

# Community Development and Neighborhood Conservation Department News

Volume Two



Issue Two



Winter 2007



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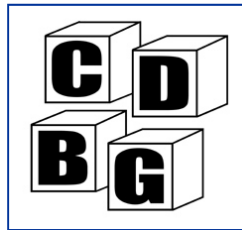


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## Community Development Block Grant Program



The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) has served Pima County since 1978. Grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have returned over \$55 million of taxpayers' funds to the county. CDBG funds have been used to revitalize lower income neighborhoods through housing rehabilitation, public facilities, infrastructure improvements and the

provision of public services. Below are some examples of how CDBG funds have been utilized locally:

**Housing Rehabilitation:** Pima County administers a home repair program for emergency home repair and weatherization. The County also funds various home repair programs including Community Home Repair Projects of Arizona (CHRP), Tucson Urban League, and DIRECT.

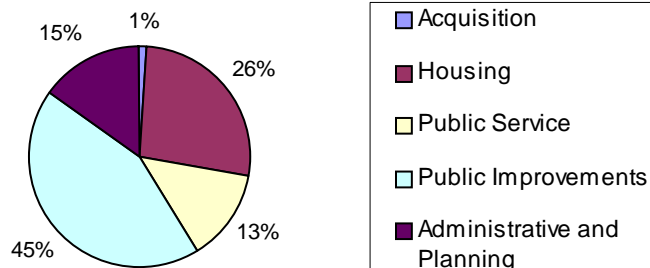
**Public Facilities:** CDBG funds are allocated to constructing and renovating public facilities. Current projects include: improvements to the Old Arivaca Schoolhouse, construction of the Flowing Wells Community Center, and the installation of fire hydrants in Flowing Wells, Catalina, Valencia West, Robles Junction, and Corona de Tucson. New projects include: improvements to the Southern Arizona Center for Sexual Assault building, the Primavera Alamo Apartments for previously homeless persons, the Arivaca Skate Park, and the Catalina Community Services building.



Old Arivaca Schoolhouse

**Public Services:** Each year, 15% of CDBG funds are designated to non-profit agencies for public service activities. Examples of programs funded by CDBG funds include: Pima Prevention Partnership Teen Court; Chicanos Por la Causa's Housing Counseling Program; and Desert Waste Not Warehouse's Computer Recycling Program.

### Expenditures By Type of Activity



# Affordable Housing and Community Planning

## Don't Borrow Trouble



Most financial representatives have their customers' best interests in mind. However, there are some who try to take advantage of consumers by using "abusive" or "predatory" lending practices. Pima County and City of Tucson local elected officials, in partnership with Freddie Mac, a government-sponsored enterprise that helps make housing finance more accessible and affordable, have teamed to bring

the anti-predatory lending campaign, "Don't Borrow Trouble" to local residents. U.S. Congressman Raul Grijalva joined Freddie Mac staff from Washington, D.C. in a Tucson media conference to launch the program. The campaign is in 43 locations across America.

Ward 5 Council Member Steve Leal spoke at the conference: "Predatory lending undermines families. Predatory lending deprives people of equity and their homes through the use of very questionable practices. Instead of helping the most vulnerable and weak, they are targeted as opportunities and profit centers."

A new hotline of (520) 792-3087 is now staffed to provide resources and referrals to people who call on the following subjects:

- Foreclosure Counseling
- Homebuyer Counseling
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Education
- Senior Issues
- Financial Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Identity Theft
- Other Related Resources

For more information on Don't Borrow Trouble Pima County contact Betty Villegas at 243-6744, Or visit the Don't Borrow Trouble national website at [www.dontborrowtrouble.com](http://www.dontborrowtrouble.com)

## Affordable Housing Locator Website

Pima County's Affordable Housing List ([www.pimacountyhousingsearch.org](http://www.pimacountyhousingsearch.org)) has been up and running since December 1, 2006 and continues to gain participation from the community. The service assists tenants in finding appropriate affordable rental housing, and assists landlords in renting their properties. Real-time information is provided regarding available housing, as well as a mapping locator service, a rental calculator, referrals to important community services and other helpful tools. A bilingual call center is also available to assist users with accessing information.

As word continues to spread about this service, use by tenants and landlords is gaining momentum. SocialServe.com, who administers the service, continues to work on registering new listings and offering technical assistance to agencies that want to maximize use of the service for their clients.

### Report for Pima County (12/19/06 - 1/15/07)

	Prior Month	Current Month
# of Searches	4,364	7,428
# of Landlords Listed	95	225
# of Units Available	631	1,009
# of Units Listed	5,309	8,235



Screen shot of the website

# Neighborhood Reinvestment Program

## Ajo Skate Park



Site for the Skate Park

In December 2006, the Pima County Board of Supervisors approved a \$500,000 Neighborhood Reinvestment grant to construct a skate park at the Bud Walker Park in Ajo, Arizona. This project was made a reality due to the hard work of Cliff Hunter, the residents of Ajo, and District Supervisor Sharon Bronson. Once constructed, this will be the first skate park in Pima County.

This proposal was unique in the sense that it was driven by the youth in the community. Over 600 signatures were collected along with 23 letters of support from local business owners, churches, community organizations and school administrators. The skate park will consist of a 16,000 sq ft. concrete

floor with 10 modular skating obstacles ranging from beginners to advanced skill levels. It will also include lighting and fencing around the skate park. The skate park is scheduled for completion by December 29, 2007. The future of the skate park brings enthusiasm for future skating events throughout the state.

## Barrio Viejo Neighborhood Project

Barrio Viejo is one of Tucson's oldest neighborhoods, if not the original neighborhood where Tucson was first based. Tucson was formally founded on September 10, 1771 by Hugo Oconor, a knight of the order of Calatrava, colonel of infantry in His Majesty's armies and commandant inspector of the frontier of New Spain. Much of Tucson's history can be traced right back to this barrio, which contains El Ojito (the little eye) a spring that once bubbled up water for the Spanish soldiers, the Hohokam Indians, settlers and for the lakes of Carrillo Gardens and bathhouses of Elysian Grove.



The project that the neighborhood selected is to construct a community garden next to the Lalo Guerro apartments. The lot contains a shrine erected after two brothers were killed in a tragic car accident. The brothers, Diego and Orlando Mendoza were 1 and 2 ½ when the car they were riding in was hit by a drunk driver in 1981.

## Cardinal Neighborhood Association



Pima County's newest neighborhood association has begun discussions on how best to incorporate Tucson Unified School District's decision to develop part of a 60 acre parcel near the center of the neighborhood. The facility could have capacity for up to 200 buses, some of which would be fueled by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). The school district is also studying the feasibility of building part of the facility that will sell CNG to the general public. The neighborhood is currently developing a proposal to submit to Pima County's Neighborhood Reinvestment Program. The

Preliminary intent of their proposal was to contend with the lack of pedestrian connectivity and safety. The neighborhood is discussing other options since they learned of the district's plans for the acreage on their northern border. "I am concerned that the influx of more traffic (school buses and TUSD staff) on Cardinal is only going to make it more difficult to secure the safety of our children and our elderly." said CNA president Norma Montijo. TUSD has invited neighborhood representatives and County staff to be part of the conceptual design team that will prepare a plan for the area residents to consider. TUSD is hoping to complete and inaugurate the facility by July of 2008.

# Community and Rural Development

## The Curley School Selected for Smithsonian's Between Fences



The Smithsonian's Between Fences exhibition looks at the history of fences in the United States and their impact on the country. The United States could not have been settled and built without fences; they stand for security and provide decorative structures across the American landscape. The exhibition focuses on how fences have defined American homes, farms, and factories, and the role that they have played in the settling of the country.

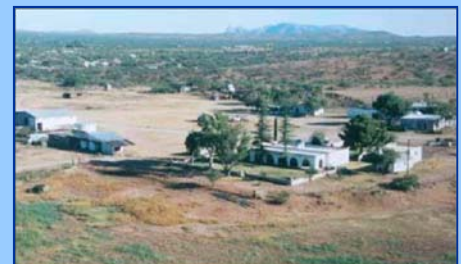
The Arizona Humanities Council (AHC) has selected six rural sites to host the Between Fences exhibit during its Arizona tour, from October 2007 through July 2008. Each of the sites will host the exhibit for six weeks and present complementary programming to tell local stories that reflect of theme of the exhibit. Host sites can produce accompanying exhibits, art shows, and oral history projects. They may also sponsor lecture series, book discussions, and public forums, all of which will be facilitated by the AHC who will provide funding, scholarly consultations, and preparatory workshops, along with materials provided by Museum on Main Street (MoMS).

The Curley School was among the sites selected to host the Between Fences exhibit. The Curley School is a historic public school in the historic heart of Ajo, Arizona – a former copper-mining town. The main building, erected in 1919, is an architectural masterpiece built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The school is on the National Register of Historic Places and continues to be used today. The school is currently undergoing an \$8.9 million renovation into affordable live/work rentals for artists, artisans, and creative home businesses.



## Rural Economic Development

While Pima County is considered an urban county due to the populated metropolitan area of Tucson, it is also a vast county. Pima County covers approximately 9,200 square miles with a Native American Reservation in its midst. Outside of the Tucson metropolitan area, the county has many small, isolated rural communities. While data and statistics are well-maintained for the Tucson area, there is insufficient information regarding the rural communities, including their economic activity and service gaps. Additionally, there are communities on the fringe of the metropolitan area which have traditionally been rural and are experiencing a transition.



In an effort to better understand these rural communities and their needs, CDNC has initiated a study to profile the economic activities and socioeconomic indicators outside of the metropolitan area. A graduate intern, Roberto Valdez, is working with knowledgeable community partners and researching and analyzing various sources of data. A survey may also be developed for community leaders in rural areas to complete. This effort builds on previous work that CDNC has completed, profiling three specific communities.

With a more accurate picture of the rural county, CDNC can identify needs for services and assistance, be it small business support, public facilities, technical assistance for agencies, and more. The efforts of the research will hopefully lead to improving the overall quality of life and sustainability of Pima County's rural communities.

# Minimum Wage and EITC

## Minimum Wage & EITC Programs

Recently, federal policies aimed at ensuring adequate income for working families have failed to keep up with inflation, leaving many working families struggling to make ends meet. Thus, state minimum wages and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) programs are important for fighting poverty. These two policies are particularly effective when enacted simultaneously because they are able to reach significantly more working families. Both benefit working families, but EITC is limited to families with low-to-moderate incomes, primarily those with children (childless adults under 25 and over 64 are ineligible). Conversely, minimum wage is targeted at workers earning the lowest hourly wages, regardless of family status or family income. The use of both policies simultaneously provides a more comprehensive program to alleviate poverty.

However, the use of both minimum wage and EITC may still not be enough to ensure that families can live above the poverty level. Consider a family of four being supported by single minimum wage earner. The annual salary of a worker earning the minimum wage of \$6.75 is roughly \$14,040. The Earned Income Tax Credit for a minimum wage worker with two qualifying children is approximately \$4,530. Therefore, the annual household income of this family would only be about \$18,570; the Department of Health & Human Services' poverty guideline for a household of four is \$20,650. Thus, utilizing the minimum wage and the EITC program, this family would be about \$2,080 under the poverty line.

## New Minimum Wage in Arizona

More than 145,000 Arizonans kicked off 2007 with a raise in their salary as the state's new minimum wage rate took effect. The new law increased the minimum wage from \$5.15 up to \$6.75, marking the first increase in the minimum wage since 1997. The minimum wage rate will increase in each subsequent year by the cost of living (as measured by the consumer price index). The new law benefits all employees that were previously earning between \$5.15 and \$6.75. Furthermore, empirical work has demonstrated that an increase in the minimum wage may benefit employees that earn more than the new minimum wage. A "ripple effect" of the minimum wage tends to benefit workers that are close to the new minimum wage rate.

## EITC Task Force



The Earned Income Tax Credit Initiative Task Force has opened multiple locations offering tax preparation services throughout Southern Arizona. The members of the Earned Income Tax Credit Initiative Task Force include the United Way, Pima County, the City of Tucson, and various other groups that donated money to help fund the sites and raise awareness about the program throughout the community. Tax preparation sites provide free assistance to low-income workers that qualify for Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) from the government. This program ensures that those workers that qualify for EITC receive all of the benefits to which they are entitled. The sites have bilingual volunteers that have many years of tax-preparation experience. Applicants for the program should have a photo identification, all W2 forms, and Social Security cards for each member of the family. Both parties must be present in order to do a joint filing. Participating sites include:

**Pio Decimo Center**  
848 S. 7th Ave.  
OPENS January 20  
Sat. 9am–12 noon  
Mon. & Wed. 3pm–5pm

**El Pueblo Adult Learning Center**  
101 W. Irvington Road  
OPENS January 20  
Wed. 5–8pm; Fri. 9am–12 noon;  
Sat. 9am–12 noon

For additional sites please visit: [www.unitedwaytucson.org](http://www.unitedwaytucson.org)

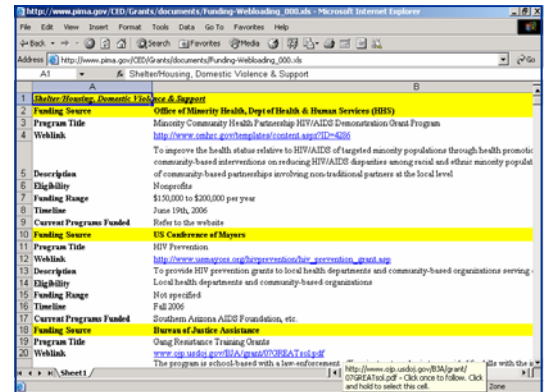


# Other Department News

## List of Funding Sources Posted on the Website

Non-profit organizations are facing an ever-increasing demand for services. However, Pima County's Outside Agencies program does not have the resources to fund all of the worthy non-profit programs in the area. Thus, after significant work and research, the Pima County website now features a compilation of funding sources for human services. The list provides agencies with alternate resources for possible funding. Non-profit agencies can utilize the list to search for possible grants and other funding. The website features a main list of funding opportunities, but it also provides a breakdown of possible funding sources by service category. The list is not a one-time posting; it will be continuously updated as new resources are found. Hopefully this service will be a useful resource for agencies seeking additional funding.

<http://www.pima.gov/CED/Grants/funding.html>



Funding Source	Program Title	Description	Eligibility	Funding Range	Timeline	Current Programs Funded
Office of Minority Health, Dept of Health & Human Services (OHHS)	Minority Community Health Partnership HIV/AIDS Demonstration Grant Program	To improve the health status relative to HIV/AIDS of targeted minority populations through health promotion, community-based interventions on reducing HIV/AIDS disparities among racial and ethnic minority populations of community-based partnerships serving non-traditional partners at the local level.	Hispanic/Latino	\$150,000 to \$200,000 per year	June 19th, 2006	None to date website
US Conference of Mayors	HIV Prevention	To provide HIV prevention grants to local health departments and community-based organizations serving local health departments and community-based organizations	Not specified	Not specified	Fall 2006	Students, Arizona AIDS Foundation, etc
Bureau of Justice Assistance	Drug Resistance Training Grants					

Screen shot of the Funding List

## House Passes H.J. Res 20, the Year-Long Continuing Resolution

On January 31, the House of Representatives passed H.J. Res. 20, a \$463.5 billion, year-long "continuing resolution" (CR). The CR wrapped together the nine FY2007 appropriations bills left unfinished by the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. It generally funds programs, such as CDBG and HOME, at their FY2006 funding level. This measure will likely be taken up by the Senate on the week of February 5.

While it is likely that appropriations CDBG and HOME programs will remain at the 2006 funding level, Pima County will likely receive a reduced amount of funding for CDBG and HOME. The reason for this reduction is that funds will be distributed to new entitlement programs. This marks the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that funds for CDBG have been cut.

### Pima County Board of Supervisors

Richard Elías—Chairman  
District 5

Ann Day  
District 1

Ramón Valadez  
District 2

Sharon Bronson  
District 3

Ray Carroll  
District 4

County Administrator  
C.H. Huckelberry

### Important Telephone Numbers

Community Development and  
Neighborhood Conservation

Margaret Kish, Director—520.243.6777

Affordable Housing and Community Planning  
Betty Villegas, Program Manager—520.243.6744

Community and Rural Development  
Allen Kulwin, Program Manager—520.243.6754

Neighborhood Reinvestment Program  
Leslie Nixon, Program Manager—520.243.6769

Outside Agency Program  
Jane Kroesen, Program Coordinator—520.243.6763

[www.pima.gov/ced/CDNC](http://www.pima.gov/ced/CDNC)