

MA CDBG GRANTEE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

KEY FOCUS AREAS

1. HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

The process of developing an HPP involves community engagement and collaboration. Municipalities work with residents, local organizations, and other stakeholders to identify housing needs, preferences, and potential solutions. This inclusive approach helps ensure that the plan reflects the community's values and priorities.



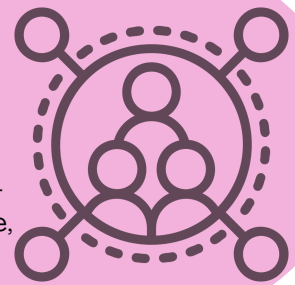
2. COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

These efforts, which promote community engagement, transparency, and accountability, play a crucial role in achieving CDBG national objectives, addressing local needs, and building sustainable and inclusive communities.



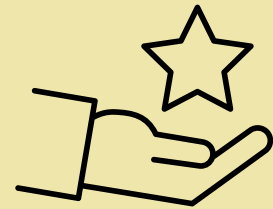
3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a fundamental component of successful funded CDBG projects. It ensures that projects are community-driven, culturally sensitive, and sustainable in the long term. Engaging residents and stakeholders in the decision-making process contributes to the overall success, acceptance, and positive impact of meeting CDBG National Objectives.



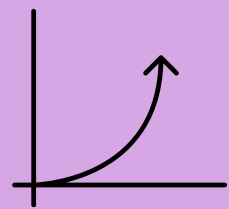
4. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Enhance the success of projects by utilizing the Massachusetts Community Engagement Continuum. The continuum, which spans from "inform" to "community-driven/led," offers a structured approach to community engagement.



5. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

By employing a strategic and inclusive communication approach municipalities can establish a comprehensive communication plan that leverages stakeholders as conduits for information, ensuring that project details are effectively disseminated to the community. This inclusive approach contributes to fostering transparency, engagement, and community support.



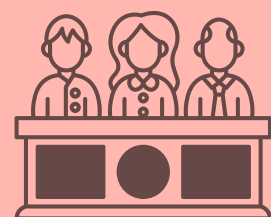
6. INSPIRATION & COLLABORATION

Find inspiration and collaboration through neighboring municipalities and stakeholders to reach community members by fostering a spirit of cooperation, sharing best practices, and leveraging collective resources. Tap into a wealth of collective knowledge, resources, and inspiration by actively seeking collaboration



7. CDBG CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Create a strong base for active and sustained community engagement by developing a CDBG CAC. It can play a vital role in fostering community engagement, promoting transparency, and ensuring that CDBG projects align with the unique needs and priorities of the communities you serve.



8. RESOURCE LIBRARY

The resource library is designed to help applicants, grantees, teams, organizations, and individuals establish and maintain robust engagement with community stakeholders. The tools and approaches outlined in the resource library can be used as-is or adapted to meet the specific needs of your community.



KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS



17 out of 39 grantees have Community Planning deficiencies

The common Community Planning deficiency scores in the FFY22/23 competitive applications are due to limited or no community engagement, especially from low- and moderate-income individuals or groups in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CDBG activities.

HPPs and CHPPs are essential tools for addressing housing needs and promoting sustainable development. They ensure compliance with Chapter 40B, offering a safe harbor, empowering local control and planning, and providing eligibility for grants and funding. The certification process, along with community engagement and collaboration, contributes to tackling housing challenges, aligning with statewide goals, and fostering sustainable development.

11 Municipalities have a HPP



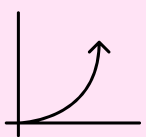
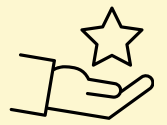
3 Municipalities have a CERTIFIED HPP

20 Municipalities conduct an annual census in January
28 utilize mailed letters & forms

The annual municipal census mailing serves as a valuable platform for municipalities to share information while collecting essential census data, offering an opportunity to engage communities, especially in rural areas and those with limited digital access.

Conducting inclusive community engagement projects involves addressing language barriers and ensuring multilingual access. Strategies include understanding language needs, translating materials and meetings, incorporating cultural interpretation, collaborating with local leaders, maintaining flexibility, and consistently updating the community on multilingual options, ultimately fostering long-term involvement and trust.

16 Municipalities have access to interpretation and translation services

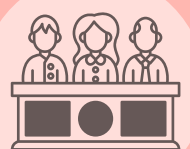


28 Municipalities involve community through informing and consulting

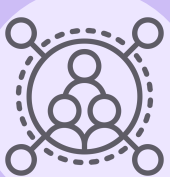
The majority of municipalities reported that they inform and consult with communities. By developing a comprehensive community engagement plan municipalities can develop goals, strategies, success metrics and utilize all six stages of the Massachusetts Community Engagement Continuum: 1. Inform, 2. Consult, 3. Involve, 4. Collaborate, 5. Empower, and 6. Community Driven/Led.

Among the FFY22-23 grantees, 22 out of 39 received high scores for Community Planning, and 16 have established CDBG CACs, with 3 currently in the process of development. The presence of CACs is beneficial in fostering community participation, particularly among low-to-moderate income groups. Municipalities with CDBG CACs demonstrated medium to high levels of community engagement and widespread citizen participation, enabling residents to actively contribute to the planning, implementation, and assessment of CDBG activities.

16 Municipalities have a CDBG Community Advisory Committee



Municipalities employ a diverse range of outreach methods to connect with residents, including online announcements, hybrid and virtual meetings, in-person gatherings, newspaper and radio advertising, paper and online surveys, participatory budgeting, partnerships, social media, and various community engagement strategies such as childcare stipends, focus groups, door knocking, storytelling, and translation services. Hiring of residents or recruiting volunteers as Community Liaisons or Digital Equity Navigators can support communication and help build trust between local institutions and community members, especially of low-to-moderate income and no to limited English speakers. This multifaceted approach aims to ensure broad accessibility, engagement, and inclusivity in reaching and involving the community.



26 engagement and outreach methods

There is a mix of approaches in collaboration with neighbors, with some municipalities actively engaging with neighbors for insights, some occasionally seeking inspiration, and others primarily relying on their own methods.

These collaborations cover a range of activities such as transportation, human resources, housing initiatives, and regional engagement programs. The emphasis on regional collaboration suggests a proactive approach to shared learning and improvement of municipal engagement strategies.

15 Municipalities collaborate with and learn from neighboring communities to enhance engagement strategies

