COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT
AREA PROGRAM

2010 COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT AREA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM HANDBOOK

This handbook will:

- Provide information about the Lake County Community Enhancement Area (CEA) Partnership Program.

- Provide guidance necessary to complete a CEA Partnership Program Application. The application itself is a separate document.

- Give Lake County's unincorporated communities sufficient information about the CEA Partnership Program to create interest in becoming a partner in this improvement effort.

I. COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT AREA (CEA) PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM BACKGROUND

A. WHAT IS THE CEA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM?

The intent of the CEA Partnership Program is to help eligible communities improve their neighborhoods. The program will target and assist communities and neighborhoods where at least 51% of the residents have low and moderate incomes. To accomplish this, the Lake County Board of County Commissioners has set aside Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars. Community groups and residents will also be expected to make in-kind and/or cash or materials contributions.

B. HAS YOUR COMMUNITY BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A POTENTIAL CEA?

The potential communities identified thus far include: Astor, Astor Park, Bassville Park, Bay Lake, Cassia, Deerhaven, Dona Vista, Forest Hills, Fullerville, Grand Island, Lake Jem, Lake Kathryn, Lake Mack, Lisbon, Montclair, Mount Plymouth, Okahumpka, Orange Bend, Pine Lakes, Pittman, Shockley Heights, Sorrento, Southside Umatilla, Stuckey, Tuscanooga, Villa City, and Wekiva Falls.

C. WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE CEA PARTNERS?

Communities receiving CEA designation will, with assistance from Lake County government, first create a community vision, identify their particular strengths and limitations and will then develop an improvement plan that takes advantage of strengths and assets and addresses the needs. The plan will be carried out through partnerships between the community, various Lake County Departments, the private sector, non-profit organizations and others. The community will be expected to play a key role in coordinating the development of a CEA Action Plan and in the implementation of the Plan. The community's buy-in of the initiative will maximize the lifespan and usefulness of resulting improvements. The improvements "belong" to the community because it played a key role in the planning, selection and installation. In most cases, the maintenance will also be the community's responsibility.

Lake County government is the other side of the partnership. Representatives from key Lake County Departments, the Sheriff's Office and the Health Department comprise the CEA Working Group which oversees the program. The Community Enhancement Coordinator serves as the link between the Working Group and the CEA's. As each CEA develops its Action Plan, the Working Group and the Coordinator will bring in potential partners including service providers and other County Departments having resources to address the identified issues. These partners will become part of the planning process as well as part of the solution. The Coordinator will also assist CEA's in obtaining other resources.

D. WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES WILL BE FUNDED?

Only those activities identified in each CEA Action Plan and meeting Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines will be funded. Residents must commit to developing a very specific plan, which may include activities like:

- Physical improvements, such as
  - beautification and signage projects
  - community clean-ups
  - pocket parks (maintained by community)
  - sidewalks
  - community center renovations
  - playgrounds
  - Other ideas that meet the HUD CDBG criteria

Assistance to find funding for the below listed items can also be provided:

- Public safety programs, such as
  - crime prevention
  - delinquency prevention
  - juvenile justice programs
- Community services, such as
  - adult education programs
  - after-school programs
  - senior citizen services

E. WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES WILL NOT BE FUNDED?

Such activities include, but are not limited to:

- Projects not providing a public benefit
- Projects located outside of designated CEA's
- Projects conflicting with existing County improvement projects or programs
- Public service programs, such as those concerned with employment, fair housing, education, energy conservation and welfare, that are already receiving or are eligible for funding from other sources
- Applications requesting salaries and/or operating expenses not directly part of the services being provided

F. WHAT ARE THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STEPS?

Step 1. Create the CEA Action Plan:

Creation of the CEA Action Plan takes place during and after the application process.

- Create a community vision statement. The Community Conditions Survey can help in creating this vision, so the Survey could be done before creating your vision statement. Just remember that the vision statement is a general, broad statement of what you want your community to be like in five, ten, even 25 years.

- The Community Conditions Survey will help determine community assets and needs. The process will give residents a chance to critically examine their strengths and limitations. The vision statement and Survey are part of the CEA Partnership Program application.
- Set and prioritize realistic goals through group consensus.
- Define how the improvements will be maintained or continued.
- Identify groups, individuals, and businesses within the community that have or could commit to supporting the improvement efforts.
- Select and support a spokesperson.
- Prepare the CEA Partnership Program application.
- Work closely with Lake County staff to develop and implement the CEA Action Plan. This means attending meetings, distributing flyers, attending public hearings, writing letters, reviewing draft documents, developing and maintaining projects/programs, etc.

Step 2. Implementation

Upon receiving CEA designation, the community will work hand-in-hand with County agencies, non-profit organizations, vendors, businesses, etc. involved to carry out its Action Plan, and to bring the improvements to a successful completion. Action Plans will be updated and making improvements will be a continuing process.

- The CDBG Section of the County's Community Services Department will be responsible for the administration and implementation of all projects that Lake County government agrees to fund.
- The community, with the help of the County agencies involved, will be responsible for the administration and implementation of the other part(s) of the Action Plan, and will also be expected to contribute resources. Contributions can be in the form of volunteers doing a part of the project, donations of goods or services or cash.
- When a project/program is approximately half complete, the community will submit a report (no more than two pages) describing the progress and how much has been accomplished to that point. Be sure to point out any problems or possible delays in completing the project on time.

Step 3. After Project Completion

After project completion, the community sponsors will need to:

- Complete an annual report describing the ongoing maintenance/funding of improvements consistent with the plan presented within the application. The report can be as simple as a couple of paragraphs describing the volunteer efforts used to maintain the improvement and a couple of photographs showing the improvement's current condition.

  A project requiring maintenance remains a maintenance responsibility of the neighborhood. It is not the County's intent to acquire additional maintenance responsibilities.
- Submit copies of minutes of meetings, as described in paragraph G below, to the CDBG Section.

G. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION?

All CEA neighborhoods will need to establish a governing body with an approved set of organizational by-laws that establishes:

- committees
- election processes
- executive board powers
- membership requirements,
- minimum meeting times and places
- officers

The organizational by-laws must be reviewed for changes at least every two years. County Staff can provide technical assistance for developing the organizational by-laws.

All CEA neighborhood governing bodies should:

- Hold four (4) quarterly, or as deemed necessary, community-wide, publicly-noticed meetings a year.
- Hold a democratic election process either through simple majority or consensus for officers and board positions. The election process should be outlined in organizational by-laws and require elections on an annual basis.
- Hold six (6) bi-monthly, or as deemed necessary, publicly-noticed leadership meetings.
- Have a current Action Plan. This action plan must be reviewed every two years for consistency and relevance to the CEA program goals.

All of the above requirements must be met within two years of date that the community receives CEA designation. If not completed, the community cannot be considered for funding of future improvements until all requirements have been met.

H. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT AREA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM?

The main benefit of the CEA program will be increased return on taxpayers' dollars. This will happen because scarce resources will be concentrated and expended in a coordinated manner as opposed to a scattergun approach. The goal is to provide sufficient resources to attack underlying causes of problems. Other benefits include:

- Helping build community cohesion.
- Increased lifespan of improvements.
- Increased opportunities to receive more resources through a coordinated approach. These benefits and many of the benefits of participating in the CEA Partnership Program have already been mentioned or implied.
- Increased access to resources because CEA's will have prioritized and made Lake County government aware of their needs and concerns.
- Increased interest in addressing quality of life issues within neighborhoods. This in turn increases their ability to address those issues.

- Increased communications, planning and coordination between communities and Lake County. Thus, more opportunities become available for citizen's voices to be heard by Lake County government.

The end result will be forging of stronger partnerships between neighbors, the County government, civic groups and the business community.

II. HOW TO COMPLETE THE COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT AREA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION

A. YOUR COMMUNITY MUST BE IDENTIFIED AS A POTENTIAL COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT AREA (CEA). See paragraph B, in Section I to see if your community has been identified as a potential CEA or phone the Community Enhancement Coordinator at 742-3918.

B. INFORMATION. Information is available from the Community Enhancement Coordinator, 1300 S. Duncan Dr., Building E, Tavares, Florida, telephone 742-3918. Information can also be found on the Lake County website by going to: www.lakegovernment.com , then, under "Most Requested" at left, click on "Departments and Offices", then under Community Services Department, click on Community Development Block Grant, and then click on "Community Enhancement Partnership Program".

C. APPLICATION PREREQUISITES:

1. COMMUNITY CONDITIONS SURVEY

The first step in applying for Community Enhancement Area designation is to complete the Community Conditions Survey. A completed Survey must be included along with the Community Enhancement Area Partnership Application. The template is part of the Application packet. The Survey consists of two parts: an inventory of assets and needs, and a map that plots the assets and needs with a physical location. More detailed instructions about how to complete this part of the application are found at the front of the Community Conditions Survey section. Applications without Surveys will be considered incomplete and will not be ranked.

The Survey is intended to help you develop your community vision. In completing the survey, you will inventory the good and bad points about your community. This is your baseline. The good points tell you what needs to stay and what resources you already have. The bad points tell you what needs to be fixed. You will build upon this to determine the route to take to achieve your vision. The route you will take to achieve the fixes becomes part of the vision.

You now have the beginnings of an action plan. You know where you want to go and have some preliminary ideas of how to get there. The Survey should suggest to you the

top three or four improvement projects you might want to undertake. Choosing one of them will then set the stage for the rest of the application narrative

2. COMMUNITY VISION AND ACTION PLAN

Developing the Vision

The second step in the Community Enhancement Area application process is to develop a vision for your community. Prior to submitting your application, the community will need to decide what it wants to be in the future. Developing a vision for the future will bring together various groups, organizations and individuals to express their dreams and expectations for their community's development. Ultimately, the vision will provide a foundation for decision-making about improvement activities.

There are many wide and varying goals that will be considered during the visioning process. The vision should reflect the consensus of as many various groups, organizations and individuals in your community as possible. Some of the questions and ideas you might consider could be: What direction should the community take and how do you want it to look in the next 5 – 10 years? Discuss the "best of what is" in your community. What are the achievable dreams for your community? Identify existing conditions that should remain or can easily be built upon or made even better. What are the specific steps the community believes need to be taken to reach your vision? These steps are the beginning of your action plan.

There is no prescribed method on how to make these decisions, nor are there any "right" or 'wrong" answers. You can sit down and have your whole group brainstorm at the same time. This works well for small groups; however, it can become unwieldy if there are more than eight to ten people in the group. You can divide a larger group into small groups, do the brainstorming, then bring everyone back together and meld your ideas into a single vision statement. Another method is to appoint a subcommittee to do the brainstorming and present their ideas to the general membership. There are numerous other models that work as well. No matter which model you use, **your vision should reflect the consensus of the group sponsoring the application.** A brief summary of your vision is part of the Community Enhancement Area Partnership Application.

Developing the Action Plan

If your community is designated a Community Enhancement Area, the County will assist you in further developing your action plan. We will compile and analyze hard data with you, assist you to administer attitudinal surveys that will supplement the Community Conditions Survey, and help to identify other resources that may be available to address your particular needs. We will also help to bring these resources to the table to be part of the continuing planning process and will ensure that they live up to commitments made at the table. You now have a route and a vehicle to reach your desired destination.

Future developments

The Community Development Block Grant Division is currently working out the details with the Growth Management Department so that when finished, your action plan could be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and would have the force of law by virtue of being incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Plan and the Land

Development Regulations. The Community Enhancement Area could also become a Community Enhancement Overlay District. The specifics of that designation are being worked out with Growth Management and the Land Planning Agency.

3. PROJECTS/PROGRAMS SUBMITTED IN THE CEA DESIGNATION APPLICATION:

- Must meet the greater than 51% of community/neighborhood residents in the project area are of low and/or moderate income criteria.
- Must be located within a potential Community Enhancement Area
- Must have support by means of cash, volunteer effort, materials, private grants or any combination thereof
- Must be visible, accessible, and beneficial to the participating community
- Must have a group or responsible entity designated to perform ongoing funding or maintenance
- Must not conflict with, but may supplement, existing and/or proposed public improvement projects and programs
- A representative from the supporting group must have attended one of the mandatory pre-application workshops.
- Application must be received by the time and date indicated on the application.

Those projects not meeting the review criteria will be rejected.

D. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

- The Schedule of Events is described in the Request For Proposal packet.

E. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposal Narrative and Budget.
Complete these sections as instructed in the packet.

Attachment A. General Information.
This attachment is for the general information required for the application.

Attachment B. Letters of Support.
Include all letters of support for your proposal. Topics for these letters include but are not limited to: general support, committing cash or materials donations and committing volunteer support to work on project.

Attachment C. Community Volunteers.
In this attachment, please list the groups/organizations/individuals who have volunteered to work on the community's portion of this project, to date. If your community is designated a CEA, a more exact list will need to be provided later. Be sure to include anyone doing administrative type work, for instance, the individual(s) who put together

this application. Also, volunteer hours are significant contributions to the success of the project and the County will want to recognize such a contribution when the project is complete.

Attachment D. Community Conditions Survey.
Complete the Survey as explained in the attachment.

Attachment E. Site Plan.
Include a sketch map and/or drawings or landscape plan, if applicable.

Attachment F. Photographs.
If you have chosen a physical improvement, your application must include pictures (limit four) of the target area. These pictures should capture the community's perception of the main physical challenges as pertains to this project. The photos will be kept by the Community Development Block Grant Section.

Attachment G. Support from Community Residents.
As widely as possible, the community should ensure that community residents, and especially residents adjacent to the proposed project site, are aware of the project and have had an opportunity to express their agreement or any reservations they might have to the project.
In that regard, with the application, you are required to submit, at least, one notice of a community-wide meeting at which your project was the main topic of discussion. This notification could be a flyer that was posted throughout the community or mailed to all residents or an announcement in a local newspaper(s), or other means that you can document.
Later, if your community is designated as a CEA, additional notifications should be done and copies of those notifications will be submitted in the mid-project report.

Attachment H. Application Checklist.
This is a checklist to be used to ensure that all necessary documentation for the application has been included.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Preliminary Review

All applications received by the deadline date and time will undergo a preliminary review using the requirements specified in the application packet. All applicants will be notified in writing of the result of the preliminary review, and, if needed, additional information may be requested. All applicants will be given a deadline to respond and submit, in writing, the additional requested information.

Evaluation of Applications

All qualified applications will be evaluated by the Community Enhancement Working Group Review Committee. The Review Committee will be responsible for reviewing, evaluating, rating, ranking and recommending a community for CEA designation to the Board of County Commissioners. The Review Committee will be composed of members of the Community Enhancement Working Group that represent County Departments/agencies that will be responsible for or may be involved in certain aspects of the proposed projects/programs.

G. SELECTION STATUS NOTIFICATION

All applicants will receive written notification of the following events:

- Results of preliminary review of the applications compared to the Review Criteria.
- Meeting before the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to designate CEA and chose project.
- Within fourteen days of BCC decision, all applicants will be notified of the results.