

TO: JAMES L. APP, CITY MANAGER
FROM: ED GALLAGHER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: 2012 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM
DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2011

Needs: For the City Council to (a) decide which applications for the City's 2012 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds should be recommended in the *Draft* Annual Action Plan and (b) set a date for the public hearing for the 2012 CDBG Fund allocations.

Facts:

1. October 24, 2011 was the deadline for submittal of applications for 2012 CDBG funds. As of that date, the City received 20 applications (including applications from the City for "capacity-building" and administrative use of CDBG funds). The total amount of funding requested for the 20 applications comes to \$640,700.
3. Attached is a table and a narrative summary of the 20 applications. Binders containing all of the applications will be available at the Community Development Department counter, Library Reference Desk, and in the City Council's office.
4. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is not expected to publish the amounts of available 2012 CDBG funds to be distributed to recipients until Spring 2012. The city assumes it will be entitled in 2012 to \$237,838.
5. The City receives its allocations of federal CDBG funds through the County of San Luis Obispo. The County takes the lead role in administration of the CDBG program. This includes the preparation, adoption and annual updating of a "Consolidated Plan", which HUD approves following adoption by the County Board of Supervisors. Under a cooperation agreement with the County, the City retains the right to decide how its allocation of CDBG funds will be used.
6. In late December 2011 or early January 2012, the County will publish a Draft "Consolidated Plan", which will list summaries of the activities that are recommended for consideration by the city councils and Board of Supervisors at public hearings to be conducted in February, March, and/or April 2012.
7. It is proposed that, at its meeting of December 6, 2011, the City Council review all of the applications and recommend those applications to be listed in the Draft Consolidated Plan as being *recommended* for funding.
8. The Draft Consolidated Plan will be considered by the Council at a public hearing to be conducted in early March 2012. At that hearing, the Council may consider any of the applications filed by October 24, 2011, whether or not they are recommended for funding in the Draft Consolidated Plan.
9. Federal regulations impose several limits on the use of CDBG funds as follows:

- a. At least 70% of all funds *must* be spent on activities that benefit low income persons, and no more than 30% *may* be spent on activities that eliminate blight;
 - b. No more than 15% of CDBG funds *may* be used for public service activities;
 - c. No more than 20% of CDBG funds *may* be used for administrative uses;
10. The \$237,838 are available to be divided among the proposed activities, as shown below:

\$165,965 for low income benefit – non-public service projects *
 \$ 31,873 maximum for low income benefit – public service programs
 \$ 40,000 maximum for administration and capacity-building
 \$237,838 Total

* Of the \$165,965, no more than \$49,790 may be spent on projects that eliminate blight.

Analysis and Conclusion:

Non-Public Service Applications (Public Facilities, Housing, Economic Development Projects)

Non-public service applications are applications that apply for funding for activities that aid in community development actions that eliminate slums and blight, avoid the deterioration of property, neighborhood, and community facilities of importance to the welfare of the community, principally serving persons of low and moderate income. Examples of activities CDBG funds can be used for are construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation (including removal of architectural barriers to accessibility), and installation of public facilities and improvements when the primary beneficiaries of the project are of low-income.

Continuing Projects

1. Turtle Creek Sidewalk Project. This project was awarded \$89,700 in 2010 funds and \$54,000 in 2011 funds to replace an existing 2,000 foot long deteriorating asphalt sidewalk in Turtle Creek Park along Brookhill Drive. The condition of this sidewalk poses a tripping hazard, primarily to seniors who live in the adjacent Sierra Bonita neighborhood.

In the process of preparing the federal environmental document for this project, it was noticed that a total of the 2,000 foot length on both sides of Brookhill Drive needs to be installed (3 new ramps plus 6 replacement ramps). Additionally it was determined that curb, gutter and sidewalk needs to be installed to connect the existing improvements on Scott Street between the Senior Center and the existing improvements to the east. Angled parking is also being designed for the portion of Scott Street. An application for an additional \$105,965 in 2012 CDBG funds has been prepared to provide for the construction of 3 new ramps and to replace the six non-ADA-compliant ramps and the Scott Street improvements.

2. Handicapped Ramps. The City has recognized that it has a responsibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide handicapped ramps where none

exist (primarily at block corners) and to replace older ramps that do not comply with standards found to be consistent with the ADA. Over the past three years the City has installed various new ramps at the northern end of Oak Street (36th & Oak and 34th & Oak), using CDBG funds. An application to install more handicapped ramps was prepared. The average cost of a ramp, including construction, design, and bidding costs is estimated at \$7,500. The application recommends that ramps be installed in order of the following priorities:

- Spring Street, north of 22nd Street
 - At the 4 corners of 13th and Park Streets (this would also entail constructing bulb-outs at the corners and possibly installing pavers in the sidewalk, which would entail considerably more than \$7,500 per corner);
 - Other locations on the West Side of Paso Robles.
3. LED-Lighted Crosswalks. The City has installed several LED-lighted crosswalks in an effort to enhance pedestrian safety at locations with high volumes of pedestrian traffic. An application to install more of these systems was prepared. The average cost of an LED-lighted crosswalk system, including construction and bidding costs, and assuming that there is no need for design, is estimated to be \$30,000. The application recommends that LED-lighted cross walks be installed in order of the following priorities:
- 34th and Oak Streets *;
 - 26th and Spring Streets;
 - Spring Street at 11th Street (between City Park and the Paso Robles Inn);
 - 13th and Park Streets.

New Projects for 2012 There are no new non-public service projects for 2012.

1. Acquisition of Property at 7860 Sinaloa, Atascadero. Transitional Food and Shelter is requesting \$200,000 to go towards the purchase of the property for transitional housing or group home for the medically fragile homeless persons in San Luis Obispo County.
2. Acquisition of property at 8600 Atascadero Avenue, Atascadero. North County Connection (NCC) is looking at the purchase of property to provide financial and program sustainability for the North County Connection, a non-profit recovery center, that has been operating at the at the facility for the past 11years.
3. Provide Entrepreneurial Training. Mission Community Services Corporation is requesting funds to operate the Women's Business Center (WBC), which would provide introductory entrepreneurial training to underserved population including women, minorities, displaced workers, veterans, the disabled and other population groups. The WBC is located in San Luis Obispo.

Public Service Applications

Public services are those activities in which non-profit organizations provide services to low income clients. For several years, the City has received more requests for grants to

support public services than it has CDBG funds that may be used for such purposes, and 2012 is no exception. If the \$31,873 available for public services were equally-distributed among all of the 12 applicants for these funds each would receive about \$2,656.

For several years, the City has required applicants for public services funds to submit certain information to supplement their CDBG applications. Such information included estimates of the number of city residents to be served by their programs, information about their annual budgets, etc. In order that the City Council have adequate information on which to base a decision to appropriately allocate the limited public service funds, City staff intends to solicit similar information from public services applicants for 2012 CDBG applications.

The supplemental information will not be available for Council's review on December 6th. Therefore, for the Draft Annual Action Plan, it is suggested that the Council confirm whether or not the City will fund public service applications at the full 15% allowed by federal regulations (as it has done for several years now). The final decision on which public service applications would be funded, would be deferred until the public hearing in March 2012.

Administration and Capacity Building

Administration refers to staff time and expenses directly related to managing the CDBG program and those activities funded with CDBG funds. As a condition of accepting CDBG funds, the city must ensure compliance with numerous federal regulations that govern aspects such as public hearings, environmental review, procurement, labor laws, and filing of quarterly reports on progress made and the socio-economic profile of beneficiaries served by the funded activities.

Capacity building refers to staff time and expenses to implement programs identified in the City's Housing Element of the General Plan and in its Redevelopment Implementation Plan that benefit low and moderate income persons and aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight. Examples include: drafting of housing-related ordinances (e.g. Density Bonuses, Reasonable Accommodation); drafting updates to the Housing Element and Redevelopment Implementation Plan; maintenance of demographic and land use information; and providing assistance to developers of low income housing in planning applications and funding requests (e.g., Oak Park Redevelopment, and Habitat for Humanity).

CDBG Regulations provide that no more than 20% of all entitlement and Program Income CDBG funds in any Program Year may be used for administrative and capacity-building purposes. Since becoming entitled to CDBG funds in 1994, the City has split its administrative allotment between grant administration and capacity building.

Options for Draft One Year Action Plan

There are many more applications than there will be CDBG funds to support. One potential funding option has been prepared for the Council's consideration. Some of the applications do not appear in the option; the reasons for this are discussed in the attached summary of applications.

In Option A, priority is given to:

- Continuing to replace the asphalt sidewalk in Turtle Creek Park with a concrete sidewalk, adding 4 new handicapped ramps, and replacing two non-ADA-compliant ramps;
- Constructing new handicapped ramps and replacing non-ADA-compliant ramps at various locations on the West Side of the City;
- Installing LED-lighted crosswalks.

Additionally, Option A assumes that the Council will want to allocate the full 15% allowable for public service applications.

Option A provides for funding the following activities:

Turtle Creek Sidewalk	\$105,965
Handicapped Ramps.....	\$ 30,000
LED Crosswalks.....	\$ 30,000
Public Services Activities.....	\$ 31,873
Administration & Capacity Building.....	\$ 40,000
	<u>\$237,838</u>

Regardless of which activities are listed in the Draft Consolidated Plan as being recommended for funding, the Council will have the authority to approve any of the submitted applications for CDBG funds following a public hearing to be scheduled for early March 2012.

March Public Hearing Dates

Possible dates for the March public hearing are:

- a. Thursday, March 8 (special Council meeting);
- b. Tuesday, March 6 (regular Council meeting).

In past years, the CDBG public hearings have taken as many as 2 hours. A special meeting provides a better environment for focusing on the allotments and reduces the amount of time that the public has to wait to speak.

Policy

Reference: Federal regulations for the Community Development Block Grant Program

Fiscal

Impact: Participation in the federal CDBG Program has involved and will continue to demand a commitment of staff resources. Utilizing CDBG funds avoids adverse impacts on the City's General Fund. It should be noted that any funding request that would come from administration would have an equal adverse effect on the City's Redevelopment Low and moderate Income Housing Fund or the General Fund.

Options: Subject to public testimony, via minute action:

- A. (1) Identify the following applications to be listed in the Draft One Year Action Plan as being recommended for funding

Turtle Creek Sidewalk	\$ 105,965
Handicapped Ramps.....	\$ 30,000
LED Crosswalks.....	\$ 30,000
Public Services Activities.....	\$ 31,873
Administration & Capacity Building.....	<u>\$ 40,000</u>
	\$ 237,838

- (2) Allow the Literacy Council's application to be considered along with the other applications for public service activities.

- (3) Set Thursday, March 8, 2011 as the date for the public hearing for 2012 CDBG allocations.

- B. Amend, modify or reject the foregoing options.

Prepared by: Darren Nash, Associate Planner

Attachments:

- 1. Table Summary of the Applications for 2012 CDBG Funds
- 2. Narrative Summary of 2012 CDBG Applications

CITY OF PASO ROBLES: 2012 CDBG APPLICATIONS

A. Public Facilities, Building Rehab, Housing, Economic Development Projects (National Objective: Low Income Benefit)

#	Applicant	Program/Project	Amount Requested
1	City of Paso Robles	Replace damaged sidewalks in Turtle Creek Park	\$120,000
2	City of Paso Robles	Install/replace handicapped ramps at various locations on West Side of City	\$60,000
3	City of Paso Robles	Install LED-lighted crosswalks at various locations on West Side of City	\$60,000
4	Transitional Food & Shelter	Purchase property	\$200,000
5	North County Connection	Recovery and Resource Center	\$ 45,000
6	Mission Comm. Services Corp.	Women's Business Center	\$ 5,000
	Total Requested		\$490,000
	Total Available		\$165,965 *

* Assumes that \$31,873 is used for Category B.

B. Public Services (National Objective: Low Income Benefit)

#	Applicant	Program/Project	Amount Requested
7	Community Action Partnership of SLO County (CAPSLO)	Senior Health Screening Program	\$2,500
8	CAPSLO	Teen Academic Parenting Program	\$2,800
9	Transitional Food & Shelter	Medical Fragile	\$20,000
10	Literacy Council	The Literacy Program	\$5,000
11	Big Brothers & Big Sisters	Mentoring Program for disadvantaged youth	\$5,000
12	Boys & Girls Club of SLO County	Leadership for project development	\$7,000
13	Senior Nutrition of SLO County	Senior Nutrition Program	\$10,000
14	Lifestyles Recovery Center	Group Counseling	\$12,000
15	El Camino Homeless Org.	Homeless shelter operating costs and motel vouchers	\$5,000
16	NC Adaptive Sports	Disabled Sports Programs	\$ 2,500
17	Loaves & Fishes	Food Pantry	\$7,000
18	PR Fellowship Development	Providers of meals and care for homeless	\$ 21,900
	Total Requested		\$100,700
	Total Available		\$31,873

C. Administration and Capacity-Building

#	Applicant	Program/Project	Amount Requested
19	City of Paso Robles	Capacity-Building Program: activities to implement Housing Element Programs	\$15,000
20	City of Paso Robles	Administration of City's CDBG Program and all CDBG-funded activities	\$25,000
	Total Requested		\$40,000
	Total Available		\$40,000

CITY OF PASO ROBLES: 2012 CDBG APPLICATIONS

Estimated Revenues

2012 HUD Entitlement	237,838.00	Amount expected to be allocated to the City from HUD
Program Income	0	Amount from repaid CDBG-funded loans (through September 30, 2011)
Total	237,838	

Expenditure Summary

A. Low Income Benefit- non public service	165,965	Must be at least 70% of \$237,838 (this amount calculated after deducting \$40,000 in administrative funds and \$31,873 in public service funds).
B. Blight Elimination	0	May not exceed 30% of \$248,190 (assuming \$60,000 spent on administrative funds).
C. Low Income Benefit - public service	31,873	May not exceed 15% of \$300,090 (this amount calculated before deducting administrative funds).
D. Administration & Capacity-Building	40,000	May not exceed 20% of \$308,090
Total	237,838	

SUMMARY OF 2012 CDBG APPLICATIONS

Public Facilities1. Turtle Creek Sidewalks:

Applicant: City of Paso Robles

Amount Requested:..... \$120,000

Activity Description: Replace a 2,000 foot length of asphalt sidewalk on both sides of Brookhill Drive in Turtle Creek Park with a Portland Cement Concrete sidewalk; add 3 handicapped ramps to provide access to the sidewalk; and replace 6 existing non-ADA-compliant ramps. It now presents a tripping hazard, primarily to seniors who live in the adjacent Sierra Bonita Neighborhood. The 2,000 foot long asphalt walkway has been damaged by tree roots and other wear and tear. Also install 225 linear feet of sidewalk, curbs, gutter and angled parking on south side of Scott Street, east of Camino Lobo. The requested \$65,000 will supplement \$89,700 in 2010 and \$54,000 in 2011 CDBG Funds awarded to this project.

CDBG Eligibility: Public Facility (24 CFR 570.201(c))

National Objective: Low and Moderate Income Benefit

Explanation..... (1) Area-wide basis (24 CFR 570.208(a)(1)): Turtle Creek Park and Scott Street are located in the heart of Block Group 1 of Census Tract 102.02 , and more than 51% of the households in this block group are of low or moderate income; (2) Limited-clientele basis (24 CFR 570.208(a)(2)): Handicapped ramps serve the physically-disabled, which are considered to be a group that is principally of low and moderate income.

2. Handicapped Ramps:

Applicant: City of Paso Robles

Amount Requested:..... \$60,000

Activity Description: Install handicapped ramps where none presently exist and replace non-ADA-compliant ramps in various locations on the West Side. The following priorities are suggested:

- Spring Street north of 22nd Street;
- At the 4 corners of 13th and Park Streets (this would also entail constructing bulb-outs at the corners and possibly installing pavers in the sidewalk, which would entail considerably more than \$7,500 per corner);
- Other locations on the West Side of Paso Robles.

CDBG Eligibility: Public Facility (24 CFR 570.201(c))

National Objective: Low and Moderate Income Benefit

Explanation..... Limited Clientele basis (24 CFR 570.208(a)(2)): Handicapped ramps serve the physically-disabled, which are considered to be a group that is principally of low and moderate income.

3. LED-Lighted Crosswalks:

Applicant: City of Paso Robles

Amount Requested:..... \$60,000

Activity Description: Install LED-lighted crosswalks at locations with high volumes of pedestrian traffic to enhance public safety. The following priorities are suggested:

- 34th and Oak Streets;
- 26th and Spring Streets;
- Spring Street at 11th Street (between City Park and the Paso Robles Inn);
- 13th and Park Streets.

CDBG Eligibility: Public Facility (24 CFR 570.201(c))

National Objective: Low and Moderate Income Benefit

SUMMARY OF 2012 CDBG APPLICATIONS

Explanation.....Area-wide basis (24 CFR 570.208(a)(1)): All proposed crosswalks are located in Census Tract 101, in which 62% of the households are of low or moderate income.
National Objective: Elimination of Blight
Explanation..... All of the locations are within the City's Redevelopment Project Area, which is defined as a blighted area. The 2010-2014 Redevelopment Implementation Plan provides documentation that lack of safe pedestrian crossings contributes to a blighting condition.

Economic Development Projects

4. Property Aquisition:

Applicant: Transitional Food and Shelter, Inc.
Amount Requested:..... \$200,000
Activity Description: Request money to help with the purchase of property in the City of Atascadero for transitional or group housing.
CDBG Eligibility: Property Acquisition (24 CFR 570.201(a))
National Objective: Low and Moderate Income Benefit

The City has yet to award CDBG funds for this type of activity. This application was not suggested for inclusion in the Draft One Year Action Plan.

5. Property Aquisition:

Applicant: North County Connection
Amount Requested:..... \$45,000
Activity Description: Request money to help with the purchase of property in the City of Atascadero for non-profit recovery resource center.
CDBG Eligibility: Property Acquisition (24 CFR 570.201(a))
National Objective: Low and Moderate Income Benefit

The City has yet to award CDBG funds for this type of activity. This application was not suggested for inclusion in the Draft One Year Action Plan.

6. Women's Business Center Program:

Applicant: Mission Community Services Corp.
Amount Requested:..... \$5,000
Activity Description: Operate a county-wide program to provide training for small businesses operated or being started by an estimated 55 low income persons. Although the program is entitled "Women's Business", grant recipients need not be women.
CDBG Eligibility: Special Economic Development Activities (24 CFR 570.203)
National Objective: Low and Moderate Income Benefit
Explanation..... Guidelines for Economic Development Projects (24 CFR 570.209): Provide one full-time equivalent job per \$35,000 of CDBG Funds.

The City has yet to award CDBG funds for this type of activity. This application was not suggested for inclusion in the Draft One Year Action Plan.

Public Services

Public Services to low income persons are eligible for CDBG funding under Section 24 CFR 570.201(e). The national objective achieved is benefit to low and moderate income persons in accordance with 24 CFR 570.208(a)(2). Recipients must demonstrate that 51% or more of their clients qualify as low and moderate income persons.

SUMMARY OF 2012 CDBG APPLICATIONS

7. **Senior Health Screening Program:**

Applicant: Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO)
Amount Requested:..... \$2,500
Activity Description: Operating expenses for a county-wide senior health screening program
Number of beneficiaries: .. 600 persons county-wide.

The City has supported this program continuously since 2001 and allocated \$1,900 in 2011.

8. **Teen Academic Parenting Program (TAPP):**

Applicant: Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO)
Amount Requested:..... \$2,800
Activity Description: Operating expenses for a County-wide counseling and child care program for pregnant and parenting teen mothers and fathers
Number of beneficiaries: .. 115 persons county-wide.

The City has supported this program continuously since 2001 and allocated \$1,830 in 2011.

9. **Emergency Shelter:**

Applicant: Transitional Food and Shelter (TFS)
Amount Requested:..... \$20,000
Activity Description: Operating expenses for various emergency shelters for medically-fragile persons located County-wide.
Number of beneficiaries: .. 500 persons in county-wide.

The City has supported this program continuously since 2005 and allocated \$9,646 in 2011.

10. **The Literacy Program:**

Applicant: Literacy Council
Amount Requested:..... \$5,000
Activity Description: Operating expenses for a County-wide program to provide English Language classes.
Number of beneficiaries: .. 700 persons county-wide.

The City has supported this program continuously since 2002 and allocated \$1,830 in 2011.

11. **Mentoring Program:**

Applicant: Big Brothers & Big Sisters
Amount Requested:..... \$5,000
Activity Description: Operating expenses for a County-wide program to provide mentoring services to "at-risk" youth.
Number of beneficiaries: .. 240 persons county-wide.

The City has supported this program continuously since 2002 and allocated \$1,830 in 2011.

12. **Project Learn:**

Applicant: Boys and Girls Club of North San Luis Obispo County
Amount Requested:..... \$7,000
Activity Description: Operating expenses for after-school programs for youth n in the Paso Robles area.
Number of beneficiaries: .. 285 persons in the Paso Robles area.

SUMMARY OF 2012 CDBG APPLICATIONS

The City has supported Boys and Girls Club educational programs 6 times since 1996. In 2011, the City provided a grant of \$3,740.

13. **Senior Nutrition Program:**

Applicant: Senior Nutrition Program of San Luis Obispo County

Amount Requested:..... \$10,000

Activity Description: Operating expenses for a County-wide program to provide hot meals to seniors

Number of beneficiaries: . 30 persons county-wide.

The City supported this program in 2011 with a grant of \$3,740.

14. **Drug/Alcohol Counseling for Youth and Adults:**

Applicant: Lifestyles Recovery Center

Amount Requested:..... \$12,000

Activity Description: Operating expenses for a drug and alcohol counseling services for low income adults and youth in the Paso Robles area.

Number of beneficiaries: .. 300 persons (per month) in Paso Robles.

The City has supported this program most years since 2002 and allocated \$3,900 in 2011.

15. **Emergency Shelter:**

Applicant: El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO)

Amount Requested:..... \$5,000

Activity Description: Operating expenses for an emergency shelter located in Atascadero that serves the North County.

Number of beneficiaries: .. 450 persons in North County.

The City has supported this program continuously since 2005 and allocated \$4,470 in 2011.

16. **Sports & Recreation Program:**

Applicant: North County Adaptive Sports and Rec.

Amount Requested:..... \$2,500

Activity Description: Operating expenses for a North County program to provide sports and recreation services to disabled youth and adults.

Number of beneficiaries: .. 104 persons north county.

This organization has not previously asked the City for funding.

17. **Food Pantry:**

Applicant: Loaves & Fishes

Amount Requested:..... \$7,000

Activity Description: Provides food to low to very low income people of Greater Paso Robles area.

Number of beneficiaries: .. 1805 households in Paso Robles.

This program received \$2,300 in 2010..

18. **Christ Kitchen and CBS Ministry Programs:**

Applicant: Paso Robles Fellowship Development

Amount Requested:..... \$21,900

Activity Description: Purchase food, supplies, and operating expenses for providing meals, showers, and donated clothing to the homeless in the Paso Robles area.

Number of beneficiaries: .. 150 persons in North County.

SUMMARY OF 2012 CDBG APPLICATIONS

The City has supported this program in 2001, 2007, and in 2010. In 2011, \$4,470 was granted.

Administration and Capacity-Building

19. CDBG Program Administration.

Applicant: City of Paso Robles

Amount Requested:..... \$25,000

Activity Description: Administer the CDBG program and all of the activities that are approved.

CDBG Eligibility: Program Administration (24 CFR 570.206)

National Objective: Low and Moderate Income Benefit; Blight Elimination

Explanation..... Administration and Capacity Building (24 CFR 570.208(d)(4)): This section provides that administrative and capacity building activities are considered to address National Objectives.

20. Capacity-Building:

Applicant: City of Paso Robles

Amount Requested:..... \$15,000

Activity Description: City staff time to implement programs identified in the City's Housing Element of the General Plan and in its Redevelopment Implementation Plan to benefit low and moderate income persons and to aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight. This activity will further the City's efforts to provide affordable housing to low and moderate income households.

CDBG Eligibility: Capacity Building Activities (24 CFR 570.205)

National Objective: Low and Moderate Income Benefit; Blight Elimination

Explanation..... Administration and Capacity Building (24 CFR 570.208(d)(4)): This section provides that administrative and capacity building activities are considered to address National Objectives.

The City of Paso Robles has annually conducted a CDBG-funded capacity building program since 1994.