

CDBG E-Newsletter

Bi-Monthly Update for Participating Agencies from the Community Development Block Grant Division

Issue XXXII

December 2008 - January 2009

CDBG Community Meetings: Residents Come Together



Los Angeles County Representatives at hand to answer resident questions during the 2nd District meeting at Athens Park on September 18, 2008.

The end of fall usually marks the period of the year when things begin to wind down before the winter holidays. For the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Division, the end of fall however, signifies that the Community Meetings are in full swing. No time for winding down, here!

September 25th marked the end of the meeting series; one (1) meeting was held in each Supervisorial District. The meetings are designed to educate residents about the CDBG Program, solicit input through a survey on their community and economic development needs, and ask questions about County services.

Roughly, 152 residents from all over the unincorporated County attended the meetings providing valuable input and taking the time to meet with the various County department

representatives who were on hand to answer questions and assist with important issues and concerns.

The Community Development Commission (CDC) would like to, once again, thank the County Departments that helped make these meetings a success. Representatives in attendance included the Departments of: Regional Planning, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Community and Senior Services, Public Library, Environmental Health, Consumer Affairs, Fire, and the Sheriff. Other County agencies also included the Housing Rights Center and the Fair Housing Foundation of Long Beach. With the help of these Departments and a host of other individuals, the meetings went off smoothly providing everyone involved with the opportunity to learn more about the various Los Angeles County communities and the important work that is being done to reach out to them.

For information on the results of the resident surveys, please see *Survey Results, page 2*.

CAPER: 2007-2008 Reporting Completed!

The last few months of every year mark an important time for our federal programs. Specifically, this is when the CDBG Division analyzes and reports our Program accomplishments to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) summarizes the accomplishments achieved through each of our three (3) formula grants: CDBG, Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Shelter Grant. The document is the end product of the annual Consolidated Plan cycle, and reports the accomplishments achieved in comparison to the goals established in both the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plan.


According to the CAPER, the County has exceeded the minimum federal regulation requiring that 70% of CDBG program expenditures benefit low- and moderate-income persons. In 2007-2008, 96% of the Program expenditures benefited low- and moderate-income persons. In meeting the national objectives of the program, \$10.6 million was spent on low/mod area activities; \$6.2 million on low/mod limited clientele; \$11.6 million on low/mod housing; \$5.1

million on low/mod jobs; \$1.3 million on slum/blight area and spot activities; and \$5.9 million on other activities.

The overall accomplishments of the CDBG Program for 2007-2008 were quite impressive. Over 1.2 million people were served with a variety of services, ranging from recreation programs to architectural barrier removal. Two hundred sixty public facilities were improved; 5,563 businesses were assisted through activities such as façade improvements, micro loans, and technical assistance; and 5,284 housing units were assisted through residential rehabilitation and code enforcement activities.

The Grants Reporting and Administration Team had the challenging task of creating the document within 90 days following the end of the grantee's program year. The CAPER was successfully completed by September 29th, and copies of its Draft version were sent to 29 selected community libraries throughout the County, while the public was notified in the Los Angeles Times and La Opinion. The Final 2007-2008 CAPER will be available on the CDC's website in mid-November 2008.

Survey Results: Needs Identified Across the Unincorporated County



The results of the 2008 Community Meeting *Resident Surveys* have now been tallied, and reveal a very interesting snapshot of the County's five (5) Supervisorial Districts.

Although each district is very unique, as a whole, they nevertheless share similar needs. Included among the top five (5) areas of greatest need were anti-crime programs, youth services/centers, and educational services. A cross-section of the survey results indicated that 71.4% of residents surveyed in the 1st District and 77.8% of residents in the 2nd District stated that anti-crime programs are of the *greatest need* in their communities. They also identified the need for more affordable housing, inclusive of both rental or home purchase assistance (consequences of the current mortgage/housing crisis).

On the flip side, as expected, residents also identified needs unique to their area such as more senior housing and drainage improvements (identified by the residents of the 3rd and 5th Districts, respectively). Through this district-by-district approach, CDC staff are able to gather information, and data, which will ultimately assist them in planning for the allocation of future CDBG funds.


Results of the surveys were forwarded to each Supervisorial office in mid-October 2008 and are available for review at: <http://www.lacdc.org/CDCWebsite/CDBG/NewsDisplay.aspx?id=208>.



Above, residents fill out the Community Survey at the 3rd District meeting in West Hollywood on September 16, 2008.

Legislative Update:

Neighborhood Stabilization Program



On July 30, 2008, Congress approved the *Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA) of 2008*, which funds the new *Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)* that will provide emergency assistance to state and local governments. *NSP* provides grants to every state and certain local communities to purchase foreclosed or abandoned homes and to rehabilitate, resell, or redevelop these homes in order to stabilize neighborhoods and stem the decline of house values of neighboring homes.

The County of Los Angeles will receive a one-time \$16.8 million allocation for targeted assistance to areas of greatest need. Participating cities were invited on October 21, 2008 to the CDC to be part of the *NSP* debriefing meeting where general information was shared for all those interested. The following is a brief

outline of some of the main points highlighted during the presentation:

What the Program CAN do:

- Designed to redevelop abandoned and foreclosed homes and properties.

What the Program CANNOT do:

- Not geared to assist those who are at risk of foreclosure, currently in the process of foreclosure, or provide foreclosure prevention activities.
- No public service (supportive or operating costs) can be funded.

What the CDC WILL Do:

Please note that the CDC is currently working to fine-tune the specific details of the *NSP* administration. Nevertheless, what is known is that the administrative responsibilities will be carried out by the CDBG Division, and the programs for implementation will be under the Housing Development and

Preservation (HD&P) Division.

Modeled after successful existing housing programs, HD&P developed the **Housing and Economic Recovery Ownership Program (HERO)** and the **Rental Program**, to accommodate *NSP* funding.

In general, HERO is designed to assist first-time low-moderate to middle-income homebuyers, including Junior Trust Deeds and assistance with providing down payments and/or closing costs. The *NSP* Rental Program will allow for the acquisition, rehabilitation, and rental of 1-4 units by soliciting non-profit developers to acquire and rehabilitate existing 1-4 unit properties for rental to homeless or other special needs populations.

The specifics on *NSP* activities have not, as yet, been finalized. However, as soon as more concrete program details are revealed, information will be posted on the CDC website.

Year In Review: 2008 CDBG and Partner Highlights

As we close out yet another calendar year, we can now step back and take a moment to reflect on the many accomplishments the CDBG Division and our partner agencies have achieved in 2008. The year has brought many important changes and opportunities for growth. The following is a brief overview of some of the successful projects and accomplishments undertaken by the CDBG Division and its partners.

Implementation of Residential Rehabilitation Module-

On July 1, 2008, the CDBG Division launched the new *Residential Rehabilitation Module* as part of the online CDBG System. The new system allows our participating agencies to transmit and upload client data, *Property IDs*, and displacement and contractor information directly into the module for staff use in conducting In-Progress Monitoring and environmental reviews. The data can also be utilized by the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) module in reporting for residential rehabilitation programs.

CDC Re-qualification for 2009-2011 CDBG/HOME Urban County Entitlement Status-

Every three (3) years, the Los Angeles County has the important task of re-qualifying for Entitlement status participation in the Urban County CDBG/HOME Programs. In order to operate both programs under HUD-established urban county configuration, the CDBG Division must gather and satisfy specific HUD performance criteria, including the submission of proper documentation and meeting critical expenditure requirements and accomplishment deadlines. The CDC was successful and the County was notified on July 29, 2008 that we re-qualified for Entitlement status and full participation in the 2009-2011 CDBG/HOME Urban County Program.



Consolidated Plan and Action Plan Approved-

On May 27, 2008, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors officially approved the 2008-2013 Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan for the Los Angeles Urban County (Consolidated Plan) and the 2008-2009 One-Year Action Plan (Action Plan). On May 29th, the CDBG Division submitted both documents to HUD. The development of the Consolidated Plan was truly a team effort between the CDBG and CDC Divisions, as well as our 47 participating cities.



For more information, the Consolidated Plan can be accessed through the following CDC web address: <http://www.lacdc.org/CDCWebsite/CDBG/Home.aspx>, under the site navigation heading "Plans and Reports."

City of Monrovia Area Partnership Receives National Recognition-

The 33rd annual Neighborhoods USA Conference held in Hampton, VA this past spring awarded the City of Monrovia's *Monrovia Area Partnership* (MAP) Program top honors coming in only behind the City of Cincinnati, OH. *MAP* is a comprehensive approach to delivering public services aimed at everything from eliminating crime and blight, to empowering neighborhoods by fostering citizen activism, volunteerism, and community pride. In addition, this innovative program combines City and CDBG funds to support the City's code enforcement activities. *MAP* and the Los Angeles County CDBG Program--an award winning strategy indeed!



Message from the CDBG Division Director

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the hard work and dedication each of our participating agencies contribute toward fulfilling the CDBG Division's mission of "putting dollars into action."

As 2008 comes to a close, please take some time to reflect on your own accomplishments as a partner in making Los Angeles County not only a better place to live and work, but also, a place ready to take on whatever the future brings.

From all of us in the CDBG Division, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

*-Terry Gonzalez, Director
CDBG Division*

