

July 27, 2015
State CDBG Program – Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

HCD

Guerdon Stuckey - Assistant Deputy Director
Leticia Johnson – CDBG Manager
Jon Diedesch – EHAP CD Representative
Patrick Talbott – CDBG Representative
Karen Patterson – Section Chief, Operations
George Rodine – Specialist

CDBG Advisory Committee Members (In Person at HCD Office)

Lorie Adams – Principal, Adams/Ashby Group
Esperanza Colio-Warren – Community & Economic Development Manager, County of Imperial
Terry Cox – Community Development Specialist, Cox Consulting
Louise Collis – Senior Program Manager, City of West Sacramento
Jennifer Owen – Housing & Economic Development Coordinator, City of Fort Bragg

CDBG Advisory Committee Members (Via Webinar)

Paula Mushrush – Housing & Grants Coordinator, County of Humboldt
Rachelle Kellogg – Community Development Director, City of Sonora
Jenna Aguilera – Chief, Grants and Loans Division, County of Lassen

Other Persons (Via Webinar)

Paul Ashby – Principal, Adams/Ashby Group
Nicole McCay – HOME Manager

Absent:

CDBG Advisory Committee Members

Chuck Kinney – Deputy Director, Planning, Kings County
Matt Perry – County Administrative Officer, County of Lake
Margaret Silveira – City Manager, City of Lakeport
Jeff Lucas – Principal, CDS
Susan Atkins – Program Director, Self Help Enterprises
Nancy Swift – Executive Director, Jefferson Economic Development Institute (JEDI)

Discussion

Review of June 30, 2015 minutes:

Advisory Committee Members requested that HCD staff provide comments made about proposed CDBG State regulation changes to the existing meeting minutes and repost on the website. Advisory Members would like to refer to the comments and suggestions made about the proposed State regulation changes and to use as a reference document for other stakeholders. HCD staff agreed to send out a separate document to members that captures the comments and discussion on the proposed State regulation amendments.

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HCD staff pointed out that comments provided during the June 30, 2015 meeting were outside and in advance of the formal public comment period forthcoming. Consequently, members are encouraged to send in formal comments during the public comment period anticipated to begin sometime in August, 2015.

Advisory Committee Members wanted more detail in the minutes about the discussions not just action items. HCD agreed to include more detail of discussion items in future meeting minutes.

Advisory Committee Members requested to review meeting minutes prior to posting on the HCD website. Draft minutes for the July 27th meeting will be sent to members before the August 31st meeting. The July 27th minutes will be reviewed at the August meeting and finalized considering comments or revisions from members. Minutes for the July 27th meeting will be posted on the CDBG advisory committee webpage once finalized.

Review of Agenda:

Advisory Committee Members requested that an item be added to the agenda for impromptu agenda discussions. Advisory Members would get two to five minutes to briefly discuss CDBG program topics. HCD staff agreed to add an “open discussion or round robin” agenda item for this purpose.

Advisory Committee Members would like to see the agenda before it gets posted. A draft agenda will be forwarded to members before the August 31st meeting.

Review Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Committee Members:

One member suggested changing the term ‘sounding board.’ HCD staff will look into replacing this term on the Roles and Responsibilities document and provide members with another draft to review before posting.

One member indicated a need to clarify HCD / CDBG mission and goals so as to provide more relevant comments on the proposed Roles and Responsibilities document. HCD staff pointed members to the CDBG home page which includes narratives on the State CDBG Mission, HUD Objective and a brief history of the State CDBG program.

Review Status of CDBG State Regulation Amendment Package:

HCD staff summarized the status of the State regulation amendment package. The Package was sent to agency and returned with no comments. The package is scheduled to go on to Department of Finance (DoF) in August. After returning from DoF, the package will be sent onto Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for review and comment. At that time, the formal public comment period will begin and public comments will be accepted.

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Review of DFA Alignment:

Guerdon Stuckey presented a Power Point presentation to brief members on DFA's transition to a functional alignment and how the Division will function as it moves into its new structure. He emphasized that there would not be a "loss" in HCD expertise and that all staff would be working together so customers got the highest level of service. HCD staff will be using communication systems that ensure representatives stay in contact with grantees and respond promptly to questions.

HCD has completed its external customer survey and DFA will be using the results of the survey to ensure constant improvements continue with our programs, similar to the improvements CDBG has completed over the past few years.

Advisory members expressed concerns that the new alignment structure would make the CDBG program more challenging as new contract representatives come up to speed and learn the program.

Advisory Member Items:

Monitoring: a member asked if Advisory Members and grantees could be given an annual update on monitoring issues and trends that CDBG staff is encountering in the field. Additionally, the member suggested this be posted on the CDBG webpage.

HCD staff responded that providing issues and trends found during monitoring visits may not be very helpful to grantees since monitoring staff focus on identified program areas or overlays and these targeted areas change annually. Whenever they focus on an area they always find issues and those issues vary depending on local capacity. Therefore, it would be very difficult to provide a list of monitoring issues which would be applicable to all state CDBG grantees, as each monitoring is unique. It is best for grantees to develop local capacity and ask state staff for guidance often.

HCD staff spoke about the concept of doing a "pre-monitoring" visit. The visit would be mid-way through the contract period and would not result in a monitoring report with formal findings or concerns but rather would be technical assistance only, resulting in an individualized technical assistance plan for the jurisdiction. Some members liked this idea and some members had did not like this concept and had concerns around the amount of time needed by the jurisdiction to attend both a 'pre-monitoring' visit and then another formal monitoring visit.

Some members indicated the monitoring checklists on the CDBG website were good, but the "Best Practices" provided by HOME Program were better.

Some members stated that monitoring visits would improve if the CDBG program staff did more regional trainings on an annual basis. They also recommended HCD staff should conduct more regular trainings on specific topics or overlays.

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Members suggested using WebEx conference calls or Webinars to provide technical assistance to one or two grantees at the same time.

Role of Committee Members' in advising CDBG practitioners and assisting HCD:

As part of defining their roles, members wished to discuss what HCD expectations were for them. Members did not want their formal role to include providing technical assistance, although they recognized they do provide guidance at times, it should not be part of the formal role. HCD concurred. There was mention of assigning “regions” to the members for them to represent, but most thought they already had regions where they worked and did not want it formalized.

Members were willing to help CDBG staff do outreach to new CDBG eligible grantees and those that are not participating in the State CDBG non-entitlement program.

Members requested to see the results of the Department’s external survey. HCD agreed to provide comments received from the survey relating to the CDBG program.

Procurement Requirement: Need to resolve question on procurement policy in new CDBG procurement chapter. Member requested staff to research policy in the procurement chapter discussing eligible bids to be within five percent (5%) of cost estimate. Member suggested that State contract standards allow bids to be within ten percent (10%).

Review of New CDBG Annual Report: Members believe the report is too much work, too complicated detailed. It should not require reporting on every beneficiary (public services specifically). The report asks for data that has not been collected historically by the CDBG self-certification of income form. The report data is different than data collected by service providers reporting to other funders (public services specifically).

Discuss Communicating Website Updates: Members expressed concerns that CDBG forms and documents are being updated on the website without noticing grantees. This can lead to grantees using old outdated forms, which get rejected by CDBG staff and have to be redone by grantees. This can lead to monitoring issues (findings or concerns) if old forms or documents are in the CDBG files at time of HCD monitoring.

Members suggested that all forms have a revision date on them so as to clarify which version of the form is on-line. Members suggested that the website have dates of posting on each document so it is clear when the last version was posted and this can be compared to the forms being used by grantees.

Members suggest HCD design a policy around when posting or reposting forms and documents on the CDBG webpage should require a list serve announcement or email, i.e. GMM chapters or guidelines.

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Members suggested that an automated system be put in place that sends out a notice about updates to the CDBG webpage, each time a change is done.

Members suggested that monitoring staff allow for use of old forms until new forms are posted. Allow use of old forms without it triggering a finding, but just keep it as a concern at monitoring.

Summary of Accomplishments from Action Items discussed at the June 30th meeting:

- 1) HCD to begin posting and making available, starting with this meeting, the Advisory Committee Meeting agendas and minutes on the CDBG website on the Advisory Committee page.
 - ✓ Completed.
- 2) HCD to post on the CDBG website on the Advisory Committee page the final version of the Roles and Responsibilities of CDBG Advisory Committee. Members have until the end of July to provide feedback to HCD staff on the draft roles and responsibilities provided at the meeting.
 - ✓ Pending Final Review.
- 3) HCD, based on feedback from stakeholders, will post FAQ's to the CDBG website to assist them with questions.
 - ✓ In Process, HCD staff is compiling FAQ's.
- 4) HCD to allow Members to provide suggestions for topics to be added to the meeting agendas. Guerdon Stuckey to have discretion of selecting agenda items in order to keep topics with broad-based relevancy on the agenda and leave issues or topics with narrow scopes or relevant to single entities for another forum.
 - ✓ Completed.
- 5) HCD to consider and look into using different technology for Members who call into the meeting, such as a webinar format, that would allow people to type questions and raise their hands without interrupting speakers.
 - ✓ Completed, meetings are being conducted as webinars.
- 6) HCD to look for opportunities to bring HUD to the table and participate in the Advisory Committee meetings to communicate planning and programmatic

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activities underway and potential timing of public input, for Members' consideration and to prioritize level of engagement on various efforts.

- ✓ On-going.
- 7) HCD to communicate to Members, via targeted emails, on pending changes in State and Federal regulations, policies and procedures that CDBG program staff is aware of, such as pending Section 3 and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing changes. HCD to communicate planning and programmatic activities underway and potential timing of public input, for Members' consideration and to prioritize level of engagement on various efforts.
 - ✓ Completed, Section 3 rule changes were provided to members and details around DFA's functional alignment structure presented at July 27th meeting.
- 8) HCD to continue discussions with HUD on new, proposed Section 3 thresholds and the programmatic impacts to CDBG non-entitlement jurisdictions in California.
 - ✓ Completed, impacts and comments on Section 3 rule changes communicated to HUD.
- 9) Advisory Committee Members to provide comments and feedback on proposed State regulation amendments during the public comment period.
 - ✓ Pending the beginning of the public comment period.
- 10) HCD to internally discuss including links to Federal statutes on the CDBG website, similar to the links currently on the site to Federal and State regulations and CFR's. Additionally, HCD to include a link to access 'Basically CDBG for States' on the CDBG website.
 - ✓ Completed, links to Federal statutes are already on the CDBG home page. The 'Basically CDBG for States' link is in process, HCD staff is coordinating these updates to website.
- 11) General agreement to meet more regularly to foster improved communication. HCD scheduled monthly meetings set for the end of July and August.
 - ✓ Completed, monthly meetings scheduled through October 2015.

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Summary of Accomplishments from Action Items discussed at July 27th meeting:

1) HCD staff will provide draft copy of minutes to Advisory Committee Members for review and discussion at the meeting. Final version of minutes will be posted after the meeting.

✓ Completed.

2) HCD staff will not provide a draft agenda to CDBG Advisory committee for comments and edits prior to meeting. HCD staff will solicit agenda items before each meeting and provide time on every agenda for members to discuss other topics not included on the agenda.

✓ Completed.

3) HCD staff will provide summary of results from the Department external customer survey at the meeting.

✓ Completed.

4) HCD staff will report back on methods to notify customers of website updates.

✓ Pending, HCD Staff is looking at software “Constant Contact” to update customers on program changes and website updates. Staff is working to have a “Revised date” on all forms and documents on the webpage. Staff is working on putting a “posted date” on webpage documents.

5) HCD staff to provide guidance on the stipulation in the procurement chapter discussing eligibility of bids within five percent (5%) of cost estimate.

✓ Completed, staff spoke with member and clarified the five percent (5%) language and policy included in the new procurement chapter.