

# National Community Development Week Tool Kit



**#CDWeek2022 #CDBGworks**

The 2022 National Community Development (CD) Week will be celebrated April 11-15. This tool kit was developed by the CDBG Coalition to help communities with the planning and implementation of their National CD Week activities.

## Why National Community Development Week?

The objective of National Community Development Week is to educate Congressional Members and the community on the importance of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, its impact on the community, and the need for increased program funding.

National Community Development Week will be held **April 11-15, 2022**. This is a critical time for appropriations; work on the upcoming FY 2023 HUD funding bill will be in the initial stages. National Community Development Week provides a perfect forum to cement the importance of CDBG in the minds of those in Washington to increase program funding.

National Community Development Week was created in 1986 to bring national attention to the CDBG Program through grassroots support at a time when the program was facing scrutiny by Congress. Grassroots support means activities by state and local CDBG grantees to recognize the program, showcase projects, and share program impact data with Congress. It provides the opportunity for communities to promote, educate, and advocate on behalf of the program. It is intentionally held during the Congressional appropriations season to allow for a concerted grassroots effort to promote the program. It is important for all communities that receive CDBG funds to participate in National Community Development Week to amplify the grassroots voice.

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 are a part of the conversation by participating in National Community Development Week. The CDBG Coalition will seek increased funding for CDBG in FY 2023 and your participation in National Community Development Week helps tremendously to support those efforts.

If you receive CDBG funding, then you should participate in National Community Development Week. We urge all CDBG grantees to issue a proclamation recognizing the CDBG program and program accomplishments. We urge program grantees and subrecipients to share program impact data with Congress by developing a fact sheet that includes information on recently funded/completed CDBG projects, beneficiaries served, and any facts or figures that demonstrate the program's results and impacts. We are asking members to share that information with Congressional members in which the CDBG-funded project or program is located through a face-to-face meeting in their district office or virtually using Zoom or some other technology. Plug in the zip code of the project location [here](#) to locate the House member. Go [here](#) to locate Senators. In addition to meetings, Congressional members like to see first-hand the completed CDBG projects and meet with program beneficiaries, so consider conducting a tour of local CDBG-funded projects for the Congressional members.

We also encourage you to use social media during National CD Week to post your events and activities. Social media posts and activities developed by Pasco County, FL from last year's National CD Week are available [here](#) as a reference for you in developing your own events, activities, and posts.

## National Community Development Week Activities

National Community Development Week is designed to focus local as well as national attention on the CDBG program. Public support and involvement from Congressional offices, local and state elected officials, program subrecipients, media, community leaders, and program beneficiaries in National Community Development Week is important. While communities develop a variety of activities to celebrate National Community Development Week, we urge jurisdictions to focus on *at least* one of the following activities.

### ***Issue a Press Release and Proclamation***

Issue a press release announcing National Community Development Week. Follow-up with the passage of a National Community Development Week proclamation by your local elected body. Send the press release and proclamation to local media outlets and to your Congressional delegation. These activities require minimal effort and can be undertaken by every grantee. A sample press release and proclamation are included in this guidebook.

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.

### Examples

**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 Commission to support CDBG.

### ***Meet with Your Congressional Delegation or Send an Educational Video and Other Materials***

Meeting with your Congressional members or their staff is one of the most effective ways of supporting the CDBG program since it affords Congressional members the opportunity to hear first-hand how the funds are being used. Highlighting the work that occurs with CDBG dollars in your community creates a tangible connection for lawmakers between the funding they appropriate for the program and improvements to their states and districts. Events like National Community Development Week attract positive attention and publicity for CDBG, which when shared with your lawmakers, is instrumental in creating the next generation of CDBG champions on Capitol Hill. Congressional members like to hear directly from the organizations or people the program serves. If possible, put a face to your program by including beneficiaries and subrecipients in the meeting. Come prepared with a fact sheet that outlines program accomplishments: recent projects/programs funded with CDBG, the number of LMI beneficiaries served, jobs created/retained (if any), and information that relays the impact of the program.

If your Congressional member or their staff are not available to meet during National CD Week, then try to schedule a meeting during August when all members of Congress will be back home

for the entire month or another [Congressional recess](#) period that meets your needs. You can also email your Congressional offices a short YouTube video that shows recently funded/completed CDBG programs and outline your program accomplishments in the video remarks. Make sure to include program beneficiaries in your meetings and videos to provide testimonials on the benefits of the program. Creating a video in-house using YouTube is an economical and easy method of documenting your National CD Week activities and sharing it with local media and Congressional offices.

### ***Develop a Tour of Local Projects or Focus on a Project Groundbreaking or Kick-Off Event***

Invite Congressional offices to tour local CDBG projects. Select projects that positively showcase the CDBG program. Develop a written project description to hand out during the tour. Please see the example below from the City of St. Louis, MO. Make sure participants meet program beneficiaries – people who have directly benefitted from the program.

#### **National CD Week – Past Examples**

**St. Louis, MO** bus tour packet

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

**Clarksville, TN** organized a tour of CDBG-funded homeless assistance projects. Each sub-recipient was given time to highlight their facility and discuss programs and services, how CDBG funds support their program, and how CDBG funds are leveraged. The following sub-recipients participated in the tour: Clarksville-Montgomery County Community Action Agency (Old Firehouse Day Shelter), United Methodist Urban Ministries (Grace Assistance and Safe House), Lighthouse Mission Ministries (Safe Harbor of Clarksville), and Manna Café.

**Quincy, MA** 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 were on hand to celebrate the opening of the program.

**La Crosse, WI** kicked off National Community Development Week 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.

### ***Participate in the National Community Development Week Social Media Messaging Campaign***

We are asking all CDBG grantees and their subrecipients to participate with us in a national social media messaging campaign during National Community Development Week to amplify

our collective voices in support of the CDBG program. Please work with your communications office or the communications person in your office to post the messages through the appropriate channels.

## **Daily CDBG Program Social Media Posts, April 11-15, 2022**

### **Monday – April 11**

**#CDBG** attracts investment in underserved communities. Every \$1.00 of **#CDBG** leverages another \$3.68. **#CDBGworks #CDWeek2022**

### **Tuesday – April 12**

The need for affordable housing has never been greater. **#CDBG** has helped preserve over 1.25 million units of affordable housing since 2005. **#CDBGworks #CDWeek2022**

### **Wednesday – April 13**

**#CDBG** strengthens communities through infrastructure. Over 51 million people have directly benefitted from CDBG-funded public improvements since 2005. **#CDBGworks #CDWeek2022**

### **Thursday – April 14**

**#CDBG** helps create and retain local jobs having created/retained 454,961 economic development jobs since 2005. **#CDBGworks #CDWeek2022**

### **Friday – April 15**

**#CDBG** benefits the nation and is accessible to every Congressional district. **#CDBGworks #CDWeek2022**

## **Other National Community Development Week Activities**

The following list provides you with other options for National Community Development Week activities. These activities take minimal effort. Make sure to reiterate the need for increased funding for CDBG in whatever activities you choose.

- Ask the Mayor/County Executive or a Commissioner to write an op-ed to your local newspaper describing the importance of CDBG to the community and the need for more program funding.
- Email a letter to your lawmakers describing recent community development projects and the role CDBG played in making them happen and the impact of the projects on your community.
- Ask your local newspaper to do a story on one of your projects.
- Use your jurisdiction's website to announce National Community Development Week and post information on CDBG funded projects on the front page.

More ideas for National Community Development Week activities can be found at the following CDBG grantee links.

[Community Development Week - Nebraska Department of Economic Development](#)

[Louisiana Office of Community Development: Resources for Local Governments](#)

## **Involve Program Partners and Beneficiaries**

The CDBG and HOME stories cannot be told without incorporating the testimony of the many subrecipients and beneficiaries who are served through the program. Subrecipients and program beneficiaries are on the front lines of providing and receiving CDBG assistance. They are essential to telling the CDBG story. Because of their connection to the program, they need to be part of National CD Week. 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. Communities must use a variety of methods to reach all stakeholders. Congressional Members want to hear how program dollars are being spent to improve their communities, so the use of local media (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 CD Week. Include information on the impact of the CDBG program in the community.
- Use social media to alert followers to National CD Week activities.
- Use your jurisdiction's website to advertise National CD Week events and provide information on CDBG funded projects
- Invite the local media to cover your National CD Week events.
- Post public banners throughout the community including signage at CDBG funded projects

### Marketing Examples

**Burlington, VT** distributed a press release and fact sheet to 125 contacts throughout Vermont, as well as to Vermont's Congressional delegation. Each day of National Community Development Week, the city highlighted CDBG programs and photos on its Facebook page, demonstrating the broad spectrum of agencies, beneficiaries, and communities integral to the Burlington CDBG story. CDBG-funded agencies submitted photos and narratives of their projects. Each post contained a website and social media link to learn more about the featured organization. The city also aired a multitude of PSAs on the local radio station to provide information to residents on the use of CDBG for economic development, housing, and initiatives to serve the most vulnerable residents. In addition, a local radio show featured a 15-minute segment on National Community Development Week with a focus on the city's youth programs. The program hosted two CDBG grantees, the Sara Holbrook Community Center, and the Burlington Police Department. The discussion centered on how CDBG is used to help the city's youth and included a focus on reaching at risk youth.

**Shreveport, LA** promoted National Community Development Week through PSAs at local radio stations, the City's website, and through departmental newsletters. The city also posted "Celebrating CDBG Week" on a digital billboard on Interstate 20.

**Richland County, SC** made the public aware of the CDBG projects in their community by providing signage at local projects. The signs had two main purposes: (1) to highlight the work that has been done in Richland County to enhance the lives of low and moderate-income people; and (2) to showcase the many ways that CDBG dollars have been spent in the community. The signs were strategically placed throughout Richland County at ten (10) different completed projects.

## FURTHER GUIDANCE

### Social Media Guidance

National Community Development Week, April 11-15, 2022

#CDWeek2022, #CDBGworks

- **Importance of the # (Hashtag) - #CDWeek2022, #CDBGworks**

Hashtags (#) label posts for ease of searching for social media content by topic. 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 into social media posting.
- **Practical Applications**
  - Use social media to “call to action” such as asking followers to call legislators about CDBG 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.

## How to Schedule a Meeting with Your Congressional Offices

Contact their secretary/scheduler to make an appointment. Go to the links below to locate the district office information for your Congressional delegation. It is usually posted at the bottom of their web page. You will 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.

House of Representatives: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

U.S. Senate: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact>

## **SAMPLE DOCUMENTS**

*(Please feel free to modify these documents)*

### **SAMPLE PROCLAMATION/RESOLUTION**

*Present this proclamation to your Congressional Members during National Community Development Week.*

**WHEREAS**, the week of April 11-15, 2022, has been designated as National Community Development Week to celebrate the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDBG Program provides annual funding and flexibility to local communities to provide decent, safe and affordable housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities to low- and moderate-income people; and

**WHEREAS**, over the past three years, our community has received a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in CDBG funds and has funded a variety of projects that have directly benefited our citizens and neighborhoods; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ designates the week of April 11-15, 2022, as National Community Development Week in support of this valuable program that has made tremendous contributions to the viability of the housing stock, infrastructure, public services, and the economic well-being of our community.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that our community urges Congress and the Biden Administration to recognize the outstanding work being done locally and nationally with CDBG by supporting increased funding for the program in FY 2023.

### **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

**The City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ Celebrates National Community Development Week; April 11-15, 2022**

Mayor/County Executive \_\_\_\_\_ and the City/County Council today issued a proclamation supporting the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and recognizing National Community Development Week, April 11-15, 2022. The week-long celebration brings together citizens, elected officials, government staff, media, program subrecipients and beneficiaries through events to showcase the impact of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

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 another \$3.68 in other funding, bringing additional resources to communities.

The CDBG program is needed more than ever to help our most vulnerable citizens and improve the overall condition of our neighborhoods. The City/County will highlight the program during National CD Week by conducting the following activities [Describe your CD Week activities].

### **SAMPLE CDBG PROGRAM FACT SHEET**

*Please complete this fact sheet and give it to your Congressional delegation and local press during National CD Week.*

#### *Executive Summary*

*Attach a brief executive summary that answers the following questions:*

- **Why is the CDBG program important to my community?**
- **Who is served by the program?**
- **How is program funding used in my community?**
- **Why is more CDBG funding needed in my community?**

#### *Program Accomplishments*

- For every dollar of CDBG funding another \$\_\_\_\_\_ in private and public funding was leveraged. CDBG assisted \_\_\_\_\_ persons in the past three years.
- CDBG created or retained \_\_\_\_\_ jobs in the past three years.
- CDBG funds in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ were spent on economic development activities (outline the types of activities and the beneficiaries assisted).
- CDBG funds in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ were spent on public improvements (outline the types of activities and the beneficiaries assisted).
- CDBG funds in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ were spent on public services (outline the types of services and the beneficiaries assisted)
- CDBG funds in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ were provided for housing activities (outline the types of activities and the beneficiaries assisted).

### **SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Celebrate National Community Development Week!

Please join me in celebrating National Community Development Week in the City/County of \_\_\_\_\_. We have fun and informative events scheduled and will showcase projects and improvements all around the city made possible by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ is a proud partner in the CDBG program available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. As its name implies, CDBG is a grant provided by the federal government to the city to complete various community building and development projects. The City/County of \_\_\_\_\_ receives about \$1 million annually and has utilized these funds successfully for decades to leverage private dollars and complete significant improvements.

These funds touch nearly every community effort in our city/county, from delivering meals to the elderly, to the creation of community gardens, to preserving local historical landmarks, to renovating neighborhood parks, to assisting countless small businesses, and to supporting workforce development. CDBG is a versatile funding source that helps us revitalize our neighborhoods and improve our citizens' lives. Locally, every \$1 of CDBG funding leverages \$4 in additional investment.

The block grants have helped expand our affordable housing efforts, helping those most at risk from homelessness. Countless local projects would not have been possible with these federal investments.

Please join me in celebrating the successes of the CDBG program and its impact on our community during National Community Development Week, April 11-15, 2022.

-Mayor/County Executive/Commissioner

## CD Week and Beyond: Meeting and Corresponding with Your Congressional Members Throughout the Year

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. It's important to meet with your Congressional members to inform them of the importance of CDBG in your community.

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 to your community; need for increased funding). Bring CDBG-funded project examples. Discuss the impact of CDBG in your 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 email. 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):

The CDBG Coalition thanks you for planning for and participating in National Community Development Week, April 11-15, 2022.

CDBG Coalition

American Library Association  
American Planning Association  
Boys and Girls Clubs of America  
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities  
Council of State Community Development Agencies  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Feeding America  
Habitat for Humanity International  
Heartland Alliance  
Housing Assistance Council  
International Code Council  
International Economic Development Council  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
National Association for County Community and Economic Development  
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of Development Organizations  
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials  
National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies  
National Association of Regional Councils  
National Community Development Association  
National League of Cities  
National Main Street Center  
National NeighborWorks Association  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National Rural Water Association  
National Urban League  
Rebuilding Together  
The Trust for Public Land  
U.S. Conference of Mayors  
YWCA USA

About the CDBG Coalition

*The CDBG Coalition consists of 31 national organizations representing local elected officials, housing and community development professionals, and a wide array of non-profit organizations. The Coalition is dedicated to the preservation of the CDBG program and works to increase awareness and need for increased program funding.*

