

Finding Funding to Fix Radon Problems

Tuesday, June 25, 2024

Co-hosted by the
National Center for Healthy Housing and the American Lung Association

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: The information below generally addresses many of the questions that were submitted before and during the June 25, 2024, webinar session—[Finding Funding to Fix Radon Problems](#), co-hosted by the National Center for Healthy Housing and the American Lung Association—and points toward specific resources of interest. As many submitted questions would require additional community-, funding-, or program-specific details to develop an accurate response, each question is not addressed individually. Rather, the sections below should provide a solid starting point for those looking for additional information as they explore CDBG and other funding sources to address radon in their community. NCHH can be reached at askanexpert@nchh.org for those looking for flexible coaching and support on setting up a home repair program, exploring CDBG funding to improve indoor environments, or advancing systems-level efforts to improve IAQ.

IF YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR GENERAL RESOURCES...

There were several questions about healthy housing/indoor air quality, specific indoor air pollutants (including radon in general), and potential repairs to improve the indoor environment. Great places to start for more information on these topics include:

- [EPA's IAQ Home Page](#)
- NCHH's [The Principles of a Healthy Home](#) fact sheet
- HUD's [Help Yourself to a Healthy Home](#) booklet
- The [National Healthy Housing Standard](#)
- HUD's [Health@Home](#) guidelines
- Kansas State University's [National Radon Program Services](#) website, which contains a wealth of information about radon, testing, mitigation, workforce credentialing, and more.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO UNDERSTAND CDBG AND HOW TO USE IT FOR HOUSING...

There were multiple questions about CDBG basics and contacts for local CDBG programs. Many of these questions were answered during the session and/or are addressed in the new TA tool from the National Center for Healthy Housing, [Using Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) Funding to Improve Indoor Air Quality](#).

A text box on [page three of the TA tool](#) contains a number of links directing to both general information (e.g., what's an "entitlement community," "state program," or "insular area"?) as well as links to learn more about local allocations or find copies of local plans or reports. In addition, HUD has created [Explore CDBG](#), a collection of online technical assistance products, and has a six-module video titled [How to Use CDBG for Housing Activities](#) that should answer most of these questions.

The search tool on HUD's [Find a Grantee page](#) can also be used to find local CDBG grantee(s).

IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOME REPAIR PROGRAMS...

There were several questions about home repair programs in general, such as: Do these kinds of programs serve tenants or just homeowners? Can they only address residential properties versus commercial or public spaces? What about single- versus multifamily housing? Does owner and/or tenant income level matter? In addition to the [new NCHH TA tool](#) focused on CDBG, check out NCHH's other TA tool, [Establishing and Running a Local Home Repair Program](#), to learn more and read about how specific communities have structured their home repair programs. NCHH created this technical assistance brief

to support local and state governments, agencies, programs, and advocates in understanding how local home repair programs can address healthy housing issues and the options for building such a program to serve community needs.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR MORE ON HOW TO USE CDBG FUNDING TO ADDRESS RADON...

There were quite a few questions submitted before the session on how to use CDBG funding as a mechanism to address radon. Many of these questions were answered during the session and/or are addressed in the new TA tool from the National Center for Healthy Housing, [Using Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) Funding to Improve Indoor Air Quality](#).

There are two pathways for using CDBG funding for IAQ repairs: (1) Include IAQ work in the strategic plan element of the multiyear Consolidated Plan, or (2) add IAQ work in an amendment to an Annual Action Plan. The choice for which route to take will depend on what works best for the community, according to factors like preferred local process, timing, and political environment. Communities frequently use CDBG funds to support home repair programs to provide grants or low- or no-interest and/or deferred loans to low- and moderate-income property owners. Because these programs often address health and safety issues, adding IAQ aligns with the programs' goals, and IAQ-focused repairs should be an eligible expense under these programs even if IAQ is not directly specified in the Consolidated Plan or the Annual Action Plan. The bottom line: CDBG is flexible, used in different ways in different communities, and the process to influence the local CDBG allocation process, while similar, will look different in every community as well.

[NCHH's brief](#) includes several examples of home repair programs using CDBG funding that have added radon testing and remediation to their eligible activities, as well as examples of communities that have paired CDBG with other HUD funding sources or used other funding sources within HUD that have some relationship to CDBG, to address IAQ. Further, the brief includes multiple considerations to keep in mind and a few suggestions on how to start thinking about how to explore this opportunity in your area.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR OTHER SUPPORTS AND ASSISTANCE WITH FUNDING...

There were some questions about guidance navigating grant writing, proposal development, community engagement, and other capacity barriers. EPA's [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Program](#) (EJ TCTACS) are designed to be engaged in just this way. The 16 TCTACS—13 regional centers and three national centers—are currently planned to be in operation through October 2028. You can learn more about the program in general and read project summaries for each geographic area (including links to TCTAC websites) [here](#).

The National Center for Healthy Housing is also available to provide technical assistance to support communities in taking systems-level action to reduce indoor air risks. Visit the [project page here](#) or contact askanexpert@nchh.org to learn more.

We also received questions about other sources of funding for radon mitigation and home repair. The presentation slides include information on and links to several other sources of federal funding in addition to CDBG, including funding at EPA, HUD, and through congressionally directed spending (earmarks). We encourage communities to use those links to consider potential options.

An additional resource that provides an overview of select funding mechanisms is NCHH's [Federal Funding for Rural Healthy Housing: Applicant Guide](#), which may be helpful to those located in rural areas. If you are looking for funding to address IAQ in tribal areas specifically, a good place to start is the [Tribal Indoor Air Funding Directory](#), hosted by the Tribal Healthy Homes Network.