



YEAR IN REVIEW: 2007

By Danielle Garcia

As we close out another calendar year, we can now step back and take a moment to recognize many of the accomplishments the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Division and our partner agencies have achieved in 2007. The year has brought many important changes and opportunities for growth. The following is a brief overview of some of the successful projects undertaken by the Division and its partners.

Consultant Hired to Assist With the 2008-2013 Consolidated Plan: In an important move, the CDBG Division signed an agreement with the consulting firm of Western Economic Services, culminating a six-month process to retain professional services to develop a new 2008-2013 Consolidated Plan. Currently under development, the draft Consolidated Plan will be ready by February 29, 2008, with the final document ready for public comment in April 2008. If approved by the Board of Supervisors on May 27, 2008, it will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on May 30, 2008. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Agency Satisfaction Survey: The results are in and the news is good. As some of you may already be aware, the CDBG Division recently administered an Agency Satisfaction Survey to participating agencies. The Survey was available online from September 11 to October 31, 2007 and assessed the services and support rendered by the CDBG Division from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. A total of 30 agencies responded and the results of the survey were quite positive overall providing an invaluable tool with which to improve our partnership with our agencies.

In-Progress Monitoring: The Program Management Unit of the CDBG Division has spent the last 12 months implementing the "In-Progress Monitoring" (IPM). IPM provides the opportunity for a real time assessment of CDBG-funded projects within the Fiscal Year (FY) they are active. Not only does it facilitate better communication between the Community Development Commission (CDC) and its partners, but it also provides an effective vehicle for improving technical support and project implementation.

Digital Signature Implementation: Something newly implemented in 2007 was the transition to electronic signatures for all contracts and amendments between the CDBG Division and its participating agencies. This move to an electronic signature procedure has saved time and resources. Most importantly, it has added to the overall efficiency of processing official CDC documents.

GREEN GRANT CELEBRATION

By Danielle Garcia

Great news on the success of the new Enterprise Home Ownership Partners (EHOP) Green Grant Program! On December 5, 2007, EHOP showcased their first house retrofitted with solar panels, ceiling and floor insulation, and a tankless water heater. The home of Margarita Garcia received these green improvements which reduced her energy costs by up to 50%. This event also marked the EHOP's 50th home solar installation project completed in the Los Angeles region.

The Green Grant Program provides low- and moderate-income residents the opportunity to rehabilitate their homes using energy-efficient improvements at no cost. The First Supervisorial District has allocated over half a million dollars to help low-income homeowners in East Los Angeles rehabilitate their homes by installing solar and energy enhancements.

This new and innovative idea of making energy efficiency accessible to those without the financial means to invest in such costly improvements accomplishes a number of things. Energy costs are reduced for those whose resources are already stretched uncomfortably thin. The program serves as an environmental role model conveying to others that "green" improvements are possible for everyone, and on a larger scale, the program provides a crucial opportunity to start reducing the strain on the world's energy resources. For more information on the programs please contact Annette Orozco, of EHOP, at (323) 833-0053, ext. 24.

Important Dates:

January 2008

01-01-08
CDC Offices Closed in Observance of the New Year's Holiday

01-21-08
CDC Offices Closed in Observance of the Martin Luther King Holiday

01-25-2008
All Agencies: 2nd Quarter 07-08 Web-based QPRs due



For further information, please contact your Program Manager.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Danielle Garcia

On December 26, 2007, the President signed into law legislation that funds the CDBG Program for 2008. The CDBG funding was part of an Omnibus bill passed by Congress and sent to the President late in the month in the effort to pass a budget before the current continuing resolution ran out, at the end of December. Although its good news that Program funding has been approved, it's not great news because the Program sustained another funding cut for the 2008 Program Year.

As reported in the previous issue of the E-Newsletter, an initial conference report between the House and the Senate, last month provided \$3.79 billion for CDBG, which was \$100 million above 2007, but about \$400 million below 2001 funding levels. This amount was amended once it was lumped into an Omnibus spending bill along with ten (10) other appropriation bills. The Omnibus bill however **cut** the CDBG formula funding by \$197 million from what was proposed in the conference report (\$3.79 billion to \$3.593 billion) and is \$118 million less than the FY 2007 funding level of \$3.71 billion. These numbers equate to a 5.2% decrease from funding levels proposed by the conference report and a 3.2% decrease from funding levels established in FY 2007. The Omnibus package adheres to the Administration's FY 2008 budget request total of \$933 billion instead of the \$954 billion proposed by the House and the Senate. After the Senate added additional funds to accommodate the Administration's request for the war in Iraq, the Omnibus was sent back to the House of Representatives for approval. Once the House approved the Omnibus package, the bill was sent to the President where it was signed into law. With the legislation approved, HUD will now have to calculate the national CDBG funding allocations for entitlement jurisdictions. We know the new allocations will result in a funding reduction for the Los Angeles Urban County, but until we get the final numbers from HUD, we will have to wait to see how the specific reduction impacts the County's Program. We will keep you posted and let you know as soon as we get the new budget numbers.



Please update your records: Yvonne Brathwaite Burke is the new Chair of the Board of Supervisors.

