



Citizen Participation Plan

for

Community Development Block Grant Funds

Department of Planning and Community Development

Housing and Community Development Division

2007

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Part I. Introduction

The City of Colorado Springs is required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to have a detailed Citizen Participation Plan which contains the City's policies and procedures for public involvement in the Consolidated Plan process and the use of CDBG, HOME, and ESG money. This Citizen Participation Plan is available to the public.

Encouraging Public Participation

This Citizen Participation Plan provides for and encourages public participation, emphasizing involvement by low and moderate-income people, especially those living in predominantly low and moderate-income neighborhoods, residents of public and assisted housing, and by other low-income residents of neighborhood strategy areas in which public and assisted housing is located. The City of Colorado Springs will take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage participation of minorities, people who do not speak English, and people with disabilities.

Copies of this Citizen Participation Plan, as well as summaries of basic information about CDBG, HOME, ESG and the Consolidated Planning process are available in the languages of residents who comprise a significant portion of the low and moderate-income population. Currently, Colorado Springs has materials in English and Spanish. Residents needing materials in other languages are encouraged to contact the City's Housing and Community Development staff.

Participants in the Plan

Many different groups are instrumental in the citizen participation plan process and in ensuring that its objectives are carried out. This section briefly identifies each group and their role in the process.

City Council

As elected representatives of the citizens of Colorado Springs, City Council is the policy making body and the ultimate authority in the citizen participation structure. City Council approves the budget for the federal grant programs (CDBG, HOME, ESG and any other special grant programs for which the City may make application) and thus is the final authority in all matters regarding the programs at the local level. All City Council meetings are open to the public except as limited by law. City Council meets in formal session on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

Housing and Community Development Division

This Division represents the City staff responsible for planning, implementing and assessing the federal grant dollars received by the City from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The role of Housing and Community Development is to advise City Administration and City Council on matters related to the federal grant programs and to provide technical assistance and informational support to all other components of the Citizen Participation structure. Housing and Community Development acts as a solicitor of citizen input and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules and regulations governing the federal grant programs administered on behalf of the City.

Program Assessment Committees

The City will utilize committees to review and analyze programs and services provided under the federal block grant programs. These program assessment committees will review proposals submitted for funding under the federal grant programs and assist in the development of plans required by HUD, as applicable. Staff will forward committee recommendations to City Council for final approval. The committees that serve in this capacity are as follows:

Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Providers Taskforce (CHAP)

The CHAP Taskforce is an open and flexible forum for service providers and citizens to work together to identify community needs and priorities related to homelessness, coordinate services, network, provide mutual support, review projects, develop awareness of issues and serve as a voice to the city, county and state governments. Homeward Pikes Peak is the permanent coordinating agency and handles the administrative function for this group. The taskforce meets on the second Thursday of each month, at 3:00 p.m. All meetings are open to the public except as limited by law.

Loan Review Committee

The committee was established in 1978 to evaluate the surety of loans made with Federal and other available funds for commercial and residential rehabilitation and business development loan programs. The Loan Review Committee has final authority to approve or deny all commercial, residential rehabilitation, and business development loans recommended by City staff. The committee is comprised of five members appointed by City Council as follows: One City Council member, two banking or mortgage industry representatives, and two citizens at large. The committee meets on the first Thursday of each month. All meetings are open to the public except as limited by law.

Affordable Housing Funding Review Committee

This committee has seven members and includes one representative each from the Housing and Community Development Division, Pikes Peak Board of Realtors, El Paso County Housing Authority, CHAP Taskforce, the lending community, and two representatives from the community at large. The committee reviews CDBG and HOME funding requests for the development of affordable housing in the City of Colorado Springs as well as Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) operating expenses. The committee meets once a month on an as needed basis to review funding requests.

Neighborhood Strategy Area Review Committee

This committee is comprised of representatives from the seven designated neighborhood strategy areas and is called upon on an ad hoc basis to review policy related items affecting designated neighborhood strategy areas. Neighborhood Associations from each strategy area provide input on project needs in their respective area and review proposed budgets for their strategy area priorities.

Human Service Funding

Housing and Community Development entered into a unique partnership in 2003 with United Way of the Pikes Peak Region. A one-application and evaluation process was developed for human service providers in the community. The one-application timing alleviates the need for agencies to submit multiple applications for human service activities and reduces the amount of time that agencies, volunteers, and staff have to spend on both processes. The process used to determine funding for the nonprofit agencies consists of volunteers from the community at large. Volunteer teams rate the agencies' proposals based on relevant criteria and these ratings are used to determine the funding recommendations submitted to City Council.

The Role of Citizens

The primary purpose of the programs covered by this Citizen Participation Plan is to improve communities by providing decent housing; a suitable living environment; and growing economic opportunities. All activities are principally for low and moderate- income people.

Because the amount of federal CDBG, HOME, and ESG money that Colorado Springs receives each year is primarily based upon the severity of both poverty and substandard housing conditions in Colorado Springs, it is necessary that public participation genuinely involves low income residents who experience these conditions. Genuine involvement by low income people, particularly residents of

predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, must take place at all stages of the process, including identifying and prioritizing needs as well as suggesting the types of programs needed to meet high priorities. A neighborhood is defined as a “Predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhood” when, at a minimum, 51% of the residents of the neighborhood have incomes that do not exceed 80% of the area median income as provided by the federal government.

The Various Stages of the Consolidated Plan Process

The policies and procedures in this Citizen Participation Plan relate to several stages of action mentioned in law or regulation. In general, these stages or events include:

- Identification of housing and community development needs
- Preparation of the draft use of funds for the upcoming year, known as the proposed Annual Action Plan; or the development of the new five-year Consolidated Plan
- Formal approval by City Council of a final Annual Action Plan; or new five-year Consolidated Plan
- Occasional necessary change to the use of budgeted funds in an Annual Action Plan; or change to the priorities established in the five-year Consolidated Plan. If the necessary change meets the substantial change definition, a formal Substantial Change Amendment will be published for citizen input and acted upon by City Council.
- Annual Performance Report to HUD at program year completion drafted for public review and comment

The Program Year

The program year chosen by the City of Colorado Springs is April 1st through March 31st of the following year.

Publication of the Citizen Participation Plan

This Citizen Participation Plan is available on the City of Colorado Springs Housing and Community Development web page at www.springsgov.com. To obtain an audio or printed copy of the plan, citizens can call, write, or send an e-mail to Housing and Community Development Division at 719-385-5912; Post Office Box 1575, Mail Code 1603, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903; Emcmullen@springsgov.com.

Part II. Public Notice

Advanced notice will be given with enough lead time for the public to take informed action. The amount of lead time can vary depending on the event. Specific amounts of time are given for different events later in this Citizen Participation Plan. The content of notices will give residents a clear understanding of the event being announced.

A. Items Covered by the Public Notice Requirement

There shall be advanced public notice once a federally required document is available. Required documents include the proposed Annual Action Plan or five-year Consolidated Plan; any proposed Substantial Amendment to the Action Plan or Consolidated Plan; and the Annual Performance Report.

In addition, there shall be advanced public notice of all public hearings relating to the funds or planning process covered by this Citizen Participation Plan.

B. Forms of Public Notice

The following represent forms of Public Notice:

- Public notices will be published in the Gazette as display advertisements in a non-legal section of the newspaper.
- Display ads and press releases in public service announcements may also be used.
- Notice will be given through letters to neighborhood organizations, public housing representatives, and agencies providing services to minorities, non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities, and low-income people. For example, Public Notice and documents will be delivered to advocates, human service agencies, Housing Authority, etc. for posting.
- Notice will be sent to any person or organization requesting to be on a mailing list.
- Notice will be posted on the City of Colorado Springs Housing and Community Development Division web page at www.springsgov.com.

Part III. Public Access to Information

As required by law, Colorado Springs will provide the public 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 the Citizen Participation Plan. Regarding the past use of funds, the law requires reasonable public access to records concerning any use of these funds during the previous five years. Additionally, as required by law, Colorado Springs will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to local meetings relating to the proposed or actual use of funds.

A. Standard Documents

Standard documents include:

- The proposed and final Annual Action Plans
- The proposed and final five-year Consolidated Plan
- Proposed and final Substantial Amendments to either an Annual Action Plan or the five-year Consolidated Plan
- Annual Performance Reports
- The Citizen Participation Plan

B. Availability of Standard Documents

In the spirit of encouraging public participation, a limited number of copies of standard documents will be provided to the public within three working days of a request. These materials will be available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities if requested.

C. Places Where Standard Documents Are Available

Standard documents will be available at the City's Housing and Community Development Division office, City Hall, Community and Senior Centers.

D. Public Hearings

Public hearings are required by law in order to obtain the public's views and to provide the public with the City's responses to public questions and proposals.

Public hearings will be scheduled at all stages of the process, including, at a minimum, a hearing about community needs, a public hearing to review proposed uses of funds, and a public hearing to assess how funds were spent during the previous program year.

The block grant budget is a part of the normal City budget cycle. As such, the City will follow its public input schedule for the City budget.

1. Access to Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held only after there has been adequate notice as described in the *Public Notice* section of this Citizen Participation Plan, including a display advertisement in the non-legal section of the newspaper ten days prior to the public hearing. Public hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to and accessible by people who might benefit the most from the use of funds.

2. Public Hearings and Populations with Unique Needs

All public hearings will be held at locations accessible to people with disabilities, and provisions will be made for people with disabilities when requests are made at least five working days prior to a hearing. Translators will be provided for people who do not speak English when requests are made at least seven working days prior to a hearing.

Part IV. The Stages in the Citizen Participation Process

A. Identifying Needs

In order to encourage public involvement, at least one public hearing to determine the specific needs and priorities identified by low and moderate-income people will be held in a location outside of city hall. Information is gathered by and communicated through representatives of the community, including recipients and providers of services.

Public hearings about needs will be completed before a draft of the Annual Budget is published for comment. The federal budget is included in the City's general budget process and citizens informed of opportunities for input. Identified needs will be considered by the City and addressed in the draft Annual Action Plan.

B. The Proposed Annual Action Plan and/or Five-year Consolidated Plan

The law that provides the federal block grant funding calls for improved accountability of jurisdictions to the public. In that spirit and in compliance with the terms of the law, Colorado Springs will use the following procedures:

1. General Information

At the beginning of this stage, Colorado Springs will provide the public with an estimate of the amount of CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds it expects to receive in the upcoming year along with a description of the range of types of activities that can be funded with these resources. In addition, the public will be given an estimate, by type of activity, of the amount of these funds which will benefit low and moderate-income people.

2. Technical Assistance

City staff will work with organizations that represent low and moderate-income people and who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding for an activity. All potential applicants for funding are encouraged to contact City staff for technical assistance before completing a proposal.

3. Availability of the Proposed Annual Action Plan

The proposed Annual Action Plan will be made available to the public at least 30 days prior to the approval of the final Action Plan by City Council so that citizens will have a reasonable opportunity to examine it and to submit comments. A limited number of copies of the proposed Annual Action Plan will be made available to the public upon request and at the locations specified above in the section *Public Access to Information*.

4. Public Hearing and Further Action

In preparing the final Annual Action Plan, 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. The final Annual Action Plan will include all comments and explain why any comments were not accepted.

C. The “Final” Annual Action Plan and/or Five-year Consolidated Plan

A limited number of copies of the final Annual Action Plan will be made available to the public within three working days of request. In addition, copies will be available at the locations specified above in the section *Public Access to Information*.

D. Amendments to the Annual Action Plan and/or Five-year Consolidated Plan

The final Annual Action Plan and/or Consolidated Plan will be amended any time there is a change in one of the priorities presented on the HUD required Priority Table; a change in the use of money to an activity not mentioned in the final Annual Action Plan and/or Consolidated Plan; or a change in the purpose, location, scope, or beneficiaries of an activity.

1. Substantial Amendments

Substantial change means changes made in terms of purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries. Any substantial change in the programs must be approved by City Council at a public hearing. It will then be submitted to HUD for informational purposes. The public hearing will be at a time and place that is conducive for the inclusion of all persons who would be affected by the change. In addition, any substantial change will be published in a newspaper of general circulation and citizens will be given 30 days to comment on the change(s). The following changes are considered substantial amendments:

- The proposed amendment requires prior HUD approval.
- The proposed amendment involves the transfer of funds of \$51,000 or more from one project to another.
- The amount involved in the proposed amendment exceeds 50% of the total project cost.
- The proposed amendment deletes an activity described in the Consolidated Plan.
- The proposed amendment changes the beneficiaries of an activity by more than 50%.
- The proposed amendment adds an activity not described in the Consolidation Plan.

2. Non-substantial Amendments

Any proposed amendment(s) to the approved Consolidated Plan that does not meet the above definition of a substantial change will be subject to the following procedures:

- The Manager of Housing and Community Development Division may approve changes involving a cumulative amount of up to \$50,000 per line item. A record of the transaction will be included in the budget file.
- Any change that comes about as a result of a disaster declared by either the Mayor or the Governor shall be included and notice of the change will be given to the public. However, in this case, the 30-day comment period is not applicable.

E. Public Notice and Public Hearing for Substantial Amendments

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

- A detailed written description of the proposed Substantial Amendment will be made available to the public within three working days of the request and copies will be available at the locations indicated earlier in this Citizen Participation Plan under *Public Access to Information*.
- The public hearing on the Substantial Amendment will take place after the public has had 30 days to review and comment on the proposed Substantial Amendment.
- In preparing a 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. The final Substantial Amendment will include all comments and explain why any comments were not accepted.

F. The Annual Performance Report

Every year, Colorado Springs must submit to HUD an Annual Performance Report within 90 days of the close of the program year. In general, the Annual Performance Report must describe how funds were actually used and the extent

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

G. Public Notice for the Annual Performance Report

There must be reasonable notice that an Annual Performance Report is available so that citizens will have an opportunity to review it and comment. Notice will be made according to the procedures described earlier in this Citizen Participation Plan with the addition of the following procedures specifically for Annual Performance Reports:

- There will be a 15 day review and comment period for the Annual Report before it is submitted to HUD.
- A complete copy of the Annual Performance Report will be made available to the public within three working days of a request and at the locations indicated earlier in this Citizen Plan under *Public Access to Information*.
- In preparing an Annual Performance Report for submission to HUD, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public. The Annual Performance Report sent to HUD will include all comments and explain why any comments were not accepted.

Part V. Complaint Procedure

All complaints related to any phase of the programs covered under the Consolidated Plan should be delivered in writing to the Housing and Community Development Division of the City of Colorado Springs at 702 East Boulder Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Complaints can also be mailed to the Housing and Community Development Division Manager, City of Colorado Springs, Post Office Box 1575, Mail Code 1603, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903. All complaints will be given consideration and answered in writing within 15 days of their receipt by Housing and Community Development Division.

Part VI. Substantial Amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan

Substantial amendments to this Citizen Participation Plan can be made only after the public has been notified of the City's intent to modify it and after the public has been given 30 days, from the date of publication, to review and comment on the proposed substantial changes to it.

Part VII. Anti-Displacement Policy

The City has adopted an anti-displacement and relocation assistance plan. The City will make every attempt not to displace individuals or families as a result of projects funded with federal block grant funds. The City will replace all occupied and vacant occupiable lower income housing that is demolished or converted to a use other than lower income housing in connection with a project assisted with federal block grant funds.

All replacement housing will be provided within three years after the commencement of the demolition or conversion. Before entering into a contract committing the City to provide funds for a project that will directly result in demolition or conversion, the City of Colorado Springs will make public by publication in a newspaper of general circulation and submit to HUD the following information in writing:

- A description of the proposed assisted project
- The address, number of bedrooms, and location on a map of low income housing that will be demolished or converted to a use other than low income housing as a result of an assisted project
- A time schedule for commencement and completion of the demolition or conversion
- To the extent known, the address, number of bedrooms, and location on a map of the replacement housing that has been or will be provided
- The source of funding and a time schedule for the provision of the replacement housing
- The basis for concluding that the replacement housing will remain low income housing for at least 10 years from the date of the initial occupancy
- Information demonstrating that any proposed replacement of housing units with smaller dwelling units (for example, a two bedroom unit replaced with two one bedroom units) is appropriate and consistent with the housing needs and priorities identified by the City and included in the Consolidated Plan.

If the specific location of the replacement housing and other required data above is not available at the time of the general submission, the City will identify the general location of such housing on a map and complete the disclosure and submission requirements as soon as the specific data is available. The Housing and Community Development Division is responsible for tracking the replacement of lower income housing and ensuring that it is provided within the required time period.

The City of Colorado Springs Housing and Community Development Division affirmatively furthers Fair Housing and does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or marital status.

This Citizen Participation Plan is currently printed in English and in Spanish. To request a copy of this document in a format other than presented please contact:

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