

2011 NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK PLANNING GUIDEBOOK

National Community Development Week: April 25-30, 2011

The U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties, National Community Development Association, National Association for County Community and Economic Development, National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies, and the Council of State Community Development Agencies have formed a partnership to promote the 2011 National Community Development Week campaign.

The 2011 National Community Development (CD) Week will be celebrated from **April 25-30, 2011**. It provides the opportunity for grantees to meet with their congressional members, showcase projects and programs, and involve the local community, including local businesses, citizens, and community groups in the week-long celebration.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the National Community Development Week campaign. This annual campaign is designed to focus local as well as national attention on the numerous outstanding accomplishments over the past 37 years of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and over the past 20 years of the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program.

National Community Development Week provides an ideal opportunity to educate citizens at the local level as well as members of Congress regarding CDBG and HOME and their importance in the lives of low- and moderate-income citizens. Please join us in the 2011 national celebration.

WHY NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK?

Given the federal deficit and budget climate, all federal programs are at risk of receiving less money in the coming year. CDBG program funding has been reduced substantially over the years. In FY 2001, the program received \$4.406 billion in formula funding. By FY 2007, the level had been reduced to \$3.58 billion. Although, Congress provided a \$347 million increase to the program in FY10; the program is still funded (at \$3.99 billion for FY11) well below the FY 2001 level. It is imperative that all CDBG grantees celebrate and recognize the good work of the program during the 2011 CD Week campaign to maintain funding for the program in FY 2012. Moreover, the Administration proposed a cut of \$178 million to the HOME program in FY 2011, proposing a funding level of \$1.647 billion. We need to ensure that Congress continues its support for HOME funding for FY 2012.

National CD Week provides the opportunity for grantees, their subrecipients, contractors, and State and local partners to come together to harness grassroots support for both CDBG and HOME by showcasing projects, educating the community on program benefits, and, most importantly, ensuring your congressional members attend CD Week activities and are made

aware of the benefits of the programs to the local economy and to the families served by the programs.

CD Week is also the time to educate your congressional members on the continued community development need in your jurisdiction, thereby making the case for increased funding for the programs. It is vital that local communities develop their own fact sheets on the accomplishments of both CDBG and HOME. *Please use the fact sheet at the end of this guidebook as a model for developing your own.*

CD WEEK ACTION ITEMS

- 1. *Organize the Working Group.*** The CDBG and HOME grantee should organize a working group to plan and implement National CD Week. A lead staff person should be appointed to shepherd the process and assignments given to working group members to accomplish the CD Week activities. Involve other departments and groups who receive CDBG and HOME funds.
- 2. *Assess Your Community.*** Every grantee should assess community perception of the CDBG and HOME programs. It is probably best to assume that the community (citizens, congressional delegation) must be brought up to speed and benefits of both programs to the community.
- 3. *Identify Your CDBG and HOME Constituency.*** It is important that CDBG and HOME be recognized as a critical form of support for many of the high priority activities in the community. Include partners that invest in your CDBG and HOME projects in your CD Week activities, such as businesses, banks, and contractors.
- 4. *Plan Your CD Week Activities; Start Now.*** Public support from your congressional delegation, community groups, the media, business and community leaders, and the beneficiaries of the program is vital.
 - When was the last time you briefed your local community groups, banks and businesses about the CDBG and HOME activities in your community?
 - When was the last time an article appeared in your local media on CDBG or HOME?
 - When was the last time you spoke to a member of your congressional delegation – or sent a letter to them about the importance of CDBG and HOME?
 - When was the last time you involved program subrecipients and beneficiaries in your CD Week activities?

Start to plan your 2011 CD Week activities now. Take the following actions.

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, community groups, and your congressional delegation. Consider producing a video or a PowerPoint, which is inexpensive and can show before and after photos.

Involve the local community: local elected officials, neighborhood groups, area banks, local businesses. Ask local businesses and banks to sponsor activities.

Invite your congressional members. Plan to meet with your congressional members in their district offices during CD Week. Invite them to tour a CDBG- or HOME-funded project, participate in a ribbon-cutting of a HOME- or CDBG- funded project, or a meet a household assisted by the programs.

Involve the media. Provide a press release on your CD week activities. Invite the press to your events. Ask them to write an article on CDBG or HOME during CD Week.

Select positive venues. Select locations that showcase CDBG- and HOME-funded projects and programs.

Most importantly, *start planning your activities now!*

5. **Your CD Week Message.** The message should be simple:

“CDBG and HOME are valued programs in our community, contributing to the local economy, serving households in need, maintaining and stabilizing neighborhoods, and providing the flexibility to develop partnerships and projects that are vital to the well-being of our area. Therefore, we strongly support the continued flexibility provided by both programs and strongly support increased funding for CDBG and HOME so that grantees can continue to respond to current and emerging community development needs, including the creation of jobs, development of affordable housing, improvement of existing housing stock, the delivery of vital services, and important infrastructure improvements.”

- Emphasize how the programs have helped your community. **Develop a local fact sheet on CDBG- and HOME-funded activities** and distribute it to the press, your congressional members, and at CD Week activities. We have included a sample fact sheet at the end of this guidebook.

6. **Focus on your congressional members.** Ask you congressional members to participate in your CD Week activities or plan to meet with them at their district offices during CD Week – or plan to visit them in Washington, DC. Meeting with a member of Congress is

a very effective way to convey a message about a specific issue or legislative matter. Since Congress will be in recess during CD Week, congressional members will be in their home districts. Plan to meet with them.

Steps to meet with your congressional member

Check with your jurisdiction first to understand any policies, procedures or restrictions you must follow before meeting with your congressional member.

- (1) **Make an Appointment:** Start planning your visit as soon as possible. Congressional members are extremely busy and their calendars fill up quickly. When attempting to meet with a 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, ask to have a face-to-face meeting with your member of Congress at their local district office during CD Week.

- (2) **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 are interested in hearing directly from the organizations or people the programs directly benefit. You should bring the following information with you to the meeting:

Good data. Convey your program accomplishments and community development need by providing data, such as:

- The number of people served by CDBG and HOME over the last five years.
- The local economic benefit:
 - # of jobs created and maintained and in which sectors
 - amount of goods and services purchased through the program (by contractors, sub-contractors, subrecipients, and the grantee)
 - any positive benefits to the tax base (e.g., construction of homeownership and rental projects, creation of new businesses, improvements to existing homes and businesses, etc.)
- At the same time, it is important to outline the demand for the programs in your community through:
 - the # of persons on waiting lists for assistance (rehabilitation assistance, purchase assistance, etc.)
 - the # of viable programs and projects not funded due to the lack of CDBG and HOME funding

Actual examples. Tell the story of a particular family or business that was assisted through one or both programs. Again, if you have brought along a sub-recipient or beneficiary to the meeting, have them tell their story. Or, arrange a projects or neighborhoods tour for your congressional delegation to see first-hand the accomplishments of both programs.

- (3) **Be Responsive and Follow-Up:** Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information in the event the member asks questions. Follow-up the meeting with a thank-you letter. Send along any additional information and materials requested.

In addition to the meeting, it is *imperative* that you undertake the following additional activities to increase congressional support for CDBG and HOME in FY 2012:

Have your program beneficiaries fill-out CD Week postcards, writing a quick note on how either CDBG or HOME have helped them. Mail the postcards to your congressional members, or present the postcards to them at your CD Week event, or at a meeting with your congressional members.

Start a community-wide petition in support of increased funding for CDBG and HOME. Some communities have done this in the past, collecting thousands of signatures, and it has been very effective. Present the signatures to your congressional members.

Invite your congressional members to a CDBG- and HOME-funded project. Ask them to be part of a ribbon cutting ceremony, coffee with residents, or sit-in on a program or activity (e.g., senior citizen event or youth event).

Have your local elected body issue a proclamation of support of CDBG and HOME during National CD Week.

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

The following provides you with actual examples of activities undertaken by communities during National Community Development Week.

- Nebraska celebrated the 2010 National CD Week through a partnership which involved the Nebraska Rural Development Commission, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, the City of Omaha, the City of Lincoln, and other community development organizations. The State of Nebraska held an awards program to designate a showcase community that had demonstrated exceptional capacity over the past five to ten years in implementing CDBG through (1) identifying community development goals and strategies; (2) combining local, state, and federal resources to achieve those goals; and (3) accomplish major projects with positive impacts on the community. The Governor

announced the designated showcase community at a ceremony during CD Week.

- During the 2000 National CD Week Campaign, Burlington, Vermont, Mayor Peter Clavelle hosted a CD luncheon where both Senator Sanders and Senator Jeffords participated.
- In Richmond, California, the focus was on a graduation ceremony for 17 participants in micro-enterprise business start-ups.
- In Greenville, South Carolina, the Greenville Recreation District, and the Freetown Community celebrated the groundbreaking of a new \$600,000 (CDBG funded) community center, which will provide recreation activities, services for the elderly, early childcare, and after-school programs.
- In 2007, the City of Austin, Texas kicked off CD Week with a news conference that included the mayor, city departments, and CDBG subrecipients.
- Harris County, Texas highlighted the results of projects recently completed with CDBG funds through stories from persons assisted with the funds, such as the story of a single mom who purchased a home with assistance from CDBG.

ACTIONS BY THE NATIONAL INTEREST GROUPS

The U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties, National Community Development Association, National Association for County Community and Economic Development, National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies, and Council of State Community Development Agencies will work together to promote the 2011 National Community Development Week campaign through the following activities.

- Development of the 2011 National CD Week Guidebook and dissemination of the guidebook to its members.
- The 2011 National CD Week campaign will be placed on the upcoming conference agenda of each organization.
- The 2011 National CD Week will be emphasized during visits with congressional members throughout the months leading up to National CD Week.
- The groups will ask HUD Secretary Donovan and HUD Assistant Secretary Mercedes Marquez to issue a joint proclamation declaring April 24-30, 2011 as National Community Development Week.
- The groups will meet with other industry allies to gain further support for National

Community Development Week.

- The groups will hold a congressional or media briefing on National Community Development Week.

**CDBG AND HOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS
FOR THE CITY/COUNTY/STATE OF _____
FOR THE PAST YEAR**

FACT SHEET DOCUMENT

CDBG

- For every one dollar of CDBG funding another \$ _____ in private and public funding was leveraged.
- A total of _____ households were assisted through the CDBG program and _____ households were assisted through the HOME program.
- CDBG created or retained _____ jobs in the past year.
- CDBG funds in the amount of \$ _____ were spent on economic development activities such as a direct financial assistance to businesses, commercial and industrial improvements, among others.
- CDBG funds in the amount of \$ _____ were spent on public improvements, such as the development and improvements of public facilities, street and sidewalk improvements, water and sewer improvements, senior centers and child care facilities, and the development of parks and recreational facilities, among others.
- CDBG funds in the amount of \$ _____ were spent on public services, such as services for senior and youth projects, health services, employment training, services for abused and neglected children, and services for the disabled, among others.
- CDBG funds in the amount of \$ _____ were provided for housing activities, such as construction, rehabilitation, homebuyer assistance, lead-based paint testing and abatement, among others.

HOME

- For every one dollar of HOME funding another \$ _____ in private and public funding was leveraged.
- HOME funds in the amount of \$ _____ were provide for housing activities, such as homebuyer assistance, rental assistance, and the production of affordable rental units.
 - A total of _____ units of affordable housing were created
 - _____ households received assistance in purchasing their first home
 - _____ rental units were constructed and/or rehabilitated
 - _____ homeowners received rehabilitation assistance

