

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

# Citizen Participation Plan

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## **Introduction**

The City of St. Louis is committed to providing citizens and other interested parties with opportunities to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the City's Community Development Block Grant ("CDBG"), HOME Investment Partnership ("HOME"), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS ("HOPWA") and Emergency Solutions Grant ("ESG") programs. The primary purpose of these programs is to create viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities principally for low- and moderate-income persons.<sup>1</sup>

As the administrator of these funds for the City of St. Louis, the Community Development Administration ("CDA") presents this Citizen Participation Plan ("CPP") to outline the process that will be followed.

## **Program Year**

CDA's program year begins January 1 and ends December 31.

## **Public Participation in the Development of Plans and Reports**

CDA encourages participation at all stages of the process. This includes citizen involvement in identifying needs; setting priorities among these needs; deciding how much money should be allocated to each high-priority need; suggesting the types of programs to meet high-priority needs; and overseeing the way in which programs are carried out.

The law particularly requires that this CPP both provide for and encourage public participation in the development of the following documents:

1. Consolidated Plan ("ConPlan") and substantial amendments to the ConPlan<sup>2</sup>
2. Annual Action Plan<sup>3</sup>
3. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report ("CAPER")<sup>4</sup>

In developing the above referenced documents, CDA will emphasize and encourage the involvement of:

- low- and moderate-income people – particularly those living in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods<sup>5</sup>, areas where funds are proposed to be used, and residents of public and assisted housing developments;

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<sup>1</sup> Low-income persons are defined as having an income below 50 percent of the average median income; moderate-income persons are defined as having an income less than 80 percent of the area median income.

<sup>2</sup> The ConPlan is a five-year plan that documents the City's housing and community development needs, outlines strategies to address those needs, and identifies proposed program accomplishments.

<sup>3</sup> The Annual Action Plan is an annual plan that describes specific CDBG, HOME, ESG and HOPWA funded projects that will be undertaken over the course of the upcoming fiscal year.

<sup>4</sup> The CAPER is an annual report that evaluates the use of CDBG, HOME, ESG, HOPWA funds.

- people that will be affected by the use (or non-use) of funds;
- minorities;
- persons with Limited English Proficiency; and
- persons with disabilities.

## 1. Consolidated Plan

The ConPlan integrates economic, physical, environmental, community, and human development in a comprehensive, coordinated fashion. The plan, which is due to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) **no later than 45 days before** the start of the first program year, recommends annual expenditures and makes longer-term recommendations over the five-year planning period.

Implementation of the City’s ConPlan is primarily carried out by CDA, the Department of Human Services and the Health Department. The Department of Human Services administers and has programmatic responsibility for the ESG program. The Health Department administers and has programmatic responsibility for the HOPWA program. CDA administers the City’s CDBG and HOME programs and is responsible for the overall coordination among the three entities in terms of planning, reporting and interfacing with HUD. Specifically, CDA is the lead agency responsible for managing the ConPlan effort and ensuring that the plan is completed, as required.

Citizen participation is crucial to the development of the ConPlan. Because of this, during the development of the ConPlan, CDA will complete the following actions:

- **At least 15 days** prior to the commencement of the public engagement process, CDA will publish its ConPlan development timeline and the dates of upcoming community meetings and other engagement efforts on the CDA website: [www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda) . Notices of timeline availability will also be posted on Facebook and distributed to the CDBG mailing list.
- CDA will hold **at least four community meetings** at locations throughout the City to seek input from citizens in the development of priorities. These meetings will be geographically disbursed to cover the entire City.

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<sup>5</sup> A predominantly low-and moderate-income neighborhood is comprised of 51 percent or more low-and moderate-income citizens.

- CDA will develop and issue **one community survey** to be used to assist in the development of priorities.
- CDA will hold **at least one Aldermanic briefing** to summarize the results of the public meetings and to seek input in the development of priorities.
- CDA will hold **at least one formal public hearing** after the conclusion of the public meetings to obtain citizen views on the meeting outcomes, to identify and solicit comments on proposed priorities, and to respond to inquiries and questions (to be held in conjunction with the Annual Action Plan public hearing). Please see the “public hearings” and “public notice” sections below for more information.
- Upon completion of the draft, CDA will utilize the public notice requirements detailed below and will allow **30 days for public comment** on the proposed ConPlan. The draft Plan, which will be made available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities upon request will include the amount of assistance anticipated, the range of activities to be undertaken, the estimated amount of funding that will benefit people of low-and moderate-income, and a plan to minimize displacement, if necessary.
- CDA will give careful consideration to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. **Comments received at the public hearing and in writing during the comment period will be responded to by CDA, and both the comment and response will be provided to HUD with the Consolidated Plan submission.**

Copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be available for review at CDA. In addition, copies will be available for viewing at the central branch of the St. Louis Public Library and for downloading on the City’s website ([www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda)).

In addition to seeking citizen input, CDA will ensure that the following requirements of 24 CFR Part 91.100 are strictly adhered to when developing the ConPlan:

- CDA will consult with other public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social and fair housing services (including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, homeless persons) during preparation of the consolidated plan.
- When preparing the portions of the ConPlan describing the jurisdiction's homeless strategy and the resources available to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) and persons at risk of homelessness, CDA will consult with:
  - The Continuum(s) of Care that serve(s) the jurisdiction's geographic area;

- Public and private agencies that address housing, health, social service, victim services, employment, or education needs of low-income individuals and families; homeless individuals and families, including homeless veterans; youth; and/or other persons with special needs;
- Publicly funded institutions and systems of care that may discharge persons into homelessness (such as health-care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); and
- Business and civic leaders.
- When preparing the portion of its ConPlan concerning lead-based paint hazards, CDA will consult with state or local health and child welfare agencies and examine existing data related to lead-based paint hazards and poisonings, including health department data on the addresses of housing units in which children have been identified as lead poisoned.
- When preparing the description of priority non-housing community development needs, CDA will notify adjacent units of general local government, to the extent practicable. CDA will also submit the non-housing community development plan to the state.
- CDA will consult with adjacent units of general local government, including local government agencies with metropolitan-wide planning responsibilities, particularly for problems and solutions that go beyond a single jurisdiction.
- CDA will consult broadly to develop a metropolitan-wide strategy for addressing the needs of persons with HIV/AIDS and their families living throughout the EMSA.
- CDA will consult with the St. Louis Housing Authority concerning consideration of public housing needs and planned programs and activities.
- CDA will consult with the Continuum of Care in determining how to allocate its ESG grant for eligible activities; in developing the performance standards for, and evaluating the outcomes of, projects and activities assisted by ESG funds; and in developing funding, policies, and procedures for the operation and administration of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

The draft Consolidated Plan must be approved by the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen prior to submission to HUD.

## 2. Annual Action Plan

The Annual Action Plan is a one-year implementation strategy for the ConPlan, which must be submitted to HUD **at least 45 days prior** to the beginning of each program year (no later than November 15). Similar to the ConPlan, implementation of the City's Annual Action Plan is primarily carried out by CDA, the Department of Human Services and the Health Department. CDA is responsible for the overall coordination among the three entities in terms of planning, reporting and interfacing with HUD.

The law also calls for improved accountability of jurisdictions to the public. In that spirit and in compliance with the terms of the law, CDA will use the following procedures.

1. No later than **June 30** of each year, CDA will publish its CDBG/HOME funding timeline for the following year. The timeline will be available on the CDA website: [www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda).
2. No later than **June 30** of each year, CDA will provide the Board of Aldermen with a copy of the draft CDBG/HOME Request for Proposals (“RFP”) and solicit feedback on annual priorities. The comment period for the Aldermen should be **no less than ten (10) business days**.
3. No later than **June 30** of each year, CDA will hold a public hearing to solicit feedback on annual CDBG/HOME priorities/activities.
4. By **July 30** of each year, CDA will advertise the commencement of the CDBG/HOME proposal acceptance period. CDA shall provide approximately 30 days for the completion and submission of proposals.
5. In late **September or early October** of each year, CDA will issue its funding recommendations on its website and request the initiation of the board bill process to approve recommendations and Annual Action Plan.
6. In late **September or early October**, CDA will hold an Aldermanic briefing to discuss CDBG/HOME recommendations and to answer questions (this briefing may occur at the formal HUDZ Committee Meeting of the Board of Alderman).
7. CDA will notify the public that a Proposed Action Plan is available for review in October of each year and will allow **30 days for public comment** before the final Annual Action Plan is submitted to HUD. CDA will give careful consideration to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. **Comments received at the public hearing and in writing during the comment period will be responded to by CDA, and both the comment and response will be provided to HUD with the Annual Action Plan submission.**
8. No later than November 15, CDA will submit Annual Action Plan to HUD.

Copies of the proposed Annual Action Plan will be available for review at CDA. In addition, copies will be available for viewing at the central branch of the St. Louis Public Library and for downloading on the City’s website ([www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda)). The Annual Action Plan must be approved by the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen prior to submission to HUD.

### 3. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report

The City must send the CAPER to HUD by March 31, which is within 90 days of the close of the City’s program year. The CAPER describes how funds were used, outlines the program year

accomplishments and shows the extent to which these funds were used for activities that benefited low- and-moderate income people.

There must be reasonable notice that the CAPER is available so that citizens have an opportunity to review it and comment. Notice will be made according to the procedures described earlier in this Plan with the following procedures specifically for the CAPER:

1. CDA will publish a public notice of the availability of the CAPER consistent with the public notice procedures described below.
2. A complete copy of the draft CAPER will be made available to the public at no cost within two working days of a request. Copies will also be available the main branch of the St. Louis Public Library and on the City's website.
3. The City will provide **at least 15 days** from the date of publication of the CAPER for the public to comment on the proposed CAPER.
4. **Before or within the 15-day comment period**, CDA will hold a public hearing to review the CAPER and general program performance.

In preparing the CAPER submission to HUD, CDA will consider all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing.

#### **FUNDING AVAILABILITY: RFPs AND NOFAs**

When RFPs or Notification of Funding Availability (NOFAs) are issued for the CDBG, ESG, HOME or HOPWA programs, the City's administering agencies will be required to provide adequate public notice as detailed below. Each agency will also be required to

1. post a tentative funding timeline on the City's website that includes at least the date proposals are due, the dates of workshops, and when funding decisions will be made;
2. provide at least one technical assistance workshop (public meeting requirements); and
3. post funding recommendations on the City's website.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

In accordance with 24 CFR 91.105, CDA must hold at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions. Public hearings must be conducted at a minimum of two different stages of the program year. Together, the hearings must address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and review of program performance. Furthermore, to obtain the views of citizens on housing

and community development needs, including priority non-housing community development needs, the citizen participation plan must provide that at least one of these hearings is held before the proposed consolidated plan is published for comment.

CDA will hold public hearings only after there has been adequate notice as described in the “Public Notice” section of this CPP. Public hearings will generally be held at CDA, a central location accessible by public transportation. This location is also accessible to people with disabilities, and provisions will be made for people with specific disabilities when requests are made at least two working days prior to the hearing. Provisions will also be made for non-English speaking individuals when requests are made at least two working days prior to the hearing.

In addition, public hearings will be held at times that are convenient for those potential and actual beneficiaries who are most likely to be affected by the proposed actions.

### **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

CDA may occasionally convene public meetings to provide information and to solicit informal feedback from citizens. These meetings will occur during the development of ConPlan priorities, but may also occur during the year. If community meetings are held, they will be timely, convened with notice, conducted at convenient times, and be held at readily accessible locations.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

CDA shall provide public notice once a federally-required document is available, such as the proposed Annual Action Plan, Five-Year Consolidated Plan, any proposed Substantial Amendment to the Action Plan or Consolidated Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Report. In addition, CDA will issue public notice of all funding availability and request for proposals, public hearings and public meetings covered by this CPP.

CDA will use the following forms of public notice for public hearings, the availability of federally-required documents, and funding availability. Each public hearing notice will include a brief synopsis of the topics covered at the public hearing, to permit informed attendance and participation:

1. CDA will publish public notices in one minority newspaper of general circulation serving St. Louis citizens. Currently CDA utilizes the St. Louis American for the publishing of public notices.
2. CDA will post notices on the CDA website ([www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda)) and the CDA Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/StLouisCDA>).

3. CDA will send notices to the International Institute, the premier organization that provides comprehensive services to refugees and immigrants in the St. Louis metropolitan area.
4. CDA will send notices to the Mind's Eye Information Service, which provides reading from local and national publications through radio and internet broadcasts for individuals in the blind and print-impaired community.
5. CDA will post a notice in City Hall.
6. CDA will give notice to any person or organization requesting to be on a mailing list.

In the case of public notice for public hearings, CDA will perform the above referenced **actions at least 14 days** prior to the public hearing. For the availability of federally-required documents and funding availability, CDA will perform these actions **at least one (1) day** prior to the commencement of the required public comment period and **at least one (1) day** prior to the issuance of the RFP, respectively.

CDA will use the following forms of public notice for public meetings:

1. CDA will post notices on the CDA website ([www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/cda)) and the CDA Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/StLouisCDA>).
2. CDA will send notices to the International Institute, the premier organization that provides comprehensive services to refugees and immigrants in the St. Louis metropolitan area.
3. CDA will send notices to the Mind's Eye Information Service, which provides reading from local and national publications through radio and internet broadcasts for individuals in the blind and print-impaired community.
4. CDA will give notice to any person or organization requesting to be on a mailing list.

CDA will use other mediums, as they become available and deemed effective by CDA management.

### **PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

As required by law, CDA will provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the data or content of the Consolidated Plan, as well as the proposed, actual, and past use of funds covered by this CPP. Regarding the past use of funds, the law requires reasonable public access to records about any uses of these funds during the previous five years.

Copies of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans and CAPER will be made available to citizens at no cost and within two working days of request. These documents will be available for pickup at CDA between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. These documents are also available on the City's website. CDA can also make these materials available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

### **SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS TO ACTION PLAN (AND/OR CONPLAN)**

Some amendments, referred to as administrative updates (grammatical or structural edits or changes in eligibility) or technical amendments (changes in department function, organizational structure or contact information) do not rise to the level of substantial amendment.

CDA will substantially amend the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan under the following circumstances:

1. there is a transfer of funds from an existing line item to a new activity or to a new subrecipient or subgrantee which has not been funded in the current grant year; or
2. there are funding changes in excess of 10% for a funded subrecipient or subgrant activity (excludes activities administered by City Departments); or
3. there is a change in allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
4. an activity type not described in the Annual Action Plan is funded; or
5. there is a change to the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity; or
6. there is a change in priorities contained in the ConPlan.

There will be notice of a proposed Substantial Amendment so that citizens have the opportunity to review and comment on it. Public notice will be made according to the procedures described earlier in this Plan, with the addition of the following procedures specifically for Substantial Amendments:

1. A detailed description of the proposed Substantial Amendment will be made available to the public at no charge within two working days of a request. Copies will also be available at the central branch of the St. Louis Public Library and on the City's website.
2. CDA will hold a public hearing regarding the Substantial Amendment. A public notice will be published **at least 14 days** prior to the public hearing.
3. The public will have a **30-day public comment period** to review and respond to the Proposed Amendment.

4. In preparing the final Substantial Amendment, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period.
5. The final Substantial Amendment will include a discussion that presents all comments, plus explanation why any comments were not accepted.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

On an annual basis, CDA will provide technical assistance to groups representing low- and moderate-income persons. Technical assistance will take the form of workshops on RFPs and NOFAs, and capacity-building training.

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

CDA will investigate and provide a timely, substantive written response to every written complaint received from the public related to the consolidated plan, annual action plan, amendments, and performance report. CDA shall make every reasonable effort to resolve any legitimate deficiencies identified by the complainant **within fifteen (15) working days** of the initial complaint.

### **AMENDING THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

This CPP can be changed only after the public has been notified of intent to modify it, and only after the public has had a reasonable chance to review and comment on proposed substantial changes to it.