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# Citizen Participation in the Community Development Block Grant Program

A Guidebook



GUIDEBOOK ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

This material on citizen participation is written to provide guidance on how localities can implement the citizen participation requirements of HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) regulations. Most of the discussion deals with requirements for entitlement grants, as stated in 24 CFR 570.303 of the regulations, but consideration is also given to special requirements for small cities, drawn from 24 CFR 570.431, and for Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG), as contained in 24 CFR 570.

These regulations are reproduced verbatim in the appendix of this guidebook. The detailed requirements are taken up one by one as the guidebook proceeds, but not in the same order as they appear in the regulations. They are printed in *italics*, and the small letters and numerals refer to paragraphs of Sec. 570.303 unless otherwise stated.

### Underlying Philosophy

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, gives cities and counties responsibility and authority to develop and conduct the Community Development Block Grant Program in their localities, but it places upon them a requirement to achieve adequate citizen participation. Involving citizens, though, is more than a legality, for it goes to the heart of the community development process.

President Jimmy Carter summarized the essence of community development in March 1978 when he described the national urban policy as "a new partnership to conserve America's communities." Implementation of this policy, he insisted, must be based upon a partnership involving all levels and branches of government, the private economic sector, labor, and neighborhood and voluntary organizations.

This is more than an ideal because as a practical matter many community development activities depend upon private investments and specific actions by individuals fixing up their homes and by neighbors working together to improve their communities. Citizens know their own needs, and their advice and participation is essential to the success of the program. Through their involvement in program assessment, the strengths and weaknesses of local programs can be determined and necessary improvements can be undertaken.

Moreover, basic fairness requires that persons affected by public actions have a voice in policy formulation. In the long run, the CDBG program aims at overall community benefit, but in the short run some individuals might be affected adversely, at least temporarily. It is of utmost importance that they know what is being planned and be given opportunities to present their views. The program gives special attention to the needs of low- and moderate-income persons, so it is especially crucial to achieve their involvement in program planning and implementation. Other citizens also want to offer their ideas about priorities, allocation of funds, and design of program activities.

For these reasons, full and meaningful citizen participation is an essential ingredient of community development.

### Basic Requirement

The CDBG regulations summarize the citizen participation requirements in the following manner:

(a) *General.* The applicant shall provide citizens with an adequate opportunity to participate in an advisory role in planning, implementing, and assessing the program. In so doing, the applicant shall also provide adequate information to citizens, hold public hearings to obtain views of citizens, and provide citizens an opportunity to comment on the applicant's community development performance. Nothing in these requirements, however, shall be construed to restrict the responsibility and authority of the applicant for the development of the application and the execution of its Community Development Program.

These general requirements indicate that the citizens' role is advisory and that the applicant city or county has full responsibility and authority for developing the application for federal assistance and for carrying out the community development program. Citizen involvement must occur during all stages of the program: as it is being planned, when implementation is underway, and as the program results are being assessed. Essential to participation is a two-way flow of communications as the city or county presents information to citizens, obtains their views at public hearings and through other channels, and provides them an opportunity to comment on performance.

### Citizen Participation Plan

(b) *Written citizen participation plan.* The applicant shall prepare a written citizen participation plan that provides procedures by which each of the requirements set forth in the following paragraphs will be implemented. The plan shall go into effect no later than August 1, 1978. The provisions concerning citizen involvement in implementing and assessing the program apply to activities that are ongoing as of that date, as well as to all future activities. The plan shall remain in effect until all activities assisted under this Part are completed, or until it is superseded by a new plan. Upon request by HUD, the plan shall be submitted to HUD to aid in the handling of complaints and to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.

By now each city and county participating in the entitlement program must have a written citizen participation plan in effect. It applies to the development of all applications to be submitted after August 1, 1978 and also to implementation and assessment of both ongoing and future activities.

*Content.* The citizen participation plan must cover all the items in Sec. 570.303 of the regulations. HUD specifies no set outline for presentation. The plan might follow the exact order of the regulations, the rearrangement used in this guidebook, or any other pattern the city or county chooses as long as all items are covered.

*Who prepares.* Responsibility for preparing the citizen participation plan falls to the applicant city or county. This must occur with citizen involvement, as spelled out in paragraph (d) of Sec. 570.303 (for further discussion of this, see page 21 of this guidebook). It remains in effect until all activities assisted by CDBG funds are completed. However, the city or county may amend the plan or replace it with a new one at any time, provided that it achieves citizen involvement in the amendment or replacement process.

*HUD's role.* When a city or county submits its CDBG application to the HUD area office, it is required to certify that it has prepared and followed a written citizen participation plan (Sec 570.307(d)(1) and (2)). However, it does not have to submit the plan to HUD area office as part of the application. HUD will normally accept this assurance but reserves the right to consider substantial evidence challenging the certification. In this case, HUD will require additional information or assurances from the applicant. HUD may also request a copy of a local citizen participation plan at any time to aid in the handling of complaints and to facilitate monitoring and evaluation. And during a monitoring visit to the community, HUD staff will examine the plan and review local compliance.

### Standards

The regulations specify five basic standards to guide citizen participation. In the order of discussion in this guidebook, they are as follows:

- Involvement of affected persons and other concerned citizens.
- Openness and freedom of access.
- Adequate and timely information.
- Submission of views and proposals.
- Continuity of participation throughout all stages of the program.

Each standard is elaborated by more detailed regulations, as the following chapters indicate.

## II. INVOLVEMENT

Spreading across all aspects of the citizen participation plan are the issues of (1) who should be involved and (2) the geographic scale of the participation process. Let us take up the latter first.

### Geographic Scale

*(c) . . . The applicant shall provide a process of citizen participation at the communitywide level with regard to the overall application and program. Applicants with populations of 50,000 or more shall also provide a process of citizen participation at the neighborhood level in areas where a significant amount of activity is proposed or ongoing . . .*

*Communitywide.* The citizen participation regulations emphasize a process of citizen participation rather than mandating a particular structure--though cities and counties may use a structural approach if they choose. (More on these alternatives later.) For all applicants, this process must apply citywide or countywide. In the case of county programs, the applicant county is responsible for assuring that this process is carried out properly even though it delegates substantial program administration to municipalities within its borders.

*Neighborhood.* Where a city or county of 50,000 or more in population is planning or carrying out a significant amount of community development activities in neighborhood areas, it must provide a process of neighborhood-level citizen participation in addition to the communitywide process. This may happen, for instance, where the applicant city or county designates neighborhood strategy areas as part of its three-year community development and housing plan. Sec. 570.301(c) of the regulations describes components of a comprehensive strategy for such neighborhoods, including provision of a combination of improvement activities, coordination of public and private efforts, and provision of sufficient resources to achieve substantial long-term improvements. There might also be a significant amount of activity occurring in one or more neighborhoods with concentrated code enforcement, historic preservation, and economic development. If so, neighborhood-level citizen participation is required.

### Who Must Be Involved: A Basic Standard

One of the five basic standards for the citizen participation process specifies who must be involved, as follows:

*(c)(2) There shall be involvement of low- and moderate-income persons, members of minority groups, residents of areas where a significant amount of activity is proposed or ongoing, the elderly, the handicapped, the business community, and civic groups who are concerned about the program. Where the applicant chooses to establish, or*

*has established, a general communitywide citizen advisory committee, there shall be substantial representation of low- and moderate-income citizens and members of minority groups. Similarly, where the applicant chooses to establish or recognize neighborhood advisory committees in areas where low- and moderate-income persons or members of minority groups reside, there shall be substantial representation of such persons;*

Types of persons on this list are those who should be especially involved, but the listing is not intended to restrict participation to these individuals. The CDBG program is intended to principally benefit low- and moderate-income persons, but in many communities they have been traditionally left out of decision-making processes. Therefore, special attention must be given to obtaining their participation. In most localities minority groups tend to have a disproportionate number of low and moderate income households, which is why they are emphasized. Residents of areas with significant activities picks up the earlier reference to required neighborhood-level participation. The elderly and handicapped are other segments of the population which may be particularly affected by the community development program. Involvement of the business community is essential to solidify the support of the private economic sector and set the stage for private investment in community development areas. Gaining the cooperation of concerned civic groups broadens the partnership. Beyond these mentioned groups are representatives of organized labor, colleges and universities, and areawide planning organizations who have contributions to make.

Other paragraphs in the regulations describe specific methods of involvement. They include obtaining views and proposals through public hearings and other avenues, getting advice on policy decisions during implementation, and providing opportunities to assess program performance. The applicant city or county has the option of setting up some kind of advisory committee or committees as a further means of involvement, though some places use only a set of processes rather than a fixed structure. Most localities, however, seem to prefer a combination of structure and process.

#### Communitywide Advisory Committees

As the CDGB program has evolved, the majority of participating cities and counties have established a communitywide advisory committee. In the second program year HUD surveyed 724 localities and found that over 80 percent had instituted such a vehicle, most of them newly created. They were mainly appointed bodies, but their composition differed considerably. During the third program year the National Citizen Participation Council (NCPC), working under a HUD contract, studied 40 cities in depth and learned that 30 of them (75 percent) have created citizen advisory committees and three more make use of existing citizen groups organized either by geographical area or program tasks. The other seven (17.5 percent) do not have an ongoing citizen participation structure. In the

NPC sample ten cities use elections to choose a majority of their advisory committee members, one relies upon volunteers, and in the remainder members are appointed, usually by the local chief executive.

*Types.* Cities and counties with communitywide advisory committees organize them in different ways. The most commonly used model provides for representation from both neighborhood and communitywide interests. For instance, neighborhood councils or advisory committees appoint representatives to the communitywide body (usually a majority) and the mayor or county executive and sometimes the city or county council appoints the remaining members. One variation has direct election of the neighborhood representatives and designation of the other members by communitywide organizations. Another model in use builds the communitywide advisory committee solely from representatives of neighborhood organizations, constituting a two-tier arrangement. Other localities have a citizen structure which is solely communitywide in composition, though some members are active neighborhood leaders; these are usually smaller communities without strong neighborhood organizations. The choice of which type to use belongs to the applicant city or county.

*Representation.* Where the applicant city or county chooses to set up a communitywide advisory committee, it must have substantial representation of low and moderate income citizens and members of minority groups. What is "substantial" representation cannot be assigned an exact number or percentage because it varies with the local situation. The rock-bottom minimum would be the percentage that low and moderate income and minority residents are of the total population, but given the nature of the program and whom it affects, a higher percentage than that would be in order. Some cities obtain substantial representation by first organizing neighborhood advisory committees in low and moderate income areas and then having their designated representatives form a majority of the communitywide advisory committee. Other methods are also possible. In a study by the Brookings Institution encompassing 32 communitywide advisory committees, the researchers concluded that low and moderate income representation tended to be better where the CAC provided neighborhood representation.

*Roles.* The NPC study, which was undertaken before the new regulations went into affect, discovered that the citizen advisory committees (CACs) had the following roles in a sample of 28 cities:

	<u>Percent of CACs</u>
Provide input on needs and priorities	100%
Recommend activities	100
Help select activities	100
Review final draft of application	75
Participate in making amendments to application	61
Review progress and evaluate impact	61
Review grantee performance report before submission	32
Make changes in grantee performance report	11

As this guidebook discusses in greater detail in later chapters, the regulations now require citizen participation in review of the final draft of the application, amendments, policy decisions during implementations, and program assessment. Therefore, all communitywide advisory committees should get into these matters unless the city or county is using an acceptable, alternative process for citizen participation for the implementation and assessment stages of the program.

### Neighborhood Advisory Committees

The provisions for neighborhood strategy areas in the new regulations reflect a growing trend to neighborhood programming as a major community development emphasis. Although there are no survey data available on the use of neighborhood advisory committees, it appears that the majority of cities with a neighborhood focus have chosen to establish or recognize neighborhood advisory committees.

*Types.* A number of variations are possible. A few cities have charter provisions setting neighborhood boards or commissions, a number of cities have enacted ordinances to establish neighborhood councils, others have set up a process to officially recognize existing neighborhood associations, and another group have less formalized neighborhood organizations. A small number of counties also have some official relationship with neighborhood groups. In many places neighborhood councils or associations exist throughout the city or county, but elsewhere they function only in community development areas. As far as the CDBG program is concerned, the latter arrangement is sufficient, but is quite acceptable for citizen participation in community development to tie to a broader neighborhood network. Indeed, cities and counties are encouraged to rely upon neighborhood organizations dealing with a variety of public and private programs because this helps tie together interrelated activities which are needed to facilitate a comprehensive strategy for stabilizing and upgrading low and moderate income areas.

*Representation.* The regulations require substantial representation of low and moderate income persons or members of minority groups where the applicant city or county establishes or recognizes neighborhood advisory committees in areas where such persons reside. As with communitywide advisory committee, "substantial" cannot be pinned down to a precise number applicable to all neighborhoods. Proportionality to the neighborhood population provides a minimum test, but this should not be perceived as a ceiling. Experience in a number of cities suggests that if neighborhood committee members are elected, small districts usually provide better representation than at-large election. Some neighborhood organizations elect a majority of the board and reserve some appointed positions to assure a balanced representation, particularly of low income persons.

*Roles.* Where a city or county chooses to establish or recognize neighborhood advisory committees as a means of meeting the requirement for neighborhood level participation, these units should have meaningful roles in all stages of the program--planning, developing the application, implementation, and assessment.

## Processes without Advisory Committees

If the applicant city or county chooses not to use either community-wide or neighborhood advisory committees, it must have alternative processes which meet the standards of openness, involvement, and continuity.

*Communitywide.* Some localities have neighborhood advisory committees but do not form a communitywide advisory committee. In such places, persons affiliated with neighborhood organizations might serve on special communitywide task forces, and sometimes the chairpersons get together in an informal, unofficial coalition. Through the cumulative involvement of citizens at the neighborhood level, widespread participation is achieved.

*Neighborhood.* Likewise neighborhood participation can be built upon the existing network of neighborhood organizations without granting them formal recognition or establishing an official neighborhood council. Coalitions of block clubs and other neighborhood groups form on their own accord, offer proposals, and negotiate with the city or county.

*Other processes.* In studies of techniques of citizen participation in planning, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has defined two main categories: initiative and reactive. "Through initiative planning techniques," explains a DOT report entitled *Selecting Effective Citizen Participation Techniques* (1977), "citizens produce proposals and structure options. The Agency provides information and technical assistance . . . In reactive planning techniques, citizens react to proposals and options developed by the Agency. As a result of these reactions, the Agencies proposals are modified." The DOT report offers the following definitions of these techniques (pages 4-5):

### INITIATIVE PLANNING

Advocacy Planning: A process whereby affected groups employ professional assistance directly with private funds and consequently have a client-professional relationship.

Charrettes: A process which convenes interest groups (governmental and non-governmental) in intensive interactive meetings lasting from several days to several weeks.

Community Planning Centers: Ongoing local bodies which independently plan for their community using technical assistance employed by and responsible to a community-based citizens group.

Computer-Based Techniques: A generic term describing a variety of experimental techniques which utilize computer technology to enhance citizen participation.

Design-In and Color Mapping: A variety of planning methods in which citizens work with maps, scale representations, and photographs to provide a better idea of the effect on their community of proposed plans and projects.

Plural Planning: A method whereby each interest group has its own planner (or group of planners) with which to develop a proposed plan based on the group's goals and objectives.

Task Force: An ad hoc citizen committee sponsored by an agency in which the parties are involved in a clearly-defined task in the planning process. Typical characteristics are small size (8-20), vigorous interaction between task force and agency, weak accountability to the general public, and specific time for accomplishment of its tasks.

Workshops: Working sessions which provide a structure for parties to discuss thoroughly a specific technical issue or idea and try to reach an understanding concerning its role, nature, and/or importance in the planning process.

#### REACTIVE PLANNING

Citizens' Advisory Committees: A panel of citizens called together by the agency to represent the ideas and attitudes of their groups and/or communities.

Citizen Representatives on Policy Making Boards: The participation by citizens as either appointed or elected members of public policy-making boards.

Fishbowl Planning: A process involving citizens in restructuring a proposed plan before adoption. Fishbowl planning uses public meetings, public brochures, workshops, and a citizens' committee; the brochures provide continuity between successive public meetings.

Interactive Cable TV-Based Participation: An experimental tool utilizing two-way coaxial cable TV to solicit immediate citizen reaction, this technique is only now in the initial stages of experimentation on a community level.

Meetings--Neighborhood: Meetings held for residents of a specific neighborhood that has been, or will be, affected by a project or plan. Usually they are held either very early in the planning process or when plans have been developed and response is needed.

Neighborhood Planning Councils: A structure for obtaining participation on issues which affect a specific geographic

area; the council serves as an advisory body to the public agency in identifying neighborhood problems, formulating goals and priorities, and evaluating and reacting to the agency's proposed plans.

Policy Capturing: A highly sophisticated, experimental method involving mathematical models of policy positions of parties-at-interest. It attempts to make explicit the weighting and trading-off patterns of an individual or group.

Value Analysis: A process which involves various interest groups in the process of subjectively ranking consequences of proposals and alternatives to articulate community goals against which alternative plans can be evaluated and developed.

Of these techniques, neighborhood councils and citizens' advisory committees are, of course, the structured approach, and so too is the community planning center responsible to a community-based citizens group. But the other techniques indicate that there are many other way to achieve citizen participation without a formal organization. Once again, it is important to emphasize that if a city or county pursues the nonstructured approach, it must meet the requirements for continuity of involvement of low and moderate income persons and other affected persons throughout all stages of the program. Chapter IV of the guidebook gets into this in greater depth as it traces the community development program through its main stages.

### III. TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Citizen participation at its best is rooted in a two-way flow of communication between public officials and citizens. Both have something to offer: facts, feelings, and opinions about particular problems, programs, and issues. Both have something to gain: greater knowledge of the matters of concern and better understanding of one another.

Good communication replaces suspicions with honest dialogue and lessens unproductive conflict. It creates an atmosphere where mutual understanding can be achieved and where decisions beneficial to the affected parties and the whole community can be made. Effective two-way communication is essential for developing a meaningful community partnership.

Therefore, three of the basic standards of the citizen participation regulations relate to the communications process: openness, information, and submission of views and proposals.

#### Three Basic Standards

*Openness and freedom of access.* The first of these basic standards is as follows:

*(c)(1) All aspects of citizen participation shall be conducted in an open manner, with freedom of access for all interested persons;*

Local fulfillment of the standard of openness and access relates to procedures and attitudes. Procedural responses deal with disclosing relevant information, providing access to documents, and conducting public hearings, matters discussed in detail below. Attitudes, though more intangible, are equally important. One essential attitude is for public officials to trust citizens and to believe that they and their organizations have important contributions to make. This reflects a recognition that no matter how much disagreement and conflict emerges from the citizen participation process, in the end a better program will result from honest discussion of differences and serious efforts to resolve issues in the spirit of a true partnership.

*Adequate, and timely information.* The next communication standard emphasizes the importance of information:

*(c)(4) Citizens shall be provided adequate and timely information, so as to enable them to be meaningfully involved in important decisions at various stages of the program;*

If the process of two-way communication between officials and citizens is to be meaningful, citizens need timely information about the community development program and the procedures governing its operation before de-

cisions are made. They need to know what can and cannot be done. They need access to Federal regulations and other issuances so that they can understand the broader context in which the program is carried out. As citizens become more knowledgeable, their participation will be more effective. Conversely, when citizens are kept in the dark, their participation is blunted and thereby made ineffectual.

So important is this standard that the regulations add reinforcement with a separate paragraph on adequate information, which begins in this manner:

*(i) Adequate information. The applicant shall provide for full public access to program information and affirmative efforts to make adequate information available to citizens, especially to those of low- and moderate-income and to those residing in lower-income and blighted neighborhoods.*

Paragraph (i) then presents detailed requirements for (1) provision of program information to citizens, (2) disclosure of program records and information, (3) publication of notice that the application has been submitted to HUD, and (4) availability of basic documents at convenient locations. These are considered later in this chapter.

*Submission of views and proposals.* The last of the communication standards deals with citizens submitting their views and proposals to local government as follows:

*(c)(5) Citizens, particularly low- and moderate-income persons and residents of blighted neighborhoods, shall be encouraged to submit their views and proposals regarding the Community Development Program;*

This is the converse of the city or county providing information to the public. It means that local officials should be informed of the views of citizens and their proposals as well as citizens being aware of the nature and procedures of the community development program. Particular stress is placed upon gaining views and proposals from low and moderate income persons and residents of blighted neighborhoods because the program is intended to principally benefit them and they are most likely to be affected both positively and negatively by program actions.

Paragraph (e) of Sec. 570.303 repeats and elaborates this standard, as discussed below.

#### Disclosure and Access

*Full and timely disclosure.* The detailed requirement for disclosure of information reads as follows:

*(i)(2) The applicant shall provide for full and timely disclosure of its program records and information consis-*

tent with applicable State and local laws regarding personal privacy and obligations of confidentiality. Documents relevant to the program shall be made available at the applicant's office during normal working hours for citizens review upon request (either written or oral).

Such documents include the following:

- (i) All mailings and promotional material,
- (ii) Records of hearings,
- (iii) All key documents, including all prior applications, letters of approval, grant agreements, the citizen participation plan, performance reports, evaluation reports, other reports required by HUD, and the proposed and approved application for the current year,
- (iv) Copies of the regulations and issuances governing the program, and
- (v) Documents regarding other important program requirements, such as contracting procedures, environmental policies, fair housing and other equal opportunity requirements, relocation provisions, and the A-95 review process.

The intent of this requirement is to have the community development program function openly with full and timely disclosure of public records and information. For this to be done responsibly, it must be counter-balanced by the right of individuals for privacy. These dual objectives can be achieved by opening to the public all information dealing with general matters, aggregated data, and endeavors affecting people collectively, and by placing restrictions upon information of a confidential nature about individual persons and families, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

The documents referred to in subparagraph (v) are described in the following articles and parts of the Federal Code of Regulations (CFR), the United States Code (U.S.C.), and executive order:

Contracting procedures	OMB Circular A-102, Attachment O
Environmental policies	16 U.S.C 470; Executive Order 11593
Fair housing requirement	24 CFR 570.601
Other equal opportunity requirements	24 CFR Part 130 and 41 CFR Chapter 60
Relocation provisions	24 CFR Part 42 and 570.602(a)
A-95 review process	24 CFR 570.310

These documents and the information described in the other subparagraphs should be available to citizens at the main office of the local agency administering community development program during all normal working hours. Citizens are entitled to access to such records, documents, and other information upon written or oral request.

*Depositories.* In addition, the regulations require that certain basic documents be available in other locations, as follows:

*(i)(4) The applicant shall make copies of the citizen participation plan, the proposed and approved application, and the annual performance report available at locations conveniently located for persons affected by the program and accessible to the handicapped.*

This requirement refers to the four basic documents most important to participating citizens. The citizen participation plan sets the basic policies for involvement and remains in effect until amended; all amendments should be added to the plans on deposit. The proposed application could be deposited at the time notice is published prior to the public hearing which must be conducted before the application goes to the A-95 clearinghouse. (See page 25.) When the application is approved by HUD it should be put in the depositories, including all amendments made during the review process; later amendments should also be added. Finally the annual grantee performance report should be sent to the depositories when it is submitted to HUD and kept on deposit thereafter.

It is up to the applicant city or county to select appropriate locations for depositories. Generally the larger the jurisdiction in size and geographic spread the more depositories will be needed. Possible sites include community development field offices in neighborhood strategy areas, public libraries particularly in low and moderate income neighborhoods, community schools, and the offices of neighborhood-based organizations. Preferably the depositories should have evening and weekend hours so that people working during the day may have an opportunity to gain access to the documents.

It is essential that the facilities be accessible to the handicapped. This refers to having ramps, elevators, doors wide enough for wheelchairs, and convenience to parking or other transportation arrangements.

#### Publication of Information and Notices

As previously noted, applicant cities and counties must undertake affirmative efforts to make adequate information available to citizens, especially to those of low and moderate income and to those residing in lower-income and blighted neighborhoods. This goes beyond having information available at headquarters and depositories.

*At beginning of planning.* Particularly important is the provision of key information at the beginning of planning:

*(i)(1) At the time the applicant begins planning for the next program year, the following program information shall be provided to citizens:*

*(i) The total amount of community development block grant funds available to the applicant for community development and housing activities, including planning and administrative activities.*

*(ii) The range of activities that may be undertaken*

*with these funds and the kind of activities previously funded in the community.*

*(iii) The processes to be followed in drawing up and approving the local application and the schedule of meetings and hearings.*

*(iv) The role of citizens in the program, as provided under this section.*

*(v) A summary of other important program requirements.*

The first two items let citizens know how much money the locality has to spend under the CDBG program and what kind of activities can be considered. Once each year, HUD tells eligible cities and counties the amount they are entitled to receive under the CDBG formula, as laid out in Section 106 of the Housing and Community Development Act and 24 CFR Subpart B. The range of permitted activities are spelled out in 24 CFR Subpart C along with a description of kinds of ineligible activities. Activities previously funded in the locality are contained in last year's application and letter of approval and in the grantee performance report.

The required description of processes to be followed and the schedule tells how and when citizens will be able to get in on developing the application and offering their views in a timely manner. The role of citizens must be described in the written citizen participation plan. Other important program information relates to such matters as contract procedures, relocation provisions, and the A-95 review process. These may be summarized in the information offered to citizens at the beginning of planning, but the full documents from which the summaries are drawn may be made available at the main office.

This background information for planning should be widely distributed to citizens and citizen organizations. Many local governments do this as part of the required public notice of the first set of presubmission hearings, conducted at the beginning of planning for the new program year; this notice should appear in readable type in the nonlegal section of newspapers. Other places prepare a booklet or information kit and send it to members of the communitywide advisory committee (if there is one), to officers of neighborhood advisory committees (if any), to leaders of groups of low and moderate income persons, and to various other citizen organizations. This booklet might also be placed in libraries, neighborhood offices, and community schools for free distribution and handed out at community meetings. Radio and television can be utilized, and also mass mailings, including a flyer sent with utility bills. Slide shows and videotapes for presentation to neighborhood organizations and other interest groups are other possibilities. Under a cooperation agreement with HUD, the National Citizens Participation Council is developing sight and sound kits on various aspects of the CDBG program, and these will be available in 1979.

*Public hearing notices.* Although the regulations provide applicant cities and counties considerable leeway on how to convey program informa-

tion at the beginning of planning, they are quite precise on the requirements for public hearing notices, as follows:

*(j)(3) Notices. In order to give adequate notice of public hearings:*

*(i) The applicant shall, 10 days prior to each public hearing, publish a notice in easily readable type in the nonlegal section of newspapers of general circulation, including minority and non-English language newspapers of general circulation where they exist. Such notices shall indicate the date, time, place and procedures of the hearing and topics to be considered. The applicant also shall make reasonable efforts to provide the notices, in the form of press releases, to the neighborhood newspapers or periodicals serving low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.*

*(ii) The applicant is encouraged to take other actions to widely publicize the hearings, such as arranging for public service radio and television announcements.*

These are important requirements because people need to know when and where hearings will be held and to have sufficient time to prepare written statements and oral testimony.

The minimum requirement is to place a notice in the nonlegal section of newspapers of general circulation at least ten days prior to each public hearing. In addition some state or local laws may require notice in the legal section of the newspaper. If there are minority and non-English language newspapers of general circulation, they too must be used. Beyond that the applicant city or county should send out press releases to newspapers and other periodicals serving low and moderate income areas. This same information can be sent to radio and television stations as news releases and in the form of public service announcements.

At the minimum the required notices must indicate date, time, and place of the hearings, the topics to be considered, and the hearing procedures. They apply to two kinds of presubmission hearings and to performance hearings. (For the nature of the hearings, see pages 24 and 31.)

### Obtaining Citizen Views

Providing information and notices to citizens is half the two-way communications process. The other half is obtaining citizens' views and proposals and then responding to them. Providing citizens opportunities to present their ideas is important for several reasons.

First, citizens have a personal understanding of the housing and community development problems affecting their lives. They live with these problems every day and know from their own experience where remedial action is needed. Their insights add to the knowledge obtained through surveys and other technical studies.

Second, citizens often have good ideas on how they want their problems solved, and they have a sense of priorities for action. They might express this through advice on the general direction they want programs to go, and they might also present specific program proposals. These ideas can be combined with proposals emanating from various agencies and from the applicant's own staff.

Third, considerations of fairness require that persons affected by public programs have proper input into program design. To be truly meaningful, such input should occur at the earliest stage of planning before decisions are already made and should continue throughout the planning process.

Fourth, the nature of many community development activities necessitates cooperation of persons served or otherwise affected when the program moves into implementation. This is best achieved if built upon a foundation of participation in planning.

*Submission of views and proposals.* As previously noted, one of the five basic standards deals with submission of views and proposals. The regulations develop this requirement further in the following manner:

*(e) Submission of views and proposals.* The applicant shall provide for and encourage the submission of views and proposals regarding the Community Development Program by citizens, particularly low- and moderate-income persons and residents of blighted neighborhoods. This includes submission of such views:

- (1) Directly to the applicant during the planning period prior to public hearings on the application;*
- (2) To recognized neighborhood, project area, and communitywide citizen organizations;*
- (3) At neighborhood and other meetings, if scheduled by the applicant prior to formal public hearings;*  
*and*
- (4) At formal public hearings.*

Here again the regulations stress the need to encourage low and moderate income persons and residents of blighted neighborhoods to offer their views and proposals. Another section of the regulations, discussed in Chapter V of this guidebook, specifies that technical assistance should be available to such persons to help them develop their proposals and statements of views (page 33-34).

In the spirit of openness, these persons and others should have multiple opportunities to submit their ideas: directly to staff of the local agency in charge of community development planning, to any of the official advisory committees which might be established, at various community meetings, and at formal public hearings. At a minimum there must be arrangements to get these views and proposals to agency staff and elected officials and two kinds of presubmission hearings. Advisory committees and

community meetings are optional, but a majority of applicant cities and counties make use of them. To facilitate direct submission, some localities have published requests for proposals in newspapers, and some have distributed booklets with tear-out sheets for proposals submission.

*Public hearings.* The requirement for public hearings is reinforced in another paragraph of the regulations:

*(j) Public hearing. The plan shall provide for a sufficient number of hearings to obtain citizen views and to respond to citizen proposals and questions at different stages of the program. Such hearings shall be held at convenient times and locations which permit broad participation, particularly by low-and moderate-income persons and by residents of blighted neighborhoods. Hearing arrangements should make possible the full participation of handicapped citizens.*

Subparagraphs (1) and (2) of paragraph (j), which this guidebook takes up on pages 24 and 31 in tracing through the community development process, explain that there must be (a) two kinds of presubmission hearings--one set at the beginning of planning and another after the application has been developed--and (b) performance hearings. The number of hearings at each stage depends upon the size of the city or county and the number of citizens who are likely to desire to submit views and proposals and to testify. Clearly a single hearing going late into the night without giving a fair opportunity to everybody wanting to speak would be insufficient.

The number of hearings also relates to the requirement for convenience in location. In a big city or sprawling county it might be necessary to have hearings in different neighborhoods, particularly during the initial stage of planning when citizen proposals are being solicited. The time of day is another consideration. Some or all of the hearings should be in the evening and perhaps on a weekend so that persons who are employed during the day will have an opportunity to appear.

To give handicapped persons full opportunity to participate at public hearings, hearing sites should be accessible by ramps or elevators and convenient to parking or public transportation. Platform and microphone arrangements should accommodate witnesses testifying from wheelchairs. There should be braille signs in hallways and elevators, and interpreters for the deaf should be available.

*Community meetings.* Many cities and counties have found that community meetings are an excellent means of communicating with citizens, though they are not mandated by the CDBG regulations. A meeting is a halfway house between printed information and a formal public hearing, for it fosters an easy-flowing exchange between local officials and citizens. Officials provide basic information, citizens offer their views, and then

a dialogue ensues, which is less likely to occur in the formal setting of a public hearing.

If community meetings are held, they should be timely, convened with adequate notice, conducted at convenient times, and held at readily accessible locations.

### Responses

To complete the communication process, the applicant city or county must respond to citizen views and proposals. The regulations have a specific requirement for this:

*(e) . . . The applicant shall provide timely responses to all proposals submitted to it, including written responses to written proposals stating the reasons for the action taken by the applicant on the proposal. The citizen participation plan shall state the number of days within which responses will be provided. Whenever practicable, responses should be provided prior to the final hearing on the application.*

Timeliness is a key factor, and the responses should come prior to the final hearing on the application where practicable. (It would not always be practicable to respond immediately to proposals submitted for the first time at this final hearing.) The number of days in which responses will be provided must be indicated in the citizen participation plan. For every written proposal there must be a written response with reasons stated for whatever action, positive or negative, the city or county has taken on the proposal. Oral proposals require only oral responses, though they may be in writing also. One way to accomplish this is to offer a response to a number of oral proposals at the opening of the hearing on the proposed application.

However responses are handled, it is important to realize that they are an essential part of a continuing dialogue between citizens and public officials.

### Bilingual Requirements

Among the population likely to be served and otherwise affected by the community development program are a sizable number who speak, read, and write little or no English. Because spoken and written communication is the foundation for citizen participation, the regulations contain the following requirement:

*(k) Bilingual. Wherever a significant number of low- and moderate-income persons and residents of blighted neighborhoods speak and read a primary language other than English, the plan shall provide that all notices of public hearings and summaries of basic information be produced in such*

*language or languages and that bilingual opportunities shall be offered at required public hearings.*

Within the United States today, Spanish is the most common non-English language among people of low and moderate income, but in various localities there may be others. What is "a significant number" has to be a common sense judgment, paying particular attention to persons who are likely to be affected by the program and who would otherwise not be able to understand what is happening unless written materials are available in their language. In some localities use of more than one non-English language may be necessary, making this really a multilingual requirement.

The regulation applies to notices of both kinds of presubmission hearings, performance hearings, and all other public hearings. The basic criteria for notices are applicable: easily readable type in the nonlegal section of newspapers of general circulation, including non-English language newspapers. Cities and counties are also encouraged to send appropriate non-English news releases to neighborhood newspapers and radio stations featuring the particular language.

The basic program information which must be summarized in non-English publications are those indicated in paragraph (i)(1): amount of available CDBG funds, range of eligible activities, processes to be followed in preparing the application, schedule of meetings and hearings, and role of citizens. (See pages 14-15.)

Finally, there must be bilingual opportunities at all required public hearing where a significant number of affected persons speak a primary language other than English. This may include the use of interpreters and a public stenographer or recording secretary with facility to transcribe the testimony in the language spoken.

#### Notice of Submitting Application to HUD

Following public hearings on the proposed application, the city or county approves the application and sends it to areawide and state clearinghouses for review. (See page 24.) After that the application goes to HUD for its review and approval. At this time another public notice is required:

*(i)(3) When the application is submitted to HUD upon completion of clearinghouse reviews, the applicant shall publish a notice in a newspaper of general circulation stating that the application has been submitted and is available to interested parties upon request and describing the requirements on citizen objections to applications contained in paragraph (f).*

Paragraph (f), which sets forth the grounds and procedures for citizens making their objections known to HUD, is discussed on pages 25-26 of this guidebook.

#### IV. CONTINUITY

Community development is not a one-time event but rather a continuous process, occurring over a period of months and years. Recognizing this, the fifth basic standard of the regulations states:

*(c)(3) The applicant shall make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of involvement of citizens or citizen organizations throughout all stages of the program;*

This applies to communitywide participation and also to neighborhood participation where it is required.

The standard of continuity is expanded in paragraph (d), which describes the principal stages of community development: (1) developing the citizen participation plan, (2) developing the application, (3) program implementation, and (4) assessment of performance. Citizen participation must be achieved throughout all these stages. In tracing these stages, this chapter adds some new material but also briefly mentions matters previously considered so as to show the complete process.

##### Developing the Citizen Participation Plan

In tracing through the stages of participation, the regulation begins in this manner:

*(d) Scope of participation. The applicant shall provide for the continuity of citizen participation throughout all stages of the program. This includes citizen involvement in the development of the citizen participation plan. . .*

The nature of the citizen participation plan is described on pages 2-3 of this guidebook. Basically an applicant city or county has flexibility in presentation as long as all parts of the regulations are covered. Likewise the city or county is free to work out its own methods for involving citizens in the development of the citizen participation plan. However, the requirements of the other basic standards apply to this process: full involvement of citizens, particularly low and moderate income persons and other affected citizens; openness and access; adequate and timely information; and encouragement of citizens' views and proposals.

By now all participating cities and counties have adopted their citizen participation plans, but many will be amending their plans in the future. As this is done, there should be full citizen involvement.

##### Planning and Developing the Application

A substantial amount of citizen participation should occur in developing the application for federal funds. On this the regulations specify:

- (d)(1) Application development. Citizens shall be involved in development of the annual application, including;
- (i) The three-year community development plan, including the identification of community development and housing needs, and the setting of priorities;
  - (ii) The Housing Assistance Plan, including the annual housing action program;
  - (iii) The annual Community Development Program; and
  - (iv) Subsequent amendments and other changes to the above, in accordance with Sec. 570.312.

*Timing and content.* Every third year, beginning with the first application submitted on or after August 1, 1978, the applicant city or county submits the HUD area office a three-year community development and housing plan, a three year housing assistance plan, an annual community development program, and an annual housing action program. In each of the next two years only the annual programs are submitted. Citizen participation is required during all three years.

What these plans and programs must contain is spelled out in other parts of the regulation. A brief outline is as follows:

Three-year Community Development Plan (Sec. 570.304)

Summary of community development and housing needs

Comprehensive strategy

    Neighborhood revitalization

    Housing

    Economic development

Three-year project summary

Housing Assistance Plan (Sec. 570.306)

Housing conditions

Housing assistance needs

Three year housing program

Annual housing action program

Annual Community Development Program (Sec. 570.305)

Summary description of each proposed project and activity

Cost summary

Map or maps showing locations and service areas of projects and activities

*Major tasks.* To produce plans and programs with this content, six major tasks must be accomplished.

(1) The CDBG regulations encourage cities and counties to designate neighborhood strategy areas in which various programs can be carried out in a concentrated manner. This requires the *identification of neighborhoods*, a task which should involve residents for their insights into intangible aspects of neighborhood identify.

(2) Effective planning should be founded upon a careful *definition of needs*. In part this can be accomplished through surveys, data analysis, and other technical studies. In addition, low and moderate income persons and other residents of neighborhood strategy areas have intimate knowledge of their own needs and therefore should have opportunities to state these needs at the beginning of the planning process.

(3) Once needs are identified, the city and county embarks upon *development of comprehensive strategies* for meeting those needs. In the CDBG program emphasis is upon strategies for neighborhood revitalization, housing and economic development (the latter only if such activities are planned). Citizens can contribute their ideas to the content of those strategies and to decisions on relative emphasis of alternative courses of action.

(4) The strategies of the three-year plan gain concrete expressions in specific projects in the annual program. Therefore, *development of proposals* is a key intermediary step between long range planning and the implementation of the community development program. This should be a major focus of citizen involvement.

(5) Almost always public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, and citizens will submit proposals totaling more dollars than available. Therefore, *determination of priorities* leads to crucial policy decisions where citizen input is essential.

(6) Finally the project proposals must be converted into the specific application which the city or county submits to HUD. *Preparation of the application* is partly a technical task for staff to undertake, but it also involves some refinement of policy decisions and should therefore be done with citizen participation.

*Information requirements.* As Chapter III of this handbook discusses in depth, adequate and timely information is an essential ingredient of citizen participation in planning and developing the application. For that reason the regulations specify a list of program information which must be provided citizens at the beginning of planning. This includes (i) amount of funds available, (ii) range of permissible activities, (iii) processes and schedule to be followed, (iv) role of citizens, and (v) summary of other important program requirements. The exact wording of this requirement and discussion of ways to implement it are found on pages 14-15.

*Submission of views and proposals.* To facilitate the two-way flow of communication, the regulations require applicant cities and counties to encourage and provide for the submission of views and proposals. As considered in detail on page 17, such views might be submitted directly to the city or county agency, to neighborhood, project area, and community-wide citizen organizations, at community meetings, and at formal public hearings.

*Presubmission hearings.* Of these alternative means of obtaining the views and proposals of citizens, the regulations mandate two types of hearings during planning and application development, as follows:

(j)(1) *Presubmission hearings.* The applicant shall hold at least two kinds of public hearings prior to the submission of the application:

(i) To obtain views and proposals of citizens at the initial stage of application development on community development and housing needs and priorities, and to obtain comments on the applicant's community development performance;

(ii) To obtain views of citizens on the proposed application prior to submission of the application to A-95 clear-  
inghouses.

The first set of presubmission hearings should occur at the beginning of the planning process. Its purpose is to let citizens offer their perceptions of problems within their neighborhoods and in the larger community and make suggestions and present proposals directed toward solving these problems. Because community development is a continuous process, citizen comments on past performance, offered at this hearing, can help the city or county make a better judgment about what programs are working, which ones might be continued, and which ones ought to be substantially improved or closed down.

The second set of presubmission hearings comes after the completion of planning and application development but before the city council or county governing board approves the application. This gives citizens a final opportunity to state their views on the content before local approval is given. After that the application goes to the A-95 clearinghouses, which are areawide and state units set up under the requirements of Circular A-95 of the federal Office of Management and Budget to review and comment upon federal grant applications with the aim of encouraging local program coordination.

As discussed in Chapter III, the hearings must be held with adequate notice (page 16) at convenient times and locations (page 18) in order to permit broad participation, especially of low and moderate income persons and residents of blighted neighborhoods. In larger cities and counties this is likely to necessitate neighborhood hearings, at least at the beginning of planning, and in all places evening hearings are desirable. Hearing arrangements should enable handicapped citizens to participate.

*Other means of involvement.* Citizen participation in planning and developing the application should go beyond submission of views and proposals and public hearings. If there is a communitywide advisory committee and neighborhood advisory committees (see pages 5-7), they would be continuously involved during the planning stages. Chapter I presents a wide variety of other techniques which might be utilized including community meetings, workshops, task forces, charrettes, media-based interaction, and independent citizen planning. Thus, cities and counties have

numerous choices as they seek ways to achieve full involvement of the citizenry during the planning stage.

*Contingencies and local options.* The regulations contain one further requirement for citizen participation in planning:

*(l) Contingency and local option activities. The plan shall provide that if the applicant sets aside funds in its application for contingencies and/or local option activities, or if it chooses to identify in its application activities that could replace any activities disapproved by HUD during its application review, the citizen participation process shall be involved in the selection of such contingency or local option activities.*

This applies to any funds set aside for unforeseen contingencies and to standby proposals to take the place of activities disapproved by HUD. Citizen participation is required in selecting these contingency and local option activities, and it can be accomplished as part of the application development process.

#### Review of the Application

City council or the county governing body approves the application, and then it goes to the A-95 clearinghouses. According to Sec. 570.310 of the regulations, they have 45 days to review the completed application and transmit to the city or county any comments or recommendations. The city or county must include these comments with its applications to HUD and must explain reasons for an inconsistency with areawide planning if noted by the Area A-95 clearinghouse. The application which goes to HUD must also contain certifications providing assurances that the applicant city or county has complied with a variety of requirements, including having prepared and followed a written citizen participation plan (see Sec. 570.307).

*Notice of availability.* When the city or county submits its application to HUD, it must publish a notice in a newspaper of general circulation that it has done so and that the application is available to interested parties. (See page 20 for the exact working of this requirement.) The notice must also describe the requirements on citizen objections to the applications, as explained below.

*Consideration of objections.* Contained within the citizen participation subpart of the regulations is a statement of the grounds which HUD will consider in dealing with objections and the timing for this action, as follows:

*(f) Consideration of objections to applications. Persons wishing to object to approval of an application by HUD may make such objection known to the appropriate HUD Area Of-*

ficie. HUD will consider objections made only on the following grounds: The applicant's description of needs and objectives is plainly inconsistent with available facts and data; or the activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the applicant; or the application does not comply with the requirements of this Part or other applicable laws; or the application proposes activities which are otherwise ineligible under this Part.

Such objections should include both an identification of the requirements not met and, in the case of objections made on the grounds that the description of needs and objectives is plainly inconsistent with significant, generally available facts and data, the data upon which the persons rely. Although HUD will consider objections submitted at any time, such objections should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of the notice that the application has been submitted to HUD, as described in paragraph (i)(3). In order to ensure that objections submitted will be considered during the review process. HUD will not approve an application until at least 45 days after receipt of an application.

This provision indicates that HUD will not second guess a city or county on policy issues which are a matter of judgment or local preference. Rather objections must meet one or more of the following grounds:

- (1) The description of needs and objectives is plainly inconsistent with available facts and data.
- (2) The activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the applicant city or county.
- (3) The application does not comply with specific requirements or law.
- (4) The application proposes undertaking of ineligible activities. It is incumbent upon an objector to state clearly the grounds for objection.

*Program amendments and changes.* Because community development is a dynamic process, it is likely that the annual community development program will require some adjustments during the course of the year. As in preparing the original plan, so also must there be citizen participation in making program amendments and other changes:

(m) Program amendments. The plan shall provide for citizen participation in any amendments to an approved application, except those for disaster activities. If the nature of the amendment is such that prior HUD approval is required, as specified in Section 570.312, the applicant shall hold public hearings on the amendment. If

*the amendment does not require prior HUD approval, the plan shall describe how the citizen participation process shall be involved in the amendment.*

Generally, according to Sec. 570.312 the applicant city or county may amend its community development program without submitting the amended application to the HUD Area Office when the changes amount to less than 10 percent of the approved entitlement amount or regardless of the percentage when the changes are between previously approved activities. However, any change or cumulation of small changes exceeding 10 percent and involving new or different activities necessitates Area Office review and in such case a local public hearing is required. But even for smaller changes there must be some kind of citizen participation, such as consultation with the community-wide advisory committee, affected neighborhood advisory committees, or some other process if there are no advisory committees.

#### Program Implementation

After HUD approves the application and the program goes into effect, citizen participation must continue. As the regulations specify:

*(d)(2) Program implementation. The roles citizens will play in program implementation shall be indicated in the citizen participation plan. At a minimum, this shall include involvement of citizens in an advisory role in policy decisions regarding program implementation. It may also include selfhelp activities carried out by citizen groups and direct program operations conducted by neighborhood-based organizations and other eligible nonprofit entities.*

Communitywide participation in program implementation is required in all cities and counties participating in the community development program, and so is neighborhood participation in cities and counties of 50,000 or more in neighborhoods with a significant amount of program activity.

*Advisory role in policy decisions.* In the planning period, a city or county establishes its basic goals and objectives and draws up the main elements of program design. These are fundamental decisions in which citizen participation is needed, but policy making does not end there. Rather as the program moves into implementation, policies continue to be made, some of them filling out the details of program design, others making adjustments in previous policies to reflect lessons learned in program operations. So there remains a need for citizens to have advisory roles in policymaking decisions during the implementation stage. This can occur in a variety of ways.

If the city or county has a *communitywide advisory committee (CAC)*, it can function year around. In this manner, it will have numerous opportunities to perform its advisory role during the implementation stage. For instance, in a housing rehabilitation program, a major element of most local CDBG programs, a number of policy decisions must be made as the pro-

gram proceeds. These decisions might include eligibility requirements for rehabilitation loans, which neighborhoods to start in first, review of information on redlining, discussion of reinvestment strategies, and other matters dealing with rehabilitation.

Because comprehensive neighborhood revitalization requires mobilization of a variety of public and private services, issues of coordination and other interagency relationships can properly be taken to the CAC, which may be in a position to support the necessary institutional changes demanded by concerted action. As the program evolves, need for specific public services will surface, and the CAC can help figure out how these needs can best be met, such as by reprogramming CDBG funds or finding other sources of support.

The housing assistance plan proposes general location of assisted housing. As the program unfolds, prospective sites will be selected, and the communitywide advisory committee can voice its views on their merits.

Likewise there are opportunities for *neighborhood advisory committees* to offer advice on policy matters during the implementation stage. Although similar to the roles of the CAC, but on a smaller scale, there are some unique features of neighborhood involvement in implementation because neighborhood organizations deal with agency field personnel and are in direct contact with residents affected by the program. Thus, in a housing rehabilitation program, a neighborhood council or association can offer its advice on which blocks to tackle first. A neighborhood group can sponsor neighborhood meetings so that housing rehabilitation officials can explain the program to owners and tenants. A neighborhood organization can also serve as or appoint members to a review committee which passes on applications for loans, grants, and work assistance (such as by a youth work crew). And neighborhood committees can help pick sites for neighborhood facilities, such as tot lots and bus shelters, and they can offer advice on the design and services to be provided in community centers.

In addition to the overall advisory roles of the communitywide and neighborhood bodies, there might be *program advisory committees* for specific activities, related directly to the agencies operating the programs. These might consist of subcommittees of the CAC or the neighborhood advisory committees, or they might be separate from these broader citizen bodies. There might also be *citizen task forces* to take up policy issues during a particular phase of program implementation and then dissolve. And citizens can join public officials on joint task forces and working committees. In sum, there are numerous ways to provide citizens with advisory roles in program implementation.

*Direct program operations.* An optional method of involving citizens during the implementation stage is through direct program operations conducted by neighborhood-based organizations and other eligible nonprofit entities. In dealing with eligible activities, Subpart C of the CDBG regu-

lations defines four kinds of nongovernmental organizations which are entities eligible to receive block grant funds from the grantee:

- (i) a private nonprofit entity duly organized to undertake community development activities on a not-for-profit basis;
- (ii) a neighborhood-based nonprofit organization where the majority of either its memberships, clientele, or governing body are residents of the neighborhood in which activities will be carried out;
- (iii) a small business investment company as defined by the Small Business Investment Act of 1958; and
- (iv) a local development corporation, as defined by several cited Federal laws (Sec. 570.204).

These entities may carry out virtually every eligible activity under the CDBG program, if the city or county so decides. In addition, neighborhood-based nonprofit organizations, small business investment companies, and local development corporations may undertake certain activities not otherwise eligible, such as special assistance to small businesses, minority businesses, and neighborhood nonprofit businesses and other special activities designed to achieve community economic development or neighborhood revitalization.

*Self-help activities.* The other optional method of citizen involvement in program implementation mentioned in the regulations is self-help activities conducted by citizen groups. These tend to be small-scale projects carried out without major funding or full-time staff. They might be managed by a neighborhood corporation, but they are just as likely to be handled by a less formal, unincorporated group. For instance, a number of neighborhoods have tool lending libraries and others have started volunteer skill banks whereby residents exchange skills in various home-improvement services, such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical repairs, and plastering. Some neighborhood associations have carried out home winterization by purchasing a truckload of insulation wholesale and selling it to interested homeowners at a substantial savings below normal retail price. Sometimes volunteers from the junior and senior high schools help residents install the insulation, and low-income persons might get free insulation under the winterization program of the local community action agency.

Many neighborhoods conduct periodic cleanup and beautification projects through a cooperative effort by local citizens, sometimes with the city supplying trucks and drivers and neighborhood residents doing the loading.

These illustrations show some of the ways in which cities and counties can achieve citizen participation in implementing the CDBG program. Undoubtedly various localities will devise other types of involvement. There is wide latitude as long as meaningful participation occurs during the implementation stage.

### Assessment of Performance

The final stage of the community development program where citizen participation is required is in the assessment of performance. The regulations have two provisions on this matter.

*Opportunity to assess.* In the paragraph on the stages of participation, the regulations specify:

*(d)(3) Assessment of performance. Citizens and citizen organizations shall be given the opportunity to assess and submit comments on all aspects of the applicant's community development performance, including the performance of the applicant's grantees and contractors. They shall also be given the opportunity to assess projects and activities to determine whether objectives are achieved. The methods by which such opportunities shall be made available shall be indicated in the citizen participation plan. The applicant shall include in its annual performance report: (i) Copies of comments submitted by citizens regarding the applicant's community development performance; (ii) the applicant's assessment of such comments; and (iii) a summary of any actions taken in response to the comments received.*

As this subparagraph indicates, the citizen participation plan must indicate the methods whereby citizens will have opportunities to assess program performance. This applies to projects and activities run directly by the city or county and its departments and also by other public and private agencies and organizations receiving CDBG funds. Performance assessment should deal with the extent to which program objectives are achieved and various other aspects of community development performance.

Sec. 570.906 of the regulations requires each city or county receiving entitlement funds to submit an annual performance report to HUD. This report must include an indication of progress on planned activities, the city's and county's own assessment of program effectiveness in meeting local needs, an analysis of who is actually benefitting from the program, and a description of progress in carrying out the housing assistance plan. The annual performance report must also contain:

- (i) Copies of citizen comments on community development performance;
- (ii) The city's or county's assessment of such comments; and
- (iii) A summary of actions taken in response to the citizen comments.

The city or county must make public notice of the availability of this report when it is submitted to HUD and make available free copies to citizens.

*Performance hearing.* Beyond this broad requirement providing opportunities for citizen participation in program assessment, the regulations

have a specific requirement for a public hearing or hearings on program progress, as follows:

(j)(2) Performance hearings. In order to review program progress and performance, the applicant shall hold an additional public hearing or hearings thirty to sixty days prior to the start of planning for the next program year.

This is in addition to the two kinds of hearings required during the planning stage.

As with these other hearings, the performance hearings must be held at convenient times and location to permit broad participation, and hearing arrangements should accommodate the full participation of handicapped persons. And there must be adequate notice.

## V. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Community development, as a complex process stretching over months and years, requires special knowledge and expertise. This applies to public agency staff working on community development, and it applies equally to citizen participants. Therefore, citizens need to gain practical knowledge if their participation is to be meaningful. Accordingly, the citizen participation regulations contain the following requirement:

*(h) Technical assistance. To facilitate citizen participation, the plan shall provide for technical assistance. The level and type of assistance determined appropriate by the applicant shall be provided to: (1) Citizen organizations, so that they may adequately participate in planning, implementing, and assessing the program; and (2) groups of low- and moderate-income persons and groups of residents of blighted neighborhoods which request assistance in developing proposals and statements of views.*

*It may also be directed toward assisting citizens in organizing and operating neighborhood and project area organizations and in carrying out Community Development Program activities. Technical assistance should be provided by specialists jointly selected by the applicant and the organizations and groups to be assisted. It may be provided either by the applicant directly or through arrangements with public or private entities.*

This requirement is reinforced by Subpart C of the regulations which defines as an eligible administrative cost (Sec. 570.206(b)):

*The provision of information and other resources to residents and citizen organizations participating in the planning, implementation, or assessment of activities being carried out with block grant funds. This may include assistance to neighborhood organizations in areas of concentrated activities or to city-wide organizations conducting training or other activities designed to increase the capability of low- and moderate-income persons to be involved effectively in the development and planning and design of a community development program consistent with the applicable citizen participation requirements set forth in this Part.*

### Basic Philosophy

*Community partnership.* The basic philosophy undergirding technical assistance ties into the concept of community partnership stated in the first chapter of this handbook. This concept holds that to be successful community development must unite everybody's efforts. There will always be differences of opinion and conflicting interests, but the aim is to

reconcile these differences and carry out programs directed toward accepted community goals. Achieving this requires two-way communication, and for this to be meaningful, all sides must have the knowledge and skills to articulate their views. For residents of low and moderate income areas to do this effectively, they may need some kind of organization in order to get together, work out common objectives, speak out for their own interests, and enter into the community dialogue. They may also want to carry out certain community development activities. For all these tasks, technical assistance is indispensable. Otherwise, citizens will be inadequately equipped to uphold their side of the community partnership.

*Style.* The true spirit of technical assistance is to offer advice and provide knowledge, not to direct citizen efforts. The technical assistance specialist has useful knowledge to share with citizens, time to work with them, a background of experience in the subject, and access to information which citizens can use. He or she is the citizens' helper, not their boss. When it comes to policy issues, the technical assistance worker outlines alternatives and indicates pros and cons of each but does not try to dictate the choice and does not take on an advocacy role in behalf of the citizens. (An exception might be staff of a citizen organization, instructed by the governing board to speak for the organization).

#### Tasks and Groups to Be Assisted

The regulations indicate that the applicant city or county is to determine the appropriate level and type of technical assistance to be provided. The regulations then specify two groups of citizen organizations for which technical assistance must be available and suggests a third group for whom technical assistance may also be provided.

*Citizen organizations.* The first group consists of citizen organizations which are participating in planning, implementing, and assessing the local community development program. In particular this refers to the official communitywide and neighborhood advisory committees which the city or county may have established. (See Chapter II, pages 5-7.) It also can apply to task forces and working committees and to independent citizen organizations with significant roles in various stages of the program.

The tasks for which citizen organizations may need technical assistance are those outlined in Chapter IV in discussing continuity of involvement. (pages 22-30) For planning, these tasks include citizen participation in such matters as identifying neighborhoods, defining needs, developing comprehensive strategies, developing specific proposals, determining priorities, preparing the application, and participating in public hearings. During implementation technical assistance may be required to help citizens fulfill their advisory role in policy decisions, handle direct program operations, and engage in self-help activities. In the assessment period citizens may need assistance in making their own assessment of program performance and in preparing for the required performance hearing.

*Affected persons.* The second group of citizens who must be provided technical assistance are groups of low and moderate income persons and groups of residents of blighted neighborhoods. This must occur whenever they ask for assistance to develop proposals and statements of views. This is an essential part of the two-way communication process, reviewed in Chapter III (page 17). Because of the strong focus of the community development program on the needs of low and moderate income persons and blighted neighborhoods, these groups deserve special assistance as they formulate their views and develop their proposals.

*Neighborhood and project area organizations.* The third group of citizens for whom technical assistance may be provided are those who are organizing and operating neighborhood and project area organizations. Particularly in low and moderate income neighborhoods technical assistance might need to start with basic community organizing so that the residents may form the kind of organizations they need to assure their participation in the community development program. Once they are organized, they may need further assistance to move into participation in planning, implementation, and assessment. During the implementation stage technical assistance can aid them in carrying out self-help activities and perhaps directly operating certain programs.

#### Methods and Deliverers

*Methods.* The fundamental method for providing technical assistance is personal contact between specialists and citizens. This might consist of agency personnel, consultants, or the citizens' own staff. It might occur one-to-one, one-to-a-few, or one-to-a-group, or it might be a team of specialists bringing a variety of skills to the group with whom they are working. This assistance can be dispensed through individual consultation, at workshops and conferences, in training sessions, or in connection with committee and board meetings. It can also be given by telephone, written material, and informal conversation.

Providing a regular flow of information to citizens and helping them establish and maintain linkages to decisions makers are two important contributions technical assistance providers can make. Thus, they can gather data, distribute reports and other publications, make contacts for citizens, and arrange for other kinds of help if necessary.

Practice-oriented publications of a how-to-do-it nature are a key element of technical assistance. Where the right kind of published material is not available, the technical assistance agency may need to produce it.

*Who provides.* The city or county grantee has the option of providing technical assistance directly through its own staff or making arrangements with public or private entities to undertake this task. Or it can be a combination. Within local government, technical assistance might be handled by the agency responsible for basic administration of the community development program, or it might be delegated to another agency,

such as an office of neighborhood assistance. The city or county might contract with a private nonprofit agency to provide technical assistance to citizen groups or with a private for-profit organization or consultant. This can include experienced citizen organizations from other cities. The grantee may also fund communitywide and neighborhood organizations so that they can hire their own staff or consultants. The city or county may further help citizen organizations by supplying other resources, such as printed material, use of printing equipment, supplies, office space, and meeting rooms.

*Who selects.* At its best, technical assistance is founded on a trust relationship between local government and the citizenry. This is enhanced if citizens receive advice and consultation from persons and organizations in whom they have confidence, regardless of whose payroll the technical assistance specialists are on. Therefore, the regulations state that the specialists should be selected jointly by the applicant city or county and the organizations and groups to be assisted.