

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN



The Department of Community Development
City of Huntsville Alabama

DRAFT

4/9/2015 _____

President or President Pro Tem,

City Council of Huntsville, AL

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR
THE CITY OF HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

I. INTRODUCTION

The City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, in an effort to more fully involve its citizens on a direct and continuing basis, has developed the Citizen Participation Plan. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires jurisdictions that receive their funds to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) that sets forth the jurisdiction's policies and procedures for citizen participation (24 CFR 91.1050). The City of Huntsville's CPP speaks specifically to activities and funds that the Community Development Department is responsible for administering. These grants/funds include, but are not limited to, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Programs (HOME) funds, and all other HUD funds received by the City of Huntsville; all State of Alabama funds, include but not limited to Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds, and any other Federal or State funds administered by the City of Huntsville, Alabama's Community Development Department.

Annual entitlement grants are made to the City from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the purpose of addressing the needs of its citizens, specifically the city's low to moderate income residents. Through this Plan, citizens' involvement in the planning, and evaluation of, all Federal fund, CDBG, HOME, all other HUD funded activities, and all State of Alabama funded activities, administered by the Community Development Department, are administered through an open process in which the rights of Huntsville citizens are respected. Citizens are encouraged to participate in influencing decisions and obtaining support from local government officials on issues of community development matters.

The City of Huntsville desires and encourages the participation of all the citizens of the City of Huntsville, particularly low to moderate income residents of slum and blighted areas, low to moderate income residents of areas in which Federal and HUD funds, including, but not limited to, CDBG and HOME funds, and all State of Alabama funds, are proposed to be used, and by residents of all low to moderate income neighborhoods that at any given time are defined by the City (Target Areas). In order to better utilize the provisions of this Plan, the City recommends the formation of neighborhood citizen committees.

II. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RECORDS

The City, through its Community Development Department, offers citizens access to information and records relating to the City's proposed and actual use of all Federal and HUD funds, including, but not limited to, CDBG and HOME funds, and all State of Alabama funds. The City will make available to citizens, records regarding the past use of funds, the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, the annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual

Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). These records will be available to the public during regular working hours at the City of Huntsville's Community Development Department, located at 120 Holmes Street, East, Huntsville, Alabama, 35801. These records will be available for five years. If a citizen requires records outside of the five year window, a written request should be submitted to the Director.

All public notices, announcement of Plans, and amendments will be in Spanish. Upon request, translations and some interpretation services will be contracted through AlameX Translation Services, LLC or Ortiz Consulting & Educational Services. The City of Huntsville's Citizen Advisory Board consist of one Spanish speaking member who is dedicated to aiding and providing translation/interpretation services to the identified population. Additional literature and materials will include a statement in Spanish indicating availability in Spanish upon request. If other populations of LEP residents are identified, the City will take appropriate measures to serve the language access needs of those persons.

Upon request the City will provide accommodations for hearing-impaired and sight-impaired citizens for community meetings or public hearings. Upon request the City will format written documents for persons with disabilities. These citizens will need to request needed adaptations one week in advance of meeting in order for the City to make arrangements. Hearing or speech impaired residents are encouraged to use the TTY line at (256) 427-7092 for request. The City will also seek to have all on-line documents in a format that is compatible with web readers who are visually impaired.

The City's website will also include a Spanish language message directing LEP citizens to contact the Office of Community Development for additional information on available programs, projects, and vital documents.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

The City will hold at least two public hearing to obtain the views of citizens, and to respond to proposals and questions on the City's housing and community development needs. These hearings will be held early in the planning process to allow citizens and community and neighborhood organizations an opportunity to make recommendations and comments on plan preparation. Notification of meetings related to the Consolidated Plan and the annual Action Plan will be made two weeks (14 days) before the public hearing date. These hearings will be held at a time and location convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, with full accommodations for the handicapped. Official notice will be published in *The Huntsville Times*, and placed on the City of Huntsville's website located at <http://www.huntsvilleal.gov>. All public hearing locations will be wheelchair accessible and accommodations for sign interpretive services, and non-English speaking residents will be made available if requested one week in advance of meeting.

IV. PARTICPATION

It is the intent of the City to attempt to reach every resident of the City and provide access to all aspects of the Federal or State funds administered by the City of Huntsville, Alabama's Community Development Department. This access includes the opportunity to apply for CDBG, HOME, and ESG, funded programs, to comment on how the funds should be spent in upcoming years, to comment on the City's past and current performance in carrying out CDBG, HOME, and ESG, funded projects, and to comment on drafts of reports such as the Five Year Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER).

The City emphasizes the involvement of low to moderate income residents in areas where housing and community development funds may be spent. The City also encourages participation of persons with special needs and/or persons who are often underrepresented in the public process, including minorities, non-English speaking/Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons, persons with disabilities, and persons who are or are at risk of becoming homeless. The City encourages the participation of Public Housing Authority leadership and their residents, as well as other subsidized/affordable housing residents, in the development of the Consolidated Plan. Finally, the City will inform and offer opportunities for comment to all residents falling within the scope of the Consolidated Plan.

The City will provide accommodations for non-English speaking/LEP citizens that attend public meetings or hearings. Residents requiring special accommodations will need to request such accommodations one week in advance of meeting. Please contact the City's Community Development Division one week in advance of meeting if you would like to request translation services for community meetings, public hearings, and/or written documents. The City will provide accommodations for hearing-impaired and sight-impaired citizens that attend community meetings or public hearings or the request of written documents formatted for persons with disabilities. These citizens will need to request needed adaptations one week in advance of scheduled meetings in order for the City to make arrangements. Hearing or speech impaired residents are encouraged to use the TTY line at (256) 427-7092 for making such request. The City will also seek to have all on-line documents in a format that is compatible with web readers who are visually impaired.

V. PUBLICATION OF THE CONSOLIDATE & ANNUAL PLAN

The Consolidated Plan will be published and made available at the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, located at 915 Monroe Street, Huntsville, AL 35801 and also on the City's website located at <http://www.huntsvilleal.gov>. In an abbreviated form, the Executive Summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan as well as identifying where an entire copy of the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan may be reviewed or copies personally obtained, as well as how to receive a copy by mail. Prior to the submission of the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan, the City will publish, in *The Huntsville Times*, and on the City's website. The proposed statement of

community development activities and projected use of funds for that Program Year affords citizens an opportunity to examine the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan contents so that they can provide comments on the proposed Plan and on the City's Community Development Department's performance. Said publication will also include:

1. The estimated amount of all Federal and HUD funds, including, but not limited to CDBG and HOME funds, and all State of Alabama funds, proposed to be used for activities that will benefit low and moderate income persons;
2. The Consolidated Plan will include an Action Plan for the first program year of the Five Year Consolidated Plan. Each year thereafter, a one-year Annual Action Plan will be made available to the public. The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) will be completed following each program year. The Annual Action Plan and CAPER will be made available to the public for each program year in which the Consolidated Plan is in effect. In compliance with HUD regulations, the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan will have a 30-day comment period, and the CAPER will have a 15-day comment period. All Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan will have a 30-day comment period. Public comment periods associated with all other Federal and State funds will follow the prescribed regulatory comment periods associated with their specific legislation.

The City's Consolidated/Action Plan will also be available to the public at the following locations:

City of Huntsville
Community Development
120 E. Holmes Ave.
Huntsville, AL 35801

Richard Showers Center
4600 Blue Spring Road
Huntsville, AL 35801

Huntsville-Madison County Public Library
915 Monroe Street
Huntsville, AL 35801

Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind
(AIDB)
600 St Clair Ave SW # 2
Huntsville, AL 35801

Huntsville Housing
Authority
200 Washington St NE
Huntsville, AL 35801

North Alabama Coalition for the Homeless
(NACH)
4092 South Memorial Parkway, Suite 205
Huntsville, AL 35802

The information will be made available in a format accessible to all persons, to include persons with disabilities upon request to the:

Department of Community Development
120 E. Holmes Ave.
Huntsville, AL 35801

Tel: (256) 427-5400

Fax: (256) 427-5431

TTY: (256) 427-7092

<http://www.huntsvilleal.gov/comdev/index.php>

VI. ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

As part of the implementation steps of the Consolidated Plan, the City will review all projects recommended for funding to identify those activities that will result in the displacement of residents. The City of Huntsville will comply with all requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act. This act, passed by Congress in 1970, is a federal law that establishes minimum standards for federally funded programs and projects that require the acquisition of real property (real estate) or displaced persons from their homes, businesses, or farms. The Uniform Act's protections and assistance apply to the acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property for federal or federally funded projects. The City of Huntsville will take the needed steps to assure that the objectives of the URA are achieved where displacement activities are required. The Uniform Relocation Act objectives are:

- To provide uniform, fair and equitable treatment of persons whose real property is acquired or who are displaced in connection with federally funded projects
- To ensure relocation assistance is provided to displaced persons to lessen the emotional and financial impact of displacement
- To ensure that no individual or family is displaced unless decent, safe, and sanitary (DSS) housing is available within the displaced person's financial means
- To help improve the housing conditions of displaced persons living in substandard housing, and
- To encourage and expedite acquisition by agreement and without coercion.

Projects that the City deems beneficial but that may cause displacement may be recommended and approved for funding only if the City or its sub-grantees demonstrate that such displacement is necessary and vital to the community and that they take efforts to reduce the number of persons displaced. Further, the projects goals and anticipated accomplishments clearly outweigh the adverse effects of displacement imposed on persons who must relocate.

Consistent with the goals and objectives of HUD entitlement programs, the City of Huntsville will take all reasonable steps necessary to minimize displacement of persons. If displacement occurs, the City will provide relocation assistance to all persons directly, involuntarily, and permanently displaced according to HUD regulations.

The owner-occupants or tenants are eligible for actual reasonable cost (based on fair market rent) of temporary lodging facilities until relocated or the structure is determined habitable by Community Development's housing inspector;

The City of Huntsville must approve housing and the Lessor and Lessee must sign a rent agreement before move-in. Housing must be comparable functionally to the displacement dwelling and decent, safe, and sanitary. This does not mean that the housing must be in comparable size. The term "functionally equivalent" means that it performs the same function, has the same principal features present, and can contribute to a comparable style

of living. Approved lodging accommodations include apartments and houses. The City of Huntsville will not reimburse “rental expenses” for living with a friend or family member;

- Either The City of Huntsville will provide the owner-occupants or tenants direct payment for moving expenses (to and from temporary housing) and storage costs, or the City will arrange moving and storage of furniture with a moving company. If the City makes a direct payment, complete documentation and receipts are necessary to process claims when storage costs exceed the amount assumed by the direct payment;
- Damage deposits, utility hookups, telephone hookups and insurance costs are not eligible for reimbursement; and
- The City may pay the cost of relocation assistance from Federal funds or funds available from other sources.

VII. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The City will provide technical advisory assistance to groups which are representative of low and moderate income persons that request assistance in developing proposals. The City will also provide technical assistance to neighborhood citizen committees, neighborhood advisory committees, civic groups, and individual citizens in understanding the CDBG program requirements, policies, and regulations governing the CDBG Entitlement program. The City will also provide technical assistance to these same groups on any other Federal or State funded programs administered by the Community Development Department.

VIII. SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

The City of Huntsville will amend its Consolidated Plan and or Action Plan whenever it decides not to carry out an activity described in the Consolidated Plan and or Action Plan, or decides to carry out an activity not previously described, or decides to substantially change the purpose, scope, location, beneficiaries, or budgeted dollar amount of an activity. Any new project or change to existing activities over \$350,000.00, or as noted above, any changes in the purpose, scope, location and beneficiaries, will constitute a substantial amendment.

Prior to amending its Consolidated Plan and or Action Plan, the City will provide citizens with reasonable notice of, and an opportunity to comment on such proposed amendments, by publication in *The Huntsville Times*, and on the City’s website, at least 30 days prior to amendment by the City. The City will make available to the public, and will submit to HUD, or any other applicable agency, a description of amendments adopted.

IX. PERFORMANCE REPORT

Citizens will be given a comment period of 15 days to provide input on the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). Comments may be submitted to the staff member identified under the “Complaint Procedures” section of this Citizen Participation Plan.

This Citizen Participation Plan shall apply to all Federal and HUD funds, including, but not limited to, Community Development Block Grant and HOME Partnership Act Entitlement activities, and State of Alabama funded activities, that are on-going as of the adoption of said Plan, as well as all future activities.

This Plan shall remain in effect from its adoption date, and until all activities assisted by any and all funds listed above. Including, but not limited to the CDBG and HOME Partnership Act Entitlement programs are completed, or until it is superseded by a new or amended Citizen Participation Plan.

X. COMPLAING PROCEDURE

Any citizen or group of citizens, with specific complaints, regarding any part of the implementation of any Federal or State funded programs administered by the Community Development Department has the right to submit a written complaint through specified channels. Written complaints will be responded to in writing within 15 working days from the data received by the Community Development Department.

- 1.) Any person or group that is aggrieved by an action or proposal related to activities involving Federal, HUD, or State funded activities administered by the Community Development Department, shall first make their complaint known to the Community Development Department. Written complaints should be submitted to:

Kenneth Benion, Department Head
Community Development
City of Huntsville
P. O. Box 308
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

- 2.) If the aggrieved person or group does not obtain satisfactory results from written complaint to the Department Head, then an appeal may be made to:

Michelle Gilliam Jordan, AICP
Community Development Director
City of Huntsville
308 Fountain Circle
Huntsville, AL 35801
(256) 427-5100

- 3.) If the aggrieved person or group does not obtain satisfactory results from written complaint to the Department Head, then an appeal may be made to the local governing body through the Office of the Mayor:

Tommy Battle, Mayor
City of Huntsville
P. O. Box 308
Huntsville, Alabama 35804
(256) 427-5000

- 4.) If the aggrieved person or group desires to carry a complaint forward from the local governing body they may contact:

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Birmingham Office
Region IV
Medical Forum Building, Suite 900
950 22nd Street, North
Birmingham, Alabama 35203-5301
(205) 745-4340
Attn: Charles Franklin, Community Planning and Development Director