



**PY 2016 Ohio Consolidated Plan Community Development Program Advisory Committee
Program Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Date of Meeting: September 29, 2015, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location of Meeting: Creekside Conference and Event Center, 700 Creekside Plaza, Gahanna, OH 43230

Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

Joyce Barrett
Elizabeth Baxter
Jay Bennett
John Cleek
Glen Crippen
Phyllis Dunlap
Terri Fetherolf
Aleta Foust
Julie Green
David Gulden
Michelle Hyer
Craig Knapke
Jeff Marshall
Holly Mattei
Angie McConnell
Nikki Reese
Barbara Richards
Sue Spiker
Karen Sprague
Janice Switzer
Niki Warncke
Evelyn Warr-Cummings
Shannon Wells
Chris Wojno

Other People in Attendance:

Erika Anthony
Gayle Flaczynski

Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) Employees:

Joshua Roth
Ben Kepple
Mary R. Oakley
Timothy Leasure
David J. Pasquariello
Amanda McCallister
Deauna Gibbs
Ian Thomas

Introduction

- Mary Oakley, Office of Community Development (OCD) Economic and Appalachian Development Section Supervisor, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

- Introductions were made, and the agenda and structure of the Advisory Committee meeting were reviewed.
- Ms. Oakley updated Economic and Appalachian Development Section staffing assignments since there was a recent departure of a program representative. Ms. Oakley also introduced Brian Cunningham as OCD's new Grant Operations Section Supervisor.

PY 2014 Annual Performance Report

- Ms. Oakley informed participants that the PY 2014 Annual Performance Report was recently completed and could be viewed on ODSA's website.
- Ms. Oakley then provided an overview of the PY 2014 Community Development Program. In PY 2014, \$21.9 million in Community Development funds was awarded to 104 eligible communities. A majority of the funds (77.2%) were utilized for public facility projects. A brief review of competitive set aside dollars was discussed. A total of \$4.5 million was awarded to 17 applications in the Critical Infrastructure program. The Downtown Revitalization program was awarded to five applicants for a total of \$1.5 million. Finally, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program was awarded to 12 applicants for a total of \$3.6 million.

PY 2015 Program Update

- Ms. Oakley reviewed the PY 2015 application status. Competitive set-aside review was completed in August. \$9.7 million was recommended for 35 competitive set-aside projects in 35 communities. A total of \$5.8 million will be awarded to 22 Critical Infrastructure projects, \$1.2 million will be awarded to four (4) Downtown Revitalization projects, and \$2.7 million will be awarded to nine (9) Neighborhood Revitalization projects. OCD was pleased by the number of first time applicants and number of communities receiving their first competitive award. Allocation review is wrapping up. Grant agreements have been issued to approximately 55 of 98 communities expected to receive funds.
- Ms. Oakley provided an overview of common issues noted during application review. OCD was disappointed by the quality of applications received noting deficiencies in application attachments, program design, identified service areas and beneficiaries, citizen and community engagement, and planning. In response, participants discussed staffing shortages, insufficient lead time, and difficulties in viewing OCEAN application data. Participants requested sample applications and better application checklists to assist with the process.

Community Development Information Strategy (CDIS) and American Community Survey (ACS)

- Ms. Oakley summarized the Community Development Information Strategy requirements. She noted that it was important to solicit feedback from participants on the process since it was the first year that grantees were required to utilize this strategy. She noted that during the application review OCD observed that communities generally made the effort to conduct outreach and be inclusive within their communities. However, the efforts the grantees made varied in scope, intensity, and community participation.
- The committee provided feedback to OCD. Many members of the committee said that since only certain areas qualify as low- and moderate-income (LMI) and are eligible for OCD programs, convincing citizens from non-LMI areas to come to CDIS meetings is difficult. In addition to this, many communities expressed that it was difficult to convince local officials that the CDIS process is an important part of OCD applications. Committee members from smaller areas said the CDIS was difficult because of the lack of administrative capacity, specifically staffing shortages.
- Committee members noted several times that they felt the American Community Survey data was inaccurate and not sufficient to use in determining eligibility. In addition, it was difficult to get individuals

within communities to participate in an income survey. OCD management was sympathetic to these concerns, yet expressed that these requirements come from HUD and not the state.

- Ms. Oakley reviewed policy notice 15-05. As of 2016, there is no longer a former direct grantee requirement. She advised the committee to familiarize themselves with this policy notice. In addition, two cities will lose direct city status in PY 2016 and will receive funding through their county of jurisdiction.

OCEAN

- Ms. Oakley reviewed application modifications made to the OCEAN application for the PY 2015 application cycle. National objective and beneficiary data is now entered on the Project Details page and generates the Service Area page. Therefore, applicants are required to delete and re-enter a project if the national objective changes. Other changes included the method by which Allocation and Competitive Set-Aside projects are linked, the hierarchy of attachments at the program, project, and activity levels, and eliminating OCEAN fields and modifying application attachments.
- Ms. Oakley proposed modifications for the PY 2016 application, including better organizing attachments, increased outcome selection options, requiring a narrative for planning activities, and new fields for access type and primary activities. OCD will also attempt to streamline application requirements for projects with both Allocation and Competitive Set-Aside funding.
- The advisory committee provided feedback on this topic. Participants expressed appreciation for OCD's technical assistance staff. The committee also expressed appreciation for OCD program staff in being patient and helpful during the application process.
- OCD agreed to provide additional training and technical assistance documents to help applicants with the process.

PY 2016 Community Development Program

- Ms. Oakley reviewed proposed language changes to the PY 2016 Consolidated Plan. Language will be added to explain and set deadlines for the Competitive Set-Aside closeout process. She advised the committee to familiarize themselves with the revised language in Policy Notice 15-06 which includes information on extensions, amendments, and financial management. She also noted that the PY 2016 application will be due June 17, 2016, and reminded everyone that the Fair Housing Analysis of Impediments must be submitted as an attachment to the application. She also informed grantees that the proposed due date for the PY 2016 Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) Program is May 6, 2016.
- Overall, there was discussion as to whether communities should be allowed to submit more Competitive Set-Aside applications than the awards they are eligible to receive. A community may have no more than three (3) projects open at any given time. If a community has one (1) open project, it can apply for no more than two (2) awards. The committee discussed pros and cons of the requirement. Some committee members thought allowing additional applications would penalize smaller communities without the resources to devote to application preparation and expressed concern about time spent preparing and reviewing applications that may not be eligible. Other committee members thought allowing additional applications would improve the quality of the projects selected for funding and discussed the difficulty in restricting communities from applying from local political perspective.
- Ms. Oakley also presented proposed changes to the PY 2016 Competitive Set-Aside Programs. The grant ceiling for the Neighborhood Revitalization will increase from \$300,000 to \$500,000. Participants stated that administration costs should be raised to from \$30,000 to \$500,000 for the \$500,000 program. Ms. Oakley reminded committee members that the three (3) Competitive Set-Aside programs are funded from the same allocation and the proposed increase would result in funding fewer applications. However, communities awarded these grants would be able to complete a more comprehensive project with a

larger community impact. In response to questions posed by OCD, committee members stated that they do not want additional prescriptive changes made to program requirements, such as increasing the minimum number of projects, requiring a minimum dollar threshold per activity or adding bonus funds for demolition. OCD should continue to score applications in the areas of comprehensiveness, impact and strategic investment.

- The committee also discussed using funds for demolition. Some members felt demolition greatly benefits distressed neighborhoods while a few disagreed, stating that demolition is counter-productive and destroys community assets. OCD proposed limiting the amount of funds available for demolition.
- Ms. Oakley clarified scoring parameters for the Downtown Revitalization Program; OCD is not proposing any programmatic changes for PY 2016. Committee members discussed rewarding communities with bonus points or additional funding for completing housing activities. Ms. Oakley explained why it is difficult to use CHIP funds for downtown housing and outlined eligible costs that could facilitate upper-story housing. One committee member advocated for increasing the grant ceiling for the program.
- Ms. Oakley explained the pro-rata requirement governing OCD's Residential Public Infrastructure Grant (RPIG), Economic Development, and Appalachian Regional Commission programs and requested committee feedback on feasibly implementing the requirement for the Critical Infrastructure program. The committee generally agreed that requiring communities to pro-rate CDBG funds would provide additional recapture for continued program funding and would not present an undue hardship as all funding sources would benefit from any cost savings. The committee was also informed that the proposed change would not affect the administrative allowance. Ms. Oakley also discussed a proposed modification to the RPIG program that will impact Critical Infrastructure eligibility. In PY 2016, RPIG will only fund projects with a total project cost of at least \$200,000 and a grant request of at least \$100,000; therefore small water and sanitary sewer projects will now be eligible for Critical Infrastructure application without OCD consultation.
- Ms. Oakley informed the committee of a new closeout requirement. Under Attachment B(8)b of the grant agreement, grantees are now required to submit photos of completed projects and narratives with the Final Performance Report. ODSA and HUD may publish these submissions to demonstrate the program's success.

PY 2016 Targets of Opportunity Program

- Ms. Oakley reviewed the current eligibility criteria. She then presented proposals to add language eliminating public services activities eligibility, clarify requirements for downtown single building rehabilitation projects, and limit eligible applicants to CDP grantees. OCD also proposed adding language requiring projects to further the State of Ohio investment objectives. The majority of committee members appeared to support the recommendations. Committee members also expressed a need for administration to implement grant awards.
- Ms. Oakley reminded committee members that communities must submit a letter of interest for OCD review prior to submitting a full application for consideration.

Long Term Visioning

- Ms. Oakley reviewed the changes that were made five years ago to the Community Development Program. She highlighted successes and strengths of the program, including resource flexibility and locally derived projects. Ms. Oakley also discussed potential improvement opportunities, including increased community and state administrative capacities; and choosing projects that truly make an impact within grantee's neighborhoods.
- Ms. Oakley informed the committee that OCD intended to develop a long-term visioning process to guide future program development and solicited feedback about opportunities for improvement and methods for on-going community engagement.

- The committee asked OCD to take into consideration the concept of “quality of place” and “placemaking” when scoring applications. The committee also expressed political challenges to project design and selection. Committee members requested OCD assist community development staff in engaging elected officials or add requirements to the CDIS process to depoliticize the project selection process and improve long-term local planning.
- Committee members also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of competitive versus non-competitive funding. OCD reiterated that the Allocation program provides annual funding for basic capacity development and allows for an on-going relationship with local leadership.
- The committee expressed a need for planning dollars for the Downtown Revitalization and Neighborhood Revitalization programs to assist with long-term project development. Also, a committee member suggested the Downtown Revitalization Program was more appropriate as a stand-alone program and was not a good fit for the Community Development Program.

Wrap-Up

- Ms. Oakley informed the committee that her staff is currently setting up technical assistance meetings for unfunded PY 2015 competitive applications. The Advisory Committee was instructed to contact David Pasquariello to make an appointment.
- Ms. Oakley reminded the Advisory Committee of the upcoming Housing Conference held November 4 through November 6, 2015 at the Sawmill Creek Resort, in Huron Ohio. The Committee was reminded registration deadline was October 21, 2015.
- Participants were also advised to contact their community development representative to schedule technical assistance visits for potential PY 2016 projects. Application training will be held in late March or early April. Training and technical assistance meetings will be scheduled for April, May, and June.
- Ms. Oakley asked the Advisory Committee if there were any additional questions or topics that needed to be addressed. None were raised. The meeting was adjourned at 3:49 p.m.