

City of Evansville
Department of Metropolitan Development

Citizen Participation Plan for the Consolidated Planning Process
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
Home Investment Partnership Grant (HOME)

INTRODUCTION:

The City of Evansville (City), as a recipient of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds, is required to complete a Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan, commonly referred to as the Consolidated Plan. The primary purpose of the community development and planning programs covered by the Citizen Participation Plan is to develop healthy urban communities by providing decent housing, suitable living environments, and expanded economic opportunities principally for low- and moderate-income people. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the City to submit a detailed plan of citizen participation, to provide and encourage the participation of persons of low- and moderate-income who reside within areas in which these funds are proposed to be used.

The Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) is designated by the City of Evansville as the lead agency for the administration of the consolidated planning process. It also serves as the administrator of the ESG, CDBG, and HOME programs. As the lead agency, DMD is responsible for developing the five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), and other plans and reports as required by HUD. DMD coordinates with other city departments and community partners to develop these documents.

I. PUBLIC NOTICE

There shall be an advance 10-day public notice of the availability of required federal documents (e.g. the five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports), and of all public hearings and meetings pertaining to funds related to the Citizen Participation Plan. Regarding community development activities, advertisements must announce the amount of federal funds available, projected activities to be undertaken, and anticipated or actual populations served.

The City of Evansville will continue to identify communication resources, to ensure that information provided by the City is accessible to all persons, regardless of their disability, language, or nationality. The City has identified resources of communication which will be utilized by the City's Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) in providing notification to the public. The Evansville Courier & Press will publish legal advertisements as requested. All public notices will additionally be forwarded, by email, to organizations that have requested distribution of information via City-approved media list.

DMD maintains a contact list of current federal funding recipient agencies, as well as interested parties who request notification of updated plans and public meetings. Interested parties are typically locally based organizations but may also include individuals with no affiliations, such as Evansville residents whose interests are impacted by federal investments. On the next page are some local organizations

which are identified as information resources for populations who have special communication needs. This is not an exhaustive list of such organizations. Contacts are subject to periodic adjustment, as new resources become available.

- **Evansville Courier & Press** – Local newspaper with a wide service area in Evansville
- **Our Times Newspaper, HOLA Newsletter, and El Informador Latino** - Minority outreach newspapers and/or other media resources.
- **WNIN (Tri-State Public Media)** – A local media agency which provides Public Service Announcements.
- **Evansville Association for the Blind (EAB)** – A local non-profit which primarily serves persons with disabilities, such as visually impaired persons.
- **United Neighborhoods of Evansville (UNOE)** - A local non-profit which supports and collaborates with Evansville's neighborhood organizations.
- **Evansville Housing Authority (EHA)** – The local public housing authority, which assists those who are housing disadvantaged.
- **Indiana Balance of State – Continuum of Care (CoC)** – The local service-coordination system of agencies which primarily serve homeless and at-risk populations. The lead agency is Aurora.
- **Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library** – The local public library system which consists of multiple locations across Evansville and provides increased access to information in various formats

A city ordinance establishes that all public meetings of government or advisory bodies must be documented through online audio and video recording (Ord G-2014-35, passed 12-19-14). It is the intent of the City to achieve greater transparency of local government by requiring archival of audio and video recordings of public meetings. Internet recordings of most public meetings are conducted in the City-County Building, located at 1 NW Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Evansville, Indiana, in conference Rooms 301 or 307. These meeting locations are accessible to the disabled and centrally located in a focus area of the city.

The only deviance to the ordinance referenced above would be in the event of an epidemic, pandemic, or natural disaster that would prevent accessibility to the public. In this case, the City would implement an alternative means to fulfill its obligation to receive citizen participation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Audio and/or video recording of a presentation to be posted on the City's website with information on how to provide comments
- Posting a presentation in PDF format on the City's website with information on how to make comments
- Hosting a webinar via work computers that allows for commenting (if such tools are available)
- Choosing to exercise HUD-approved waivers for citizen participation public comment period, for an associated Consolidated Plan and Action Plan amendment, so long as the City adheres to the amount of days HUD requires for this waiver to receive public comments
- Choosing to exercise HUD-approved waivers regarding reasonable notice and opportunity to comment, so long as the City determines what constitutes reasonable notice and opportunity to comment given the circumstances

The City of Evansville will take whatever action is appropriate to encourage participation of all its citizens in public meetings, including but not limited to, minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities.

Any form of public notice associated with this Citizen's Participation Plan will contain the following language:

The City of Evansville does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, disability, national origin, or any other protected classification under federal law. In accordance with the "Americans with Disabilities Act", those requiring assistance and/or accommodation related to the accessibility to documents and participation, as well as Limited English proficiency (LEP) persons, should contact the Department of Metropolitan Development at (812) 436-7823 to request additional auxiliary aides, services, and language assistance. Requests are to be submitted no later than 10 days prior to the meeting, though we will make every effort to accommodate late requests.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MEETINGS

The City of Evansville will conduct public hearings and meetings regarding the five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports, as well as proposed substantial amendments to any Consolidated Plan or Action Plan. Drafts of these documents must be made available to the public for review and comment, typically for a continuous period of at least 30 days. All comments provided will be considered and responded to in writing by DMD.

- A. Needs Hearings: At least two (2) public meetings are held each year to assess community needs and establish funding priorities to update the City of Evansville's Consolidated Plan. Public notices are posted in the local newspaper as legal advertisements, and may also be publicized via other media resources, **at least 30 days in advance** of the required submission dates for plans and reports to HUD. The public is encouraged to submit comments to DMD and/or attend the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) meetings.
- B. Consolidated Plan: A Draft of the Consolidated Plan is made available for review and comment on the City of Evansville website (www.evansville.in.gov) and in the DMD office for a period **not less than 30 days prior** to its submission to HUD. Public meetings, which must include at least one (1) meeting to review the Consolidated Plan but may also include meetings to discuss separate components of the Consolidated Plan, are conducted in the focus area for citizen review. All comments are accepted up to four (4) days prior to submission of the Consolidated Plan. A summary of all comments is forwarded to City Council and the Mayor, as well as documented within the final version of the Consolidated Plan.
- C. Annual Action Plan: A Draft of the Annual Action Plan is made available on the City of Evansville website (www.evansville.in.gov) and in the DMD office for a period **not less than 30 days prior** to its submission to HUD. At least one (1) public meeting is conducted in the City-County Building for citizen review of the plan. All comments are accepted up to four (4) days prior to submission of the Action Plan. A summary of all comments is forwarded to City Council and the Mayor, as well as documented within the final version of the Annual Action Plan.
- D. Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER): A Draft of the CAPER is made available online on the City of Evansville website (www.evansville.in.gov) and in the DMD office for a period **not less than 30 days prior** to its submission to HUD. One (1) public meeting is conducted in the City-County Building for citizen review of the CAPER. All comments are accepted up to four (4) days prior to submission of the CAPER. A summary of

all comments is forwarded to City Council and the Mayor, as well as documented within the final version of the CAPER.

E. Substantial Amendments

In accordance with federal regulations, the City must specify the criteria to be used for determining what constitutes a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan and what action must be taken should a substantial amendment occur.

A substantial amendment is defined as:

- addition or deletion of a project not previously described
- a change in location, scope, or beneficiary of any project previously described
- an increase or decrease in program funds of at least 50% for any project whose total allocation is \$100,000 or more.

A Substantial Amendment to an Action Plan or Consolidated Plan must be made available on the City of Evansville website (www.evansville.in.gov) and in the DMD office for a period of public review **not less than 30 days prior** to enacting the changes – unless exercising an allowable waiver issued by HUD, in which case the maximum waiver requirement for review and comment will be adhered to.

Changes that are not considered substantial amendments include:

- Liquidation of unspent dollars for completed activities. These funds may be reallocated to increase up to 49% of the existing activities' budget, consistent with the rules governing substantial amendments
- Data updates, such as census data, income limits, and fair market rents
- A minor change in location of a specific property, as long as the purpose, scope, and intended beneficiaries remain essentially the same
- The transfer of some (but not all) funds within a project from one approved budget line-item to another approved budget line item, subject to approval by DMD
- Adjustments to project budgets which are allocated less than \$100,000 **or** are above \$100,000 but the increase or decrease in program funds is not more than 50%.

III. CITIZEN COMMENTS/COMPLAINTS

Individuals, organizations, or neighborhood groups which have questions, comments, concerns, or complaints pertaining to the Consolidated Plan, CDBG, ESG, HOME programs, or the proposal review and grant allocations process, are encouraged to contact DMD for clarification, explanation, and/or assistance. All information and records relating to the federal funding process are open to the public for review. DMD will request commenters to provide basic contact information, such as name, phone number, address, and/or email address; this assists DMD to provide a timely, substantive written response to all citizen questions, comments, concerns, and complaints.

Inquiries may be submitted by postal mail, email, phone call, or in-person via the DMD office. DMD office hours are Monday-Friday, from 8 AM to 5 PM, except on holidays.

Comments should be directed to:

Community Development Coordinator
Department of Metropolitan Development
306 Civic Center Complex
1 NW Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Evansville, Indiana 47708
Office Phone: (812) 436-7823
Coordinator Email: dmdemail@evansville.in.gov

IV. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

DMD staff will work with prospective subrecipient organizations to develop an effective funding proposal. DMD staff are available to answer questions and explain eligibility and benefit requirements to potential applicants. All applicants are required to participate in grant training that is provided by DMD, on an annual basis, to be eligible to apply for or receive ESG, CDBG, or HOME funds. All applicants are required to contact DMD to have their completed proposal forms reviewed for accuracy and completeness prior to the submission deadline.

V. CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The CAC is a five to seven (5-7) member body appointed by the Mayor to represent Evansville residents, especially the low-income community, in the allocation of funds process. Appointees represent housing, economic development and community development interests and are chosen based on their personal knowledge about Evansville and the needs of the low-income community. All CAC meetings are open to the public.

CAC meets three (3) times during the grant review process:

1. CAC training and grant overview - CAC members receive a binder from DMD with ESG and Public Service CDBG grant proposals for evaluation. Additional documentation includes current HUD income guidelines, results from the Needs Survey of the Consolidated Plan, current Evansville Low-Income Census Tract Map, and relevant ESG and CDBG grant requirements.
2. Agency presentations to CAC - Public meeting in which CAC can ask questions of applicant agencies. Members must be sworn in prior to or during this first meeting to be considered a valid member, and
3. CAC final recommendation - Public meeting in which CAC convenes to deliberate and create funding recommendations to be provided to the Mayor.

Meetings are conducted in the City-County Building, where they are streamed live online, recorded and archived for public review and comment.

VI. CONSOLIDATED PLANNING PROCESS

DMD will prepare a written description of all proposed uses of ESG, CDBG, and HOME funds, detailing all anticipated allocations, including proposed allocations to city agencies, in a summarized format such as a spreadsheet. The description will provide sufficient detail to allow citizens to determine the degree to which they might be affected. At a minimum, this description shall include type of activity, location, and amount of federal money requested. This description, along with a copy of each ESG and CDBG Public Service proposal, will be distributed to CAC members and shall be made available to the general public for review **fourteen (14) days** before the CAC makes its recommendations to the Mayor. The summary spreadsheet containing these descriptions shall be provided upon request at no charge.

The CAC shall make recommendations to the Mayor regarding the allocation of ESG and CDBG Public Service funds. The Mayor shall review CAC's comments and make funding recommendations to City

Council. City Council, upon reviewing the recommendations of the Mayor, determines the projected expenditures for the proposed Annual Action Plan. Availability of the proposed Annual Action Plan will be published as described in Section I.

After all comments have been reviewed, presented to the Mayor and City Council, and all changes made and ratified by the Mayor and City Council, the final Consolidated Plan shall be submitted to HUD by the established deadline. The deadline for submission of the Consolidated Plan and/or annual Action Plan is forty-five (45) days prior to the end of the program year, except in the case that an extended deadline is approved by HUD.

VII. ANTIDISPLACEMENT POLICY

DMD shall follow its written Anti-Displacement and Relocation Policy and provide annual reports to HUD as part of the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report. The policy is kept on file at DMD and is in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.