

Percent for Place

A Brief Guide to Community Project Funding & Congressionally Directed Spending

[Community Project Funding](#) / [Congressionally Directed Spending](#) (CPF/CDS), sometimes referred to as “earmarks,” fund projects selected by each congressional office and must be approved in the final federal budget.

CPF/CDS began in FY22, with approximately [\\$9.1 billion](#) for nearly 5,000 projects. Based on analysis by Percent for Place, civic infrastructure projects accounted for nearly \$2 billion of FY22 and FY23 CPF/CDS spending, funding 950 civic infrastructure projects in communities across the country, with an average project award of \$2 million.

Fast Facts

- Not all Members of Congress participate in the earmarks process. Review your Members’ website to determine if they participate and note each office maintains its own application form and process.
- A request must align with an existing federal agency and cost center. Not all programs and agencies are eligible.
- Applicant type varies by agency. In many cases, governments and nonprofits are eligible to apply; however, for-profit entities are not eligible. Eligibility can vary each year.
- Depending on the agency, some funds have spending horizons that range from one year up to five years.
- Projects must comply with federal requirements. Be sure to budget for federal compliance, such as the [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#) or [Section 106: National Historic Preservation Act of 1966](#).
- The passing of the federal budget dictates the timing of funding approval—for instance, the FY23 budget, including CPF/CDS, was approved in December 2022, while the FY24 budget was approved in March 2024.
- Once approved, funds generally take 18 months or more to move through the grant contract phase and become available for grantees.
- Consider reviewing previous years’ guidance from your Members of Congress to determine how your project may best fit with eligible programs. Keep in mind that requirements and eligibility are subject to change.
- The next cycle will likely open in February or March 2025 with a short turnaround. Be ready!

Percent for Place is a coalition of local, state, and national nonprofit organizations that advocates for greater federal funding for civic infrastructure. Our goal is for a small, ongoing percentage of federal spending to be dedicated to civic infrastructure, to provide a reliable stream of funding for high-quality, shared assets in communities across the country.



Strategies for Success

- **Work with congressional offices throughout the year:** Reach out to your Members' offices as soon as possible to have them learn more about your civic infrastructure project. Initiate a conversation with staff members in the district, as they lead this process. Ask staff members to be included in any notifications or email lists about the CPF/CDS process. Check-in with the office in early spring to remind them of your interest.
- **Continually build relationships:** Consider ways to nurture relationships with congressional offices outside the application process, with invitations to relevant community or project milestones, press announcements and site visits. Schedule a tour of your civic infrastructure project with your Member during a congressional recess. Civic infrastructure is tangible and benefits many community members, so use the experience of being on-site to your advantage. For instance, consider photo shoot opportunities and social media celebrating the project featuring your congressional office.
- **Be strategic with your project:** Most funded projects should meet a short-term need, even if related to a longer-term effort. For example, ongoing program-related expenses are not likely to be successful. Select civic infrastructure projects that can meet a specific timeline. Also demonstrate the need and community impact, particularly for underserved communities. Obtain letters of support from organizations, public agencies and individuals that may catch the attention of the office.
- **Ask questions:** Prepare questions that will help you understand the Member's priorities relative to your project request. These may include logistical questions, but can also relate to the office's policy priorities, current projects and programs in which the office may be involved. Consider asking the staff or your Member to meet with the project team or visit the project site.



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Cultural Center and Park

Representative Projects

Energy & Water Development and Related Agencies

- Transforming the Memphis, Tenn. riverfront (\$3M)

For inspirational projects receiving federal funding read:

["A Win for Civic Infrastructure"](#)

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

- Developing the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Cultural Center and Park in Macon, Ga. (\$310K)

Learn about the investments transforming communities in the article:

["Civic Infrastructure Unites Americans"](#)

Transportation, Housing & Urban Development, and Related Agencies

- Creating the Urban Agriculture Garden in San José, Calif. (\$1.7M)
- Extending the Lewiston Canal and Riverwalk Trail in Maine (\$979K)
- Redesigning Starkville, Miss.'s Main Street (\$2M)
- Building connections with the Augustine Trail in Charles Town, W. Va. (\$1.4M)

Explore the work across the country being supported by CPF/CDS:

["Celebrating Federal Funding for Civic Infrastructure"](#)



Tom Lee Park / Memphis, Tenn.