



NARC National Association of Regional Councils

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES – LARGE, SMALL, URBAN AND RURAL – THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ISSUE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports sufficient and sustained funding for Housing, Urban and Community Development, including an increase in budget authority for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and those programs that support community development.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

- Urge authorization of HUD with funding increase to allow for support and expansion of economic and community development programs, both rural and urban, that promote regionalism.
- Support increased funding for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to, at minimum, the FY2005 enacted level of \$4.1 billion.
- Encourage fully funding brownfields cleanup and assessment programs.
- Support fully funding Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED) and the Community Development Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108).
- Promote the implementation of criteria for HUD programs to require development through a collaborative process with practitioners and stakeholders at the federal, state, local and regional levels.

BACKGROUND

Community development is a local empowerment process that involves local leaders who build organizations and alliances that partner businesses with other areas in a city, town, township or local unit of government for the betterment of the community, especially to assure quality, affordable housing. It is a process that involves a comprehensive approach that factors economic and social goals, a base of operating principles, a strategic planning and analysis process, sound financial management, and an organizational format. Regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations support local leaders in their community efforts and provide a regional framework for achieving community objectives.

Like past years, the FY2008 Presidential budget request cuts overall funding from HUD (calling for \$35.2 billion), as well as many of the significant community development programs. The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which allocate funds to more than 1,100 local and state governments on a formula basis, are proposed for a 25 percent funding cut and a formula change. The Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) was designed to help local governments redevelop brownfields, abandoned, idled, or underutilized real property and is now proposed to be zeroed out by the Administration. Similarly to BEDI, the Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED), which provides grants to nonprofits to support capacity building, housing and economic development, and the Community Development Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108), which allows an entitlement community to borrow up to five times the amount of CDBG allocation to finance large-scale physical improvement projects, have both been zeroed by the White House.

HUD programs are vital to community planning, development, sustainability and progress. America's communities need to be able to compete in a global marketplace and maintaining HUD programs is essential for continued prosperity and success for American businesses, communities and families.