

COMMUNITY SHELTER BOARD

Community Acceptance Requirements, Instructions, and Tools

Overview

All service providers have distinctive missions, objectives, and responsibilities. Yet we all share the goal of nurturing community acceptance of supportive housing to assure a compassionate community for all. The purpose of these protocols is to develop suitable strategies to construct community support for each project in every step of its development. Community acceptance is a process, not a product.

Community Shelter Board (CSB) staff is available to assist agencies on various levels throughout the community acceptance process. By combining expertise in the areas of public relations, relationship building, community education, and government approvals, CSB staff can offer assistance to help agencies complete a comprehensive community acceptance plan.

Community Acceptance Plan Guidelines

All agencies applying for funding for new site-based projects or projects that have a concentration of units in a particular neighborhood (including existing programs that are moving to a new site) must submit a **Community Acceptance Plan** for each project to assure the best possible level of community support. Elements of the Community Acceptance Plan should be updated throughout the process.

The following elements must be included in each Community Acceptance Plan:

Project Summary

A one (1) page description of the project that includes:

- target population and tenant mix,
- description of housing including number of units (total and Rebuilding Lives designated),
- supportive services provided,
- development plan
- list of partnerships or collaborations with other organizations, and
- funder recognitions

Community Acceptance Strategy

Develop a written strategy to gain community acceptance. The strategy should follow the “6 Steps to Community Acceptance” described in Exhibit 1. Identify any possible “blemishes” that your organization might have that could be raised against you, and have a strategy to neutralize/explain past problems.

Community Notification Questionnaire

A Community Notification plan is an important component of building community acceptance. The first decision is whether to notify, the second is who to notify, and finally, how the notification will occur.

Key Personnel Questionnaire

A community relations team for each project must be developed with a specific point of contact for the media, for the community, for public officials, and for project planning. A team leader must be selected to manage this process and who will complete and return the Contact Questionnaire (see Exhibit 3).

Real Estate Questionnaire

Information about the plan to acquire real estate must be developed. See Exhibit 4.

Tool Box

Each project should have its own tool box, or briefing packet, that can be given to funders, public officials, media officials, project supporters, as well as project opponents.

The tool box should contain both general supportive housing facts and project-specific facts.

Project-Specific Fact Sheets

The agency will develop project-specific fact sheets that describe the project and frequently asked questions, including information about:

- CSB and Funder recognition
- Target population and tenant mix
- Description of housing and number of units
- Supportive services provided
- The agency's track record
- Why the site was chosen
- The role neighbors can play in the project's design and operation (see Exhibit 5 regarding Good Neighbor Agreements)
- Pro-housing messages (see Exhibit 6 for pro-housing messages)
- Partnerships with service-delivery agencies (state whether services will be delivered on- or off-site)
- Whether a Good Neighbor Agreement will be developed
- Inventory of the neighborhood (i.e. – three major bus lines, food pantry, thrift store, community center, etc.)
- Information regarding Fair Housing Laws and a client's right to privacy
- If relevant, services that will not be offered and reasons for not offering them
- Agency contact person and phone number

Exhibit 1

Community Acceptance Strategy¹

Prepare written assessment and plan for community acceptance should be submitted with the concept paper and at least 30 days prior to site control. Records of activities and revisions to the plan should be submitted quarterly.

1) Research and assessment

- a) Organization reputation
- b) Local government approvals – process and criteria
- c) Local government current knowledge of and support for supportive housing, your organization’s work and the current proposal
- d) Full analysis of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed site
- e) Likely concerns neighbors might have
- f) Potential legal issues (zoning, land use, etc.)
- g) Local media issues

2) Political strategy

- a) Who are key leaders (City, Township, County, State and Federal)? How will they be contacted?
- b) Who are political supporters?
- c) Who are political opponents?
- d) What is your education and advocacy strategy?

3) Strategy to build public support

- a) Describe supporters
- b) Describe recruitment strategy
- c) Describe communication plan

4) Strategy to work through community issues

- a) What is the notification and community outreach plan? What methods will be used?
- b) What are responses to opponents’ concerns?
- c) Will an outside facilitator or community relations be involved?
- d) When will the Good Neighbor Agreement and Neighborhood Advisory Council be initiated?

5) Legal Strategy

- a) How will your organization be prepared for any legal challenges

¹ Modified from Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California

- b) How will your project educate neighbors about legal rights of prospective tenants (e.g. fair housing, etc.)?

6) Public Relations and Media Strategy

- a) Will this be pro-active or reactive?
- b) What are your key messages?
- c) What activities will be undertaken? What is timing of activities?

Exhibit 2
Community Notification Questionnaire

Please answer each question.

- 1) Will the project include existing tenants who would be negatively impacted by public disclosure?
- 2) Will the project be significant due to either new construction or substantial rehab such that neighbors will “notice” the project even without public disclosure?
- 3) Will there be 24-hour staff? Will there be on-site services?
- 4) Will there be community areas or common space? Will there be parking space?
- 5) What type of project:

	Multiple Buildings, Multiple Sites
	Multiple Buildings, Single Site
	Single Building

- 6) Describe mix and types of structures. What is the density of the project and how does this compare to other types of structure in the immediate neighborhood? Are there other Rebuilding Lives projects within a two (2) mile radius? Within the area? As defined by neighbor? [Please Complete Table]

Units		Project Provides Services		Current Development Rebuilding Lives Units
# units	%	# units	%	
				Other Units
			100	Total Units ¹

1. All units in development. If leased development, all units in complex.

- 7) Will a zoning variance or other land use authorization be required?
- 8) Will public funds be used that will require a public hearing or other public disclosure? Will tax abatement be utilized for funding?

9) Who is the project designed to serve and how will community involvement and interaction impact that service?

10) Do you plan community notification? Why or why not?

11) What are the neighborhood organizations within a TWO-MILE radius of the project (please consult lists produced by the city of Columbus and MORPC)? If possible, attach a map. *REQUIRED FOR ALL PLANS.*

<i>Group</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Boundaries</i>	<i>Does project fall within boundaries of the group? (YES/NO)</i>

12) Who will be notified?² What is the timeline for notification? How will this notification occur? *NOT APPLICABLE IF NO NOTIFICATION PLANNED.*

<i>Group</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Method</i>

² Project sponsors must keep an ongoing record of all community contact (written, personal contact, and meetings) and submit updates quarterly.

13)What written materials will be distributed as part of the notification?

14)How will neighbors and neighborhoods be offered opportunities to participate in the project? Will a neighborhood advisory committee be established? Will an effort be made to negotiate a Good Neighbor Agreement? What is the timeline for these activities?

Exhibit 3
Key Personnel Questionnaire

Please fill out the names and titles of the people who have been assigned to the following tasks (If not applicable, mark "NA"):

- 1. Overall Project Leader:** _____
Approves all strategic plans and critical tactical decisions. Coordinates team members, both staff and external support. Responsible for the research, assessment, and planning of the Community Acceptance strategy.
- 2. Community Outreach Liaison:** _____
Responsible for contacting neighbors and neighborhood organizations while also generating and organizing supporters. Will be able to spend time attending community meetings, responding to callers, etc.
- 3. Media Spokesperson:** _____
Responsible for talking with all media; generates talking points; prepares supporters to address media, develops press releases/supporting materials, etc.
- 4. Project-Planning Leader:** _____
Responsible for project design, implementation plans, coordinates all aspects of project financing, assures implementation of the project.
- 5. Attorneys involved:** _____
Legal counsel for zoning and other legislative and/or administrative issues.
- 6. Real Estate Agent:** _____
- 7. Outside Public Relations and/or Community Relations counsel:**

- 8. Architect:** _____
- 9. Other team members:**

Roles

1. If CEO or executive director is not listed above, what will be his/her role?
2. Who within the agency will be responsible for the political strategy?
3. Who within the agency will be responsible for the strategy to work through community issues?
4. Who within the agency will be responsible for the legal strategy?
5. Who within the agency will be responsible for the public relations/media strategy?
6. Who within the agency will be responsible for the “supporter” strategy?
7. Do you have a budget to support these activities? Please describe.

Exhibit 4

Real Estate Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions.

1. What are the criteria for selecting the project site?
2. Do you have a site identified? If yes, please describe. How does this site meet selection criteria?
3. Attach list all sites considered and reason for not selecting each site. If no other sites are considered please explain why.
4. If the site has been selected, describe date secured and method of site control.
5. Describe current zoning/land use. Will variances or changes be needed? Who will need to approve these changes?
6. Describe geology of the site. Has the soil been tested? Are there environmental concerns?
7. Is the site within an area covered by the Community Plan? (e.g. City of Columbus Area Plan)
8. If leased site, who owns and manages the property?