

## **2012 NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK PLANNING INFORMATION**

### **National CD Week: 26 Years of Showcasing CDBG National Community Development Week: April 9-14, 2012**

The 2012 National Community Development (CD) Week will be celebrated from **April 9-14, 2012**. 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 26th anniversary of the National Community Development Week campaign. This annual campaign is designed to focus local as well as national attention on the outstanding accomplishments over the past 38 years of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and over the past 21 years of the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program.

National Community Development Week provides an ideal opportunity to educate members of Congress on CDBG and HOME and the importance of both programs on the lives of low- and moderate-income citizens. Please join us in the 2012 National CD Week campaign. NCDA is, once again, proud to lead the National Community Development Week campaign.

#### **About the National Community Development Association**

The National Community Development Association (NCDA) is a national non-profit organization comprised of nearly 500 local government members that administer community development, affordable housing, and economic development programs, including the CDBG and HOME programs. The mission of the Association is to assist local governments achieve high-quality, locally-responsive programs for making communities better places to live and work, particularly for low- and moderate-income people. NCDA grew out of the Model Cities Program in 1968, with the commitment to help local governments respond to their community development needs.

#### **CDBG**

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program was enacted into law as part of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. CDBG's main purpose is to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing, a suitable living environment and economic opportunities to low- and moderate-income people. To this day, CDBG remains the principal source of revenue for localities to utilize in devising flexible solutions to prevent physical, economic, and social deterioration in lower-income neighborhoods and communities throughout the nation.

#### **Continued Cuts to the Program**

In FY 2001, the program received \$4.406 billion in formula funding, its highest funding level

ever. That level now stands at \$2.95 billion for FY12 resulting in a \$1.4 billion reduction – or 33% cut since FY01.

## **HOME**

Enacted into law in 1990, the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program was developed to provide resources to communities to provide decent, safe and affordable housing opportunities for low-income persons. Program funding has been used nationally to complete over one million units of affordable housing. Prior to the creation of the HOME program, there were few options available to communities to develop affordable housing. Families lived in overcrowded situations and in unsafe housing. Working families struggled to save enough for a down payment. Communities lacked the resources needed to design large-scale affordable housing programs to address these problems.

### **Significant Cuts in FY12**

The HOME program has been reduced by 45% since FY10 when the formula level stood at \$1.825 billion. By FY11, program formula funding had been reduced to \$1.6 billion. The HOME program received a whopping 37% cut in FY12 – reducing the program from \$1.6 billion to \$1.0 billion.

The articles published in *The Washington Post* on the program last year helped contribute to the funding demise; providing a one-sided, skewed view of the program. Not only were the facts misleading, but they gave the impression that the overall program was tainted with mismanagement and poor oversight, which is untrue. According to HUD, the delayed projects cited in one *Washington Post* article constituted only 2.5% of the 28,000 active developments. Many of these open projects are newly constructed single-family homes that remain on the market because of the economic downturn in the housing market.

### **WHY NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK?**

National CD Week provides the opportunity for grantees, their subrecipients, beneficiaries, 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 that 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. *Our primary focus this year is having CDBG and HOME grantees conduct a tour of their CDBG- and HOME-funded projects for their congressional members during National Community Development Week.*

It is more important than ever for CDBG and HOME grantees to celebrate National Community Development Week. Both programs have been cut significantly over the past two years and given the federal deficit and budget climate, CDBG and HOME are at risk of further cuts in FY13. In our visits to congressional members this year, many offices informed us that they are not hearing from many communities on the CDBG and HOME programs. While many

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communities work their hearts out throughout the year promoting both programs, many communities do not. Grassroots support is key to the continued funding of these programs. We need *every grantee* to take action during National CD Week to promote CDBG and HOME.

## CD WEEK ACTION ITEMS

1. ***Organize the Working Group.*** The first step to a successful CD Week campaign is organizing a working group to plan and implement the CD Week activities. 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. ***Establish Regular Meetings of the Working Group.*** The working group must meet regularly (bi-monthly or weekly) to ensure the CD Week activities are planned and implemented on time and to ensure that congressional members are contacted and confirmed for participation in the celebration. Appendix A at the back of this document provides information on how to have the event placed on your congressional member's calendar. The working group should establish a time line and assignments during the first meeting.
3. ***Identify Your CDBG and HOME Constituency.*** Include partners that invest in your CDBG and HOME projects in your CD Week activities, such as businesses, banks, and contractors.
4. ***CD Week Activities.*** Public support from your congressional delegation, community groups, the media, business and community leaders, and the beneficiaries of the program is vital. The 2012 National CD Week Campaign should focus on the following activities and action items:
  - **A tour of local CDBG- and HOME-funded projects** for your congressional members. Select projects that positively showcase CDBG and HOME. Develop a written project description, including financing, to give to your congressional member during the tour. Make sure the congressional delegation meets beneficiaries of the projects during the tour.
  - **Make sure the local press is invited** to cover your CD Week activities.
  - **Involvement of others;** local businesses, community leaders, subrecipients and beneficiaries in the sponsorship of activities or participation in planned events.
  - **Announce your events** through press releases and local news articles.

- **Start a letter writing campaign** during CD Week. Ask your program beneficiaries to write a quick note to their congressional members describing how CDBG and HOME have helped them. The notes should be personal. Present the notes to your congressional members during the project tour or other CD Week event.
- **Start a community-wide petition** in support of increased funding for CDBG and HOME during CD Week. 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 during your CD Week projects tour or other event.

5. ***Adopt a 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 events. *We have included a sample fact sheet at the end of this document.*

## APPENDIX A

### **CD Week and Beyond: Meeting and Corresponding with Your Congressional Members**

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 recent cuts to CDBG and HOME, it is imperative that you invite your congressional members to participate in your National CD Week events (remember to schedule a tour of CDBG- and HOME-funded projects) and continue to meet and correspond with them throughout the year. Congress will be in recess during CD Week, so invite them to your events!

**Make an Appointment:** Congressional members are extremely busy and their calendars fill up quickly. When attempting to meet with a member, contact their appointment secretary/scheduler. Explain your purpose. Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your member of Congress or dial the number directly. You can obtain your member's information at <http://www.house.gov> and <http://www.senate.gov>. If the scheduler is unavailable, leave a message with your name and phone number requesting the event be placed on your member's calendar. Keep making follow-up calls until you speak to the scheduler directly to confirm your member's participation in your event.

*For a Face-to-Face Meeting:* Speak to the scheduler, ask to have a face-to-face meeting with your member of Congress and the aide who works on the specific issue area that you are interested in discussing (e.g., the staff person responsible for CDBG and HOME). You may or may not be able to meet directly with your member, but meeting with the aide who handles your issue is just as important. These aides make recommendations to your congressional member on what position to take on an issue. The scheduler may want you to fax or e-mail a written request for the meeting, so be prepared to do so.

If you are not able to travel to Washington to meet with your member of Congress, you can schedule a meeting with your member at their local district office. The information for the local offices can also be obtained by contacting your member's office directly through the Capitol Switchboard or going directly to the House and Senate website. If possible, bring a subrecipient or beneficiary to the meeting with you. Congressional members like hearing directly from the organizations or people the programs directly benefit.

**Be Prompt and Patient:** When meeting with a member, be punctual and be patient. Remember to thank your member and his staff for meeting with you. Be concise and forthright when discussing CDBG and HOME. Ask for your member's support of both programs in FY13. Explain how the programs serve the citizens of your community. It is not uncommon for a congressional member to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted due to their crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible. When the opportunity presents itself, continue your

meeting with the member's staff.

**Be Prepared:** Bring to the meeting information and materials supporting CDBG and HOME. Members are required to take positions on many different issues. It is therefore helpful to share information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact and benefits associated with CDBG and HOME.

If you are attending the meeting with several people, choose one person to lead the meeting and another to take notes. Share the speaking role with all of the people attending the meeting. This will reiterate to the member the importance of the issue. Be prepared to summarize your request in 5-10 minutes. Members are very busy, so meetings are often relatively short. A typical meeting should go as follows:

1. Introductions
2. Acknowledge your member of Congress (and any staff that you have worked with), thank them for meeting with you, and thank them for any previous actions that have helped your community recently.
3. Present your issues.
4. Ask for a commitment from your member to support increased funding for CDBG and HOME in FY13.

**Make the issues real:** Convey to your member how the programs help constituents in their district. Provide specific examples. If you have brought a subrecipient or beneficiary to the meeting, this is the opportune time for them to tell your member how the programs have helped them.

**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 that outlines what was discussed in the meeting and reiterates any commitments made by your member. Copy the member's legislative aide that works on CDBG and HOME. Send along any additional information and materials requested.

### **Tips on Writing to a Member**

Due to tightened security of the mail to Congress, a letter can take up to 3 weeks to reach your member, so please ALSO FAX AND E-MAIL 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):

**Sending an E-Mail to Congress**

When addressing an e-mail to a member of Congress, follow the same suggestions as for a printed letter. For the subject of your e-mail, identify your message by topic or bill number. The body of your message should use the following format:

Your Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear (Title)(Last Name),

**The Roles of Congressional Staff**

Each member of Congress has staff to assist him/her during a term in office. To be most effective in communicating with 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. He/she 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.

## What You Should Bring With You to Support CDBG and HOME

1. **Good data.** Show how the cuts to the programs have affected program staffing and delivery. Provide the following information.
  - The actual cut to your allocation over the past few years
  - An estimate of the number of people that will not receive assistance. Here are some examples:
    - # of elderly that will not be assisted
    - # of youth that will not be assisted
    - # of homeless individuals
    - # of people that will not receive assistance to buy a home
  - An estimate of the economic loss to the community. Here are some examples.
    - # of jobs lost
    - # 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
2. **Actual examples.** Tell the story of a particular family that will not be assisted or the plight of the elderly or other special population that will not receive assistance. Again, if you have brought along a subrecipient or beneficiary to the meeting, have them tell their story.
3. **Show how the programs are working in your community.** Dispel the belief that these programs are not effective. Bring a brief outline of your CDBG and HOME program detailing how the programs have assisted your community over the past 5 years. Some areas to highlight include: # of people assisted, # of businesses assisted, # of neighborhoods assisted, # of jobs created or retained, # of homes that have been rehabilitated, # of new homeowners, # of blighted buildings that have been demolished, # of infrastructure improvements, etc. Leave copies of this information with your congressional member and staff.

## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

### SAMPLE PROCLAMATION/RESOLUTION

*Present this proclamation to your congressional members during the National CD Week tour of CDBG and HOME funded projects.*

**WHEREAS**, the week of April 9-14, 2012 has been designated as National Community Development Week by the National Community Development Association to celebrate the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDBG Program provides annual funding and flexibility to local communities to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing, a suitable living environment and economic opportunities to low- and moderate-income people; and

**WHEREAS**, the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program provides funding to local communities to create decent, safe, affordable housing opportunities for low-income persons. Nationally, over one million units of affordable housing have been completed using HOME funds.;and

**WHEREAS**, over the past five years, our community has received a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in CDBG funds and \$\_\_\_\_\_ in HOME funds; and

**WHEREAS**, the following activities have been funded (please list below); and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ designates the week of April 9-April 14, 2012 as National Community Development Week in support of these two valuable programs that have made tremendous contributions to the viability of the housing stock, infrastructure, public services, and economic vitality of our community.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this community urges Congress and the Administration to recognize the outstanding work being done locally and nationally by the Community Development Block Grant Program and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program by supporting increased funding for both programs in FY13.

## **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

City, USA  
Date

For further information, contact  
Jane Doe at (202) 777-CDBG

### **The City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ Celebrates National Community Development Week**

Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ and the City Council issued a proclamation supporting the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program through the celebration of National Community Development Week which will officially be recognized the week of April 9-14, 2012.

Enacted into law in 1974, the CDBG program is the principal federal program providing grants to States, cities, and counties to devise neighborhood approaches that will improve the physical, economic and social conditions in communities. It is administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The HOME program provides grants to States, cities, and counties to create safe, sanitary, and affordable housing conditions in communities nationwide.

2012 marks the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CDBG program and the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the HOME program. Both programs have faced significant cuts in the past two years; CDBG with a 26% cut since FY2010 and HOME with a 48% cut since FY2010. In FY2010, CDBG was funded nationally at \$3.990 billion and HOME was funded at \$1.825 billion. CDBG is now funded at \$2.95 billion nationally and HOME at \$1.0 billion nationally. With the economic downturn, these programs are needed more than ever to help our most vulnerable citizens and improve the overall condition of our neighborhoods.

The City/County highlighted the positive impact of both programs recently by taking congressional members on a tour of local CDBG- and HOME-funded projects [Describe the projects visited, activities, and remarks by congressional members].

## **SAMPLE FACT SHEET**

### **CDBG and HOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS (PAST FIVE YEARS) FACT SHEET**

#### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)**

- For every one dollar of CDBG funding another \$\_\_\_\_\_ in private and public funding was leveraged.
- \_\_\_\_\_ persons were assisted through the CDBG program in the past five years.
- CDBG created or retained \_\_\_\_\_ jobs in the past five years.
- 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 INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS (HOME) PROGRAM**

- For every one dollar of HOME funding another \$\_\_\_\_\_ in private and public funding was leveraged.
- \_\_\_\_\_ persons were assisted through the HOME program in the past five years.
- 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

