



National Community Development Week Activities

April 17-22, 2017

Suggested Activities

Focus on at least one of the following activities for National Community Development Week. The first four activities take minimal effort to undertake (small CDBG grantees may want to focus on one of these activities). With all of the activities, reiterate the need for increased funding for CDBG and HOME.

- Write a letter to your lawmakers describing recent community development projects and the role CDBG and HOME programs played in making them happen.
- Write an op-ed to your local newspaper reiterating the importance of CDBG and HOME to your community.
- Issue a press release and proclamation announcing National CD Week and outline how CDBG and HOME funds have been used in your community. Send the press release and proclamation to your lawmakers and local media.
- Ask your local newspaper to do a story on one of your CDBG and HOME funded projects.
- Meet with Congressional Members/staff at their district offices to discuss the importance of CDBG and HOME to your community.
- Conduct a tour of local CDBG and HOME funded projects for your lawmakers, local elected officials, and the media.
- Work with your communications department/staff to develop a YouTube video of some of your CDBG and HOME funded projects. Include sub-recipients and beneficiaries in the video. Send it to your Congressional Members.
- Hold a ground breaking ceremony or ribbon-cutting of a CDBG or HOME funded project. Invite your lawmakers, local elected officials, and the media.
- Have CDBG and HOME program beneficiaries sign on to a CDBG/HOME support letter to your lawmakers.

To locate the address for your House Member go to www.house.gov/representatives/find/

To locate the address for your Senators go to www.senate.gov.

Writing to Your Lawmakers

Due to tightened security, a letter can take up to 3 weeks to reach your Congressional Members, so FAX AND EMAIL a copy of the letter to your Member. Their fax number and e-mail address can be found on their website.

Addressing Correspondence:

To a Senator...

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Last Name):

To a Representative...

The Honorable (Full Name)
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative (Last Name):

Meet with Your Congressional Member/Staff in Their District Office

Meeting with a member of Congress, or Congressional staff, is a very effective way to convey a message about a specific issue or legislative matter. With the continued focus on reducing the federal budget, it's important to meet with your Congressional Members to inform them of the importance of CDBG in your community. With budget constraints, it is impractical for most grantees to travel to Washington, DC to meet with lawmakers. Scheduling a meeting in their district office is just as effective. If possible, bring a sub-recipient or beneficiary to the meeting with you. Congressional Members like to hear directly from the organizations or people the programs serve. Contact their secretary/scheduler to make an appointment. A typical meeting should go as follows:

- I. **Introductions**
- II. **Acknowledge** your Member of Congress (and their staff) and thank them for meeting with you.
- III. **Present** your issues (e.g., importance of CDBG to your community; need for increased CDBG funding in your community). Bring CDBG-funded project examples. Discuss the impact of the projects on the community. If you have brought a sub-recipient or beneficiary to the meeting, let them tell the Congressional Member how the program has helped them. Be prepared to answer questions.

Follow-Up: Follow-up the meeting with a thank-you letter. Send along any additional pertinent information and materials.

The Roles of Congressional Staff

Each Member of Congress has staff to assist them during their term in office. To be most effective in communicating with your Member of Congress, it is helpful to know the titles and principal functions of key staff.

Administrative Assistant (AA) or Chief of Staff (CoS): The AA reports directly to the Member of Congress. This person usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcomes of various legislative proposals and

constituent requests. The AA is usually the person in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.

Legislative Director (LD), Legislative Assistant/Aide (LA) or Legislative Counsel (LC): The LD is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding pros and cons of particular issues. In some Congressional offices, there are several Legislative Assistants/Aides and responsibilities are assigned to staff with particular expertise in specific areas.

Appointment Secretary or Scheduler: The Appointment Secretary or Scheduler is responsible for controlling the Member's calendar. This includes arranging meetings for constituents, arranging speaking dates, and arranging visits to the district.

