insecurity relief, job training, assistance for the unhoused, and services for victims of domestic violence and parenting education.

Beyond aiding the most vulnerable members of our community, the CDBG program has also contributed to local public infrastructure projects in low-to-moderate income areas. This includes the enhancement of sidewalks, streets, alleys and the replacement of lead water service lines.

The impact extends to single- and multi-family rental rehabilitation and lead abatement programs, addressing serious safety code violations and improving living conditions for low-to-moderate income households within Oak Park.

Allocating these critical federal funds is no small feat. Annually, volunteers on the Community Development Citizens Advisory Commission collaborate with Village staff to meticulously review numerous funding applications submitted by diverse Oak Park organizations. Though funds are limited and competition is intense, the outcomes make the collective effort rewarding and worthwhile.

As we join hands in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of National Community Development Week, let us reflect on the positive impacts that federal CDBG program funds have had right here in Oak Park, reinforcing the strength and resilience of our community.

Sincerely,

Community Development Citizens Advisory Commission

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