



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

### CONSOLIDATED PLAN ADVISORY BOARD (CPAB)

#### NOTES FOR MEETING

WEDNESDAY MAY 13, 2015

SAN DIEGO CIVIC CONCOURSE - NORTH TERRACE ROOMS 207-208

202 'C' STREET - SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joyce Abrams, Council District 1 representative</li> <li>• Dr. Maruta Gardner, Council District 2 representative</li> <li>• Vicki Granowitz, Council District 3 representative</li> <li>• Ken Malbrough, Council District 4 representative</li> <li>• Valerie Brown, Council District 5 representative</li> <li>• Earl Wong, Council District 6 representative</li> <li>• Richard Thesing, Council District 7 representative</li> <li>• Aaron Friberg, Council District 8 representative</li> </ul>	<p>Nohelia Patel, Council District 9 representative</p>

STAFF PRESENT	ATTENDANCE SHEET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sima Thakkar, HUD Program Manager</li> <li>• Eliana Barreiros, HUD Programs Coordinator</li> <li>• Michele Marano, HUD Programs Coordinator</li> <li>• Krissy Toft-Maier, HUD Programs Coordinator</li> <li>• Leo Alarcon, HUD Project Manager</li> </ul>	<p>7 people signed the attendance sheet</p>

#### Call to Order

Ms. Vicki Granowitz called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. with eight board members present. Quorum was achieved at the same time.

#### Approval of Minutes

Ms. Granowitz called for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 2015 meeting. Maruta Gardner motioned to approve the minutes – the motion was seconded by Ms. Brown. Minutes were then approved, 8-0.

#### Staff Announcements

- Mr. Erik Caldwell, director of the Economic Development Department, thanked the CPAB for their time and efforts and extended an invitation to meet with any board member that so desired. When asked by Ms. Granowitz whether he had any specific goals he wanted to speak about, Mr. Caldwell expressed a desire to realize efficiencies and improved internal collaboration and noted the Economic Development Department will realign into the spheres of either community development or business development.

- Ms. Barreiros announced City Council’s approval of the Action Plan on April 28<sup>th</sup>. The Action Plan was due for submittal to HUD on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May. Ms. Barreiros acknowledged the work of the interns on the Action Plan, the Consolidated Plan, GeoTargeting, and Performance Indicator efforts.

Board Announcements

N/A

Non-Agenda and Agenda Public Comment

N/A

Agenda Item(s)

Item 6.a.: Discussion Item:

***FY 2016 CDBG Application Process Review:***

Mr. Leo Alarcon reported the results of the FY16 CDBG RFP applicant and CPAB member surveys. *Please see attached presentation and comment form for more information.*

- Daniel Hernandez of La Maestra Community Health Centers suggested having successful applicants give advice regarding deficiencies to smaller organizations, pledging La Maestra’s willingness to act as a mentor. Responding to Ms. Brown’s inquiry of what the vision of the program would be, Mr. Hernandez replied that it would cover commonly omitted elements that would be obvious to past recipients.
- Ms. Thakkar reaffirmed that the comment section of the scoring criteria is the most logical place for suggestions and capturing the subjectivity of views. Ms. Brown said that she had a different conception of comments as a novice, leaving fewer than optimal, which she would remedy next time. In the interest of allowing a debrief, Ms. Brown proposed adding a general feedback section in addition to the scoring sheet. Mr. Hernandez also suggested applicants be referred to La Maestra and other willing groups, who could inform on the proposal process. Ms. Thakkar floated the idea of soliciting organizations’ participation, stressing that involvement be voluntary. Mr. Malbrough asked why the City can’t require the funded to provide a debrief; Ms. Thakkar wasn’t sure what could be legally required from applicants, unless the language were enshrined in council policy or explicit in the contract. While surprised by agencies’ general willingness to assist one another, she argued for proceeding in baby steps to gauge participation, since competition for funding may limit the amount of cooperation. Ms. Granowitz stressed the importance of organizations not feeling pressured to participate, framed it as an ethical issue.
- Ms. Thakkar proposed broadening assistance from CDBG to grant-writing in general, perhaps using a 3<sup>rd</sup>-party organization to cover topics that pose a challenge to non-

profits. Mr. Thesing expressed support for 3<sup>rd</sup> party coaching if feasible, saying it would limit conflicts between competing organizations. He also alluded to questions in the budget section that would've been a more natural fit elsewhere. Ms. Thakkar explained that the scoring criteria was conceived first, then the application, leading to some awkward placement.

- Ms. Abrams opposed giving points for 0% leverage (seconded by Ms. Granowitz) and reiterated the importance of rules on length, the neglect of which can lead to an unfair advantage. Ms. Abrams also brought up the Brown Act, which can cause discussions to vary based on how groups are split up (lacking communication between them). Ms. Thakkar responded that this may occur even in one group, based on work schedules and attendance; she stressed the review of a mock rather than a real application, so that no member feels coerced to change their score as a result of the discussion.
- Ms. Granowitz mentioned the example of points given for a section left blank, which a mock would curtail by producing consistency. Ms. Abrams appreciated a staff email asking for verification of her comments before they were finalized. Ms. Brown and Ms. Abrams remarked that it obvious who had paid-staff or a grantwriter working on the application. To encourage small agencies to apply, the notion of a 3<sup>rd</sup>-party grantwriter to present on grant terminology and phraseology was suggested. Ms. Brown and Ms. Granowitz developed an Ad Hoc methodology for unspecified subsection points, maintaining consistent allotments for each question across applications. Ms. Gardner suggested reconvening the scoring subcommittee to look at the scoring sheet with a fresh pair of eyes.
- Mr. Malbrough was bothered by the public service allocation of \$1.3 million remaining constant in the face of decreased overall funding. Ms. Granowitz noted the lack of a nexus for some funded agencies, emphasizing the importance of a direct LMI benefit; additionally, she suggested incorporating maintenance into the project estimation to prevent obsolescence, which would require the agency to apply for more funding. It was emphasized that tweaking criteria would not necessarily affect applicants; rather, it would simplify scoring for CPAB by reducing ambiguity.

Ms. Granowitz called for a motion to approve an Ad Hoc subcommittee including herself, Mr. Thesing, Ms. Brown, and perhaps Mr. Wong (with Mr. Malbrough as an alternate). Ms. Gardner motioned and said motion was seconded by Mr. Malbrough. The motion was carried unanimously, 8-0.

Item 6.b.: Discussion Item:

***Update on Geographic Targeting***

Due to lack of time, this item was tabled for the June meeting.

**Adjournment**

- Meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.



# Applicants & CPAB FY 2016 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Process Surveys Results

*Economic Development Department*



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## FY 2016 CDBG Applicant Agencies Survey Results to Date

Question regarding:	Strongly Agree or Agree
Request for Qualification process	86%
Request for Proposal supplemental documents	86%
Mandatory RFP Workshops	82%
Technical Assistance meetings	90%
RFP questionnaire	85%
Timeliness of RFP documents	93%
Scoring Criteria	83%



# ***Do you have any comments in relation to the FY 16 CDBG application process?***

- Challenges:
  - First Time Applicants
    - Amount of background info & instructions
    - Required meetings
    - Technical information
    - Process favors past recipients
  - Notice of funds available
  - Consolidating Funds to Award Next Highest Score
  - CPAB Board



# ***Do you have any comments in relation to the FY 16 CDBG application process?***

- Successes:
  - Process improvements
    - Reduced paperwork
    - Submittal of documents
  - Support from staff
  - CPAB award decision discussions



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## *Suggestions for FY 17?*

- Process & Administration
  - Electronic application/Signature/Submission
  - Set list of attachments/format
  - Applicants limit funds requested
  - Process flow chart
  - Technical assistance meeting longer than 30 minutes
  - Notice of funding available earlier
  - Improvements to CDBG RFP Handbook
  - Encourage new applicants





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## *Suggestions for FY 17?*

- Process & Administration Continued...
  - More advance notice for workshops
  - More time to complete RFP
  - Feedback on applications
  - Lack of commitment for leveraged funds
  - Parallel but separate processes for categories of projects
- CPAB
  - Scoring more clear
  - Ensure fairness to large and small nonprofits



# FY 2016 CDBG Applications' Review Process: CPAB Members Survey Results to Date

Question regarding:	Strongly Agree or Agree
RFP process	100%
Review binders	100%
CPAB review handbook	100%
Ad Hoc discussions	100%
Scoring criteria	100%
Resources and information sufficient	100%
Sufficient time in scoring	71%



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# *CPAB Survey Results: Improvements*

- Practice scoring applications
  - Mock applications
  - Examples of critical needs and not
- More historical data on applicants
- Change the scoring form to follow application exactly
- More time to score



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# ***CPAB Survey Results: Scoring Criteria***

- Leverage section
  - No points for 0%
- New or expanded service definition
- Breakdown points for each section (subcomponents)
- Small group participation varies



# ***CPAB Survey Results: Future Topics and Trainings***

- Discussion of real application
- Examples of critical needs, deferred maintenance and repair
- No scorers represent applicants from their areas
- What makes a good budget
- Mini – training sessions
  - Dedicated time each CPAB meeting on a topic
  - CPAB scoring handbook



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# *CPAB Survey Results*

# Questions???

**Consolidated Plan Advisory Board (CPAB) Meeting of May 13, 2015**  
**Handout**

**Fiscal Year 2016 CDBG RFQ/P Process: Applicants' Survey**

Please see below for responses given to the two open ended questions of the survey by applicants as of May 11, 2015. Note that the responses are not listed in any particular order nor were they edited by staff in any significant manner (only minor edits were made for clarity purposes).

**What are your suggestions for improving the application process for Fiscal Year 2017?**

- *We are grateful to CPAB and City staff for the opportunity to request funding for our important projects and to provide feedback and suggestions for improving the application process in Fiscal Year 2017. Our agency has participated in the City's CDBG process by submitting a number of proposals over many funding cycles. The process has greatly improved over time, and we look forward to continued efforts to make the process even more pragmatic, efficient, fair, and transparent. Publicizing the CPAB handbook in advance of the RFQ would increase transparency and help applicants better understand the process. For instance, during the March 11th meeting, CPAB members discussed not funding a higher scored project because the project exceeded the remaining funds available in the funding category. CPAB decided to fund a project with a lower score and smaller request amount after consolidating remaining funds from two different scoring categories, a process that should be fully explained in the FY17 applicant instructions and the scoring criteria. This relates to the ability of the CPAB to partially fund projects that are among the top-scoring applicants. Currently, there is no statement in any HUD guidelines or any other publicized document outlining the rule preventing partial funding within a category. Furthermore, in previous years, CPAB partially funded projects. If the rule changed, applicants should have been made aware. If there is no federal requirement preventing partial funding, at time of funding decisions, applicants should have an option to adjust their budgets so that projects at the funding cutoff will not be passed over in order to fund a lower-cost, lower-scoring project. For example, in the case of an agency that serves meals, a change of scope would be easy to accomplish should partial funding be allowed. Such a project can accomplish intended goals on a smaller scale to match available funding. In the case of CIPs, we appreciate that all construction bids are no longer required for submission in the RFP, but this means that budgets should be allowed to be constructed with a buffer to allow adjustment because actual costs inevitably change. Organizations have to make the case in the application for their experience and history with executing CDBG contracts, so capacity should be taken into account and CPAB should recognize that organizations have the ability to complete a project within scope through matching funds and/or working with contractors to meet the budget. For instance, in a CIP, an agency could use less expensive materials to complete the project without changing the scope. Furthermore, it is our opinion that remaining funds should be rolled over to the next cycle for the RFP process instead of remaining in the City's accounts unused. Remaining funds from previous years could be used as a contingency to avoid these complications. We suggest that future applications and handbooks should explicitly state that CPAB may consolidate leftover funding from Nonprofit Capital Improvement Projects (NCIP) and Community Economic Development (CED), as was the case during the allocation meeting on March 11th. To us, this practice seemed to compromise the fairness of the process,*

*as scoring criteria and applications for NCIP and CED are different. For example, CED projects are on a 12 month timeline and NCIP are on an 18 month timeline, therefore it seems the scoring criteria should not be interchanged when deciding which projects to fund. A technical assistance meeting longer than 30 minutes would also be helpful to fully understand these processes. In our opinion, applications should limit project request amounts so that a select few projects cannot consume the majority of the available funding.*

- *It was much better than 2015, so keep making improvements. Suggest you develop parallel but separate processes for the two categories of projects; having them together can get confusing. Despite HUD's understandable intent, we do NOT like the requirement that experts hired to develop project estimates cannot bid on projects. It challenges our relationships with our experts. Perhaps CDBG or HUD would be willing to supply consultants to develop the RFP numbers as disinterested and objective 3rd-party analysts.*

- *I felt there was a lack of transparency on the amount of funding the non-profit organizations could compete for. For example, on the letter the NP received from the City it stated the organization could apply for up to over \$300K, however, at the workshop it was disclosed there was approx. \$200K total available for all of the NP's to compete for. I felt this was disappointing and created barriers for the small NP's to compete and to receive funding from CDBG.*

- *Making sure the complete application process is fair and impartial to all applicants, whether it is a large or small non-profit entity.*

- *We haven't seen scoring sheets yet, but don't understand why we didn't score higher. We seem to fit the criteria on every level and met every benchmark required. I understand if there is not enough funding to go around, but I don't understand the scoring nor think it's as clear as it could be.*

- *"RFP" was used throughout the process to refer to the actual application. However, "Request for Proposal" (RFP) in most funding contexts refers not to the application but to the funding agency's solicitation for proposals. I would suggest using the more common terminology to avoid confusion, namely, the solicitation is "RFP" and the proposal submitted is "proposal."*

- *Since most of our funding is from government sources, we are able to document the commitment of those funds for the RFP. CDBG funds were heavily leveraged with those sources but points could not be awarded due to the lack of commitment. With the stiff competition for CDBG funds, those lost points could make the difference between being funding or not.*

- *I believe the initial community needs assessment process strongly biased the City priorities. First, the flyer used to promote community forum stated: "Eligible uses of these federal program funds include: improvements to facilities that serve low and moderate income (LMI) families and individuals; improvements to public infrastructure in LMI neighborhoods; provision of public services; economic development assistance; and projects that increase access to affordable housing and address homelessness. Things like: senior centers, park and recreational facilities, accessibility improvements for public facilities, cleanup of contaminated sites, food banks, business expansion and storefront improvements, etc." So if I am a low-income family, living with bed bugs, mold, rats, roaches, and other housing issues, I probably wouldn't show up to the forum in the first place, because there is no indication that these funds could be used to help me. Second, if I did show up, and filled out the needs survey, these issues are not even listed as an option. These issues are: a) not addressed by City Code Enforcement due*



to both what is enforceable and City Code Enforcement priorities, and: b) even if they were, a majority of low income persons are afraid to even contact City Agencies. To start, you should get rid of every checklist, then try surveying low-income families using a very generic open ended question, not leading them to what you think City priorities should be.

- I would respectfully offer the following suggestions for consideration: Electronic submission Acceptance of electronic signature (e.g. docuSign)
  - For those agencies that were not funded, there hasn't been clear information distributed pertaining to how to receive feedback on the applications submitted. It would be great to know how to go about doing this.
  - The time to write the proposal after the bidder's conference is very short. It makes planning a bit hectic!
  - More lead time in your invitations would be very helpful. I think the workshop had a 10-day advance notice; that is way too short for us to plan.
  - It would be helpful to know in advance the total pool of funding available. Had we known, it is likely we would not have invested the time to apply.
  - We suggest that the City of San Diego be more proactive and encouraging in providing new applicants with all of the clarity and technical assistance necessary for them to be both competitive and successful in the application process. Furthermore, the CDBG RFP Handbook must be more comprehensive and include clear and concise information within its contents, especially in any of the eligibility determination sections. When entrusted with public funds, it is imperative that the City of San Diego provide potential CDBG applicants with a process that is transparent, easily accessible and inclusive for all.
  - We did not participate this year beyond the initial stage because we learned that the funds available could not be used for the purpose we needed.
  - Introduction to the CDBG funds on website might include a flow chart of how the process works from RFQ, to meetings (and who needs to be there) to RFP to recommendation meeting (and who should be there) and if awarded the consulting/budget meeting (grantee and OED staff.) While we all still must read the narratives, many people will understand the process better with a visual roadmap. Because there is so much that has to be read, perhaps a short recap, in bullet points, that highlight the major action steps or requirements.
    - Why is there a new app every year? It would be nice to settle on a format/list of attachments.
    - Electronic applications would be great.

**Do you have any comments in relation to the Fiscal Year 2016 CDBG application process?**

- I think the process has improved dramatically over the past 3 years. We appreciate your efforts to streamline the application process.
  - We are grateful to CPAB and City staff for the opportunity to provide feedback about the FY 2016 CDBG Application Process. Consolidating Funds to Award Next Highest Score: Procedurally, CPAB's action of consolidating the remaining funds for Nonprofit Capital Improvement Projects (NCIP) and Community Economic Development (CED) to fully award the next highest score seems flawed. The scoring criteria

*and applications were different enough to warrant logical skepticism in directly comparing a CIP score to a CED score in order to render a funding decision based on ranking. Although CIP and CED were combined from the beginning of the process in FY15, these allocations were separated in the FY16 RFP process and cannot be recombined without changing the applications and scoring criteria, thus compromising the integrity of the entire process. Only Awarding Funds to Fully Fundable Projects: The process of calculating scores in an objective manner – a fundamental function of CPAB – is negated if CPAB decides to pass over an organization to recommend a lower-scoring project due to it being “fully-fundable.” A higher scoring project should not be passed over to award a lower scoring project due to a minor shortfall in available funding. It should be the organization’s choice to decline or accept a partial award. CDBG Staff are responsible for guiding CPAB on the process, but during the March 11th meeting, staff expressed a firm stance and strongly suggested to the CPAB members to not recommend partial funding because it was described as “problematic.” Partial funding has precedent in recent City of San Diego CDBG cycles. Our review of HUD guidelines, the CDBG guidebook, and other published documents did not reveal a prohibition against partially funding CDBG projects. If the next-highest scoring organization can maintain project scope, then the organization should have the opportunity to accept or decline funding. Especially since the public was not granted an opportunity to provide input on this issue prior to CPAB ratifying its FY16 recommendations to City Council. Further, because the FY16-19 Consolidated Plan automatically reserves 60% of available CDBG funds for City infrastructure and public safety projects, nonprofit agencies should be able to accept partial funding, especially because CDBG is one of the few local public revenue streams for nonprofits in San Diego. The number of nonprofit CIPs recommended for funding was reduced from twelve in FY15 to five in FY16, and the awarded funding from \$5,806,354 in FY15 to \$2,128,231 in FY16. After limiting Public Service funds (Council Resolution No. 2013-129 allows the City to reserve up to \$1,318,078 of Public Service allocation), current allocations now only represent about 35% of the HUD allocation available through a competitive RFP process after the City takes 20% off the top for administrative costs. The City will also reclaim any balances not allocated through the RFP back to the City’s reserves. These combined practices directly and negatively impact non-profits’ ability to serve LMI individuals and families in our community. Indeed the handbook was very detailed and helpful, but the aforementioned realities were unclear or missing altogether, leading to inconsistencies and misunderstanding on the part of proposing organizations. It is our opinion that the City of San Diego CDBG should be more transparent about the changes that have been made allowing the City to reserve 65% of the HUD allocation for City projects prior to the RFP process. The FY16 process resulted in awarding only three PS projects, five CED projects, and six CIPs, which is a significant reduction from recent years. HUD did not reduce the total CDBG allocation this year, so the reduction in awards resulted from local policies, not federal budget cuts, which was the reason stressed during the mandatory CDBG workshops. While we appreciated the workshops, in the future it would be more helpful to provide attendees with information about what has been improved based upon feedback received through these surveys. We felt that both the workshops and technical assistance meetings directed applicants to the handbook rather than offering technical assistance. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback.*

- *The amount of background info along with the instructions was overwhelming for first timers and those who haven't submitted in a few years. It wasn't clear which meetings, after RFP, we were to*

*attend (multiple meeting announcements) - not sure if which were relevant / required; hard to pull together staff to attend with 5 days notice, too.*

- Our experience in navigating through the tedious CDBG process, the technical information provided to us was vague and sometimes contradictory depending on the source of the information. The process itself appears to favor those who have successfully competed in the past and serves to confuse those who are new applicants.*
- The support from CDBG staff was stellar.*
- Overall, a very smooth process - nicely done! I thought the reduced paperwork burden during the entire process was wonderful. Also, the discussion of the CPAB around award decisions was helpful. I would be interested in hearing how the scoring process will be more standardized for the reviewers. It sounded like they were interested in having more guidance in that regard. If scoring guidance for CPAB members does change, it would be helpful for grantees/potential applicants to know what that might look like.*
- We appreciated not having to submit documents during the process that we not applicable at that particular time.*
- The application process for 2016 was light-years better than in previous years. Keep up the good work!*
- A total revamp and revision of the CPAB Board. This Board appears very bias in its scoring process and in its recommendations to the full City Council. The CPAB Board should be more racially diversified thus reflecting San Diego's culturally diverse populace.*
- This was the most effective process in years*
- I think you should let everyone know once they have completed the RFQ's the total the City has available and their focus. After, going through the RFQ's, getting a SAM # and learning you may not have a chance of winning an award would save both the NP and the City a lot of time with regards to applications.*
- Much improved application process -- and wonderful, knowledgeable and helpful CDBG staff to guide the way!*

#### **FY 2016 CDBG Applications' Review Process: CPAB Survey**

Please see below for responses given to the three open ended questions of the survey by CPAB members as of May 11, 2014. Note that the responses are not listed in any particular order nor were they edited by staff in any significant manner (only minor edits were made for clarity purposes).

#### **If I had to suggest one (or more) improvements to the process it would be:**

- We can still work on the questions asked. I would like more historical data on the applicants*
- Conduct one practice scoring session, using an old application, and letting members fully discuss why they scored the way they did*
- Doing a practice scoring on an application would be helpful*
- Need examples of what is and is not a critical need*

- *Make the scoring form follow the application exactly*
- *I would like the whole group to do a mock scoring of an application together, first each individual doing it by himself, than the whole group going through it together, discussing and giving rationale.*
- *If possible, we need to start the whole process a month earlier to give us more time to score stuff*

**Please use the space below to identify sections(s) and/or components of the criteria that you think need to be re-evaluated and provide your rationale**

- *Change the percentages in the budget section of the criteria so that applications that have no other dedicated funds get zero points.*
- *Leveraging, new or expanded service sections need work*
- *Changing the name of the organization to make it appear like a new entity needs fixing*
- *Would like to break down the scoring criteria to flow with application sub-components (ie, instead of 10 points for question 5 that has 4 parts, each part has a sub-set of points that collectively add up to the 10 points)*
- *I think the small group emphasis is dependent on WHO is in the group. That might change the scoring.*
- *No specific suggestions*

**Identify below any areas or topics that you would like further training on in order to better evaluate CDBG applications**

- See comments under question regarding suggestions for improvements. Specific discussion regarding a real application would help us get a better understanding of how to evaluate applications.
- The Board need further education on what is an appropriate project to receive funds, some did not seem like critical needs
- More emphasis needs to be placed on demanding that no scorers represent applicants who represent the zip codes they represent.
- What makes for a good budget