

# COMMUNITY CATALYST GRANTS PROGRAM

## OPERATING

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BALTIMORE CITY  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### ROUND 3 – FY2023

## FUNDING GUIDELINES & APPLICATION INFORMATION

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*Release Date: September 16, 2022*

*Application Deadline: **October 28, 2022***

***Applications must be submitted through DHCD’s online applicant portal.\* See the Application Information section for detailed instructions.***

*\*Reasonable accommodations available upon request.*

***To access to the applicant portal, register your account, sign in, and submit your application, click here: <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/baltimoremd/Participant>***

**PLEASE READ THESE GUIDELINES CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION.**

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## IMPORTANT DATES

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<b>Grant Application Available</b>	September 16, 2022
<b>Information Sessions (offered virtually)</b>	October 5, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET October 6, 2022 at 10:00 AM ET
<b>Deadline for Submission of Written Questions to DHCD</b> Note: No questions will be accepted or answered after the deadline	October 14, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET
<b>Responses to Written Questions Posted on DHCD'S Website</b>	October 21, 2022
<b>SUBMISSION DEADLINE</b>	<b>October 28, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET</b>
<b>Anticipated Notification of Awards</b>	February/March 2023

## WHAT'S NEW

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- Bonus points in scoring for projects located in Impact Investment Areas identified in the DHCD's "[Framework for Community Development](#) or that meet the Framework's objectives and strategies.
  - Bonus points in scoring for Established Organizations that partner with Emerging Organizations
  - Addition of a new application narrative for applicants to showcase their approach to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
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## COMMUNITY CATALYST GRANTS OVERVIEW

In 2018, DHCD established the Community Catalyst Grants program (CCG) to provide operating and capital support to assist organizations in historically disinvested communities. These communities are predominantly low-income, minority, have suffered disproportionately from low housing values, high rates of vacancy and abandonment, poverty, crime and public health problems, and may have received less public and private investment than other communities.

Community Catalyst Grants are intended to:

- **Value neighborhoods.** Support community-based efforts that support residents as they take the lead in their communities' redevelopment plans and projects.

- **Promote equity and community development in long-disinvested neighborhoods.** Funding emerging and established organizations in historically disinvested neighborhoods provides critical financial support to community-based initiatives that need it most.
- **Be flexible.** Applicants will identify their priorities for funds, whether it is increasing staff, retaining consultants, updating equipment, creating cooperative enterprises or helping to finance a project that achieves a community identified need.

In previous rounds, CCG funds have supported:

- Technical assistance and consultants to develop strategic plans and build organizational infrastructure
- Community organizing
- Upgrading accounting and IT platforms
- Repairs and improvements for legacy homeowners
- Blight reduction
- Commercial and economic development
- Strategic planning
- Start-up costs for non-profit organizations

**In FY 2023, DHCD will be making up to \$1.9 million in operating grants available for projects that are critical to locally-driven community revitalization projects and support DHCD’s [“Framework for Community Development.”](#)**

Applicants will self-select whether to apply as “Emerging” or “Established” organizations. Projects located in Impact Investment Areas or whose work fulfills one of the Framework Strategies, as described in DHCD’s [“Framework for Community Development,”](#) will automatically receive 10 bonus in the scoring of the Project Description Section. Established organizations that partner with an Emerging organization on their project will automatically receive 5 bonus points in the scoring of the Project Description Section.

### **Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants include community development corporations, umbrella organizations, neighborhood revitalization organizations, faith-based organizations, merchant associations and other organizations that have a valid 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) status or that have received a temporary determination from the IRS. Organizations that do not have a 501(c)(3) status can apply through an eligible applicant or a fiscal agent. Eligible applicants and their fiscal agents, if applicable, must provide proof of their business entity’s status of

good standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) – proof can be provided as a timestamped screenshot of SDAT’s Business Entity entry for the applicant or a scanned copy of the Certificate of Status. DHCD reserves the right to require organizations with annual operating budgets of \$100,000 or less, or who have been operating for 12 or fewer months to identify a fiscal agent or to partner with an eligible applicant. Applicants using a fiscal agent must include information describing their policies, procedures, and fee structure. Both the applicant and the fiscal agent must sign and return the Certification and Authorization to Submit form. In the event funds are awarded, DHCD will require an executed Memorandum of Understanding between the fiscal agent and applicant.

**Note:** If organizations were previously awarded CCG Funds in BOTH Round 1 (FY 19) and Round 2 (FY 20-21) for Operating or Capital grants, they are ineligible for a Round 3 award.

### **Emerging and Established Organization Definitions**

Applicants self-select whether they qualify as an “Emerging” or “Established” organization based on the following criteria:

- Organizations headquartered in or whose work is centered in communities that have historically been under-funded, may not have established revenue sources and may lack access to capital are, for the purposes of the Community Catalyst Grants, considered to be **“Emerging.”** This can include nonprofit groups that have a long-term presence in neighborhoods, groups that are active but may not have a 501(c)(3) status, groups that are interested in starting a new initiative, or groups collaborating to achieve larger goals. In some instances, Emerging organizations are raising capital, but, due to the challenging nature of their projects, find themselves with funding gaps.
- Organizations that work in neighborhoods and communities where ongoing investment has resulted in demonstrated market changes and improvements, have consistent funding sources, professionalized boards, and access to resources are, for the purposes of the Community Catalyst Grants, considered to be **“Established.”**
- Organizations that received a Community Catalyst Grant in the past must include text from their application classification from the last round and provide a brief update to the classification.

DHCD reserves the right to modify an applicant’s classification.

## OPERATING GRANTS DESCRIPTION

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DHCD will be making **up to \$1.9 million available in Operating Grants** for organizational operating costs. At least \$1 million will be awarded to Emerging organizations. Not more than \$900,000 will be awarded to Established organizations. Applicants may request funds for projects that previously received an award of CCG Funds. Established organizations that partner with an Emerging organization as part of their project will automatically receive 5 bonus points in the scoring of the Project Description Section. Partnerships must have benchmarks and assessment measures agreed to by both the Emerging and Established organization partners. Projects located in Impact Investment Areas or whose work fulfills one of the Framework Strategies, as described in DHCD's "[Framework for Community Development](#)," will automatically receive 10 bonus points in the scoring of the Project Description Section of the application.

The Goals of CCG Operating Grants are to:

- Support efforts to stabilize and improve housing market conditions, through a combination of organizational growth, technical and financial assistance, partnerships, and collaboration
- Create and/or formalize organizations
- Expand programs to increase capacity resulting in visible and quantifiable impacts through increased staff, technical, and financial assistance
- Community ownership of a project
- Strengthen the community's understanding of and ability to participate in development initiatives
- Undertake a deferred project
- Increase economic opportunities and prosperity for all stakeholders
- Foster partnerships and collaboration

### **Operating Grant Award Amounts and Terms**

Emerging applicants may request a grant amount of \$75,000, \$100,000, or \$150,000. Established applicants may request an award amount of \$75,000 or \$100,000. DHCD reserves the right to award less than the requested amount. *Upon execution of the award agreement, all required documents must be submitted within 90 days of acceptance of award or award may be eligible for termination. All CCG Operating Grant funds must be spent within 24-months of executing a Funding Agreement with DHCD.*

### **Matching Funds**

Emerging applicants will be required to provide a fifteen percent match over the two-year term of a grant. Established applicants will be required to provide a twenty percent match over the two-year term of the grant. The match can include in-kind services or other funding sources.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and other City sources **will not** be considered eligible sources for a match.

### **Eligible Uses of Operating Grant Funds**

Operating Grants can be used to fund a variety of uses:

- Community Organizing
- Consultants to assist with such activities as operations, accounting, fundraising, program development, and information technology
- Professional Services
- Staff to help start a new program or expand an existing program
- Strategic planning
- Equipment

### **Ineligible Uses of Operating Grant Funds**

- Currently funded or duplication of existing programs including but not limited to: Baltimore Children and Youth Fund, Creative Baltimore Fund, Community Arts Grants, Lots Alive, Neighborhood Event Grants, Baltimore Main Streets programs, Community Land Trusts or other programs and/or projects eligible for funding through the [Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#), South Baltimore Gateway Partnership Community Grants, SB7 Community Enhancement Grants, or other sources as determined by DHCD.
- Charter schools
- Endowments
- Fundraising campaigns
- Programs associated with a specific religious or other affiliation or that support political actions, causes, advocacy, or parties.

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

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### **Submission Information**

Applications must be submitted through DHCD's online applicant portal.\*

To access to the applicant portal, register your account, sign in, and submit your application, click here: <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/baltimoremd/Participant>

If you experience technical difficulties with the portal, please email [support@neighborlysoftware.com](mailto:support@neighborlysoftware.com) for assistance. Technical support is available Monday through Friday 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM ET.

*\*Reasonable accommodations available upon request.*

A completed application, including all requested documents, must be submitted no later than **October 28th at 5:00 PM Eastern Time** in order to be considered.

**LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Please review the training video and materials at the [the CCG website](#) for guidance on how to complete the application.

### **Threshold Criteria for Applications**

**FAILURE TO INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN YOUR APPLICATION BEING INCOMPLETE AND DISQUALIFIED FOR CONSIDERATION. All applicants must complete the electronic application and submit all applicable file attachments. Please make sure your application file includes all the following:**

#### Project Information

- Project Narratives
  - Project Description
  - Applicant Capacity
  - Community Engagement
  - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - Schedule
  - Evaluation Process
  - Project Budget (*must be submitted as an Excel spreadsheet electronically. All tabs must be completed*)
- Job descriptions, if funds are being requested to support personnel
- Commitment Letters as evidence of Matching Funds
- Signed Certification and Authorization to Submit by all parties
- Letter of Intent signed by all parties, if the application is a joint submission or supports a collaborative effort

- Copy of fiscal agents' policies and procedures (including requirement to provide quarterly expenditure reports to grantees) and Letter of Intent signed by all parties, if the applicant is using a fiscal agent

**Financial Information - all Financial Information items (must be included for both fiscal agent and applicant/No earlier than 2019)**

- Copy of the most recent 990 Tax Return
- Applicants with Annual budget of \$500,000 or more- Most recent Audited Financial Statement
- Applicants with Annual Budget of more than \$200,000, but less than \$500,000- Most recent Financial Statement as prepared by a certified accounting firm
- Applicants with Annual Budgets that are less than \$200,000- Most recent annual budget. In the event funds are awarded, the applicant will be required to provide a Reviewed financial statement.

**Organizational Information**

- Corporate Resolution/Board of Directors approval **(must be included for both fiscal agent and applicant)**
- Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws **(must be included for both fiscal agent and all applicants)**
- Current IRS Determination Letter indicating 501©(3) or 501(c)(6) status
- Evidence of Good Standing with the State of Maryland for all parties
- List of Board of Directors, titles, and affiliations **(must be included for both fiscal agent and all applicants)**
- Organizational chart indicating roles and responsibilities of all partners and applicants

All applicants will be required to demonstrate how they support community-driven planning initiatives as well as one or more of the following City priorities:

- Crime reduction
- City-sponsored planning initiatives, including but not limited to INSPIRE, Green Network Plan, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, COVID-19 support, DHCD, or BDC Revitalization area
- Maximizing Baltimoreans' access to jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities created by reinvestment
- Building an internal team that has the capacity to succeed and the willingness to be relentlessly accountable
- Ensuring community voices are central to shaping neighborhoods

Applicants may also choose to use existing information to explain their Emerging or Established selection:  
Community Catalyst Grants Funding Guidelines and Application Information – Round 3 – FY2023

- Neighborhood Housing Market data provided in the Housing Market Typology or other sources
- Demographic information as found in the American Community Survey, Baltimore Neighborhoods Indicators Alliance *Vital Signs*, or other sources
- Financing including funding streams and access to capital and investment
- Deferred/underfunded projects
- Market studies or other information regarding the built environment
- Board and workforce structure and composition

**Collaborative or Joint Applications**

One or more entities may partner and submit a joint application for a project and/or up to three unrelated projects. In the event funds are awarded, DHCD will require a Memorandum of Understanding or Partnership Agreement between all participants prior to executing a Funding Agreement.

**Requests for Multiple Projects**

Applicants can request funds for multiple projects (up to three) but will be asked to rank projects in priority order and will also need to demonstrate the organizational capacity to implement projects. Applicants that request funds for multiple projects in the same community will be required to demonstrate how these projects support a community plan or other strategic revitalization initiatives. Applicants submitting a collaborative request must designate one eligible organization as the lead applicant. Please refer to the Application for additional information.

**REVIEW PROCESS and GRANT AWARDS**

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DHCD and other City Agency staff will review applications, meet with applicants and conduct site visits as necessary. Anticipating that there will be more requests than available funds, applicants may be asked to re-submit budgets, plans, drawings, financial information, or other information as part of the review process. The Review Committee will provide their recommendations to the Housing Commissioner who will make the final determination. All applicants will be notified in writing and awards will be posted on DHCD’s website.

**Application Scoring**

Applications will be scored by a review panel. Total points possible for each section of the application are listed in the table below.

Operating Application Scoring	Points possible
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION	40 Points
Project Description – <i>Impact Investment Bonus</i>	<i>10 Bonus Points</i>
Project Description – <i>Emerging Organization Partner Bonus</i>	<i>5 Bonus Points</i>
APPLICANT CAPACITY	40 Points
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION	40 Points
PROJECT BUDGET & FINANCING	30 Points
PROJECT SCHEDULE	20 Points
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	20 Point
PROJECT EVALUATION	10 Points
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE</b>	200 Points (215 with full bonus points)

All applicants who are awarded funds will be required to execute a Grant or Loan Agreement with the Department of Housing & Community Development that will be subject to approval by the City’s Board of Estimates and to provide quarterly reports and other documentation regarding their project. Depending upon the amount of the grant award, applicants may also be required to meet the following City requirements:

- Minority and Women’s Business Participation
- Local Hire
- Employ Baltimore

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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### **Issue Date**

The issue date of this Grant Application is September 16, 2022

### **Submission Deadline and Requirements**

The deadline for submitting applications and all application materials is **October 28, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET**

### **Obtaining the Application and Guidelines**

The Community Catalyst Capital Grants Application and Guidelines will be made available electronically on DHCD's website at: <https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/nd/community-catalyst-grants>.

\*Hard copies of the Application and Guidelines can be requested.

### **Information Session**

DHCD will host two online information sessions on October 5, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET and October 6, 2022 at 10 a.m. ET. These online information sessions do not require prior registration and are open to the public. More information about the sessions (including the link to join and a phone number to teleconference in) can be found at <https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/nd/community-catalyst-grants>.

If special accommodations are required to attend the session, please email [dhcd.ccg@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:dhcd.ccg@baltimorecity.gov) at least three business days in advance.

### **Questions and Inquiries**

Interested applicants can submit questions and inquiries in writing only to [dhcd.ccg@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:dhcd.ccg@baltimorecity.gov) no later than October 14, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET. DHCD will make best efforts to post responses on its website no later than October 21, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET. DHCD reserves the right to decline questions that are project-specific.

### **Revisions and Addenda**

Should it become necessary to revise any part of this Application and or Guidelines or provide additional information necessary to adequately interpret the provisions and requirements, an addendum shall be posted on DHCD's website. Revisions and Addenda will not be provided on an individual basis, therefore all interested applicants are encouraged to review the Community Catalyst Grant website periodically at:

<https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/nd/community-catalyst-grants>

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### **Award Amounts**

Final awards are made by the Housing Commissioner. DHCD reserves the right to make an award of funds in an amount other than what is requested in the Grant Application. DHCD reserves the right to determine what funding source is used for the award. All awards are subject to final underwriting by DHCD and approval by the City's Board of Estimates.

### **Incurring Expenses**

Neither the City of Baltimore nor DHCD will be responsible for and will not pay for any cost incurred by any applicant in preparing and submitting an application or requested supplemental information in response to this application.

### **Compliance with Law**

By submitting an application, organizations awarded funds agree that they will comply with all Federal, State and City laws, rules, and regulations and ordinances applicable to its activities and obligations under this program.

### **Public Information Act Notice**

DHCD commits to handling all information regarding financial assets in strictest confidence. Applicants should give specific attention to identifying any portions of their application that they deem to be confidential, proprietary or trade secrets and provide justification why such material should not be disclosed by DHCD under the Maryland Public Information Act SS 1-601 et seq. of the State Government Article, Annotated Code of Maryland upon request by the public.