

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After completing this module, you will have a working knowledge of:

- The community development process
- Planning steps in community development
- Methods for documenting community problems
- How to select ICDBG projects that can address community problems and meet goals
- The ICDBG project team roles and responsibilities
- How to identify and engage strategic partners

A. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A successful community development process begins well before proposal writing starts and continues after a project has been completed. Community development begins by working with the community to identify current problems and current resources.

Defining current problems and resources is the starting point for reducing or eliminating unaddressed problems, developing plans for the future, and improving the quality of life of community members. Successful community development is built upon a foundation of community involvement followed by planning.

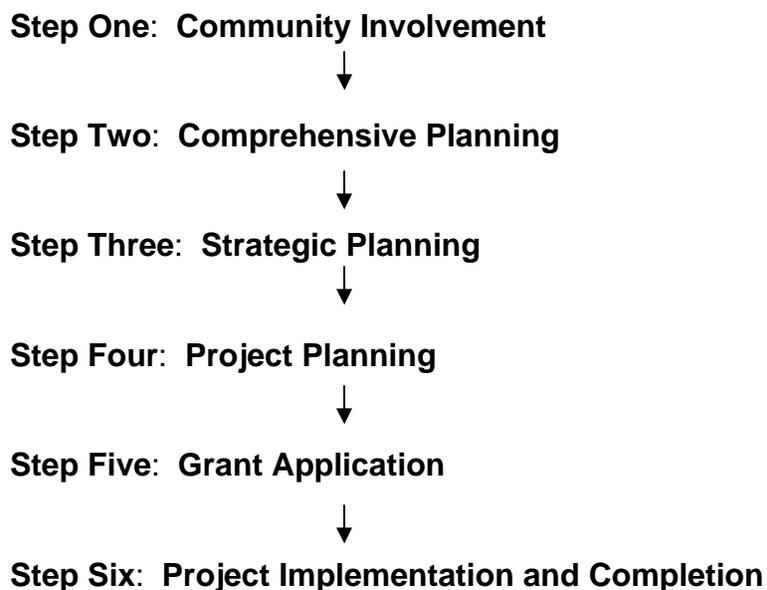
One product or result of this community involvement and planning can be a comprehensive long-range plan. A comprehensive long-range plan is a document that provides an outline of the community's starting point and a map of desired changes to be made over a specific amount of time. Comprehensive long-range plans should be adopted by the tribe's governing body through formal resolution. Upon adoption by the governing body, planners have direction to develop strategic plans that implement comprehensive plan components.

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Communities with successful community development systems share the following features:

- Community involvement and support
- Strong planning capacity
- Realistic goals
- Multiple approaches to achieve goals
- Strong organizational and management capacity
- Systems for overcoming obstacles
- Systems of accountability
- Partnerships and collaborations to meet goals
- Funding for projects

B. PLANNING STEPS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Step 1 - Community Involvement:

Community participation is critical to the process of identifying the community's current and future problems, as well as to developing the plan to address those

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problems. The tribe can select from a variety of information-gathering methods to secure community participation. These methods include, but are not limited to:

- Focus groups
- Community meetings
 - Need surveys
 - Interviews with key informants
 - Steering committees

Community participation helps ensure that all problems as well as existing resources within the community (including human resources) that can be used to reduce the problem's scope and impact have been identified.

Community-based planning should be an on-going process in tribal government. Too often community-based planning is tied to funding source requirements for community involvement in project development. However, community-based planning should have an existence that is separate and apart from grant writing efforts. Community involvement starts with identifying current problems and resources. Problems are prioritized. Strategies that use identified resources are crafted into potential projects that will address those problems and create outcomes that will benefit the community.

Step 2 - Comprehensive Planning:

Comprehensive planning involves engaging the community in describing and prioritizing long-range goals (5-10 years) and designing benchmarks to measure progress in achieving the goals. A goal is a broad statement of what the community defines as an ideal condition or set of conditions. Problems that impact the community and community members stand between the community and those goals. As part of the comprehensive planning process, community members often sort identified problems into broad categories to be further defined in strategic planning processes that follow comprehensive planning. For example, "Health" may be identified as a broad problem category during the comprehensive planning process. The category of "Health" could include such individual health issues as increasing levels of tuberculosis, such public health issues as outbreaks of water-borne illnesses, and such environmental health issues as increasing levels of developmental disabilities due to lead poisoning. These specific health problems would be addressed in a strategic planning process.

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identifies all the steps necessary to achieve a project goal. This will also help accomplish strategic plan short-term goals and the comprehensive plan long-range goals. The project plan includes identified timelines for completing these steps. It will provide a set of outcome objectives which describe measurable benefits for the community and explain how the community will evaluate success in implementing the project.

A major benefit of having ongoing community-based planning as part of your organization's "standard operations" is that it ultimately results in time and cost savings for staff. It involves the community in comprehensive long-range and strategic planning that provides the framework for projects necessary to help resolve community problems. A current strategic plan assists in the design and development of project plans, based on concrete documentation of community goals and identified problems, rather than an available funding opportunity.

Step 5 – Grant Application

It is important to be careful to select the grant opportunity that provides resources that can be used to resolve the community's problems through projects identified by the tribe. The grant application must be written according to the application guidelines and, at the same time, describe a project that will move the community toward its goals. If funded, the grant application serves as the blueprint for project implementation.

Grantors may require grantees to meet a series of requirements. These will vary from grantor to grantor and may range from:

- Financial matching of funds
- Verification of eligibility for project participants
- Timeframe for completion of the project

The tribe must agree to and be able to meet each of these requirements. If the tribe cannot meet the requirements of the grantor, it should continue searching for funding opportunities or find ways it can meet these requirements in the future. It is better to find an appropriate fit between the tribe and the grantor than promise something that cannot be achieved.

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Step 6 – Project Implementation and Completion

Successful project implementation and completion is the successful conclusion of the community development process. Successful project implementation and completion will also impact the future funding of tribal projects.

C. DOCUMENTING THE COMMUNITY PROBLEM

In the process described above, the tribe would have engaged in a community-based process to describe and identify its problems and resources, and the long-range goals that are included in the tribe's comprehensive plan. High-priority problems, along with strategies for dealing with them, would have been included in the tribal strategic plan. As grant opportunities appear, the tribe could determine if any strategic plan goals and approaches match the goals and interests of the granting agency.

It is important to document how and when the community was involved in the planning process. Documentation might include:

- Community surveys
- Minutes of community meetings
- Governing body resolutions establishing community goals & priorities

Documentation can also include a description of how the community was involved in creating:

- Comprehensive plans
- Strategic plans
- Indian housing plans
- Land-use plans that include goals and describe problems that are the project focus.

In addition to current and historic problem definitions provided by the community, data and studies from other sources should be provided:

- Tribal statistical data on income, unemployment rates, or other data which support the project need
- Statistical data from other agencies reinforcing community problems such as: I.H.S., school district, BIA, state or other appropriate data sources

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This information should be used to document and further describe problems defined by the community. Third party data is not a substitute for community-based statements of priority problem areas.

The ICDBG program emphasizes the importance of documenting community involvement and community problems.

24 CFR Section 1003.604 identifies the citizen participation requirements and methods for documenting this participation. Applicants should follow their traditional means of involving community member but must at least:

- Furnish community members with information concerning the amounts of funding available for proposed community development and housing activities and the range of activities that may be undertaken.
- Hold one or more meetings to obtain the views of residents on community development and housing needs. These meetings need to be scheduled in ways and times that will allow participation by community members.
- Develop and publish or post a community development statement in a manner that affords effected community members an opportunity to examine the proposed project and to submit comments.
- Afford community members an opportunity to review and comment on the organization's performance on existing active ICDBG projects.

Prior to submission of the application to HUD an applicant must certify by an official Tribal resolution that is has met these requirements and considered any comments and reviews expressed by community members and if it deems them appropriate, modified the application accordingly and made the modified application available to community members.

The minimum requirements for citizen involvement described in CFR 24 1003.604 do not provide an adequate description of community-based planning and the importance of community involvement in problem identification and project design. DO NOT limit community involvement to the minimal sets of activities listed above. Engage in an active and comprehensive community-based planning.

Rating Factor 2: Need/Extent of the Problem requires that the ICDBG application include quantitative documentation that the project meets an essential

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community development need and the project benefits the neediest segment of the population.

The ICDBG NOFA is very clear on the necessity of documenting community problems and showing how the community was involved in problem identification. Not all funding agencies provide such specific guidelines. Be prepared to provide a combination of qualitative data, such as that collected at focus groups, as well as quantitative data, such as that collected through surveys, community meetings or past program evaluations, to provide a potential funder with a brief but distinct picture of the community's needs.

D. SELECTING THE ICDBG TO MEET COMMUNITY GOALS

When the tribe is matching its identified goals to all funding options and selecting the best opportunity for funding, the ICDBG program will usually be at the top of the list. Since the ICDBG program focuses on the development of viable Indian and Alaska Native communities, it can be used to meet many community goals.

The tribe can select one or multiple projects to be included in one ICDBG application. Referring back to the example in Step 2 of Comprehensive Planning (Page 2-3), a tribe may wish to address the identified lead poisoning problem through an ICDBG project for housing rehabilitation, the waterborne illness problem through a public facilities and improvements project, and/or the tuberculosis problem through a new housing construction program. Additionally, there may be additional funding through other funding agencies that the tribe could use to leverage an ICDBG grant.

In designing the project, funding availability must be factored into the decision. The total cost of *all* activities cannot exceed the grant ceiling limit established for the applicant's Area ONAP. In Fiscal Year **2008**, the funding limits were:

AREA	GRANT CEILING
Eastern/Woodlands	\$600,000
Southern Plains	800,000
Northern Plains	6,001+ 1,100,000 0-6,000 900,000
Northwest	500,000
Alaska	600,000

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Southwest Population: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50,001+ • 10,501-50,000 • 7,501 – 10,500 • 6,001 – 7,500 • 1,501 – 6,000 • 1 – 1,500 	5,500,000 2,750,000 2,200,000 1,100,000 825,000 605,000
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Note that the Area ONAP grant funding ceilings are fixed amounts for each tribe or tribal organization, regardless of its size, except in the Northern Plains ONAP and the Southwest Area ONAP.

For the Northern Plains and Southwest Area ONAP jurisdictions, the population used to determine ceiling amounts is the Native American population that resides on a reservation or rancheria. Southwest and Northern Plains area tribes and tribal organizations should contact the Area ONAP office if they are unsure of the population level to use to determine the ceiling amount for the tribe or if the level used for previous years may need to be revised or corrected. The Southwest or Northern Plains Area ONAP must approve any corrections or revisions to Native American population data before an application is submitted. Always refer to the NOFA for the current funding ceiling.

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PARTICIPANT WORK ACTIVITY TWO COMMUNITY NEED & PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

List up to three (3) problems which have been identified by your community that would directly impact LMI community members:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Provide details and describe documentation used to verify how the community was involved in identifying the problems:

List the other methods used to document the problems:

Write a goal that addresses the identified problems:

Describe an ICDBG project which will move the community closer to achieving the goal:

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PARTICIPANT WORK ACTIVITY TWO (Continued) COMMUNITY NEED & PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Identify The Type of Project Selected: _____

- Housing Rehabilitation
- Land Acquisition
- New Housing Construction
- Homeownership Assistance
- Public Facility/Improvement
- Economic Development
- Microenterprise
- Other _____

Describe the benefits that LMI community members will receive from the project.
How will the project reduce or eliminate the problem described above?

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E. ESTABLISHING PROJECT TEAM'S ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to establish your project team as early as possible in the grant conception phase. The number of people on the team will depend upon the following variables:

- Nature, size and complexity of the project
- Amount of experience and level of expertise within the tribe
- Availability of time to commit to the project

Team members should be selected to represent the following areas of project development and management:

- Project planning
- Project management
- Financial management
- Staffing coordination
- Governing body communication
- Grant writing
- Project outcome design

Project Role	Who	Responsibilities
Project planning	Planning Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assists in the planning of the project• Ensures the project addresses the community's overall needs and goals
Project management	Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manages all elements of the funded project
Financial management	Finance Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develops the project budget• Manages receipt and distribution of all funds• Supervises project procurement activities• Submits all financial reports

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Project Role	Who	Responsibilities
Staffing coordination	Human Resources Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists in the development of the staffing pattern for the project • Ensures timely hiring of project staff • Ensures appropriate use of existing staff for the project
Governing body communication	General Manager or Department Director responsible for reporting to the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides regular up-dates on project status
Grant writing	Grant Writer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates and/or secures all documents required with grant application and submission • May be involved with project implementation
Project outcomes design	Planner or appropriate Department Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the grant application has realistic outcomes • Designs and implements the evaluation protocol and manages the evaluation activities to document project outcomes

Team composition may vary depending upon the project. An early identification of the project team members and a commitment from the members will support the successful completion of the project.

F. STRATEGIC PARTNERS

To successfully plan, implement, and manage a project might require securing strategic partners to support the effort. A strategic partner is an individual, tribal department, organization, or other group that will bring specific resources to the project.

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Strategic partners can be used to provide a skill or resource that the tribe does not have. These resources may be either financial or human resource assets. A financial resource might be cash or financial accounting service. Human resources might be expertise in performing project activities necessary for the successful completion of the project.

Examples of the use of strategic partners include:

- The identification of a strategic partner with extensive experience to assist in the project management if the tribe has limited project management experience. Not only will this strengthen the project but it can increase the capacity of the tribe in project management.
- The identification of a strategic partner who will provide an independent review of the financial activities if the tribe has had negative audit findings until the negative audit issues are resolved.
- If the tribe does not have experience in evaluating the project outcomes, seek a strategic partner with experience to add to the team.

Using strategic partners can help a tribe strengthen its management of a project and develop its internal capacity.

G. SUMMARY

Completing the community-based planning steps in community development is critical to project success. These steps ensure that there is documented community involvement in identifying the most severe problems of the community. Community-based planning provides an effective framework for long-term or comprehensive planning, which identifies long-term changes to occur over the course of five to ten years. Comprehensive planning leads to strategic planning, which describes action strategies for critical changes that would be addressed within a shorter period of time, usually two to three years. Project planning allows a tribe to identify one or more of the strategic planning goals and match the project(s) to the parameters and the funds available from funding sources as they become available.

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A well-defined series of steps in project planning helps to move a project from concept to reality. Those steps include project scoping considerations, fiscal and project management decisions and evaluation design issues. As part of the project planning process, identifying a project team and establishing each team member's role and responsibilities in accomplishing the process is a critical task.

During this initial exploration of the project's scope, also assess the internal capacity and resources of the tribe. This assessment may result in seeking a strategic partner that can add expertise and resources to the project as well as help in presenting a strong, experienced team to a potential funding agency.

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PARTICIPANT WORK ACTIVITY THREE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Identify potential team members for the project identified in Participant Activity Two:

Area of Expertise	Name	Department
Project Planning	_____	_____
Project Management	_____	_____
Financial Management	_____	_____
Staffing Coordination	_____	_____
Governing Body Communication	_____	_____
Grant Writing	_____	_____
Project Outcomes	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Identify potential strategic partners and how they will contribute to the project for the project identified in Participant Activity Two:

Potential Strategic Partner	Project Role
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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