



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

**Economic Development Department
Community Development Division**

CONSOLIDATED PLAN ADVISORY BOARD PANEL HANDBOOK
for the
**Review and Scoring of the FY 2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
Request for Proposals (RFP)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction 3

II. Review Panel: Responsibilities and Conduct 4

III. City Staff: Responsibilities 5

IV. Conflict of Interest Guidelines 5

V. Confidentiality..... 7

VI. Review Package 8

VII. Reviewing & Scoring Applications 8

 1. Preparation: Prior to the Review.....9

 2. Reading and Analyzing Applications.....9

 3. Ad Hoc Committee Meetings 10

 4. Scoring Applications 10

 5. Finalized Scores 11

VIII. Reviewers Written Comments..... 11

IX. CPAB Ratification of Scores 11

X. Next steps 12

XI. Appendices 12

I. INTRODUCTION

CITY OF SAN DIEGO – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The City of San Diego's Community Development Division (within the Economic Development Department) oversees federally funded entitlement grant programs including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program.

THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides funds to local jurisdictions on an annual basis through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for local community development, housing activities, and public services. The primary objective of the CDBG Program is the development of viable communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. In accordance with CDBG standards, these resources are intended to primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons and neighborhoods.

CITY OF SAN DIEGO – CONSOLIDATED PLAN ADVISORY BOARD

The Consolidated Plan Advisory Board (CPAB) was established by the City Council via Ordinance No. O-19963 (Sections 26.2101–26.2113 of the Municipal Code) to provide advice and recommendations on certain policy issues related to the City of San Diego HUD grant entitlements inclusive of the CDBG program. Specifically, per §26.2113, the CPAB is charged with performing an open and impartial evaluation of the applications for CDBG funds and provide funding recommendations to the City Council.

PURPOSE OF THE CPAB PANEL HANDBOOK

This *CPAB Panel Handbook* outlines the process and procedures the CPAB will follow in reviewing and scoring applications submitted for the Fiscal Year (FY 2017) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Request for Proposals funding cycle.

The Handbook identifies:

- The roles and responsibilities of the CPAB (reviewers);
- Procedures to follow in conducting the review;
- Reference materials that may be used in scoring the applications;
- Required forms to be considered in the review; and
- Conflict-of-Interest guidelines for panel members.

Appendices of this handbook include the following:

- Conflict of Interest Statement: As described in Section IV., The Conflict of Interest Statement is attached as Appendix A. *(To be signed by the CPAB reviewer and returned to the City.)*
- Confidentiality Agreement: As described in Section V., The Confidentiality Agreement is attached as Appendix B. *(To be signed by the CPAB reviewer and returned to the City.)*

The review of CDBG applications, as outlined in the City's Consolidated Plan for Fiscal Year 2015-2019, is a competitive process to ensure funds are invested in the highest scoring projects

II. REVIEW PANEL: RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT

Reviewers are responsible for conducting an independent and objective review of the CDBG applications and must be able to fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. Read and become familiar with supplementary materials provided (inclusive of this Handbook) prior to the commencement of their review;
2. Attend and participate fully in the Ad Hoc Committee meetings, if Ad Hoc Committees are utilized;
3. Recuse themselves from the review of applications where an actual or apparent conflict of interest may be present;
4. Consider, review and score each application in relation to the applicable FY 2017 Scoring Criteria;
5. Refer all applicant contact to the Community Development Division Office staff; and
6. Complete their review on or before the February 29, 2016 deadline and return all materials to the Community Development Division upon completion of the review.

Reviewers must be able to dedicate a significant amount of time to this process within a very limited timeframe. If they find they are unable to fulfill their obligations, they are asked to contact City staff immediately.

III. CITY STAFF: RESPONSIBILITIES

The City of San Diego Community Development Division Office staff (*City staff*), charged with the responsibility of ensuring the CDBG allocation process is impartial and consistent with all applicable standards, will:

1. Deliver all materials and necessary information to reviewers in a timely manner;
2. Respond to all inquiries from the reviewers promptly;
3. Consult with staff from HUD and the City Attorneys' Office and other professionals, as needed;
4. Provide staff and facilitate the Ad Hoc meetings, if needed;
5. Calculate the average score assigned to each application based on the individual scores assigned to that application by all the participating reviewers;
6. Create a ranking of the applications by project-type based on their average scores in descending order and present the scoring recommendation to the CPAB for its ratification at the March 9, 2016 CPAB meeting; and
7. Present CPABs recommendation to the City Council for review and approval in March 2016 (time and date to be determined);

IV. CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

In order to ensure compliance with applicable HUD requirements and other applicable standards, as well as to ensure a fair and transparent scoring process, CPAB reviewers are required to follow these Conflict of Interest guidelines. A conflict of interest generally describes a situation in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise or bias professional judgment and objectivity.

The CDBG conflict of interest provisions at the federal level are based on the regulations found at 24 CFR 570.611 which can be summarized as follows:

No person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected or appointed official of the recipient (City of San Diego in this instance), or any designated public agencies, or any sub-recipient which is receiving CDBG funds and who exercises or has exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to CDBG activities or who is in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside

information with regard to such activities, may obtain a financial interest or benefit from the activity, or have an interest in any contract, subcontract or agreement with respect thereto, or in any of its proceeds, either for themselves or those with whom they have family or business ties, during their tenure and for one year thereafter.

The CDBG RFP review process is also subject to a variety of federal Conflict of Interest regulations and standards. Said standards prohibit City employees, as well as its officers and agents, from participating in the selection, award or administration of a contract supported by federal funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, is involved. Note that even *apparent* conflicts of interest are prohibited.

The City of San Diego Municipal Code also governs the actions of the CPAB in relation to conflicts of interests and requires CPAB members to recuse themselves from participating “in any decision in which she or he has any personal or financial interest” (see § 26.2109).

The City Council has also adopted Policy No. 000-04, which is the Code of Ethics for all city employees and board/commission members.

Within the general context of the conflict of interest guidelines, a *financial interest* includes:

- Receipt of gifts of \$250 or more in value in the previous twelve months from an applicant organization;
- Receipt or promise of income (e.g., salary) from an applicant organization in the previous 12 months;
- Having an investment of \$2,000 or more in an applicant organization;
- Holding a position of management or serving on the board of an applicant organization, whether in a paid or unpaid position, within the previous twelve months; and,
- Ownership of real estate with a value of \$2,000 or more with an applicant organization.

As noted, federal standards also prohibit apparent conflicts of interests. An apparent conflict of interest is generally considered to occur when the circumstances are such that a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts would question the impartiality of the reviewer in his/her evaluation of an application.

Review panel members are obligated to report any conflicts of interest to City staff immediately. Reviewers can declare the presence of such conflicts via email or via a phone call. Declaring such conflicts does not mean that reviewers cannot serve; it simply means reviewers may not review those applications or participate in the Ad Hoc meeting discussions of those applications with which the conflict exists. It is important to note that a conflict of interest exists whether or not decisions are affected by a personal interest –conflicts of interest only imply the potential for bias is present.

Reviewers must keep in mind the conflict of interest provisions during the process as potential conflicts may exist in relation to the applicant agency, its board members, its staff, the proposed project itself, its intended beneficiaries and/or other parties that may be affected by the project.

If at any point during the process, a reviewer determines the potential presence of an actual or apparent conflict of interest, that reviewer must declare the presence of such conflict to City staff and recuse herself/himself from reviewing the pertinent application and participating in related discussions. When in doubt, a reviewer is expected to contact City staff for guidance.

This responsibility is strictly imposed upon reviewers and reviewers are required to complete the Conflict of Interest Statement provided in this handbook and submit it to City staff prior to the receipt of the review binder. If the reviewer identifies the presence of a conflict of interest at any point during the review process, the reviewer is also obligated to report such conflict immediately to City staff. Any applications where a Conflict of Interest has been noted will be removed from the *review package* of the appropriate reviewer(s).

V. CONFIDENTIALITY

CPAB reviewers are also asked to respect the confidentiality of the RFP applications and supporting materials. The materials in the *review binders* (as described below) may not be photocopied or reproduced in any manner and must be returned to the City along with the completed scoring forms upon completion of the reviews. Reviewers are also expected to safeguard these documents once they have received them and use the information strictly for its intended use.

Furthermore, reviewers may only discuss the applications, their contents, and their own assessments of the applications or similar related matters during the Ad Hoc meetings and/or with City staff as part of related inquiries.

Completion of a Confidentiality Agreement is required of all reviewers prior to their receipt of the *review binder* (as described below).

VI. REVIEW PACKAGE

Each Board member participating in the review of the CDBG applications for FY 2017 will receive the **review binders** on or before February 5, 2016. The *review binders* contain the following documents (including this handbook):

- Applications: This material includes the portion of the applications which is subject to the review of the CPAB as part of their scoring, as well as the applicant's organizational chart and Board roster.
- Scoring Sheets/Criteria: Each Scoring Criteria form has been customized for each CPAB member with the reviewer's name, the name of the agency and the project title. These forms will be collected at the end of the review process and tallied to compile the scores and ranking of the eligible projects.
- Conflict of Interest Statement: As described in Section IV of this Handbook, a copy of the Conflict of Interest Statement will be included as Appendix A.
- Confidentiality Agreement: As described in Section V of this Handbook, a copy of the Confidentiality Agreement will be included as Appendix B.
- List of Applicants and Projects: A listing of all applications submitted, sorted by project category (CIP, CED, PS and CG). The information provided will include the name of the applicant agency and the name of the proposed project, as identified by the applicant in the application. The List of Applicants and Projects will be included as Appendix C.
- Past Performance Table: As described at the October 14, 2015 CPAB meeting, staff is providing a summary of past performance (2 fiscal years) for former CDBG-funded projects to be considered in Section 2: Organizational Capacity of the Scoring Criteria. The tables will be included as Appendix D.
- Reference materials provided at CPAB meetings: In the past, CPAB members have requested various training presentations to better assist them in evaluating the applications. These include Fiscal information, the City Permitting Process, and a sample Public Service application. The FAQs and RFP timeline are also included as part of the reference materials and will be included as Appendix E.

VII. REVIEWING & SCORING APPLICATIONS

The following sections provide details regarding the six primary elements of the review process for the CPAB members:

1. Preparation
2. Reading and Analyzing Applications
3. Discussion at Ad Hoc Committee Meetings
4. Scoring Applications
5. Finalizing Scores

1. PREPARATION: PRIOR TO THE REVIEW

To reiterate, prior to the receipt of the *review package* as described above, reviewers are required to:

1. Read and complete the **Conflict of Interest Statement** (Appendix A of the Handbook) and return it to City staff.
2. Read and complete the **Confidentiality Agreement** (see Appendix B of the Handbook) and return it to City staff.
3. Examine the **List of Applicants and Projects** (Appendix C of the *review package*) and identify any proposal and/or applicant agency where a conflict of interest may exist and inform City staff of any such conflict.

2. READING AND ANALYZING APPLICATIONS

Reviewers are instructed to evaluate applications on the basis of the FY 2017 CDBG RFP Scoring Criteria. Reviewers should consider how well the applicant fully describes the proposed project in relation to the questions asked.

As part of this analysis, the reviewer may consider the following questions:

1. Does the information provided respond to elements of the questions asked?
2. Is the information clear and specific (rather than vague and/or open to numerous interpretations)?
3. Is the proposed outcome(s) measurable? Is it consistent with the project objective(s)?
4. Are the proposed activities and outcomes appropriate in relation to the funds requested?

Given that **each** reviewer must read and score **each** application within a limited timeframe, reviewers are encouraged to consider the number of applications that must be reviewed and allot an appropriate amount of time for each.

3. AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETINGS

CPAB may choose to convene Ad Hoc committee meetings to discuss applications, exchange considerations and ask technical questions of staff.

Each reviewer is responsible for scoring **each** application independently and not sharing scores with other CPAB reviewers.

4. SCORING APPLICATIONS

Reviewers must identify the most significant strengths and weaknesses of the application when assigning scores. Reviewers must use **whole** numbers in assigning scores to the individual sections.

As part of the revised scoring criteria, certain sections in the criteria are “shaded” for City staff input only. Those sections are as follows:

- Section 3: Budget, Item d) - To remain consistent, staff will input the appropriate number based upon secured leveraged funding.

| | | |
|--|--|----------|
| <p>d. Budget clearly lists all other funding sources secured for project, submits documentation for each source listed, and percent of funds leveraged (calculated by: other secured funding/total project costs) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 0%-5% (0 points) ▪ 6%-20% (1 points) ▪ 21%-40% (2 points) ▪ 41%-60% (3 points) ▪ 61%-80% (4 points) ▪ 81%-100% (5 points) | <p>(HPA confirmed: % & points)</p> | <p>5</p> |
|--|--|----------|

- Section 5: Project Specifics, Item b.i.) - Staff will input the appropriate number based upon the Scope of Work and Budget. Project should demonstrate compliance with CDBG eligibility, National Objective and other requirements.

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <p>b. Project Scope & Schedule</p> <p>i. The Scope of Work and Budget demonstrates compliance with CDBG eligibility, National Objective and other HUD and City requirements; and</p> | <p>(HPA confirmed points: __)</p> | <p>2</p> |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------|

- *(Nonprofit CIP projects only)* Section 5: Project Specifics, Item a.ii.) – Staff must ensure the correct level of Environmental Review for the City, State, and Federal has been met and/or identified by the agency.

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------|
| <p>ii. The level of Environmental Review (City, State and Federal) needed has been identified and planned for, as demonstrated by HUD Programs staff verification; and</p> | <p>(HPA confirmed score: __)</p> | <p>2</p> |
|--|----------------------------------|----------|

After the section-specific scores are recorded on the Scoring Form, the reviewer will total them to arrive at his/her overall score for the application.

5. FINALIZED SCORES

Upon completion of the review and scoring process, the review panel members submit to City staff the original scoring forms (wet signatures required) and return the *review binders, no later than February 29, 2016*. Reviewers have not completed the review process until these materials are received by City staff and/or their representatives.

The scoring forms will be made available to the applicants (upon their request) following the ratification of the FY 2017 Annual Action Plan by the City Council. The names and signatures of the individual reviewers will be redacted from the scoring forms prior to their distribution to the applicant agencies

VIII. REVIEWERS WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewers play a critical role in the CDBG funding allocation process. Written comments on the scoring form can provide objective and substantiated information upon which evaluations can be made.

Reviewers should not:

- Use prior or outside knowledge of an applicant organization. Comments and scores are based only on the information at hand.
- Impose their own evaluation standards – applications should be reviewed in relation to the Scoring Criteria.
- Make sarcastic or derogatory remarks.

The *scoring forms* are intended to serve as additional training and technical assistance for applicant agencies. These forms serve as the mechanism the City uses to provide feedback to the applicant agencies regarding the strengths and/or weaknesses of their applications. Therefore, these written comments should be as specific as possible. As appropriate, reviewers are asked to cite sections or page numbers of an application in the comments in order to provide helpful guidance to the applicants.

IX. CPAB RATIFICATION OF SCORES

Upon completion of the reviews and submittal of the scoring forms to the City, staff computes the average score assigned to each application based on the individual scores of the participating reviewers. The applications are then segregated into the four following groups based on the project application category:

1. Capital improvement projects,
2. Community/economic development projects,
3. Public service projects, and
4. Challenge Grants.

The applications in each of these four groups are ranked based on their average scores – in descending order. Once compiled, average scores and resulting rankings are posted on the City’s CDBG Program website and notification of their availability is given to all applicants and subscribers of the City’s email distribution list. Average scores and resulting rankings will subsequently be presented to the CPAB for their ratification during the March CPAB meeting.

X. NEXT STEPS

Following the CPAB March meeting, the CDBG funding recommendations are presented to the City Council for review and approval. This presentation is tentatively scheduled for late-March 2016. Staff will incorporate the City Council CDBG funding allocations in the FY 2017 Annual Action Plan and the Substantial Amendment to the FY 2015- FY 2019 Consolidated Plan and will release the Plans for a 30-day public review in April 2016. These Plans will be presented to City Council for review and approval in late-April 2016. The Annual Action Plan describes how CDBG resources will be allocated and, in fact, constitutes the application to HUD for receipt of the City’s FY 2017 CDBG entitlement. The Plans must be submitted to HUD on or before May 15, 2016.

XI. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Conflict of Interest Statement

Appendix B: Confidentiality Agreement

For more information please contact:

City of San Diego
Economic Development Department
Community Development Division
1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1400
San Diego, CA 92101
cdbg@sandiego.gov

APPENDIX A

FY 2017 CDBG RFP REVIEW AND SCORING PANEL

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

I have carefully read the conflict of interest provisions as described in the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board Panel Handbook and hereby certify the following:

1. I acknowledge that real and apparent conflicts of interest may exist;
2. I will be mindful of the conflict of interest provisions **throughout** the review process;
3. I will identify instances where conflict(s) of interest may exist and promptly report those to City of San Diego Community Development Division staff via email and/or phone call and subsequently recuse myself from participating in the review process of the affected applications;
4. For any instances where I identify conflicts of interests **throughout** the review process, I will facilitate retrieval of the affected documents by City staff within a reasonable timeframe.

Please check the option below that reflects your status:

- I have reviewed the list of FY 2017 CDBG applicant agencies and the names of their proposed projects and, based on that review, I have NO conflicts of interest to report at this time.
- I have reviewed the list of FY 2017 CDBG applicant agencies and the names of their proposed projects and disclose conflicts of interest with the following applicant agencies and/or projects at this time:

PRINTED NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

APPENDIX B

FY 2017 CDBG RFP REVIEW AND SCORING PANEL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, _____, have been appointed to serve as a member of the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board (CPAB) and will be evaluating and scoring the proposals submitted in response to the FY 2017 Community Block Development Grant (CDBG) Request for Proposals (RFP) applicants ("FY 2017 CDBG Applications").

Per the City of San Diego Municipal Code §26.2113, I am charged with performing an open and impartial evaluation of the FY 2017 CDBG Applications and provide funding recommendations to the City Council. Specifically, I will be reviewing the FY 2017 CDBG Applications in relation to the FY 2017 CDBG Scoring Criteria and assigning a score to each Application based on said review.

I hereby acknowledge and/or agree to the following in performing this review:

1. I understand that all information I receive during the review process, including but not limited to the name(s) of specific applicants and/or their proposed project names, the contents of specific proposals, my evaluations and those of other evaluators, discussions regarding proposals during any Ad Hoc Committees meetings, and all related information constitutes "Confidential Information."
2. I understand and I agree to hold all Confidential Information in the strictest confidence.
3. I understand that any unauthorized disclosure of Confidential Information will compromise the fairness of the process and may result in harm to the City of San Diego and/or its constituents.
4. I will use said information strictly for its intended, official and authorized purpose: scoring the FY 2017 CDBG Applications in relation to the applicable set of criteria.
5. I will safeguard all review materials provided to me by City staff as part of the "Review Binder(s)" and promptly return said materials to City staff upon completion of the evaluation process.
6. I will not use any of the review information for matters unrelated to the City of San Diego FY 2017 CDBG RFP review and at no point will I use said information for my private gain or the private gain of others, either by my direct or indirect action or by giving counsel, recommendation, or suggestions to others.
7. I will not have any direct or indirect contact or discussions with any party who submits a proposal and/or their representatives.

8. I agree to immediately notify City of San Diego HUD Programs Administration Office staff if I obtain information outside of this review process that could impair or could create the appearance of impairing my ability to evaluate proposals fairly and impartially.

Read and accepted by:

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE