



THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM AND OTHER FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

SECTION I – GENERAL (PAGE 1)

SECTION 2 – STANDARDS OF PARTICIPATION & GOALS FOR PARTICIPATION (PAGE 2)

SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION (PAGE 3)

- APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT (PAGE 3)
- PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION (PAGE 4)
- MONITORING EVALUATION (PAGE 4)
- SUBMISSION OF VIEWS AND PROPOSALS (PAGE 4)
- COMPLAINTS (PAGE 5)
- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (PAGE 5)
- ADEQUATE INFORMATION (PAGE 6)
- MEETINGS (PAGE 7)
- PUBLIC NOTICE (PAGE 8)
- CONTINUING ACTIVITIES (PAGE 9)
- COPIES OF SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE FIVE YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN, ACTION PLANS, AND CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORTS (PAGE 9)
- ACCESS TO RECORDS (PAGE 9)
- SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE FIVE YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN AND ANNUAL ACTION PLANS (PAGE 10)
- EMERGENCY ACTIVITIES (PAGE 12)
 - o URGENT NEEDS (PAGE 12)
- CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT (PAGE 13)
- NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING RESIDENTS (PAGE 13)
- RESIDENT COMMENTS ON THE CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION PLAN (PAGE 13)
- REVISIONS TO THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN (PAGE 14)
- ANTI-DISPLACEMENT (PAGE 14)
- COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES (PAGE 14)

SECTION I – GENERAL:

This Citizen Participation Plan is prepared in compliance with 24 CFR Part 91.105, *Citizen Participation Plan; Local Governments; as amended at 71 FR6962, February 9, 2006*. This Citizen Participation Plan sets forth the City of Hagerstown's policies and procedures for public participation by encouraging residents to participate in the development of the City's Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, any amendments to these plans, applications for Section 108 Loan Guarantees, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), and all other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable.



SECTION II – STANDARDS OF PARTICIPATION & GOALS FOR PARTICIPATION:

The Standards of Participation and Goals for Citizen Participation in the City of Hagerstown, Maryland, are as follows:

- A.** All aspects of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, and all other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable, shall be conducted in an open manner with freedom of access for all interested persons, groups and/or organizations.
- B.** To the greatest extent possible, there shall be involvement of: (1) low- and moderate-income persons, especially those living in slum and blighted areas; (2) in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used; (3) residents of public housing communities; (4) by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods; (5) residents of neighborhood revitalization strategy areas; (6) the elderly; (7) persons with disabilities; and (8) all persons directly or indirectly impacted or affected by the Community Development Block Grant Program, and/or all other Federal Programs, if applicable.
- C.** Public Hearings shall be accessible to low- and moderate-income individuals. In addition, the City of Hagerstown's Department of Community and Economic Development staff will speak to any group about the City's Community Development Block Grant Program, and other Federal Grant Programs, its past performance and its proposed or future activities.
- D.** There shall be, to the greatest extent possible, and throughout all stages of planning and development of the CDBG Program, any substantial amendments, and all other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable, a continuity of participation by City residents.
- E.** The public shall be provided, to the greatest extent possible, with timely and adequate information for the purpose of meaningful input into the CDBG Program, and all other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable.
- F.** Low- and moderate-income persons, residents of slum and blighted neighborhoods, residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods; residents of public housing communities; residents of neighborhood revitalization strategy areas (NRSAs); the elderly; persons with disabilities; and all persons directly or indirectly impacted or affected by the Community Development Block Grant Program, and all other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable, shall be encouraged to submit their views and proposals regarding these programs.
- G.** The City of Hagerstown will explore alternative public involvement techniques and quantifiable ways to measure efforts to encourage public participation in a



shared vision for changes in the City and its neighborhoods, and review of the City's program performance. In addition to advertisement of Public Notices in the local newspaper of general circulation the City will also whenever possible post notices on the city's website, on social media sites, through e-mail and on HUB City Channel 25.

- H. Consultation will be made, in conjunction with the Hagerstown Housing Authority, the participation of residents of public housing and assisted housing developments, and the member organizations of the Continuum of Care, during the process of developing and implementing the Five Year Consolidated Plan and One Year Annual Action Plans, and residents of areas within which developments are proposed.
- I. The City of Hagerstown shall provide information to the Hagerstown Housing Authority about consolidated plan activities related to the Housing Authority's developments and surrounding communities so that the Housing Authority can include this information in its annual Public Housing Comprehensive Grant Program.
- J. The City will take appropriate actions to encourage participation of all its residents, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.

SECTION III – SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION:

A. Application Development:

An initial step in the planning process will consist of a public notification regarding the CDBG Program. This notification will provide the public with information regarding the amount of funds expected to be available for the program year and the range of activities that may be undertaken with federal funds. The public will be invited to submit written request for specific activities they would like funded during the program year. A notice will be published in one or more newspapers to solicit funding requests.

Prior to the submission of the Five Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, any application for CDBG funds such as the Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program, and any other Federal Grant Program, if applicable, the City of Hagerstown's Department of Community and Economic Development, in addition to meeting the minimum requirements, shall provide the following information to the public :

1. Application requirements for the program;
2. Eligibility of project activities;



3. Time table for submission;
4. Funding amounts of CDBG funds and program income;
5. Range of activities that may be undertaken with available funds;
6. Estimated amount of benefit to persons of low-and-moderate income; and
7. Any other information necessary to involve residents in the development of plans and applications.

Information provided to the public will be in conformance with Section II above.

B. Program Implementation:

The Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) of the City of Hagerstown's Department of Community and Economic Development will be made available to the general public for the purpose of reviewing the accomplishments of the City's CDBG, and other Federal Grant Programs, as applicable.

The role of the public in implementation of the CDBG program are as follows:

1. "direct involvement" in project development and implementation; and
2. "continued advisory role" via call-ins, write-ins, and group meetings with organized and recognized groups.

C. Monitoring Evaluation:

Opportunities for the public to monitor and evaluate the CDBG program shall be consistent and continuous. Methods available to further these objectives are as follows:

1. Direct contact with staff;
2. Direct contact between staff and groups; and
3. Direct contact between residents and the Mayor's office

D. Submission of Views and Proposals:

The submission of views and proposals from low- and moderate-income persons, minority groups, non-English speaking residents, and any other person or organized groups can be on a continuous basis and shall be encouraged to the greatest extent possible. Submissions can be in the form of:



1. Personal contact;
2. Mail, email, and telephone contact;
3. Petitions;
4. Attendance at public meetings/hearings;
5. Through questionnaires; and
6. Other available means

The submission of views and proposals shall be an on-going process and at a minimum during the following stages:

1. The planning process;
2. The annual HUD application process; and
3. The implementation process

Responses to all submissions shall be in a timely fashion and shall not exceed a period of thirty (30) days after the voicing of a comment, or the date of receipt of a written comment or inquiry.

E. Complaints:

All complaints regarding any aspect of the Community Development Block Grant Program, and all other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable, shall be reviewed in a timely manner and a written response will be provided within thirty (30) calendar days after the voicing of a complaint or the date that the written comment was received by the City of Hagerstown.

F. Technical Assistance:

The staff of the City of Hagerstown's Department of Community and Economic Development shall provide technical assistance to groups/organizations which are representative of persons of low- and moderate-income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs applied to through the City's Consolidated Plan. Such assistance shall include but not be limited to:

1. Program rules and regulations;
2. Requirements for implementing and managing a project or program;
3. Project eligibility and national objective requirements; and



4. The evaluation process use by the City in selecting projects for federal funding.

The City's provision of technical assistance does not include the preparation of grant applications for individuals or organizations."

G. Adequate Information:

The City shall provide full public access to the CDBG program information and affirmative efforts to provide adequate information to the public , especially those who are low- and moderate-income, those who are residing in predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods or slum and blighted neighborhoods, the disabled, the elderly, and non-English speaking residents. Information shall be provided on the CDBG, and all other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable, including at a minimum the following:

1. At the time when the City begins its Community Development Block Grant planning process and any other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable, including:
 - i. Total amount of funds available, including program income;
 - ii. The range of activities that are eligible or ineligible, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons who are low-and-moderate income;
 - iii. Plans to minimize displacement and to assist any persons displaced, specifying the types and levels of assistance the City will make available to persons displaced, even if the City anticipates no displacement. The Five Year Consolidated Plan must state when and how the City will make this information available;
 - iv. The process that will be followed in developing and approving projects, activities, or programs;
 - v. The standards of participation and goals of the Citizen Participation Program; and
 - vi. Summary of important program requirements
2. Upon request, copies of all materials relating to the CDBG Program, and all other Federal Grant Programs, if applicable, will be made available to any person and/or group for the cost of copying only, particularly documentation concerning the following:
 - i. All marketing, promotional material, and news releases;



- ii. Key documents, including all prior applications, letters of approval, performance and program evaluation reports, and any other applications, proposed or approved, or reports required by HUD;
- iii. Copies of the CDBG regulations;
- iv. Information on contracting and purchasing procedures, environmental policies, fair housing, equal opportunity, relocation provisions, the 24 CFR Part 58 environmental review process, affirmative action, and any other requirements or regulations relating to the CDBG program; and
- v. Cost of copying will be as established by local and state laws, as outlined in the City's Freedom of Information Policy.

H. Meetings:

All meetings shall be held in a timely fashion and shall be accessible to all segments of the City of Hagerstown's population including accommodations for persons with disabilities, and non-English speaking residents. These meetings shall be held at a time and place that is convenient and accessible to potential or actual beneficiaries.

1. Public meeting/hearings shall be held on a continuous basis, at least two (2) times per year at different stages of the program year for the purpose of obtaining citizens' views on the development of needs, the review of proposed activities and review of program performance. At least one (1) public hearing must be held during the planning process for the proposed Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. The second public hearing must be held on the proposed plans or applications for funds prior to City Council approval and submission to HUD.
2. Public meeting/hearing notices shall be published at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing date and shall be advertised in the *Herald-Mail*, or other local newspaper of general circulation in the area.
3. In the event that national or local health officials recommend social distancing and/or limited public gatherings for public health reasons, virtual or web-based hearings will be used in lieu of in-person hearings. If this format is used accommodations for real-time responses, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues, public access to all questions and response, and accommodations for persons with disabilities or limited English



proficiency will be made to the greatest extent possible. On the day of the public hearing, comments may be submitted in writing or made orally during the hearing.

I. Public Notice:

1. A notice will be published in the local newspaper of general circulation in the City that the proposed Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan will be on public display for a period of no less than thirty (30) calendar days in order to receive public comments prior to approval by the City Council.
2. Copies of the proposed plans will be made available at the following locations:
 - i. **Department of Community and Economic Development** – 14 N. Potomac Street, Suite 200A, Hagerstown, MD 21740
 - ii. **City Clerk's Office** – Hagerstown City Hall, 1 E. Franklin Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740
 - iii. On the City of Hagerstown's website at: <http://www.hagerstownmd.org>
3. Included in the Plans will be an Executive Summary of the proposed plan which describes the contents, purpose, and a list of locations where copies of the entire proposed Five-Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans may be examined. In addition, a reasonable number of free copies of these Plans will be made available to low-and-moderate income residents or groups that request it.
4. The City of Hagerstown will consider any public comments or views received in writing or orally at the public meetings/hearings in preparing the final Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans. A summary of all comments, including those comments not accepted and the reason therefore, shall be attached to the final Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans.
5. Final copies of the Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans will be available for public inspection at the following locations:
 - i. **Department of Community and Economic Development** – 14 N. Potomac Street, Suite 200A, Hagerstown, MD 21740
 - ii. **City Clerk's Office** – Hagerstown City Hall, 1 E. Franklin Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740



- iii. On the City of Hagerstown's website at <http://www.hagerstownmd.org>
6. The Department of Community and Economic Development will distribute notices for public meetings/hearings to all City departments, City Council members, and the Hagerstown Public Library. Notice will also be sent to all residents, groups, agencies, and organizations that request to be put on the Department's CDBG mailing list.
7. In the event of certain disasters or emergencies HUD may provide waivers and/or alternate requirements relative to the public notification processes.

J. Continuing Activities:

All continuing activities shall be subject to the citizen participation process as herein outlined.

K. Copies of Substantial Amendments to the Five Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans and Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Reports:

Copies of Substantial Amendments and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) will be available for reading upon request at the offices of City Department of Community and Economic Development and via the City's website at <http://www.hagerstownmd.org>.

L. Access to Records:

The City shall provide full and timely disclosures of its program records. The City will provide these disclosures within a reasonable period of time. Additionally, all public and non-private records and documentation concerning the Community Development Block Grant Program and all other applicable Federal Grant Programs shall be made available by appointment during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Personnel records and the personal financial records of program participants/applicants are not available for public inspection.

The City of Hagerstown's Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and CAPER for the current program year plus each of the five (5) preceding years are available for public review in the Department of Community and Economic Development, 14 N. Potomac Street, Suite 200A, Hagerstown, MD, 21740. The department's office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Copies can be requested by mail or by phone. Residents can call (301) 739-8577 ext. 111 or mail requests to City of Hagerstown, Department



of Community and Economic Development, 14 N. Potomac Street, Suite 200A, Hagerstown, MD 21740 or by emailing a request to DCED@hagerstownmd.org

Those wishing for information concerning address-specific projects shall file a Maryland Public Information Act Request with the Communications Officer of the City of Hagerstown.

M. Substantial Amendments to the Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans:

1. Definition: A substantial amendment to the Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans is:

- i. Changes to any of the goals, policies, or procedures identified in the Consolidated Plan;
- ii. A change in the allocation of priorities, national objectives, or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
- iii. A proposal to undertake a new activity, using funds from any program covered by the Five Year Consolidated Plan (including program income received from previous year's funds) and not previously described in the annual action plan;
- iv. A change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of a previous approved activity;
- v. The use of program income that was not previous allocated to an eligible activity;
- vi. Deletion or elimination of a previously approved activity;
- vii. A change of 50% or more of a budget line item amount of an approved activity, either increased or decreased; or
- viii. The use of contingency or unprogrammed funds, based on the following criteria.

3. Criteria: The criteria used to determine what constitutes an amendment are based on the following items. If any of the following happen during the course of an activity than a substantial amendment has occurred.

- i. **Purpose** – the original purpose for which the activity was selected has changed, including the category of the national objective selected;
- ii. **Scope** – the size or scope of work of the project/activity has increased or decreased which changes the cost of



the activity by more than 50% of the total original budgeted dollar amount for that activity;

- iii. **Location** – the location of the project activity is different from that originally proposed or the size of the project service area has increased or decreased by 25% in size or the location of the activity had to be relocated to another area;
- iv. **Beneficiaries** – if an activity was initially designed to benefit a particular group (i.e. the elderly, persons with disabilities, etc.) and the beneficiaries of the activity is changed;
- v. **Cost** – the total cost of the activity has increased or decreased by 50% or more than the original approved budget amount;
- vi. **New Activity** – a new activity is proposed which was not previously approved; and/or
- vii. **Deleted or Canceled Activity** – a previously approved activity is proposed to be deleted/canceled from the approved plan.

4. **Procedure**

A description of the substantial amendment to the Five Year Consolidated Plan or the Annual Action Plan will be published in the *Herald-Mail*, or other local newspaper of general circulation. A period of no less than thirty (30) days will be provided to receive public comments

The City will consider any comments or views of residents received, in preparing the substantial amendment of the Five Year Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans. A summary of any comments or views, as well as a summary of any comments or views not accepted and reasons therefore, shall be attached to the substantial amendment of the Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.

- i. The substantial amendment will be presented to and approved by the City Council if the substantial amendment involves a change of \$25,000 or more either increased or decreased to an approved activity, and/or any of the substantial amendment definitions or criteria which involve activities or actions of \$25,000 or more. The substantial amendment can be presented during the thirty (30) day comment period, approval must be after the comment and before submission to HUD.



- ii. In the occurrence of certain disasters, emergencies or other unanticipated events, substantial amendments may have a reduced comment period of five (5) days before submission to HUD.

N. Emergency Activities:

During the course of implementation of the CDBG program, if the City makes an emergency declaration as a result of a situation or condition that has arisen through no fault of the City, immediate action or remediation may be taken. If CDBG funds are available to resolve or remediate that situation or condition through a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, the City may proceed with corrective action during the thirty (30) day comment period unless otherwise indicated through HUD guidance to proceed with a shortened five (5) day comment period. The City must publish a notice concurrently, in the newspaper of general circulation in the area, and allow residents to respond to the expenditure of CDBG funds during the 5/30 day comment period.

With respect to a declared disaster or emergency event, the City may elect to use CDBG funds to address needs created as a result of disaster relief efforts. Potential uses of funds will still be in compliance with normal CDBG eligibility requirements as well as the information included in this Citizen Participation Plan and the Consolidated Plan. HUD may also provide new guidance on eligible uses in which the City will comply with and may utilize as well.

1. Urgent Needs

To comply with the “Urgent Needs” National Objective, activities undertaken in response to disaster or emergency events will meet community development needs having particular urgency. These activities will alleviate existing conditions that the City confirms:

- i. Pose a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community;
- ii. Are of recent origin or recently became urgent; and/or
- iii. Other resources of funding are not available to carry out the activity.

Activities to address “Urgent Needs” include, but are not limited to the following:

- i. Clearance of debris;
- ii. Demolition, clearance, and/or reconstruction of damaged property posing an immediate threat to public safety;



- iii. Emergency reconstruction of essential water, sewer, electrical, medical, and telephone facilities;
- iv. Emergency construction of medical facilities; and/or
- v. Providing a variety of relief services to individuals

O. Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER):

A notice will be published in the local newspaper of general circulation in the area informing the public of the availability of the City's Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) and providing the opportunity to comment on the CAPER. A period of no less than fifteen (15) calendar days will be provided to receive public comments prior to submission to HUD.

The City will consider any public comments or views received in writing or orally, concerning its Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report. A summary of these comments or views shall be attached to the CAPER.

P. Persons with Disabilities and Non-English Speaking Residents:

The City of Hagerstown's Department of Community and Economic Development will need to be notified at least three (3) days in advance of a public meeting/hearing that special accommodations are needed to accommodate the needs of any person who is disabled and/or non-English speaking residents, so that arrangements can be made for the resident to participate in the public meeting/hearing, including the need for a language translator. Also, a summary of the minutes of the hearing will be transcribed in other languages, when applicable, for the benefit of non-English speaking persons.

Q. Public Comments on the Citizen's Participation Plan:

The City of Hagerstown will provide the public with the opportunity to comment on this Citizen Participation Plan. Copies of this proposed Citizen Participation Plan will be available at the City of Hagerstown's Department of Community and Economic Development and on the website at <http://www.hagerstownmd.org>. Copies of the Citizens Participation Plan will be made available upon request, in a format accessible to persons with disabilities.

R. Revisions to the Citizen Participation Plan:

Revisions, amendments and changes may be made to the Citizen Participation Plan at any time to enhance clarity, enhance the process for encouraging constructive citizen participation, or to incorporate requirements, waivers, or flexibilities allowed by HUD or other federal entities. Notice of Changes to the Citizen Participation Plan will be published in the newspaper of general



circulation in the area and include at least a ten (10) day comment period or in the event of a special waiver or flexibilities the comment period may be shortened to five (5) days.

S. Anti-Displacement:

It is the policy of the City of Hagerstown to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that activities undertaken with the CDBG Program funds will not cause unnecessary displacement. The City will continue to administer the CDBG Program in such a manner that careful consideration will be given during the planning phase to avoiding displacement. Displacement of any nature shall be reserved as a last resort action necessitated only when no other alternative is available and when the activity is determined necessary in order to carry out a specific goal or objective that is of benefit to the public.

If the displacement is precipitated by activities that require the acquisition (either in whole or in part) or rehabilitation of real property directly by the City of Hagerstown, an agent, or a recipient of CDBG funds through the City of Hagerstown, all appropriate benefits will be made available as required by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies' Act of 1970 and amendments. The "Uniform Act" or the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan under Section 104 (d) shall be provided to the displaced person or persons. Information about these programs will be provided to all persons who may potentially be displaced in the form of informational brochures on these programs and explained in detail by the City staff.

T. Complaints and Grievances:

Complaints and grievances are handled in a timely and professional manner. All complaints are reviewed by the Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development. A response is prepared in an effort to address the complaint. Written responses to complaints regarding the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, CAPER, amendments, and general grievances will be made within thirty (30) days after receipt of the complaint. Written grievances should be addressed to: City of Hagerstown, Community and Economic Development Department, 14 N. Potomac Street, Suite 200A, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.