

March 9, 2006

George W. Bush
The President
The White House
Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As a housing rehabilitation professional, I am concerned about your assessment of the Community Development Block Grant Program. The rating of ineffective is troublesome. Primarily reflected in the scores earned in the purpose, planning and results/accountability categories which are below 50% and management reaching only 67%. Its been a few years since I have been in school, but I recall that if you score anything below 65 percent, you are failing. Your proposed actions to improve the performance of the program by legislative reforms to target specific neighborhoods, applying a common set of performance goals measures for programs and providing bonuses for those whom meet or exceed those performance goals are feasible steps in the right direction given the dependency that these funds have generated.

On a micro level, I believe what should be called for is a dramatic redefinition of purpose for each program, especially in housing rehabilitation. Planning to meet goals within a certain target neighborhood is one thing. But designing a program that informs and encourages homeowners and contractors to participate is something else entirely. I therefore urge you to encourage all grantees to improve their purpose through clear definition, their long and short terms plans by considering every aspect of the process in housing rehabilitation and improving administrative responsibility in reporting results by developing internal mechanisms, such as databases that record activities and provide efficient reports.

From a policy standpoint, the clear message is that more of the same won't work. The warning signs are already visible, and it is incumbent upon all of us to pay attention.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard A. Long 1/0
C|lo group