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CONFERENCE OF MAYORS



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## National Community Development Week Tool Kit



The 2019 National Community Development (CD) Week will be celebrated April 22-26, 2019. It provides the opportunity for communities to reach out to their Congressional Members, showcase projects and programs, and involve program partners in the week-long celebration. This tool kit is intended to help communities with the planning and implementation of their National CD Week activities.

## **Why National Community Development Week?**

Objective: Educate the community and Congressional Members on the CDBG and HOME programs, their impact on the community, and the need for increased program funding.

National Community Development Week was created in 1986 to bring national attention to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program at a time when the program was facing scrutiny by Congress. The week-long celebration has expanded to include the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program. National Community Development Week provides the opportunity for communities to promote, educate and advocate on behalf of both programs. It is intentionally held during the Congressional appropriations season to allow for a concerted grassroots effort and voice to be heard on the importance of both programs and their impact on communities nationwide. With continued pressures to reduce federal funding, it is imperative that all communities that receive these resources participate in National Community Development Week.

National Community Development Week is designed to focus local as well as national attention on the CDBG and HOME programs. It provides a united voice of support and harnesses the power of grassroots engagement to educate members of Congress and the community on the successes of the programs and their value to local communities.

Although spending for the current fiscal year is not yet set, National Community Development Week will occur during a critical time when Congress is making decisions about spending levels, so make sure that you're a part of the conversation by hosting a National Community Development Week activity. We will be seeking increased funding for CDBG and HOME in FY 2020 and your participation in National Community Development Week helps tremendously in these efforts.

This year, National Community Development Week is being held on April 22-26, 2019. Lawmakers will return to their states and districts for the week, giving you an opportunity to showcase the good work you do in your community using CDBG and HOME dollars.

### **Start Planning for National Community Development Week, April 22-26, 2019**

Start planning now for National Community Development Week. During National Community Development Week, we are asking members to publicly highlight the work of the CDBG and HOME programs.

#### **Organize Staff**

The first step to a successful National Community Development (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. This effort must involve departments and groups who receive CDBG and HOME funds. Regular meetings will ensure CD Week activities are planned and implemented on time. Many jurisdictions have created CDBG and/or HOME advisory boards to assist them in allocating their program funds. These boards are often appointed by the mayor, county executive or city council and usually consist of community members with community development and affordable housing experience and other relevant participants. The focus of such boards is to serve in an advisory capacity to the local elected officials and CDBG/HOME staff to determine funding priorities, evaluate funding proposals and make funding recommendations. Many communities work with these boards in planning and

implementing their National CD Week activities. Other communities without advisory boards tend to create a special committee to focus on National CD Week planning and implementation. Whatever method is chosen, CDBG and HOME program staff must be central in leading the National CD Week effort.

***Example:***

**Arlington, TX** established a National Community Development Week planning committee that consisted of various stakeholders. The planning committee met regularly and gathered data and facts on the impact of CDBG and HOME dollars in the City of Arlington, created fliers and infographics on CDBG and HOME accomplishments, developed press releases and formal invitations for their CD Week event, and organized a ribbon cutting event showcasing grant dollars at work which included the beneficiaries of those grant programs.

**Involve Program Partners and Beneficiaries**

Subrecipients and program beneficiaries are on the front lines of providing and receiving CDBG and HOME assistance. Because of their connection to the programs, they should be part of National CD Week. The CDBG and HOME stories cannot be told without incorporating the testimony of the many beneficiaries who are served through these critical federal funds. Put a face on your programs by including beneficiaries and subrecipients in your National CD Week events.

**Market National Community Development Week**

Advertising and promotion are critical to a successful National CD Week campaign. Communities must use a variety of methods to reach all stakeholders and publicize activities and events. Congressional Members want to hear how program dollars are being spent to improve their communities, so the use of local media (such as print, television, and radio) is important to documenting your National CD Week activities and ensuring your Congressional Members and the community are made aware of your program activities.

***Marketing Ideas:***

- Issue a press release and media advisory in advance of National Community Development and/or on the first day of National Community Development Week. Include information on the impact of the programs in the community.
- Use social media to alert followers to National CD Week activities. #CDWeek2019
- Use your jurisdiction's website to advertise National CD Week events and provide information on CDBG and HOME funded projects.
- Invite local television, radio and print media to cover your events.
- Post public banners throughout the community including signage at CDBG and HOME funded projects.

***Examples:***

In advance of National Community Development Week, the **City of Burlington, VT**, sent out a press release to media and its Congressional delegation announcing National CD Week. Each day of National Community Development Week, Burlington, VT highlighted a CDBG subrecipient and its CDBG-funded projects on the city's Facebook page. CDBG-funded agencies submitted photos and narratives of projects with a link to their agency website and the project. The city also aired public service announcements (PSAs) during National Community Development Week. Further, a local radio show interviewed two CDBG subrecipients (including the local police department) to discuss how the CDBG program was used to help at-risk youth.

**Shreveport, LA** posted the dates of National Community Development Week on a digital billboard on Interstate 20.

**Richland County, SC** posted signage at local CDBG- and HOME-funded projects to make the public aware of the programs.

### **Decide Upon Activities**

Focus on at least one of the following activities for National Community Development Week. Projects can be showcased in a variety of ways depending on your capacity; even simple activities like writing a letter to your local newspaper and your lawmakers describing your project and the role CDBG and HOME played in making it happen can make a huge difference. For example, the first four activities below take minimal effort to accomplish (small grantees may want to focus on one of these activities) Combined with the voices of your colleagues across the country, planning a successful activity or set of activities could you create one of the most impactful National Community Development Weeks for your community to date. Contact your Congressional delegation to invite their participation in at least one National Community Development Week event (see the next section of the Tool Kit).

Make sure you also reiterate the need for increased funding for CDBG and HOME in whatever activities you choose.

- Write a letter to your lawmakers describing recent community development projects and the role CDBG and HOME programs played in making them happen and the impact of the projects on your community.
- Write an op-ed to your local newspaper describing the importance of CDBG and HOME to the community and the need for more program funding.
- Issue a press release and proclamation announcing National CD Week and outline how CDBG and HOME funds have been used in your community. Send the press release and proclamation to your lawmakers and local media. These activities require minimal effort and can be undertaken by every grantee. A sample press release and proclamation are included in this Tool Kit.

Some communities also hold special ceremonies or press briefings to announce the passage of the proclamation to gain further media attention for National CD Week.

**Tulsa, OK** proclamation video

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPCX4KS\\_DM0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPCX4KS_DM0)

**Hollywood, FL** invited various public service agencies such as Hope South Florida (housing and economic development assistance for the homeless or formerly homeless), Hispanic Unity (job training and placement), Russell Life Skills and Reading Foundation (youth education), the Boys & Girls Club (youth education) and other organizations to attend the City Commission meeting to accept the proclamation put forward by the Mayor and City Council

- Ask your local newspaper to do a story on one of your projects.

- Meet with Congressional Members/staff at their district offices to discuss the importance of CDBG and HOME to your community (more information is provided in the next section of this Tool Kit).
- Conduct a tour of local CDBG and HOME funded projects for your lawmakers, local elected officials, and the media.

### **St. Louis, MO bus tour of local projects**

<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/community-development/events/upload/CDA-Bus-Tour-Final.pdf>

- Work with your communications department/staff to develop a YouTube video of some of your CDBG and HOME funded projects. Include sub-recipients and beneficiaries in the video. Send it to your Congressional Members.

### **McAllen, TX CDBG video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COk7wzmv80&t=3s>

- Hold a groundbreaking ceremony or ribbon-cutting of a CDBG or HOME funded project. Invite your lawmakers, local elected officials, and the media.

### **Quincy, MA**

The city held a ribbon cutting of the Germantown Neighborhood Center Music Clubhouse, a CDBG-funded activity which benefits low-income youth. The Honorable Mayor Thomas P. Koch joined U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and others to celebrate the opening of the program.

### **La Crosse, WI**

The city's celebration of National Community Development Week kicked off in a neighborhood revitalization area where the Mayor, State Senators, Congressional Members, members of the neighborhood association, and council members toured four homes funded with CDBG and completed in partnership by the City of La Crosse, Western Technical College and Habit for Humanity.

- Have CDBG and HOME program beneficiaries sign on to a CDBG/HOME support letter to your lawmakers.

### **Involve your Congressional Offices**

National Community Development Week provides a perfect forum to cement the importance of CDBG in the minds of those in Washington. Your participation in National Community Development Week is particularly critical in 2019; there are many new members of Congress. These newcomers will be making decisions about CDBG and HOME and their funding levels in the coming months. Highlighting the work that occurs with CDBG and HOME dollars in your community creates a tangible connection for lawmakers between the funding they appropriate for these programs and improvements to their states and districts. Events like National Community Development Week attract positive attention and publicity for CDBG and HOME, which when shared with your lawmakers, is instrumental in creating the next generation of CDBG and HOME champions on Capitol Hill.

***Invite your Congressional Members to at least one National Community Development Week event.***

- **First, decide what type of event you'd like to hold.** You don't need a fully planned event, but figure out who will participate, what is the size of the event, where and when is the event, what is the focus, will the Senator/Representative be asked to make remarks, and will there be media? If the date and time of your event is flexible, you may be able to work with staff to better fit in the Senator's or Representative's schedule.
- **Second, contact Congressional offices.** The new Congressional session started on January 3, 2019. You'll need to identify who handles scheduling for your legislator and what is required by the office to submit a formal invitation. Start by calling your most local district office - phone numbers for district offices are available on the legislators' web sites. Some offices schedule exclusively through their DC office, so you may need to make several calls before you get in contact with the appropriate staffer.
- **Third, follow-up frequently.** Schedulers are extremely busy and are constantly inundated with requests. Make sure yours gets the proper attention by contacting the scheduler frequently- initially twice a week but increase that to daily in the two weeks leading up to the event if you still have not received an answer. Make sure you ask the staffer handling your request what the best way to get in touch with him/her is and use those communication methods. If you are having trouble getting in touch with the person handling your request, leave messages with the office receptionist, too.
- Finally, **don't get discouraged** if members of Congress or their staff cannot attend your event. Work with the office on alternative ways they can participate - ask them to issue a press release about your event, promote it on social media, or begin a scheduling request for a district work period later in the year. They may have other ideas on how they can participate, so be flexible.

***Meet with your Congressional Members during National Community Development Week.***

Plan to meet with your Congressional offices during National CD Week. 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 continued focus on reducing the federal budget, it's important to meet with your Congressional Members to inform them of the importance of CDBG and HOME. With budget constraints, it is impractical for most grantees to travel to Washington, DC to meet with lawmakers. Scheduling a meeting in the district office is just as effective. 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 serve. Contact their secretary/scheduler to make an appointment. Go to the following links to locate the district office information for your Congressional delegation. It is usually posted at the bottom of their web page.

House of Representatives: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>  
U.S. Senate: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact>

A typical meeting should go as follows:

1. **Introductions** – introduce yourself
2. **Acknowledge** your Member of Congress (and their staff) and thank them for meeting with you.
3. **Present** your issues (e.g., importance of CDBG/HOME to your community; need for increased CDBG/HOME funding in your community). Bring CDBG-funded project

examples. Discuss the impact of the projects on the community. If you have brought a sub-recipient or beneficiary to the meeting, let them tell the Congressional Member how the program has helped them. Be prepared to answer questions.

4. **Follow-Up**: Follow-up the meeting with a thank-you letter. Send along any additional pertinent information and materials.

***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):

**Social Media Guidance**  
**National Community Development Week**  
**April 22-26, 2019**  
**#CDWeek2019**  
**Contact: [mpond@ncdaonline.org](mailto:mpond@ncdaonline.org)**

- **Importance of the # (Hashtag) - #CDWeek2019**

Hashtags (#) label posts for ease of searching for social media content by topic. When organizations do not use the hashtag, that content is discoverable searching keywords, e.g. “Community Development Week;” however, the hashtag is clickable and can pull together the content under one umbrella very quickly. This increases the chances of engagement with others who are posting about the same topic. Engagement drives reach. The more reach the posts have, the more “return on investment” of the time staff is putting in to social media posting.

- **Practical Applications**

- Use social media to “call to action” such as asking followers to call legislators about CDBG and HOME funding in the Federal budget.
- Share exciting stories in more than one format. Give readers more than a headline by writing a blog article. Share more than one photo per post to give viewers a broader perspective of the story behind the post.
- Cross-reference and utilize multiple media channels. Post links or photos of newspaper articles. Include event registration links in press release or in posts if applicable. Be aware of formatting content appropriate to each platform. Make yourself familiar with each platform and how they are different.
- Post familiar faces. Include photos of Mayor, other dignitaries, and participants. Use photo release for children under 18.
- Engage with individuals and organizations both in person and online. Engage with other pages to drive engagement on your page. Make the request for individuals and organizations to participate in the social media campaign and provide guidance.
- Consider enhanced content options such as podcasts, recorded videos, live streaming, infographics, and blogs.

- **Advice on Personal Branding**

- Keep your personal and your organization voice separate. Interact between the two accounts if comfortable. For example, like and share the organization content as yourself. Be aware of privacy settings. (Boilerplate: “Postings on this site are my own and do not reflect or represent the opinions of agency for which I work.”) Do not use your government email address for personal accounts, for various reasons.
- Review agency social media policy; seek required communication reviews, permission to disclose public information, and permission to tag.
- Participate in live events (such as Twitter Chats or Facebook Live). Join or start a group. Tweet and share using relevant hashtags. Be a thought leader.

## **SAMPLE DOCUMENTS**

*(Please feel free to modify the documents)*

### **Sample Proclamation/Resolution**

*Share this proclamation with local media outlets and your Congressional offices during National Community Development Week.*

**WHEREAS**, the week of April 22-26, 2019 has been designated as National Community Development Week to recognize and celebrate the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program; and

**WHEREAS**, since 1975, the CDBG Program has provided annual funding and flexibility to local communities to provide affordable housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, since, 1992, the HOME Program has created and preserved affordable housing for low-income families; and

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

**WHEREAS**, both programs have suffered funding cuts over the years; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ designates the week of April 22-26, 2019 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 we urge Congress and the Administration to recognize the outstanding work being done locally with CDBG and HOME funds by providing increased funding for both programs in FY 2020.

**Sample Press Release**

*Use this press release to announce National Community Development Week to media outlets, program partners, and elected officials.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Phone Number:

E-Mail:

**The City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ Celebrates National Community Development Week; April 22-26, 2019**

The City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ will recognize the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program during National Community Development Week, April 22-26, 2019. The week-long celebration brings together citizens, elected officials, media, program staff, subrecipients and beneficiaries through events that recognize and showcase the programs. National Community Development Week also serves as a venue for educating the public about the programs.

For more than 40 years, CDBG has provided local communities with an important source of funds to address affordable housing and community and economic development needs. The CDBG program provides grants to over 1,200 local governments to create neighborhood approaches that improve the physical, economic and social conditions in communities. Every \$1.00 of CDBG leverages more than \$4.00 in other funding; bringing additional vital resources to communities.

For more than 20 years, the HOME program has helped communities provide access to affordable housing for low-income households. The HOME program provides grants to over 600 local participating jurisdictions to create safe, sanitary, and affordable housing in communities nationwide. Every \$1.00 of HOME leverages more than \$4.00 in other funding.

Both programs are administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These programs are needed more than ever to help our most vulnerable citizens and improve the overall condition of our neighborhoods. The City/County will highlight both programs during National CD Week by conducting the following activities [Describe your CD Week activities].

### **Sample Program Fact Sheet**

*Please complete this fact sheet and give it to your Congressional delegation and local media during National Community Development Week.*

#### **Executive Summary**

How is CDBG and HOME funding used in my community?

Who are the program beneficiaries?

Why is more CDBG and HOME funding needed in my community?

#### **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Accomplishments**

In the past five years, \$\_\_\_\_\_ in CDBG funding has been invested in the community.

This investment has leveraged \$\_\_\_\_\_ in additional funding.

In the past five years, \_\_\_\_\_ people have been served by the program.

Important results: Outline one or two projects/programs that have made an important impact on the community.

#### **HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program Accomplishments**

In the past five years, \$\_\_\_\_\_ in HOME funding has been invested in the community.

This investment has leveraged \$\_\_\_\_\_ in additional funding.

In the past five years, \_\_\_\_\_ people have been served by the program.

Important results: Outline one or two projects/programs that have made an important impact on the community.

This Tool Kit was developed by the National Community Development Association. Please contact Vicki Watson, Executive Director, National Community Development Association at [vwatson@ncdaonline.org](mailto:vwatson@ncdaonline.org) with any questions.