

**2008 NATIONAL COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT WEEK  
March 24 – 30, 2008**

**CDBG WEEK  
PLANNING GUIDE**

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- Plan Your Activities For CDBG Week Now
- Raise Awareness For CDBG
- Involve Your Community And Elected Officials
- Meet With Your Congressional Delegations
- Increase And Sustain Grassroots Support For CDBG



# **2008 National Community Development Week Action Plan**

National Community Development (CD) Week will be celebrated March 24-30, 2008. This week provides the opportunity for CDBG grantees to meet with and educate Congressional members on the value of CDBG for your communities. Use this week to showcase CDBG-funded projects and programs that will create opportunities for positive press events. Involve the media, your Congressional representatives, Mayors and other local officials, business leaders, Chambers of Commerce, local residents, and community groups in your week-long celebration. [Begin to plan for CD Week now.](#)

## **Why We Need to Continue to Raise Awareness for CDBG**

CDBG program funding has been reduced. In FY 2001 the program received \$4.406 billion in formula funding. By FY 2006, the level had been reduced to \$3.71 billion and remains at that level today. The President continues to propose sharp cuts for CDBG each year in his budget. And Congress is faced with funding challenges that include the increasing federal budget deficit, continued funding for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and spiraling costs for Social Security and Medicare. It is vital that all CDBG grantees celebrate and raise awareness of the good work that this program provides for our communities.

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Your action during the 2008 National Community Development Week, and continuing throughout the year, is essential to the future of CDBG. The program has bi-partisan support in Congress; however, without a strong and sustained grassroots response to cuts in the program, and without communicating your message directly to your members in Congress, the future of CDBG is in jeopardy.

The National Community Development Association strongly urges all grantees to respond to calls for action from Washington as we continue our campaign to increase CDBG.

## **The U.S. Conference of Mayors' 10-Point Plan**

On January 24, 2007, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) announced the **Mayors' 10-Point Plan**. A major imperative in the plan is the doubling of funding for CDBG to \$8 billion. NCDA worked closely with USCM to develop this policy position that states: *"The nation's mayors recommend that CDBG formula funding be doubled to \$8 billion. This additional funding would address the delayed projects and activities which have come about because of cuts to CDBG, and further build on the proven record of an effective affordable housing and revitalization program."*

USCM and NCDA are committed to reaching this goal. However, the goal will never be attained without aggressive grassroots support from Mayors, grantees, their sub recipients,

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their beneficiaries, and data to back up the need for this increased level of funding. ***All CDBG grantees must commit to this goal and must continue to work with USCM and NCDA to achieve this goal.*** National CDBG Week will help us demonstrate community development needs nationwide.

## **National Community Development Week Action Items**

Public support from your Congressional delegation, community groups, the media, business and community leaders, and the beneficiaries of the program is essential.

*When was the last time you briefed your local elected officials, community groups, banks and businesses on CDBG activities in your community?*

*When was the last time an article on CDBG appeared in your local newspaper? Take advantage of free media in your community.*

*When was the last time you spoke to a member of your Congressional delegation about CDBG?*

It is essential that you meet these objectives. If your Congressional members are unaware of your CDBG activities or the cuts in funding to the program over the past few years, then you are not being diligent in increasing awareness for the program.

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# **National Community Development Week Activities**

## **Begin Planning Your Activities Now!**

### ***Announce Your Events.***

National Community Development Week should begin with press releases and informational materials distributed as soon as possible. Announce planned events to your local media, your Mayor and local officials, community groups, the business community, and your Congressional delegation.

### ***Select Positive Venues.***

Select locations that showcase CDBG-funded programs.

### ***Meet With Your Congressional Members.***

Set up meetings with members in their district offices and invite members to tour CDBG-funded projects, creating events that attract media attention.

### ***Involve Your Local Community.***

Invite local elected officials, neighborhood groups, area banks, and local businesses. Invite the Mayor to participate in activities. Ask local businesses and banks to sponsor activities.

### ***Involve The Media.***

Provide a press release on your CD Week activities. Invite the press to your events, talk with them and provide them with information that can be helpful and positive when they write an article on the event. Write OP/ED pieces for your local newspapers. Again, take advantage of your free media.

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***Have Your Program Beneficiaries Fill Out CD Week Postcards Describing How CDBG Has Helped Them.*** Either mail the postcards to your Congressional members or, preferably, present the postcards to them at your CD Week event or at your meeting with your Congressional member to discuss CDBG.

***Begin A Community-wide Petition Drive In Support Of Increased Funding For CDBG Program Formula Funding.*** A number of communities have done this in the past, collecting thousands of signatures. This has been very effective. Present the signed petition to your Congressional members at your meeting.

***Keep Your CD Week Message Simple.***

“We support local flexibility and increased formula funding for the program so that grantees may continue to respond to current and emerging community development needs.”

Emphasize how the program has helped your community (e.g., what projects and programs have been developed through the program to assist the community and its residents). Develop a fact sheet on CDBG-funded activities in your community and distribute it to the press, your Congressional members, elected officials, and at CD Week activities.

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# Meet With Your Congressional Member

This year we are asking all CDBG grantees to meet with their Congressional members at their district offices during CD Week. Meeting with a member of Congress is a very effective way to convey a message about a specific issue or legislative matter. With the recent cuts to CDBG, it is imperative that you meet with your Congressional members during CD Week to gain support for increased formula funding for the program.

## ***Make An Appointment.***

Start planning your visit at least two months in advance. Congressional members are extremely busy and their calendars fill up quickly. When scheduling a meeting with your Congressional member, contact the appointment secretary/scheduler at the local district office. Explain your purpose and who you represent. You can obtain your member's information at <http://www.house.gov> and <http://www.senate.gov>. When you speak to the scheduler, request a face-to-face meeting with your member of Congress at the member's local district office during CD Week.

## ***Make The Issues Real.***

Convey to your member how the programs help constituents in their district. Provide specific examples. 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 directly benefit.

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### ***Provide Examples.***

Tell the story of an actual family that will not be assisted, or the plight of the elderly or other special population that will not receive assistance. If you have a sub recipient or beneficiary at the meeting, let them tell their story.

### ***Provide Good Data.***

Show how the cuts to CDBG have affected your program. Provide information and bring it to the meeting, including:

**The actual cut to your allocation over the past few years.**

**The number of people that have not or will not be assisted, together with a breakdown by sub population.** Examples to include are: number of elderly that will not be assisted; number of youth that will not be assisted; and number of people that will not receive assistance to buy a home.

### ***The Economic Loss To The Community.***

Examples to include are: number of jobs lost; number of businesses that have lost revenue and may lose revenue in the future (e.g., contractors associated with your program, local lending institutions, non-profit organizations, etc.; the loss/potential loss to the economy in the purchase of supplies and materials.

### ***Show How The Programs Are Working In Your Community.***

Dispel the belief that these programs are not effective or need to be “reformed”. This is political/bureaucratic-speak for dismantling

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CDBG. Bring a brief outline of your CDBG program detailing how the programs have assisted your community over at least the past five years. Feel free to provide data that goes beyond five years. Some areas to highlight include: number of people assisted; number of businesses assisted; number of neighborhoods assisted; number of jobs created or retained; number of homes that have been rehabilitated; number of new homeowners; number of blighted buildings that have been demolished; and number of infrastructure improvements, etc. Leave copies of this information with your Congressional member following your meeting.

***Be Responsive And Follow-Up.***

Be prepared to answer questions and provide additional information at the meeting with your Congressional member. Follow up the meeting with a thank you letter. Send along any additional information and materials requested.

Take pictures with your Congressional member at your CD Week event or meeting and send them to the member with your thank you letter. Members post pictures of constituent events on their websites.

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