

Welcome to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's presentation, the Community Development Block Grant Lifecycle Part One Planning.

Planning for Community Development Block Grant investment and the implementation of CDBG activities go hand-in-hand. Well thought out and inclusive planning paves the way for effective and efficient implementation of projects and activities.

In this presentation, we discuss the lifecycle of a Community Development Block Grant from planning to evaluation in two parts.

Part One covers planning for the future expenditure of CDBG funds.

Part Two covers the implementation and evaluation of CDBG-funded activities.

Planning for CDBG investment follows a process that, for new grantees, starts with assessing needs and works its way through to evaluating performance. For experienced grantees, the process begins with evaluating past performance then proceeds to determining current needs.

The CDBG planning process is iterative, with each phase overlapping and informing the others.

Grantees prepare the Consolidated Plan every 3-5 years and the Action Plan annually to guide the expenditure of their HUD formula funds. Grantees assess and adjust their CDBG program design so that it is responsive to changing community needs.

When planning, grantees consider community needs and market forces; explore new funding resources and look for new opportunities to leverage investments. They evaluate past activities, and assess capacity.

Grantees synthesize this information and seek input from program beneficiaries and stakeholders to inform their goals and strategies.

From providing feedback on prior activities to assessing current needs to helping to design activities, Stakeholders can be some of your greatest resources.

The consolidated planning process is the formal means, or the tool, by which your CDBG program design and your community development plan are realized.

Consulting with stakeholders is at the core of the CDBG planning process. Stakeholders, including community members, beneficiaries, implementation partners, and elected officials, can contribute valuable information that guides smart CDBG investments.

There are many ways to involve stakeholders in CDBG activities on an ongoing basis. For example, you can hold meetings with partners to solicit feedback and problem solve, run community workshops during the year to help you stay on top of issues, check in with community organizations and elected officials, and invite beneficiaries to participate in activity and program design.

Now, let's hear how a Community Health Center in Quincy, Massachusetts does this.

Fifty one percent or greater of our board are active patients who get their care through this health center operation. So they bring the voice of the patients to the governance table, and their own personal anecdotal experience as patients to help inform staff about ways in which we could do better. And that's simplistic. We have corporate compliance committees, we have performance improvement committees, we have a lot of data analysis that these same patient board members work on month in and month out to always find ways to improve. What's great about this community is we have people who live in this community who serve on our board because they're patients of this health center and they want to see it here and they want to see it continue and they want to see it improve and get better and grow over time.

Now that we know that stakeholders are crucial to CDBG planning, let's discuss how to determine community needs.

Grantees use a multi-faceted approach based on data and community input to understand community needs.

Entitlement cities assess and respond to needs by developing targeted strategies within their communities.

States respond to needs by developing broad strategic approaches and defining activity types they will support. They disburse funds to non-entitlement communities to carry out the activities.

Grantees must consider both community needs and market conditions. If grantees consider only one or the other, they may end up developing ineffective strategies.

For example, if a grantee considers supporting a job training program to help people find jobs in manufacturing, but manufacturing jobs are declining in the city, it is unlikely that the graduates will find work.

To avoid this, the grantee may request that providers demonstrate that they are training people in rising industries.

HUD's eCon Plan Template, CPD Maps, and the CDBG Low and Moderate Income Data Map Application provide current and reliable demographic, housing and economic data. Consider supplementing this data with other sources, such as beneficiary and waiting list data collected by partners, to zero in on specific trends.

Data alone cannot reveal the community needs and market conditions that most affect community members. It is essential to validate your data-driven conclusions with community input.

Next, let's discuss how grantees set priorities for their CDBG programs.

Entitlements and states set priorities in a similar way but on a different scale. Entitlements prioritize specific types of CDBG activities and may identify geographic target areas for investment.

States must consider a variety of needs, cover several market areas, and develop strategic priorities by setting policy and establishing criteria for non-entitlement grant awards.

When establishing priorities, seek input from elected officials, stakeholders and the public. With community support your plan will be easier to implement.

Let's hear how one community helped change the course of their neighborhood improvements.

We started off just having a neighborhood review on what we would like to do and we asked what would they do for us. We were told that we had the option of sidewalks and some trees and we said, well, we'd prefer to actually have a park.

To determine priorities, consider the scale of need; the potential impacts that activities might have; your ability to do more with less; and the ability to leverage or complement other public and private investments.

Increasingly, grantees need to look for new resources to make sure their investments will have transformative impacts.

Entitlements work directly with partners to leverage CDBG funds.

States often require applicants to provide matching funds for a project.

Consider leveraging partner resources, private investments, local, state and federal funds, as well as in-kind resources, such as public land or professional services.

You can also use local regulatory tools, such as inclusionary zoning or density bonuses, to complement CDBG program strategies.

Consider how to leverage community assets like transit, capital improvements, and CDBG financing tools, such as Section 108 Program, revolving loan funds, and float funding.

In Odessa, Texas, partnerships are key to their success.

I think it's incumbent upon us as CDBG practitioners to find people that can assist in the projects that will make a difference in your community. Over the years we've been blessed to be able to partner with local contractors, local developers, real estate agents, bankers, and certainly the city has also invested its own money to make sure that the needs of our community are met. Partnerships are vital to anything that we do and especially in an area where you have reduced funds they are critical for what you do.

When any amount of CDBG funding is used in a project, the entire project is subject to CDBG regulations and cross-cutting requirements. These requirements, such as prevailing wages or environmental review procedures, can affect project budgets and schedules.

Now let's talk about setting goals.

Setting goals helps grantees and stakeholders come together around a shared vision. To generate momentum, it is important to set goals that are realistic and achievable.

Entitlement communities set goals that are informed by local needs and opportunities.

In developing their CDBG goals, States must balance the needs of many non-entitlement communities.

When developing CDBG goals for the Consolidated Plan, create goals that are achievable within a three to five year time frame. Goals may identify both outputs and outcomes.

Outputs are specific completed activities, products, or deliverables, such as a number of housing units rehabilitated or the linear feet of sidewalks constructed.

Outcomes are changes in conditions as a result of investments, such as an increase in the number of children living in lead-safe housing or an increase in new businesses opened.

Goals identify the changes to be made, as well as the measures for success.

Involving stakeholders when setting goals helps generate support for the strategies you will implement. It is also a good way to assess their feasibility, as stakeholders can identify issues or challenges.

Let's see how the City of Philadelphia involved stakeholders to maximize CDBG success.

One of the things that Judge Rizzo did was create a steering committee. And that steering committee she brought together lender attorneys, legal advocates, housing counselors, all together to make sure that partnerships were created so that the program itself can remain strong. This allows then the CDBG dollars - we expect that with this system of partnership and collaboration that people work together to maximize the use of CDBG dollars to get a positive outcome.

Evaluating performance is one of the most valuable and informative stages in the CDBG lifecycle and goes beyond simply reporting accomplishments.

When grantees determine what works well and what doesn't and use this information to inform planning and program design, their programs improve and people benefit.

Progress reports, monitoring letters, the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report or CAPER, and Performance Evaluation Report or PER, provide data you can use to evaluate performance. In addition, seek input from beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Be sure to provide your findings to decision makers to inform future program design.

In the next video, we hear from the City of Rock Island's Development Programs Manager.

It's important in a community to try to find the best options that fit your community and to be respectful of where things have started and to certainly tweak programs that you may already have so go back and take a look and maybe modify or adapt where you need to. The whole idea is to be consistent but to also have new tools out there for people to utilize. You have to keep the happy mix.

Before designing your CDBG program, consider how you will measure progress and define success. Use the consolidated planning process to secure buy-in from stakeholders on a system of performance measurement that is both realistic and informative. And to ensure it's working as planned, re-evaluate your overall program design each year when developing your Annual Action Plan.

We have just discussed in Part One: Planning, how well thought out and inclusive planning paves the way for effective and efficient implementation of projects and activities.

Click the link to view Part Two of this series: Implementation, for information on aspects of implementation that grantees should consider to ensure they have successful programs.

Click on any resource link to help you effectively design your CDBG activities and overall program.