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CDBG Office Hours: A Little Lecture, A Lot More Action

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Great Places WIN



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From “CDBG Talks” to “CDBG Office Hours”

- **2025** pilot: Topic-based technical assistance webinars
- Goal: Improve grantee compliance + reduce confusion
- Outcome: High demand, evolving engagement patterns
- **2026**: Rebranded, refined, and operationally smarter

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What The Sessions Looked Like

60-minute Google Meet sessions

Structured flow:

- Welcome + framing (5–10 min)
- Topic walkthrough (30–40 min)
- Live Q&A (15–20 min)
- Mix of screen sharing + discussion



...So let's Correct This:

90-minutes to allow for lecture AND Q+A

OR

Begin with a short topic for discussion with some preliminary examples, then open up for interactive questions.

Topics Covered

(High-Impact Compliance Areas)

Labor Standards

Section 3

Procurement + Cost Analysis

Financial Management

Reporting + Recordkeeping

(Speciality Areas)

Housing Rehab + Accessibility

Planning Activities + Special Projects

Not covered:

Acquisition and Relocation

Income Surveys

Other Programs (Non-CDBG)

What Actually Happened In Practice

Sessions became hybrid:

- Training + troubleshooting
- Instruction + emotional reassurance

Attendance patterns:

- Full-session participants
- Drop-in “one question” users
- Engagement peaked during:
 - Real examples
 - Live clarification moments

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Guest Speakers: Small Effort, Big Impact

- Used selectively, *not* every session
- **Most effective for:**
 - Real-world examples
 - Peer validation
 - “Here’s what actually worked”
 - Created credibility without extra staff lecturing



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Visuals

- Quirky and Forward
- Limited Clip Art and Graphics
- Match with Introduction Music (funk? Big beat? dance? Jazz?)
- Make sure your tech person can smooth transitions



Tone Matters

- “A little lecture, a little conversation”
- “Drop in or stay the whole time”
- “Bring real project questions”
- “Not formal training — practical support”

Invitations



Give permission to ask “dumb” questions (which are actually smart questions).

Question Patterns We Observed

- **Staff Questions Focused On:**
 - Process pain points
 - Lessons learned
 - Tools and workflows
- **Participant Questions Focused On:**
 - Compliance thresholds
 - “Does this apply to my project?”
 - Reporting mechanics
 - What happens if something goes wrong?

Response Patterns + Takeaways

- Strong chat participation
- Verbal engagement when prompted
- Appreciation for informal tone
- Follow-up requests after sessions
- **Checklists reduce overwhelm**
- **Early planning prevents late-stage crises**
- **Peer examples normalize complexity**
- **Clear workflows matter more than fancy software**

Issues & Constraints

- Recording + transcript production was resource-heavy
- Post-session sharing was cumbersome
- Staff capacity limited deep interactivity
- One hour was often tight for complex topics

Why We Rebranded for 2026

From:

- Lecture-heavy sessions
- Rigid attendance expectations
- Post-production burden

To:

- Drop-in support model
- Conversation-first design
- Lower production overhead
- More sustainable staff workload

2026 MD CDBG Office Hours Model

- Monthly cadence aligned with grant lifecycle
- 10–15 minute topic intro
- Majority time for open discussion. Not a webinar.
- No required prep
- Practical problem solving focus

Strategic Enhancements:

- Guest grantee spotlights (rotating)
- Seasonal compliance reminders
- Topic solicitation from participants
- Reduced reliance on recordings shared after
- Emphasis on real-time help

Discussion

- What **topics** can your team handle?
- What are the **biggest complaints and concerns** you hear?
- Do you have a **tech-person** on your team who can take the pressure off?

Schedule a Call



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