

APPENDIX G

STATE AND REGIONAL PROJECT REVIEW/PRIORITY RANKING SYSTEM

It is the state's policy to decentralize decision-making in the prioritization of applications for the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program. The state has delegated project selection to the Association of Governments (AOGs) through the Regional Review Committees (RRCs). Each RRC has established a rating and ranking system that is used in evaluating projects for funding. The state has approved these systems and public hearings are held annually for public comment.

The delegation of the rating and ranking process to the RRCs does not remove the state from its responsibility to ensure national objective and eligible activity compliance. The state maintains the right to refuse funding to any project that does not meet minimum program standards.

The state requires that these systems contain at least **eight** basic criteria. This requirement has been instituted to bring some consistency to the ranking of applications statewide. The RRCs are not required to use the identical language shown in addressing these criteria, but they must meet the general intent.

1. Capacity to Carry Out the Grant

The grantee must have a history of successful grant administration in order to receive full points in this category. To adequately evaluate grantee performance, the RRC must consult with the state staff. Staff will rate performance on a scale of 1-10 (ten being best). A grantee whose performance in the past was poor must show improved administration capability through third party administration contracts with AOGs or other capable entities to get partial credit. In order to be eligible to receive new funding, a grantee/sub-grantee must have drawn down at least 50 percent of their previous year's CDBG grant funds at the time regional and rating and ranking.

2. Job Creation

Points must be given to projects that create or retain jobs. Fewer points may be given for temporary jobs.

3. Housing Stock

Because housing is a state priority, housing projects that improve or expand the communities housing stock must be weighted to receive additional points in rating and ranking systems.

4. Affordable Housing Plan

House Bill 295 requires all cities and counties to address the problems associated with the availability of affordable housing in their community's plans. (Cities with less than 1,000 persons and counties less than 25,000 are exempt from this requirement.) Applications received from communities and counties who have complied with HB295 by the preparation and adoption of a plan, and who are applying for a project that is intended to address some element of that plan will be given additional points.

5. Extent of Poverty

Points must be given for the percent of "low income" and "very low income" persons benefiting either from the project or carried out in a low-income community. Low-income persons are members of families whose income is 50 percent of the county or statewide median income per year. Very low-income families are those whose income is 30 percent of the county or statewide median income per year.

6. Financial Commitment to Community Development

It is difficult to compare all of the various ways commitment to community development can be measured. The state will only require that additional points be given to communities who show commitment based on criteria selected by the RRC. These criteria are somewhat subjective and may be weighted in accordance with local priorities.

7. Project Maturity

Each application must contain a specific and detailed scope of work that contains a narrative description and a detailed engineer's cost estimate. Rating and ranking questions should allow the RRC to determine the "immediate viability" of the project. Additional points may be given to applicants that have demonstrated progress and organization in their application. Examples of this can be demonstrated by advanced procuring of engineering services or having a dedicated and involved project manager. Simple projects should not be penalized compared to more complex projects; maturity should not be confused with complexity. Maximum points should be awarded to applicants having secured additional funding. Fewer points may be awarded if additional funds have been applied for or are in the application process.

Applicants may demonstrate maturity by leveraging the CDBG funds being requested. RRCs must give additional points for applicants that provide a cash match to the CDBG funding. A sliding points system is encouraged that gives greater points for higher match percentages.

8. Planning

The state of Utah emphasizes the importance of incorporating planning in the operation of government. RRC's must review previous year's consolidated plan, establish regional priorities and award points according to those priorities. Communities that demonstrate their desire to improve through planning should receive additional points in the rating and ranking process.

In the rating and ranking of CDBG applications, each region will recognize an applicant's accomplishments consistent with these principles by adding additional points for the following:

1. Demonstration of local responsibility for planning and land use in their communities in coordination and cooperation with other governments.
2. Development of efficient infrastructure including water and energy conservation.
3. Incorporation of fair housing opportunity and affordability into community planning.
4. Protection and conservation plan for water, air, critical lands, important agricultural lands and historic resources.
5. Removal of barriers to accessibility of programs and facilities for all persons.