

**City of Petersburg Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2026, 6:00pm
Petersburg Public Library**

- Meeting called to order at 6:02pm by Chair Shabaka Moore.
- Roll Call: Advisory Board Members (AB) in attendance: Sonja Holt-Cartwright, Leonard Curry, Wanda Taliaferro, Tonya Brown, Bernard Harper, Marcus Squires, Genevieve Lohr, and CDBG Admin Jennifer Murphy-James
- A quorum was determined and a moment of silence observed.
- The January meeting minutes were accepted and seconded, with no amendments or corrections.

New Business

- Shabaka Moore opened the Public Hearing of Needs portion of the meeting with a brief overview of its purpose. Genevieve Lohr provided a brief overview of the Community Development Block Grant program, as well as a Summary of the 2025-2029 Petersburg CDBG Consolidated Plan. Sonja Holt-Cartwright then explained the Gathering Circle format.
- Attendees participated in facilitated discussion circles, spending approximately 10 minutes in each. The circles were organized around the three CDBG priority areas and an additional miscellaneous/other category:
 - Elimination of Slums & Blight
 - Benefit to Low-to-Moderate Income Persons
 - Urgent Needs posing serious threats to health or community welfare

Advisory Board (AB) members served as circle leaders, documenting key themes and community-identified needs expressed by participants.

- Bernard Harper & Marcus Squires reported out on the collective data captured during the discussions. Overarching themes included revitalizing abandoned homes and businesses, among other community development priorities.
- Feedback: overall attendees enjoyed the new format. Suggestions received included: having the facilitators change circles, instead of the attendees, and using a larger room, to increase the ability of hearing with greater ease within the group.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:29pm

Next Meeting March 18, 2026

CDBG Statement of Needs Community Meeting

February 18, 2026

Benefit Low to Moderate Income

- Key Themes
 - Affordable Housing
 - Single Family Housing
 - Land Trust Use
 - Childcare Programs
 - Food and Security
 - Transportation
 - Educational Initiatives
 - Shelter (unhoused individuals)
 - Financial Literacy
 - Context Appropriate Dissemination
- Narrative: The attendees of this meeting shared a variety of themes that would benefit low to moderate-income individuals in Petersburg. Key themes centered on basic needs like housing and food access, emphasizing the need to focus on single-family housing and unhoused shelter, and exploring the use of land trust(s). Childcare, transportation, and education, including financial literacy, were also specifically identified. Finally, there was a statement about the need for appropriately disseminating information.

Slums and Blight

- Key Themes
 - Youth
 - Recreation
 - Parks
 - Focus on non-athletic kids
 - Recreation Center Funding
 - Literacy
 - Schools
 - Blight
 - Boarded Homes
 - Tear down: Should be exempt from current building codes
 - Historic Home Neglect
 - Need for more trash cans
 - Maintenance of Businesses
 - Housing
 - Affordable Housing (Starter Homes)
 - Crowding Out
 - Money to Improve Homes

**CDBG Statement of Needs Community Meeting
February 18, 2026**

- Direct funds to keep owners in their homes
 - Higher Property Taxes
 - Educate on appeal for property tax increase
- Public Safety and Education
 - Lighting
 - Graffiti
 - Educate Council
 - Police Visibility
- Infrastructure and City Services
 - Street Improvement
 - Control Corridors
 - Flood Areas
 - Code Enforcement
 - Gateway Improvement
 - Reinvest
- Narrative: Slums and blight focused on traditional topics like improving infrastructure (streets, flooding, gateways), supporting city services like Code Enforcement, increasing trash can access, addressing boarded homes, historic home neglect, and maintenance of businesses. Another topic was the impact on lots where old homes are torn down, and new dwellings are subject to current zoning/building codes—especially setback requirements, which make some lots unusable. The recommendation was to exempt those properties from the new codes to allow for the revitalization of the existing lot. Housing was another topic, with discussions about affordable housing, funding improvements, keeping residents in their homes, the concern that residents are being crowded out, and higher property taxes. A recommendation was to support education about appealing new property tax increases. Education was also mentioned as a need, specifically for council. Public safety and a focus on youth activities like parks, activities for youth who are not engaged in sports, literacy, and schools were also mentioned.

Miscellaneous

- Criminal Justice
 - Jobs Re-Entry from Jail
 - Anti-gang violence and prevention
 - Needs of victims post trauma
- History and Arts
 - Arts Outreach (18 years and under)
 - Arts and Culture Hub
 - Petersburg Black History Museum
- Early Childhood and Youth

**CDBG Statement of Needs Community Meeting
February 18, 2026**

- Home Visitation (up to 5 years old)
- After School Youth Programs
- Rising Senior Introductions to STEM
- Camps to Enhance Skills
- Community Support
 - Homeless and Hotel Nonprofit Services
 - Social Enterprise
 - IT Training and Exposure
 - Community Spaces
- Narrative: The miscellaneous category provided good feedback in the areas of criminal justice, history and arts, early childhood and youth, social services, community, and education. Needs identified were re-entry jobs, anti-gang and violence prevention, and the importance of supporting victims after a trauma; arts and culture, to include outreach for youth and the Petersburg Black History Museum; support for children and families, to include home visitation, after-school programs, STEM engagement, and camps targeted at enhancing skills; and community support with homeless and hotel nonprofit services, social enterprise, IT training and exposure, and community spaces.

Other Needs Not Addressed

- Transportation
 - Regional Transportation
 - Other locality support
 - CDBG funding for a study to address transportation needs
- Community Support
 - Support for residents with assessment costs related to water and septic line repairs
 - Utility Assistance
 - Inaccessible DSS Office
- Hotel Support
 - Nutrition
 - Unemployment
 - SNAP benefit limitations
 - Medication Assistance
 - 21 Day Stays Compounding Stability Concerns
- Unhoused Populations
 - Mailboxes
 - Education Post Housing
 - Support Services
 - Addressing Basic Needs
- City Support

**CDBG Statement of Needs Community Meeting
February 18, 2026**

- Homeless Shelter
- Employee with a focus on marginalized communities
- No delivery on grocery store
- Food Insecurity
 - Food Desert
 - Transportation for Groceries
- Narrative: This group discussed the imminent needs of the city that are not addressed by the other areas, but remain a threat to the well-being of the community. The main areas are bolstering services, supporting unhoused populations (including those in hotels), addressing food insecurity, supporting the community, and improving transportation. More specifically, regional transportation includes support for riders who need to get to work and buy groceries outside the current bus operating schedule. Community support to assist residents with assessments prior to repair by the city or utility company, utility assistance, and concerns for the accessibility of the DSS office. Hotels were a common topic due to many families residing in them as their homes and concerns about health, unemployment, mental health, and basic needs. Unhoused populations were another concern for many participants; mailboxes to receive driver's licenses, education after securing housing, support services, and addressing basic needs. Food insecurity was also a concern, given that Petersburg is a food desert and the limitations faced by residents who rely on bus transportation. Additionally, city support to better serve marginalized populations was identified as a community need.

**Summarized by Genevieve Lohr, MSW, MS
CDBG Advisory Board, Ward 5**