Office of U.S. Senator Christopher A. Coons

Guide to Congressionally Directed Spending

Updated February 2026

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<u>What is Congressionally Directed Spending?</u>

Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) is a process that allows Members of Congress to request federal funds for specific projects in their states. Through CDS, Senator Coons is able to request funding for priority projects in Delaware. The CDS process was reinstated in 2021, and over the last few years, Senator Coons has brought hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to Delaware to support projects up and down the state. These projects have included support for our state's nonprofits, the construction of new affordable housing, the expansion of health care services, and investments in workforce development programs.

The CDS process enables Senator Coons to decide what projects to fund, but there are strict guidelines set forth in Senate rules to govern the process, including requirements on eligibility, transparency, and accountability. Specifically:

- For-profit entities are not eligible for funding. Eligible recipients include only nonprofits, state governments, and local governments.
- Senator Coons cannot support projects in which he or his immediate family have a financial interest. He must publicly certify this in writing for each project he submits to the Appropriations Committee.
- Projects must fall within an eligible account (listed at the end of this document) and meet specific eligibility requirements established by the Appropriations Committee and the relevant federal agencies.
- Projects that Senator Coons submits will be publicly reported on his website, including the project recipient, location, funding amount, and a description of the use of funds.
- Projects that receive funds are subject to oversight from the federal agency that administers the funds, including any additional reporting, permitting, or eligibility requirements beyond what is listed below.
- Projects are also subject to audit by the Government Accountability Office, which is required to report to Congress on the status of the use of CDS funds.

In addition to the above requirements, it is important to note that <u>this funding is not guaranteed</u>. As laid out in further detail below, these funds are contingent on the United States Congress passing annual appropriations bills.

We hope you will take these requirements into consideration when determining if applying for CDS funds is right for you and your organization.

Timeline for Congressionally Directed Spending

As previously indicated, Congressionally Directed Spending is contingent on the passage of annual appropriations bills, and as such, a concrete timeline is difficult to lay out. However, the following outlines a general timeline of the CDS process, which may vary from year to year.

1. **February** – Senator Coons' Congressionally Directed Spending application period opens

2. **March** – Applications are due to our office; Senator Coons and his staff begin to review projects (the specific deadlines vary each year)

3. **April** – Senator Coons makes his final decisions and submits selected projects to the Senate Appropriations Committee

4. **Early Summer** – The Appropriations Committee reviews Senator Coons' requests, confirms project eligibility, and makes decisions on which requests it will fund

5. **Late Summer** – Appropriations bills are released that include Senator Coons' projects; the Appropriations Committee and the full Senate then consider the bills

6. **Fall/Winter** – Congress typically passes a government funding package, which will provide funds for Senator Coons' CDS projects

   Note: The end of the federal government's fiscal year is September 30; Congress historically does not meet that deadline, and the bills have been passed anywhere from December to March of the subsequent year

7. **January/February of the Subsequent Year** – Federal agencies contact the project recipients selected for funding; project recipients will enter into a grant agreement with the federal agency to receive the funds

8. **Spring/Summer of the Subsequent Year** – Project recipients begin to receive the funds that were secured, though some agencies may take longer than others

<u>Frequently Asked Questions</u>

1. What makes a good project?

   When evaluating projects, we consider many factors, including, but not limited to:
   o   A well-thought-out, detailed, and complete application
   o   Demonstrated need for funding and explanation of the federal nexus
   o   The capacity of an organization to carry out a federal grant, including prior experience with federal funds as evidenced by a valid SAM.gov number
   o   Strong community support, including letters from community leaders and elected officials
   o   Additional sources of funding beyond the CDS funds
   o   A clear timeline for your specific project and alignment with the CDS timeline
       ▪   *Note*: Projects that have not yet begun the procurement or construction process are generally easier to fund

2. Can I reach out to Senator Coons' office to discuss a project before the application is due?

   Yes, and in fact, we would encourage you to reach out prior to submitting your application. Working with our team before you submit an application will allow us to provide guidance on the feasibility of your project and ensure your project is eligible.

3. Do you coordinate with the other Delaware delegation offices?

   Yes, we coordinate with the other Delaware delegation offices and share projects with one another. This year, we will have a joint application with Senator Blunt Rochester so the same application will go to both Senate offices.

4. Is my organization eligible if it has previously received CDS funds?

   Yes, as long as your organization has a demonstrated need for additional funds.

5. Can my organization submit more than one CDS application?

   Yes, our application has a field where applicants can indicate their preferred priority order if they submit more than one application.

6. If my organization applied for CDS funds in the past, but wasn't successful, can my organization apply again?

   Yes, and we would encourage you to speak with our staff before you submit a new application to discuss any issues your application may have encountered in the past.

7. Do I need to have previous experience working with a federal agency to receive these funds?

   While previous experience working with a federal agency on a grant is not required, we do recommend that you familiarize yourself with the process, including SAM.gov, Unique Entity Identifiers (UEIs), and other steps in the federal grant process. Please contact our staff if you have questions.

8. How does my organization receive the funds if approved?

   Each federal agency is different when it comes to disbursing CDS funds to recipients. For example, some agencies will reimburse the recipient in phases as the work is completed, others will give the recipient the full award up front once the grant agreement is signed, and some agencies will ask recipients to request the funds as needed.

9. Do we need a lobbyist or consultant to apply for funding?

   No. Any eligible organization is welcome to contact us directly about CDS projects. Most organizations who apply have a grant writer or someone dedicated to fundraising, but some smaller organizations and municipal governments complete the applications themselves.

10. Are there differences between what projects the Senate can fund and what projects the House of Representatives can fund?

   Yes, the Senate and House set their own rules for this process, and as such eligibility requirements and accounts may vary between the two chambers. In addition, the House usually has a set cap on the number of projects each member is allowed to submit for consideration.

11. Can my organization be reimbursed for work performed or expenses incurred prior to being award funds through this process?

   In general, you cannot be reimbursed by CDS funding for work on a project, or a portion of a larger project that you anticipate using CDS funds for, prior to the enactment of this funding. If you are awarded funds, you should consult with the relevant federal agency to determine when it is okay to begin incurring expenses.

12. Is there a way to see what projects Senator Coons has supported in the past?

   Yes, you can read more about previously funded CDS projects [here](#)!

<u>Eligible Accounts</u>

The Senate Appropriations Committee sets the eligible accounts and eligibility requirements for projects each year. Currently, the committee allows for CDS projects in nine subcommittees. Please see the eligible accounts and requirements listed below.

If you are not sure which account is the best fit for your project, do not be concerned. Our staff will work with you to determine the best fit for your project.

Eligibility requirements are subject to change, and our staff will communicate any updates should your project be impacted by such changes.

<u>Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies</u>

- Agriculture Research Service – Building and Facilities
  - Requests may only include funding for existing facilities or facilities where funding has been provided in the past through this account.
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture – Research and Facilities
  - Eligible qualifying institutions as defined in [section 7 U.S.C. 6971(f)(1)(C))](#) may request funds for constructing, purchasing, updating, renovating, or modifying agricultural research buildings to conduct research in the areas of agriculture and food sciences.
  - Funds may be used to fund site design, purchase and installation of permanently affixed equipment for research, as well as for construction or renovation of buildings or sites for agricultural research facilities or other facilities that store agricultural research experimental samples.
  - CDS recipients must provide a 100% non-federal match for any RFAP award. Recipients cannot move forward without a commitment to match funding before obligation.
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Salaries and Expenses
  - Requests must meet environmental review requirements (National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] and Endangered Species Act [ESA]);
  - Projects most compatible with CDS include field crop and rangeland ecosystems pests, pest detection, plant protection methods development, specialty crop pests, tree and wood pests, wildlife damage management, wildlife services methods development, veterinary diagnostics, and equine, cervid, and small ruminant health.

- o Certain programs require matching requirements.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service – Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations
    - o This account follows all existing eligibility requirements from USDA's Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations program as described here.
    - o Projects may not exceed a watershed or sub-watershed size of 250,000 acres and at least 20% of the project's benefits must be directly related to agriculture.
    - o Projects must go through a four-step process, including a preliminary feasibility study (PIFR), watershed plan development, implementation of watershed plan, and commencement of construction.
    - o If a project is a "new start," it is eligible only for PIFR funding at a level of $55,000. Projects should be nearing the construction implementation phase.
- Rural Development – Community Facilities Grants
    - o This account follows all existing eligibility requirements from USDA's Community Facilities program as described here.
    - o This program has a match requirement on a sliding scale based on community population size. Funds can cover up to 75% of the total project costs, and the balance should be from non-federal sources.
    - o Projects must be located in, or serve, a Census-designated area with a population size of less than 20,000 based off the 2020 Census.
    - o Projects are subject to NEPA guidance and Build America Buy America Act requirements.
    - o Funds cannot be used for organizational overhead.
- Rural Development – Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program Grants
    - o The account follows all existing eligibility requirements from USDA's Distance Learning and Telemedicine program as explained here.
    - o This account has a flat 15% match.
    - o Projects must meet eligibility requirements set out in law here.
    - o Maximum grant size is $1,000,000.

- National Institute of Standards and Technology – Scientific and Technical Research Services
  - Projects should address standards-related research and technology development. Construction is not eligible.
- National Institute of Standards and Technology – Construction of Research Facilities
  - Projects will be accepted on a very limited basis for construction projects at non-federal research facilities, including those at research institutions and colleges/universities.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Operations, Research, and Facilities
  - Projects should address fisheries, marine mammals, ocean, coastal issues, climate, weather, atmospheric research, data acquisition, and forecasting programs. Construction is not eligible.
- Department of Justice – Byrne Discretionary
  - The account follows all existing eligibility requirements explained here.
  - Projects should provide additional personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual support, training, technical assistance, and information systems for criminal justice systems.
  - Land acquisition and construction are not eligible.
- Department of Justice – COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Equipment
  - Projects should provide for the development of technologies and automated systems to assist law enforcement agencies in investigating, responding to, and preventing crime. Recipients shall include state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and their public agencies (for example, police and/or sheriff's departments).
  - Projects should be one-time purchase of equipment & technology. CDS funds cannot be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of items purchased.
- NASA – Safety, Security, and Mission Support
  - Projects should focus on science education, research, and technology development related to NASA's mission.
  - Medical research projects and projects at NASA-owned visitor centers or a state's designated Space Grant Consortium are not eligible.

- **Department of Energy – Energy Projects**
  - Eligible topic areas include renewable and clean energy, electricity and energy resiliency, cybersecurity and energy security, nuclear energy, and fossil energy or carbon management.
  - This is a very limited account. Projects will be in line with current Department of Energy missions that focus on transformative science and technology research, development, and demonstration under the topic areas listed above.
  - Projects must follow statutory costs sharing requirements.
  - Construction projects, planning studies, and vehicle charging projects are not eligible.
- **Army Corps of Engineer Projects – Investigations, Construction, Operations of Maintenance**
  - Projects must be previously authorized by Congress, and few, if any, new starts will be funded.
  - The Army Corps of Engineers must be consulted with in advance to determine project feasibility.
  - Projects must be executed in the year of appropriation.
- **Bureau of Reclamation – Water and Related Resources**
  - Additional info about the program guidelines can be found here.
  - Projects must be authorized and few, if any, new starts will be funded.
  - Projects must be executed in the year of appropriation.

- **Small Business Administration – Administrative Provision**
  - Projects in support of small businesses, including but not limited to entrepreneur training, counseling, research, and construction or acquisition of facilities.
  - Applicants are encouraged to use these funds for advisory and operating support to help businesses grow and expand. Construction may be eligible in limited situations.
  - Small Business Administration CDS funding cannot be used to provide seed capital for small businesses, nor can it be used by the CDS recipient to make grants/loans.
- **National Archives and Records Administration – National Historical Publications and Records Commission**
  - Projects that help ensure online public discovery and use of historical records collections, encourage public engagement with historical records, strengthen the nation's archival network, or publish documentary editions of historical records. This includes initiatives like record digitization, programming, and online availability of records.
  - Additional information about what is eligible for NARA funding can be found here.
- **National Archives and Records Administration – Repairs and Restoration**
  - Projects that direct spending for presidential libraries or new archival facilities.
- **General Services Administration – Federal Buildings Fund, Construction and Acquisition**
  - Construction projects typically include federal courthouses, federal buildings, or land ports-of-entry.
- **General Services Administration – Federal Buildings Fund, Repairs and Alterations**
  - Repairs projects must be federally owned properties in need of repair or alteration and are typically federal buildings or federal courthouses.
- **Office of National Drug Control Policy – Administrative Provision (Prevention Grants)**
  - Preferred prevention programs would include community-based coalitions which, as part of their application, propose data-driven, evidence-based prevention interventions; have established measurable objectives; and proposed implementing a comprehensive mix of strategies. Also, Drug-Free Communities (DFC)-funded coalitions recently

trained by CDC to implement Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as part of their substance use prevention efforts are recommended.

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Projects
    - Requested projects must meet the eligibility requirements of the PDM grant program, including the non-federal cost-share requirement, benefit-cost ratio, and environmental and historic preservation requirements.
    - Additional FEMA information about the PDM program can be found here.
    - Clearance from the Delaware Emergency Management Agency is also required.
- FEMA – Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Grant Program
    - Requested projects must meet the eligibility requirements of the EOC grant program, including the non-federal cost-share requirement and environmental and historic preservation requirements.
    - Additional information about FEMA's EOC program can be found here.

- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Clean Water Projects**
  - Projects should be included on the state's most recently finalized Clean Water Revolving Fund Intended Use Plan.
  - There is normally a minimum 20% cost share requirement for any state or local water infrastructure grant funded through congressionally directed spending. Other federal funds cannot be used for this cost-share.
- **EPA – Drinking Water Projects**
  - Projects should be included on the state's most recently finalized Clean Water Revolving Fund Intended Use Plan.
  - There is normally a minimum 20% cost share requirement for any state or local water infrastructure grant funded through congressionally directed spending. Other federal funds cannot be used for this cost-share.
- **National Park Service (NPS) – Historic Preservation Fund**
  - Maximum project amount is $500,000.
  - Projects must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or be considered a National Historic Landmark.
  - Applicants should have at least a 1:1 non-federal match.
  - Normally, these funds cannot go toward a project already owned by the NPS.
  - Additional information about the eligible NPS programs can be found [here.](#)
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Forest Resource Information and Analysis**
  - Activities within this account include forest management, cooperative fire protection, wood innovation, and urban and community forestry.
  - Projects should be part of the state's [Forest Action Plan](#) or contribute to meeting the goals of the Forest Action Plan.

- **Department of Labor – Employment and Training Administration (ETA) – Training and Employment Services**
    - Projects should clearly articulate a project purpose and be focused on meeting the employment and training needs of workers. Generally, these projects should include direct services, which could include career services, training services (including work-based training), supportive services, and other permissible services, as they are defined in [WIOA](#).
    - CDS funding may be used for the purchase of equipment, but generally only if it is an incidental part of the larger project to provide direct services.
    - CDS funding within ETA cannot be used for construction or renovation of facilities or the purchase of land or buildings.
- **Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) – Program Management**
    - **Health Facilities Construction and Equipment** – CDS requests for the cost of limited-scope construction, renovation, or capital equipment purchase for facilities for health, mental health, or substance abuse services, training of health professionals, or medical research.
        - HRSA Health Facilities funding cannot be used to acquire land or purchase existing buildings, or to pay salaries or other operating costs.
    - **Rural Health** – CDS requests for projects to improve health care in rural areas. Examples of eligible activities include medical, dental, or mental health care services; health promotion and education; chronic disease management; telehealth services; and improvements to emergency medical services. CDS funds can be used for services only in areas that meet HRSA's definition of "rural."
- **HHS – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Health Surveillance and Program Support**
    - **Mental Health** – funding to support programs that promote the prevention or treatment of mental health disorders, including rehabilitation, outreach, and other support services.
    - **Substance Abuse Treatment** – funding to support programs that improve access, reduce barriers, and promote high-quality, effective treatment and recovery services.

- o **Substance Abuse Prevention** – funding to support programs to prevent the onset of illegal drug use, prescription drug misuse and abuse, alcohol misuse and abuse, and underage alcohol and tobacco use.
  - o Funds cannot be used for construction, nor can they be sub-granted to other organizations.
- **HHS – Administration for Children and Families – Children and Families Services**
  - o **Child Abuse Prevention** – projects to improve the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect through research, model service improvement, information dissemination, and technical assistance. Projects must serve or target abused and/or neglected children and their families.
  - o **Social Services Research and Demonstration** – projects to promote the ability of families to thrive through financial self-sufficiency in order to reduce poverty and to promote the healthy development and greater well-being of children and families. Projects can serve a diverse population including: low-income individuals, children, youth, families, individuals with developmental disabilities, and Native Americans.
  - o Funds cannot be used for construction or renovation of facilities.
- **HHS – Administration for Community Living – Aging and Disability Services**
  - o Projects should be used to improve the ability of older adults and individuals of all ages with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in their communities. Generally, CDS requests should focus on improving access to, or the quality of, education, training, support services, and independent living services for older adults and individuals with disabilities.
- **Department of Education (ED) – Innovation and Improvement – Fund for the Improvement of Education**
  - o Funding can be used for a variety of projects, including instructional services, after-school centers, curricula development, teacher training, acquisition of books and computers, arts education, social and emotional learning activities, full-service community schools, and early childhood education.
  - o Funds cannot be used for construction or renovation of school buildings.
  - o Daycare and childcare projects that do not include educational services are also not eligible under this account.
- **ED – Higher Education – Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education**
  - o Projects should primarily be focused on improving access to, or the quality of, postsecondary education.

- Examples include projects to hire and train faculty; establish and improve degree programs; improve teacher preparation programs; develop and improve curricula; upgrade technology, equipment, and telecommunications; provide student support; and implement university partnerships with school districts.
- Funds cannot be used for endowments or for the construction or renovation of facilities.

<u>Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies</u>

Funds can only be used for military construction projects. Please contact our staff if you believe you might have an eligible project.

- **Transportation Planning, Research, and Development (TPR&D) for transportation research projects**
  - Projects within this account should be for national or regional research and development projects.
- **Grants-in-Aid for Airports (Airport Improvement Program or AIP) for airports**
  - For large and medium primary hub airports, CDS can cover 75% of eligible costs (or 80 % for noise program implementation). For small primary, reliever, and general aviation airports, CDS can cover a range of 90-95% of eligible costs, based on statutory requirements.
  - Additional information about the program can be found here.
- **Facilities and Equipment (F&E) for terminal air traffic control facility replacement projects**
- **Highway Infrastructure Programs (HIP) for highway projects**
  - Senate rules say the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) is the only organization that can receive highway CDS funds from this account. Local governments are encouraged to collaborate with DelDOT in advance to identify projects that improve safety, access, and resilient infrastructure, and to ensure a non-federal match is available.
- **Transit Infrastructure Grants (TIG) for transit projects**
  - This is mostly limited to state and local governments but should be submitted with the support of DelDOT.
  - Additional information about eligible transit projects under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code can be found here.
- **Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grants for rail**
  - This account is limited to a small number of applicants in Delaware.
  - Additional guidelines about eligibility can be found here.
- **Community Development Fund for Economic Development Initiatives (EDI)**
  - Projects should address affordable housing, community services, and economic development. Examples of eligible EDI projects include, but are not limited to: acquisition of real property (land, water rights, buildings); construction of new affordable housing; blight removal or remediation; and construction, rehabilitation, and improvements of public facilities (except buildings for general conduct of government), such as neighborhood centers, parks, and shelter for persons having special needs such as survivors of domestic violence and the homeless.

- Reimbursement of expenses incurred prior to the enactment of a final appropriations bill is not permitted.
- Projects are subject to other federal requirements including the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development's NEPA-implementing regulations, and all appropriate federal environmental and historic preservation laws, regulations, and executive orders.
- For more information on types of eligible activities, applicants should review HUD's resources on the CDBG program,
- Projects must address a CDBG National Objective. The most common objective that EDI projects will meet is the benefit to low and moderate-income (LMI) persons. If using the LMI National Objective, please review this HUD resource.

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