



Citizen Participation Plan

for

Housing and Community Development Programs

Amended June 1, 2020

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Introduction

The City of Orlando (City) seeks federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to accomplish desired activities in low and moderate income neighborhoods through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program. Federal regulations for these programs require the establishment of a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) to encourage and facilitate input by citizens and to establish standards for the public participation process. The City is committed to providing opportunities for its citizens to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and assessment of these federal programs.

The City CPP is designed to gather input from persons with low and moderate incomes, persons living in slum and blighted areas, and in areas where funds are being used or are proposed to be used, and from residents of primarily low and moderate income neighborhoods, where at least 51% of the residents are low and moderate income persons. The CPP also seeks input from persons who are homeless, members of minority groups, non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities, and residents of public housing. In order to encourage and support public participation, the City will provide information, hold public hearings, and give citizens the opportunity to comment. Citizens will be provided with reasonable and timely access to these public meetings. Along with citizens the City will consult with focus groups (i.e. for profit and nonprofit organizations, businesses, developers, community and faith based organizations, philanthropic organizations, local and regional institutions and the Continuum of Care) that represent and/or serve these populations.

While citizen participation is essential for a viable program, the final authority for decision-making rests with the Mayor and City Commissioners. The exchange of information among citizens, City staff, and elected officials provides for a stronger, more responsive housing and community development effort in the City of Orlando.

Public Hearings

The City will hold at least two (2) public hearings per year to obtain citizen input and to respond to questions in the development of the Five Year Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). These public hearings will be conducted at different times during the program year.

An initial public hearing will be held during the development of the Annual Action Plan. A second public hearing will be held later in the year.

Every five years, in preparation for the Consolidated Plan, the City will consult with citizens, focus groups (i.e. for profit and nonprofit organizations, businesses, developers, community and faith based organizations, philanthropic organizations, local and regional institutions and the Continuum of Care) to obtain input on housing and community development needs.

The City of Orlando will make reasonable efforts to accommodate persons with special needs who notify the City at least two (2) business days prior to the public meeting with their request for special accommodations. Upon request from non-English speaking citizens, efforts will be made to have personnel fluent in the respective language present at these meetings.

Public Notices

To accomplish community wide participation, the City will publish notification of the public hearings, the availability of the CPP, the summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan, proposed Annual Action Plan, proposed Substantial Amendments, and the availability of the CAPER in The Orlando Sentinel. The Orlando Sentinel is the primary newspaper of general circulation in the Orlando region which includes minority and disabled populations. Due to irregular publishing schedules, when feasible and practical, the City will also publish these notices in specific newspapers serving minority populations or non-English speaking persons. For example, notices may be published in the Orlando Times, which serves the African American community, or El Sentinel, which serves the Hispanic community, and/or other such publications when feasible and appropriate. Notices will appear as a display ad in the non-legal section of the paper.

During the comment period, copies of the proposed CPP, the proposed Consolidated Plan, the proposed Substantial Amendments, and the CAPER will be available in large print for review and comment on the City of Orlando website at www.cityoforlando.net or at the following locations:

City of Orlando
Housing and Community Development
400 S. Orange Avenue
Orlando, FL 32801

Orlando Public Library
101 E. Central Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32801
(Orange County Library System)

Orlando Housing Authority
390 N. Bumby Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803

For HOPWA related items, the following additional libraries will be added:

Tavares Public Library
314 N. New Hampshire Avenue
Tavares, FL 32778
(Lake County Library System)

Jean Rhein Central Branch Library
215 N. Oxford Road
Casselberry, FL 32707
(Seminole County Library System)

Hart Memorial Central Library
211 E. Dakin Avenue
Kissimmee, FL 34741
(Osceola County Library System)

Upon request, the City will mail copies to the homebound and provide a reasonable number of free copies to citizens and groups.

Citizen Participation

The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) sets forth the City's policies and procedures for citizen participation in the development of the Citizen Participation Plan, Five Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and the CAPER.

Citizen participation is essential during the planning process for these documents, including: identifying needs, setting priorities based on identified needs, recommending activities to meet high-priority needs, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the activities. The City encourages citizen participation by low and moderate income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods, where at least 51% of the residents are low and/or moderate income persons. In an effort to provide opportunities for greater citizen participation, the City specifically encourages minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities, to attend and participate at public hearings. The City also encourages the participation of local and regional institutions, the Continuum of Care, businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, and community and faith-based organizations.

In addition, the City of Orlando utilizes the expertise of citizens through their participation on a variety of committees (such as the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, the SHIP/HOME Review Committee, the CDBG Review Committee, the ESG Review Committee, the HOPWA Review Committee, and advisory committees related to HOPWA) to provide advice and to recommend policy changes as well as certain funding recommendations. In order to meet community needs and to facilitate the timely expenditure of grants, if funds are unexpended from a prior year or become available during the current fiscal year, City of Orlando Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) staff may make funding recommendations directly to City Council on projects or activities that are consistent with the Consolidated Plan. All City Council meetings are open to the public and accessible to persons with disabilities.

Citizen Participation Plan

The CPP may be periodically amended. The City will publish notification of the availability of the CPP in accordance with the Public Notices section above. Citizens will have fifteen (15) days to review the amended CPP and submit comments to the City HCD before the amended CPP is submitted to City Council for adoption. All City Council meetings are open to the public and accessible to persons with disabilities.

During times of a national declared disaster or pandemic such as COVID-19, the comment period may be reduced to a period no less than five (5) days.

Five Year Consolidated Plan

The Consolidated Plan is a five year strategic plan. This document serves as the planning document of the City in order to apply for funding under the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA Programs. Through this document, the City identifies needs and goals for community planning, development, and housing programs during the designated five year period. The plan is submitted to HUD on or before August 15 prior to the start of the first year of the new five year period.

In order to ensure citizen participation, the City will meet with citizens and host various focus groups prior to the development of the Five Year Consolidated Plan. Before the City adopts the proposed Consolidated Plan, the City will provide citizens, public agencies and other interested parties with the following:

- 1 - A forum for citizens and groups to provide the City with information on housing and community development needs as part of the preparation of the Consolidated Plan;
- 2 - The amount of funds the City expects to receive from HUD for the implementation of the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA Programs, including program income received through activities under these programs;
- 3 - The range of activities that may be undertaken under each of these programs and the estimated amount of funds that will benefit low and moderate income residents;
- 4 - The plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist anyone displaced pursuant to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. The types and levels of assistance the City will make available to displaced persons are contained in the City's relocation plan. A separate One-for-One Replacement Plan will be made available to inform the public about planned activities that will cause the demolition of habitable or inhabitable units and their replacement. A public notice advertising the availability of the One-for-One Replacement Plan will be published in The Orlando Sentinel, the primary newspaper in the Orlando region.

The City will also conduct at least one public hearing during the development of the proposed Consolidated Plan. The City's HCD will work with the Orlando Housing Authority to encourage the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan. This is an opportunity for interested persons to ask questions and provide input during the development of the Consolidated Plan.

Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held to receive oral and written public comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan. The hearing will be advertised approximately fourteen (14) days in advance in The Orlando Sentinel, the primary newspaper of general circulation in the Orlando region. The public hearing will be held in the evening, at a time that is convenient to most people who would benefit from the use of the funds. The location of the public hearing may be at City Hall, 400 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32801, which is a central, accessible location or at one of the City of Orlando community centers, unless otherwise noted in the hearing notification.

The City of Orlando will make reasonable effort to accommodate persons with special needs who notify the City at least two (2) business days prior to the public meeting and identify and request special accommodations. Upon request from non-English speaking citizens, efforts will be made to have personnel fluent in the respective language present at these meetings.

Comment Period

The City will publish notification of the availability of the proposed Consolidated Plan in accordance with the Public Notices section above. The notification will include a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan. Citizens will be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed Consolidated Plan for a period of not less than thirty (30) days before the Consolidated Plan is approved by City Council and submitted to HUD. Comments may be made to the City of Orlando HCD. All comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, will be considered by the City before submitting the Consolidated Plan to HUD.

As noted, the Consolidated Plan will be available on the City's website at www.orlando.gov/housing. In addition, copies of the Consolidated Plan will be provided to citizens and groups, upon request, free of charge during the comment period.

A summary of all comments received and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefor will be attached and made a part of the corresponding final Consolidated Plan.

Annual Action Plan

An Annual Action Plan is prepared during each year of the five year Consolidated Plan and specifies the amount of funding the City anticipates receiving from HUD, and related program income, under the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA programs. The Annual Action Plan serves as the application for funding to HUD and describes the activities/projects to be undertaken to address the needs and priorities identified in the Consolidated Plan. The Annual Action Plan is submitted to HUD on or before August 15 each year.

Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held to receive oral and written public comments on the proposed Annual Action Plan. The hearing will be advertised at least fourteen (14) days in advance in The Orlando Sentinel, the primary newspaper of general circulation in the Orlando region. The public hearing will be held in the evening, at a time that is convenient to most people who would benefit from the use of the funds. The location of the public hearing may be at City Hall, 400 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32801, which is a central, accessible location and/or at one of the City of Orlando community centers, unless otherwise noted in the notification.

The City of Orlando will make reasonable effort to accommodate persons with special needs who notify the City at least two (2) business days prior to the public meeting and identify and request special accommodations. Upon request from non-English speaking citizens, efforts will be made to have personnel fluent in the respective language present at these meetings.

Comment Period

The City will publish notification of the availability of the proposed Annual Action Plan in accordance with the Public Notices section above. Citizens will have thirty (30) days to review the proposed Annual Action Plan and submit comments to the City of Orlando HCD before it is submitted to City Council for adoption. The public will be provided with reasonable access to records, subject to all local, state, and federal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, during the public comment period.

A summary of all comments received and a summary of any comments not accepted with the reasons therefor will be attached and made a part of the Annual Action Plan.

Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) is the annual report that provides details of the City's performance in the administration of funding provided under the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA programs during the previous grant year and tracks progress made towards the five year goals established in the Consolidated Plan. It describes how funds were expended for activities that benefited low and moderate income residents. The CAPER is submitted to HUD by December 30 and is the basis for an evaluation of annual accomplishment and progress towards goals established in the Consolidated Plan.

Comment Period

The City will publish notification of the availability of the CAPER in accordance with the Public Notices section on page 4 above. Citizens will have no less than fifteen (15) days to review the proposed CAPER and submit comments to the City of Orlando HCD before it is submitted to HUD. The public will be provided with reasonable access to records, subject to all local, state, and federal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, during the public comment period.

A summary of comments received and the City's response will be attached and made a part of the final CAPER.

Substantial Amendments

The City of Orlando will consider the following changes to be Substantial Amendments to the Five Year Consolidated Plan and/or the Annual Action Plan:

1. A change involving more than fifty percent of the annual funding available in the use of funds from one eligible activity to another eligible activity; and
2. A change that adds a new activity.

Comment Period

The City will publish notification of the availability of proposed Substantial Amendments in accordance with the Public Notices section above. Citizens will have no less than thirty (30) days to review the proposed Substantial Amendment and submit comments to the City of Orlando HCD before it is submitted to City Council for adoption. The public will be provided with reasonable access to records, subject to all local, state, and federal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, during the public comment period.

A summary of comments received and a summary of comments not accepted with the reasons therefore will be attached and made a part of the Substantial Amendment. The Substantial Amendment will be transmitted to HUD.

Disaster/Emergency events that may require expedited substantial amendments

It may be necessary to expedite substantial amendments to the Five Year Consolidated Plan and/or the Annual Action Plan in the event of a declared disaster or emergency. There are three types of disasters/emergency events that may necessitate an expedited substantial amendment including (1) Man-Made disasters, (2) Natural disasters, and (3) Terrorism. Man-made disasters can include chemical spills, mass rioting, power outages, dam failure, plant explosions, etc. Natural disasters can include earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, wild fires, flooding and public health issues such as wide-spread disease such as the recent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Terrorism events include bomb threats, biochemical attacks like the spread of anthrax, or cyber-attacks like hacking, phishing, and virus distribution, etc.

These expedited substantial amendments may include funding new activities and or reprogramming of funds including canceling activities to meet needs resulting from a declared disaster or emergency. Therefore, the City of Orlando may utilize CDBG, HOME, ESG and HOPWA funds to meet these needs with a 5-day public comment period instead of a 30-day public comment period which is otherwise required for substantial amendments. For CDBG funding under FY2019-2020, FY 2020-2021 and the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security ACT or CARES Act, the City of Orlando may provide 5-day notice of a proposed change for public comments as allowed under the HUD waiver. Special ESG funding under the CARES Act referred to as ESG-CV to address the COVID-19 pandemic do not apply to citizen participation requirements that would otherwise apply to ESG funds.

Virtual Public Hearings/Meetings

In the event of a declared disaster or emergency, it may be necessary for the City to conduct virtual public hearings/meetings due to the inability to hold in-person public hearings due to social distancing and/or limits for public gatherings for public health reasons. The City will provide reasonable notification under the same mediums for publishing and posting notices for the public as appropriate and access for citizens in accordance with the disaster/emergency or HUD provisions. The City will allow for the receipt of citizen comments and publicly present comments during the public hearings and will provide timely responses to citizen questions and issues.

Technical Assistance

The City of Orlando HCD will work with organizations and individuals who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding assistance under any of the CDBG, HOME, ESG or HOPWA Programs. Staff will also provide guidance on the interpretation of the federal regulations, the strategies and objectives of the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan, and will provide referrals to other agencies, including HUD, when necessary. Technical assistance will also be provided to potential applicants to assist them in the development of proposals for funding under any of the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan. Receiving staff assistance does not guarantee that an applicant will receive funding.

Complaint Procedure

Citizens with complaints concerning the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments and CAPER should contact the HCD Department by calling (407) 246-2708 or in writing to the City of Orlando Housing and Community Development Department, 400 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32801.

The City will provide a written response to all complaints received in writing, or orally, within fifteen (15) working days of their receipt, when practicable, by the HCD. A record will be maintained of all complaints received that will include the nature of the complaint, referrals made, and the final disposition.

Availability to the Public

Copies of all final documents will be kept on file at the Orlando City Hall, HCD, 400 South Orange Avenue, Orange, FL 32801, and will be made available for public inspection and review during regular business hours. The City will provide copies to citizens and groups, upon request, including large print copies for the visually impaired. The City of Orlando will also provide final copies of these documents to the OHA so OHA can make this information available at OHA's annual public hearing, required for the Public Housing Agency Plan.

Adoption of this Amended CPP

The availability for public review of this amended Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) was published in The Orlando Sentinel on May 24, 2020. In addition, the draft of the amended CPP was posted on the City of Orlando website at www.cityoforlando.net/housing. Since this amendment occurred during a national declared pandemic (COVID-19), citizens had five (5) days to review the amended CPP and submit comments to the City of Orlando Housing and Community Development Department before it was submitted to City Council for adoption on June 1, 2020. No comments were received from the public.