

Frequently Asked Questions about CMAP's application to the DCEO "IKE" Planning Program

June 14, 2011

Why is CMAP applying to administer the program itself, rather than just coordinating with DCEO?

There are several reasons for this. First, CMAP's efforts to administer the program are consistent with the recommendations of GO TO 2040, the regional comprehensive plan adopted in October 2010. The plan recommends that CMAP coordinate grant programs for local governments that include sources from various federal and state agencies, including DCEO. As a regional agency with strong connections to local governments and numerous staff with local planning experience, CMAP will be able to direct the resources of the Ike Planning Program to meet the needs of communities in the region; in comparison, DCEO's limited staff must cover the entire state of Illinois.

Second, CMAP's involvement will simplify the application process for local governments. The application form circulated by DCEO for the IKE Planning Program is over 50 pages long, making it difficult to access by local governments with limited staff. CMAP will absorb many of the administrative requirements related to the program, including filling out the application form and reporting progress to the federal government, and will allow local governments to request assistance using a much simpler and shorter application form.

Finally, because DCEO has not made any grants through the IKE Planning Program despite receiving the funding nearly 18 months ago, CMAP is concerned that this major funding resource may go unused. DCEO has focused on administering other elements of the overall IKE program (such as the much larger pool of funds for infrastructure improvements), but the IKE Planning Program has so far not been initiated. Suballocating funds to CMAP and allowing CMAP to administer the grant program for the Chicago metropolitan area will ensure that these planning funds are used expeditiously.

Why is CMAP applying for \$4 million?

CMAP is basing its request on a statewide formula developed by the Illinois Association of Regional Councils for a separate portion of the overall IKE funding. The formula was based primarily on the level of damage caused by flooding associated with Hurricane Ike. According to the formula, the Chicago region's "share" of the IKE Planning Program should be just under \$4 million (the application will actually be for approximately \$3.93 million).

If CMAP's application is successful, could individual municipalities still apply directly to DCEO?

No, for the IKE Planning Program, applicants from our region would apply through the grant program administered by CMAP. The \$4 million requested by CMAP is estimated as the region's fair "share" of the statewide IKE Planning Program, as described in the previous question. However, for any of the other funding programs in the overall IKE Disaster Recovery Program—such as the IKE Public Infrastructure Program or the IKE Community Stabilization Program—communities would continue to apply directly to DCEO.

What would be the timing of CMAP's grant program?

The timing of grant distribution will depend on DCEO's requirements for when the funding must be spent. Ideally, one call for projects would be held each year in 2011, 2012, and 2013, each time for approximately \$1.3 million in grants. The call for projects will be coordinated with the call for projects for CMAP's other grant and technical assistance programs.

How does this program relate to other CMAP grant and technical assistance programs, and how are communities supposed to understand which program is right for them?

The proposed grant program would fund projects that address stormwater management, flood prevention, and green infrastructure through comprehensive planning. This would complement, rather than replicate, other key CMAP programs, such as the Community Planning grant program (which funds transportation-related plans) and the Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program (which provides direct staff assistance to local communities). In addition to coordinating the call for projects for these and other programs, CMAP will create a complete, easy-to-understand guide for communities that helps them to determine which program is right for them.

How do communities in our region with fewer resources stand to benefit from this program? Many of these communities have difficulty applying for complex federal or state grants—how will CMAP help them?

In our region, a disproportionate number of municipalities recovering from damage caused by Hurricane Ike—and most at risk from flooding and other natural disasters in the future—are poorer communities. In addition to facing these great challenges, many municipalities simply do not have enough staff to apply for grants and other funding to help their communities plan for the future. CMAP considers it a very high priority to fully engage these communities and make it easy for them to apply for the assistance they need. This was demonstrated by our new Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, in which we simply asked communities, "What would you like to do?", and then followed up with direct conversations with each applicant to make sure we fully understood their objectives, regardless of their resources or experience

applying for competitive assistance programs; in addition, as CMAP evaluated over 200 LTA applications, we gave priority to requests for assistance from high-need communities. Given the goals of CMAP and the recommendations of GO TO 2040 -- as well as the objectives of the IKE Planning Program and other initiatives funded by the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program -- we expect high-need communities in our region to be a focus of the proposed local grant program.

The state passed the Local Technical Assistance Act in 2002, allowing DCEO to provide funding for comprehensive plans, but never allocated any money to the program – can the IKE Planning Program be used to fund comprehensive plans, accomplishing the goal of the Local Technical Assistance Act?

Yes, this program can be used for comprehensive planning, but plans must have a strong focus on disaster recovery and hazard mitigation. While the IKE Planning Program is more focused than a general program to fund comprehensive planning, a good comprehensive plan is an effective way to help reduce the likelihood of future disasters including floods.

How can governments and nongovernmental groups help support this application?

CMAP is seeking to submit its application on behalf of other partner organizations, including Counties, COGs, municipalities, nongovernmental groups, and other interested organizations in the region. If your organization is interested in supporting our application, we would request that you give us permission to reference you in our application; provide a letter of support; and be ready to contact state decision-makers to voice your support for application.