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East Providence's Community Development Block Grant funds help residents and neighborhoods - by Roberto DaSilva

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Roberto DaSilva

East Providence is proud to be a community that helps its less fortunate residents. The city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding is one way to meet that goal. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's CDBG Entitlement Program provides grants to eligible communities to benefit low and moderate-income people. Grants can be used to carry out a wide range of community development activities that help revitalize neighborhoods, rehabilitate properties, improve community facilities and services, and provide economic development opportunities. All activities must either benefit low and moderate-income residents, prevent or eliminate slums or blight, or address urgent community development needs.

The City of East Providence has been awarded \$772,761 in CDBG funds for the federal fiscal year 2026. The city's use of these funds is guided by a local Consolidated Plan, which sets priorities over five years, and an Annual Action Plan, which details spending for the coming fiscal year. These plans are informed through a citizen participation process and the city's Comprehensive Plan.

Over the past several years the City of East Providence has used CDBG funds to advance several activities that would be unaffordable using only local funds. While these activities primarily benefit low and moderate-income residents and neighborhoods, they have a positive impact throughout the city. Funded activities have included purchasing land and, in some cases, remediating soil contamination for several affordable housing developments. These include the Residences at Riverside Sq., Central City Apartments and the affordable component of the East Point development. East Point was made possible by the city's purchase of the former Ocean State Steel property using CDBG funds. The site has been remediated and is currently being transformed by Churchill & Banks into a mixed-income residential development along the Seekonk River.

The city has also used its CDBG program to benefit local neighborhoods by renovating several recreation facilities, constructing sidewalks, and improving the city's Riverside Sq. Other recent projects include the installation of security cameras at senior public housing developments and the renovation of a municipal building which is planned to become an outpatient mental health clinic for high school students. The program has also funded several local non-profit organizations that assist local low and moderate-income residents in various ways. These include a diverse range of organizations, such as the East Bay Community Action Program, local food pantries, such as Good Neighbors, and small volunteer organizations assisting those in need.

CDBG funding also supports the city's popular Home Improvement Program which offers no-interest deferred payment loans and low-interest loans to owner-occupied residences and qualifying rental properties. Funds can be used for repairs in order to improve a home's safety, accessibility, and energy efficiency. This program has helped keep residents in their homes when large and unexpected repairs are needed.

The city is grateful for its ongoing partnerships with HUD and local service providers for the assistance that this program has provided.

Roberto DaSilva is the mayor of the city of East Providence, R.I.

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