

Citizen Participation Plan



**For
Housing and Community
Development Programs**

**CITY OF ORLANDO
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
AS AMENDED**

Introduction

The City of Orlando is committed to providing opportunities for its citizens to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and assessment of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, HOME Partnership (HOME) Program, Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Program and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program. The City recognizes that those persons or groups affected by, or involved with projects under these programs can provide meaningful assistance to those responsible for program implementation. In order to encourage and support participation of citizens, the City will provide adequate information, hold public hearings, and give citizens the opportunity to comment. While citizen participation is essential for a viable program, the final authority for decision-making rests with the elected officials: the Mayor and City Commissioners. The exchange of information among citizens, City staff and elected officials will allow for a stronger, more responsive housing and community development effort in the City of Orlando.

This amended Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) sets forth the City's policies and procedures for citizen participation in the development of the Citizen Participation Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments and the CAPER, and will become effective upon its adoption by City Council. This amended CPP will be posted on the City of Orlando web site at www.cityoforlando.net and hard copies will be made available for review at the locations indicated below under the "Public Notice" section. Citizens will have fifteen (15) days to review the amended CPP and submit comments to the City of Orlando before it is submitted to City Council for adoption. Arrangements will be made to accommodate the requirements of persons with disabilities for access to the CPP upon request.

Encouraging Public Participation

The City will hold public hearings, as described in the "Public Notice" section below, and give citizens the opportunity to participate in the development of the following documents:

1 - **The Consolidated Plan** - This serves as the planning document of the City in order to apply for funding under the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA Programs. The overall goal of these programs is to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities principally for low- and moderate-income persons. Through this document, the City describes its plan to pursue these goals for all the community planning and development programs, as well as for housing programs, during a five (5) year period. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will evaluate the performance of the City through the accomplishment of these goals.

2 - **Annual Action Plan** - This document serves as the application for funding to HUD under the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA Programs. The Annual Action Plan includes the amount of assistance the City expects to receive (including grant funds and program income) from each of the federal programs and a description of the activities, including funding allocations that the City will undertake to address the needs and priorities established in the Consolidated Plan.

3 - **Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)** - This report describes the accomplishments of each activity undertaken during the previous year,

including how funds were actually used and the extent to which these funds were used for activities that benefited low- and moderate-income residents. The fiscal year for expenditures of HUD funds begins October 1 and ends September 30 of the following year. This report must be submitted to HUD within 90 days of the close of the program year, or December 30th.

4 – **Substantial Amendments** – Whenever a substantial change, as described under the substantial amendments section, is proposed said amendment shall be available for public comment for a period of thirty (30) days before submission to City Council for approval.

The City wishes to encourage participation especially by low- and moderate-income persons and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. 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 public meetings and participate in the various activities funded with CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA funds. To accomplish this level of participation, the City will publish notices of public hearings in newspapers that are read predominantly by Hispanic and African-American residents and will coordinate with agencies that serve the disabled. The City may also distribute information through flyers and invitations to residents of low- and moderate-income neighborhoods directly affected by the City's Consolidated Plan activities.

In addition, the City's Housing Department, in consultation with the Orlando Housing Authority, encourages the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan. The City of Orlando shall provide final copies of the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan and the CAPER to the Orlando Housing Authority so they can make this information available at the annual public hearing required under the Comprehensive Grant Program. Citizen participation is essential at all stages of the planning process, including: identifying needs, setting priorities based on needs, recommending activities to meet high-priority needs, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the activities.

Public Notice

In order to provide citizens the opportunity to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments to these documents, and the CAPER, the City will publish notices of public hearings and notices of availability of these draft documents

in The Orlando Sentinel, a newspaper of general circulation; and/or in newspapers or publications serving low- and moderate-income persons and minorities, such as "El Nuevo Dia" or "La Prensa", Spanish language newspapers, "The Orlando Times", a newspaper serving the African-American community; and will coordinate with agencies that serve the disabled such as the Center for Independent Living. The notice will be published as a display ad, in a non-legal section of the newspaper, at least two weeks prior to the public hearing. (Note: Notices relating to the HOPWA Program and its activities will be published in non-legal sections of newspapers in Orange, Seminole, Lake and Osceola Counties). The public hearing notice will include some or all of the following information as appropriate to the particular meeting:

1. The date, time and place of the hearing.
2. Topics to be discussed.
3. Procedures for the hearing.
4. Basic information about the program(s).

5. Timing and procedures followed in the development and approval of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments, and CAPER.

The Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments of these documents, the CAPER, including the listing of all approved activities and their funding under the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA Programs, the Citizen Participation Plan (amended), the availability of housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents, and any One-for-One Replacement Plans will be posted on the City of Orlando web site at www.cityoforlando.net. In addition, drafts and final copies will be made available for review at the following locations:

City of Orlando - Housing & Community Development Department
City Hall, 6th floor, 400 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, Florida 32801

The Orlando Housing Authority, 390 Bumby Ave., Orlando, FL 32801

Orange County Library System
Orlando Public Library, 101 East Central Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32801

Washington Park Library, 5151 Raleigh Street, Orlando, FL 32811
Southeast Library, 5575 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL 32822
Herndon Library, 4324 E. Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32803

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

Lake County Library System
Lake County Library, 312 W. Main Street Tavares, FL 32778

Osceola County Library System
Hart Memorial Central Library & Ray Shanks Law Library, 211 E. Dakin Ave. Kissimmee, FL 34741

Copies of any of the above-mentioned documents will be provided to citizens and groups, upon request, free of charge during the comment period. Citizens will be provided thirty (30) days from publication date to submit comments on the Consolidated Plan, on the Annual Action Plan, and substantial amendments to these Plans; and fifteen (15) days from publication date to submit comments on the amended Citizen Participation Plan and the CAPER. Comments may be submitted via telephone to (407) 246-2708 or in writing to:

City of Orlando
Housing Department
PO Box 4990
400 S. Orange Avenue
Orlando, Fl. 32802-4990
Comments may also be submitted via e-mail to: paulette.edwards@cityoforlando.net

During the applicable comment period, the City shall also consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally, at public hearings regarding any of the above-mentioned documents. A summary of these comments or views received by the Housing Department, and the determination of the acceptance or non-acceptance and reasons for the non-acceptance will be attached and made a part of the corresponding final document, i.e., Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments, and CAPER.

Access to Information

The City of Orlando will hold, at a minimum, two (2) public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views, provide information and respond to questions. For the development of the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan, there will be at least one (1) public hearing to 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 and the Annual Action Plan;

2 - The amount of funds the City expects to receive from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the implementation of the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA Programs, as well as program income, through activities under these programs, as part of the preparation of the Annual Action Plan;

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 shall be specified. 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 inhabited units and their replacement. A public notice advertising the availability of the One-for-One Replacement Plan will be published as indicated above in the "Public Notice" section.

Availability of drafts of the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and substantial amendments, and the period of time they will be made available for comments from citizens and interested parties are discussed above in the "Public Notice" section.

The second public hearing will be held to provide the public with information on the draft CAPER, which describes the accomplishments obtained under the previously mentioned programs, including the expenditure of funds. Availability of the draft CAPER and the period of time it will be made available for comments from citizens and interested parties are discussed above in the "Public Notice" section.

A public hearing will be held only after there has been adequate notice (at least 14 days), including a display ad in a newspaper of general circulation as described in the "Public Notice" section. Public hearings will be held at 6:30 p.m., a time that is convenient to most people who would benefit from the use of the funds. Public hearings will be held at City Hall, 400 South Orange Avenue, City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, which is a central, accessible location, unless otherwise noted. Accommodations are available, upon request at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, for disabled individuals. Also, Spanish-speaking personnel are present at these meetings and, upon request from other non-English

speaking residents; efforts will be made to have personnel fluent in the respective language present at these meetings.

Substantial Amendments

The City of Orlando shall amend its approved Annual Action Plan and/or its Consolidated Plan whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

- 1 - To make a change in its allocation priorities;
- 2 - To make a change in the method of distribution of funds;
- 3 - To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income), not previously described in the Annual Action Plan;
- 4 - To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity;

5 - To make substantial changes in funding to an **activity**¹. Under the CDBG Program, a substantial change is defined as an increase or decrease in funding for a particular activity, which is equal to or more than 40% of the original allocation for the activity in a fiscal year. For example, if a first increase/decrease to the budget of an activity equals 25% of the original fiscal year allocation, no amendment is required. However, if a second increase/decrease to the budget of that activity equals 20% of the original allocation, then an amendment is required because the cumulative change is 45%, thus exceeding the 40% threshold for that fiscal year.

Under the HOME, HOPWA, and ESG Programs, a substantial change is defined as an increase or decrease in the funding of a **project**², which is equal to or more than 40% of the original allocation for the project in a fiscal year. For example, if a first increase/decrease to the budget of a project equals 25% of the original allocation, no amendment is required. However, if a second increase/decrease to the budget of that project equals 20%, then an amendment is required because the cumulative change is 45%, thus exceeding the 40% threshold for that fiscal year.

¹ **Activity:** Under the CDBG Program, the City defines "activity" as the actual, specific undertaking to be funded; i.e., Construction of Jackson Community Center, Frontline Outreach Gymnasium Renovations, etc.

² **Project:** Under the HOME Program, the City defines "project" as one of the eligible categories of assistance: New Construction, Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation, Rental Rehabilitation, and Homebuyers Assistance.

Under the HOPWA Program, the City defines "project" as one of the eligible categories of assistance: Short-term Rent, Mortgage and Utilities Assistance, Tenant-Based Housing, Facility-Based Housing, and Supportive Services.

Under the ESG Program, the City defines "project" as one of the eligible categories of assistance: Renovation of Emergency Shelters for the Homeless, Operating Expenses of Homeless Shelters, Essential Services to the Homeless (counseling, transportation, etc.), and Homeless Prevention.

When a substantial amendment is proposed under any of the above-mentioned programs, said amendment shall be presented to the corresponding Review Committee for comments. If the Review Committee recommends approval of the amendment, citizens will be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed substantial amendment through the

publication of a Notice of Amendment published as described above in the "Public Notice" section. The City will provide citizens with the opportunity to make comments on proposed substantial amendment(s) for thirty (30) days. All comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, if any, will be considered by the City before implementing the proposed changes. . A summary of these comments or views received by the Housing Department, and the determination of the acceptance or non-acceptance and reasons for the non-acceptance will be attached and made a part of the corresponding final document. After an amendment is approved by City Council a copy shall be submitted to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development with a transmittal letter signed by the Director of the Housing Department.

Technical Assistance

The City of Orlando Housing Department will work with organizations and individuals representative of very low-, low- and moderate-income people who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding assistance under any of the CDBG, HOME, ESG or HOPWA Programs. The Housing Department will make available to potential applicants, upon request, copies of regulations related to eligible activities included in the Annual Action Plan. Staff will also provide guidance in 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.

Selection of Activities to be Funded

HOME Program: The HOME Program has an ongoing Request for Proposals process in conjunction with Florida's State Housing Initiatives Partnerships (SHIP) Program. Applicants for funding under the New Construction and Rental Rehabilitation Projects must first meet with Housing Department staff for an explanation of the requirements for submission of a proposal. Staff may recommend funding of other activities that have high priority for the City. The remaining balance of funds, if any, will be made available through a Request for Proposals process.

Proposals received by the third Tuesday of each month will be reviewed by the SHIP/HOME Review Committee on the following month. The SHIP/HOME Review Committee is comprised of ten (10) representatives from: City of Orlando (One representative from each of the following departments: Development Review, Design Services, Growth Management, Police Department, Permitting Services, Finance, Housing Department); one representative either from the Orlando Fannie Mae Partnership Office, Florida Community Partners, or Orange County Housing Finance Authority; one representative from the CDBG Review Committee; and one representative from the Municipal Planning Board. Recommendations to award funds for activities are submitted for approval to City Council. The selection of units to be assisted under the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation and First Time Homebuyers Assistance will be made by the Housing Department staff on a first-come, first-serve basis.

HOPWA Program: The City is the recipient of HOPWA Program funds for distribution in the counties of Orange, Seminole, Lake and Osceola. The City utilizes a once-a-year Request for Proposals process to distribute the HOPWA funds among the various agencies that provide housing and related services to low-income persons with Acquired Immune Deficiency

Syndrome (AIDS) or related diseases and their families. The proposals received are reviewed by the HOPWA Review Committee, comprised of one community members who have knowledge of AIDS/HIV programs, one representative from the Ryan White Part A Office, and one representative from the Ryan White Part B Office. The Committee's recommendations are submitted to City Council for approval.

ESG Program: Funds received by the City under the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) are distributed through a once-a-year Request for Proposals process. The proposals are reviewed by the ESG Review Committee and their recommendations are submitted to City Council for approval. Also, staff may recommend funding of other activities that have high priority for the City. The remaining balance of funds, if any, will be made available through a Request for Proposals process. The ESG Review Committee is comprised of one representative from the Homeless Services Network, one representative from the Orlando Housing Authority, and one representative from the CDBG Review Committee.

CDBG Program: CDBG funds are distributed in the following manner: Housing Department staff makes recommendations for the use of funds for ongoing housing assistance programs, such as the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program, weatherization and minor rehab of units owned and occupied by seniors, and modifications to units for handicapped accessibility. Staff will make these recommendations based on prior year expenditures and anticipated need. Also, staff may recommend funding of other activities that have high priority for the City. The remaining balance of funds, if any, will be made available through a Request for Proposals process. Staff recommendations and proposals received from agencies will be submitted to the CDBG Review Committee and their recommendations will be submitted to City Council for approval. The CDBG Review Committee will be comprised of seven (7) members. These members will be: one from each Commission district for a total of six (6) plus a representative from the Orlando Housing Authority.

Complaints

Citizens with complaints concerning the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments and CAPER should contact the Housing Department personnel by phone or in writing, at:

City of Orlando
Housing Department
P.O. BOX 4990
400 South Orange Ave.
Orlando, FL 32802-4990
Tel. No.: (407) 246-2708

If the matter is not resolved with staff, the Director of the Housing Department will consider the complaint and respond in writing within fifteen (15) working days. A record will be maintained of all complaints received that will include the nature of the complaint, referrals made, and the final disposition.

Approved March 22, 2004