



## **NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION CONGRESSIONAL MEETING PREP AND TALKING POINTS**

The focus for NCDCA in 2019 continues to be increasing program funding for our core programs – CDBG and HOME – and increasing program flexibility – making the programs more efficient and less burdensome for grantees. We will need your help in this endeavor if we are to be successful. We need you to reach out to your Congressional Members to educate them on the importance of these programs, the need for more funding and the need for less administrative and program burden. Contact with your Congressional Members can take various forms, whether via letter, meeting, site visit or another event. National Community Development Week is April 22-26, 2019 and provides the perfect opportunity to meet with your Congressional Members in their district offices, host a site visit or tour of local CDBG and HOME funded projects, or another event.

The following video developed by NCDCA and the information below will guide you in meeting with your Congressional Members.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/pkmfgtu3tyarpe7/NewCongressNCDCA.mp4?dl=0>

### **STEP ONE: REQUEST THE MEETING**

Contact the scheduler in the office of your Congressional Member. Ask for the staff member who handles community development/housing issues. Go to the following links to find the office number for your Congressional Members. Educate yourself on your Congressional Members – read their bios and view their legislative priorities.

House: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

Senate: <https://www.senate.gov>

Once connected with the person who handles community development/housing issues, let them know you would like to meet with them to share information on the CDBG and HOME programs.

### **STEP TWO: PREPARE FOR YOUR MEETING**

To support increased funding for CDBG and HOME, Congressional Members (and staff) need to be shown data that demonstrates the *need* for additional funds. Prior to your visit, assimilate this data into a succinct informational packet to hand out at the meeting that includes the following:

**1. A narrative of your CDBG and HOME programs; along with important outcomes**

- program allocations over the past few years, activities funded, populations served, and important outcomes such as project leveraging, jobs created/retained, # of people served through the programs, income levels served, critical populations assisted such as the homeless, veterans, youth and the elderly
- attach examples and beneficiary testimonials

**2. Why is more CDBG and HOME funding needed in my community? What is the unmet need in my community?** Make the case for more funding by focusing on unmet community development need in your community. Look at unfunded applications, underfunded projects, and projects that have been put on hold due to a lack of adequate funding as sources of unmet need. Include this information in the packet.

**STEP THREE: THE MEETING**

- Thank your Congressional Member and/or their staff for meeting with you.
- Introduce yourself – name, title, community
- Give a copy of your informational packet to your Congressional Member and/or their staff and start the meeting with the following talking points.
- The meeting will likely be short – 15 minutes – so it's imperative to focus the discussion on program funding first.

**Talking Point #1:** Ask your Congressional Members to support increased funding for CDBG in FY20. NCDCA will be seeking at least \$3.8 billion for CDBG in FY20. Let them know the CDBG program has been cut nationally by \$1.1 billion since FY01 and the program costs continue to increase. Use your informational packet to show the need for more CDBG funding in your community.

**Talking Point #2:** Ask your Congressional Members to support increased funding for the HOME program in FY20. NCDCA is seeking at least \$1.5 billion for HOME in FY20. Let them know the HOME program has been cut by 50% nationally, yet the program costs continue to increase. Again, use your informational packet to provide reasons for the need for increased HOME funding in your community.

**Talking Point #3:** Ask your Congressional Members to participate in a projects tour, project ribbon cutting, groundbreaking ceremony, meet with program beneficiaries or other activity during your 2019 National Community Development Week celebration, April 22-26, 2019. This will allow them the opportunity to see first-hand how CDBG and HOME dollars are being used in their communities. If they're not available that week, see if they're available during some other work period when they're back home.

If time remains in the meeting, focus on the following statutory items that need to be fixed by Congress. If you're unable to cover these items in the meeting, leave a hand-out with these priorities listed.

- Raise the Davis-Bacon project threshold to \$250,000 for non-residential and increase the CDBG housing unit threshold to 12 units to coincide with the HOME program.
- Section 3 – raise the recipient thresholds to \$750,000 from the current \$200,000 and apply the Section 3 requirements to covered contracts over \$500,000.
- Eliminate the 15% set-aside of HOME funds for CHDOs.
- Eliminate the 24-month commitment deadline for HOME funds.
- Emergency Solutions Grant Program – remove the 60% cap that may be used for emergency shelter.

#### **STEP FOUR: FOLLOW-UP**

Follow-up the meeting with a thank-you letter. Reiterate the talking points from your meeting in your letter. Send along any additional information and materials requested by your Congressional Member or their staff.

Remember, send written correspondence to District offices and e-mail/fax correspondence to the DC office.

#### **IF YOU'RE NOT ABLE TO ARRANGE A MEETING**

If you're not able to arrange a face-to-face meeting with your Congressional Member or their staff, it is important that you undertake the following activities:

- Send a letter requesting increased funding for the CDBG (\$3.8 billion) and HOME (\$1.5 billion) programs and highlight one or two beneficiaries that have benefitted from the programs.
- Congressional Members keep up with local print news. Ask your local newspaper to do a story on one of your projects.
- At the end of your program year, provide a report on CDBG- and HOME-funded activities in their districts.

#### **Writing to Your Lawmakers**

Send letters to their district office. Fax or e-mail correspondence to the DC office.

#### ***Addressing Correspondence:***

##### **To a Senator...**

The Honorable (Full Name)

District Office Address

Dear Senator (Last Name):

##### **To a Representative...**

The Honorable (Full Name)

District Office Address

Dear Representative (Last Name):

#### **Questions? Please Contact:**

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