

Ellwood City Borough
Three Year Community Development Plan
CDBG FY 2014-2015-2016

Ellwood City Borough, Lawrence County Pennsylvania is located about 40 miles North of Pittsburgh with access to 3 interstates within a 10-mile radius (I-79, I-76, I-376).

The state routes leading to these interstates (Rt 288 and Rt 488) are two-lane roadways and include a bridge / span that is overdue for repair work.

The Borough once boasted multiple manufacturers who employed thousands of people and the Borough's population peaked at just over 12,000 people. Today the largest employer is Ellwood Group which owns Ellwood Forge and several other manufacturers remain but the employment rolls are in the hundreds not the thousands. Just this past year, 2 of those manufacturers, Sabre Industries and Heraeus Electrolite announced closings (well over 300 jobs lost) followed by the sale and predicted closing of the corporate offices of ESI3 Bank which occupies one half of a city block in the Central Business. The population is fewer than 7,400 and falling.

The town has a Central Business District that consists of about 4 city blocks of mixed use. Several of the retail shops and restaurants are doing very well but they are scattered amid empty storefronts and deteriorating architecture.

Like many "rustbelt" towns, the Borough's infrastructure is old, sometimes obsolete (sidewalk curbs) and often has failures (water line breakages),

The Borough's population is weighted with the aged; nearly 1/4 of the population is older than 62 years. More than 13% of the population identify themselves as having a disability and more than 14% are living below poverty level.

Because of these trends and recent closings, the Borough will evaluate its Three Year Community Development Plan (CDP) and conduct needs assessments. The following pages show the existing plan.

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Introduction

Ellwood City is located on the border of Lawrence and Beaver Counties, and is a crossroads of Route 288, 351, 4SB and 65, and serves a center of commerce, manufacturing and services to a population of within ten to fifteen miles. The business district, or Core Area, generally extends from Park Avenue to Factory Avenue, and from Tenth Street to Fourth Street with the inclusion of Sixth Street which crosses the Connoquessing Creek via the Fifth Street Bridge, (see map).

The Plan contained herein is for Fiscal Years 2013, 2014, 2015. In order to prepare this Plan, several sources of information were used to document the Community Development Plan within Ellwood City Borough. From an analysis of needs, prioritized goals were prepared and ultimately, Community Development Block Grant Program activities to address the needs and achieve the goals for development.

1. Low and Moderate Income Persons/Households

Previous CDBG applications were submitted using a 1999 Borough Income survey. The Borough felt it would be prudent to undertake another Borough-wide income survey to determine if conditions had remained the same. The survey was mailed to all residents, with addresses being obtained from the Borough's Utility Billing Department. Stamped, self-addressed envelopes were included with the survey, to encourage prompt return of the completed forms. A cover letter explained the reasons for the survey. The survey has been tabulated by designated geographic areas, and such information is readily available by those geographical areas. The survey form used was that as provided by the Department of Community and Economic Development COBG Guidelines. The mailing was done on February 18, 1998, asking for a return by March 2, 1998. However, in order to obtain greater return, the time was extended, two additional notices were placed in the local newspaper, and notices were posted in the Municipal Building. On March 13, 1998, the survey was considered closed and the results were tabulated. Additional survey requests since the prior tabulation have not produced significant results.

As of March 2, 1999, fifty-nine (59) percent of the households surveyed had responded. This accounts for forty-six (45) percent low/moderate income persons based upon survey requirements as established by the Department of Community and Economic Development. Ellwood City Borough does not meet the LMI test for Borough-wide activities, and the result of the 2010 Census for LMI persons has not been released.

Therefore, the Borough is proposing projects for LMI targeted activities and the elimination of slums and blight.

2. Community Development Needs.

Housing

A review of the 2003 Comprehensive PIM for Ellwood City documents that there are a total of fifty (50) housing units with deferred maintenance. A windshield survey of the Core Area shows significant deterioration of the second floor housing units, many of which are rental units to low and moderate income persons.

According to the Comprehensive Plan, the Ellwood City Borough had a housing vacancy rate of approximately 3.5 percent. Generally accepted levels of vacancy for owner-occupied housing and renter-occupied housing are three (3%) percent to seven (7%) percent. It would therefore appear that the overall vacancy rate for the Ellwood City Borough is within reasonable levels. It has been assumed, for the purpose of this Plan, that an adequate housing stock is available, and therefore only housing rehabilitation activities should be undertaken, with an emphasis on housing maintenance. This is particularly true, since the Ellwood City Borough is built-out community. Since the mid 1980's the Borough has rehabilitated over one (100) homes with HOME and CDSG assistance, this activity should continue.

Public Utilities and Improvements

Infrastructure problems within the Borough consist of the many varied problems which are experienced by older urban areas. Specifically these consist of sanitary and storm sewer facilities problems, pedestrian and ADA access problems, transportation deficiency in recreation facilities, and general facility problems, deterioration in the downtown Core Area. Restoration of the Core Area and community facilities should continue.

Employment

As deterioration in housing exists within the Borough, it has contributed to the needs as are described in detail in this Plan. Improving Code Enforcement and Assistance to Low Income Persons in the community represent one which will be addressed through continued grantmanship efforts. It is specifically proposed that the Borough continue the Urban Gardens effort to provide fresh produce to the vulnerable persons.

Economic Decline and Unemployment

1. Economic Decline and Unemployment

Unemployment statistics are not reported specifically for Ellwood City Borough according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in Pittsburgh. Therefore, it is difficult to determine and identify population groups which are experiencing unemployment or underemployment. Therefore, certain assumptions should be made. The loss of industrial jobs to the area has been a problem since 1980. Many of these individuals have found employment after the large mill job faded. However, wage rates and benefit packages are typically inferior in quality, resulting in families who are now in the low to moderate income category. Approximately forty-three point eight (43.8) percent of all persons within Ellwood City Borough are considered to be low to moderate income persons, according to HUD Section 8 limits. The Ellwood City Borough was designated a Commonwealth Sponsored Enterprise Zone and has recently assisted in locating an LED Light Manufacturing in the original Enterprise Zone. This effort must continue.

Commercial Disinvestments

A review of tax records within the borough indicates disinvestment by commercial establishments in the Core Area, particularly from the five hundred (500) through nine hundred (900) block. Such disinvestment is apparent when traveling through the Core Area and viewing the number of vacant or unused *and* underutilized building and other buildings which *are* in need of demolition or significant improvements. This spot blight and revitalization is proposed to be addressed through the Ellwood City Revitalization Corporation development activity and CDBG assistance for clearance. While a revitalization urban mall has been constructed, there is still considerable structure blight. DCED has approved the redevelopment plan and the re-use plan for the Ellwood City core area.

3. Community Development Objectives

Ellwood City Borough Community Development Objectives can be summarized as follows:

- Undertake target Infrastructure improvements
- Stimulate growth and deter blight in the Core Area
- Attract Industries and/or promote investment of existing industries and businesses
- Acquire and reuse/redevelopment Brown field sites.
- Provide public services to LM eligible persons

These objectives will address the identified needs as detailed in the assessments of community development needs, with an emphasis to benefit low/moderate income persons.

4. Three Year Plan

After an Analysis of the future and current needs of the Ellwood City Borough, and consideration of eligible activities under the Community Development Block Grant Program, the Plan was established as follows:

Fiscal Year 2014

Continuation of removing architectural barriers in the Pittsburgh Circle and at the Borough Building.
Housing Rehabilitation will be addressed through the HOME Program and the Borough will consult with the County to consolidate efforts.

Fiscal Year 2015

Continuation of removing architectural barriers in the Pittsburgh Circle
Clearance of blight

Fiscal Year 2016

Address Architectural Barriers in other areas of the Borough
Clearance of blight

5. Fiscal Year 2013 Synopsis

Administration	\$18,000
Public Facilities	\$12,676
Streets and Roads	\$30,000
Housing Rehabilitation	\$23,000
Clearance	\$22,000
Total	\$105,676