

CITY OF LAREDO

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The City of Laredo is identified as an Entitlement City by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and consequently, receives funding annually through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the HOME Investment Partnership Program and the Emergency Shelter/Solutions Grant (ESG). The amount of each CDBG, HOME, and ESG entitlement is determined by statutory formula. Within the statutory constraints of each of the HUD programs, the City of Laredo is able to develop its own programs and funding priorities.

In application for funding through these programs, the City of Laredo is required to develop and submit to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, a Consolidated Plan which identifies the housing and non-housing funding priorities of the community and the specific activities to be carried out with CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds. In developing the Consolidated Plan, the City is charged with the responsibility of consulting with local citizens, community service organizations, and others as applicable in assessing needs and determining the best use of program funds.

The City of Laredo has amended its Citizen Participation Plan to adhere with 24 CFR Part 91, pertaining to the Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development Programs. Also, in accordance with 24 CFR Part 91.103 (3), the City will provide this Plan in a format that is accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. The City's policies and procedures to encourage and allow for citizen participation in the development and submission of a Consolidated Plan, as well as any substantial amendments to the Plan, and reports of performance are outlined below.

I. ENCOURAGEMENT OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- A. The City of Laredo shall take appropriate action to encourage the participation of all its citizens in the development of the consolidated plan, any substantial amendments to the consolidated plan, and on the performance report.
- B. Particular emphasis will be placed on encouraging the participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, as defined by the City. The City of Laredo will take whatever action is appropriate in the encouragement of the participation of all its citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons as well as persons with disabilities.
- C. The City shall encourage, in conjunction with consultation with the Laredo Housing Authority, the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments, in the process of developing and implementing the consolidated plan, along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located. The City shall make an effort to provide information to the housing

agency about consolidated plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the housing agency can make this information available at the annual public hearing required under the Comprehensive Grant Program.

- D. The City shall provide citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the citizen participation plan, and on substantial amendments to the citizen participation plan, and must make the citizen participation plan public. The citizen participation plan shall be in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN

- A. Before adopting the Consolidated Plan, the City will make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance the City is expected to receive (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low-and moderate income.
- B. City staff charged with the responsibility of preparing the Consolidated Plan will meet and request input from local citizens, service organizations, the Public Housing Authority, and other interested parties through:
 - 1. Neighborhood meetings held in each of the City's regions (North, South, East, and West), will be schedules in a timely fashion to allow for sufficient time for preparation of the plan.
 - 2. At least one public hearing will be held at a location easily accessible to all, prior to the development of the plan in order to obtain the views of citizens on housing and community development needs, including priority non-housing community development needs.
 - 3. Scheduled meetings with service organizations, the Public Housing Authority, and others as necessary.
- C. At the time the proposed plan is made available for public comment, a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be published in the Laredo Morning Times or other local newspaper which maintains the greatest circulation.
- D. Paper and computer disk copies of the complete Consolidated Plan will be made available at City Offices and local libraries, for public review for a 30 day period. Notice will be given through the Laredo Morning Times or other newspaper of greatest circulation; the Public Access Channel, Radio and TV regarding the comment period.
- E. A reasonable number of copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be made available free of charge to citizens and groups who request it.

- F. A public hearing noting the proposed activities to be carried out with CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds will be held before a request is made for City Council authorization to submit the Consolidated Plan to HUD.
- G. In preparing the final Consolidated Plan, City staff will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at public hearings/meetings. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views and the reasons therefore, shall be made part of the final consolidated plan.

III. DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

The City of Laredo does not anticipate any displacement to occur as a result of any HUD funded activities. All programs will be carried out in such a manner as to safeguard that no displacement occurs. However, in the event that a project involving displacement is mandated in order to address a concern for the general public's health and welfare, the City will take the following steps:

- A. A public hearing will be held to allow interested citizens an opportunity to comment on the proposed project and voice any concerns regarding possible relocation. Notice of the public hearing/meeting will be made as per the procedure noted in a separate section of the Citizen Participation Plan.
- B. In the event that a project involving displacement is pursued, the Community Development or other City staff will contact each person/household/business in the project area and/or hold block meetings, depending on the project size; inform persons of the project and their rights under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and respond to any questions or concerns.
- C. Relocation assistance will be provided in adherence with the City's Project Relocation Plan and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

- A. Changes to the Consolidated Plan that constitute a Substantial Amendment include:
 - 1. A change in the use of CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds providing for the addition/deletion of a project including the purpose, scope, location or beneficiary of an activity.
 - 2. An increase in the funding of a previously disclosed CDBG or HOME activity, if the additional allocation equals or exceeds \$500,000. Additional allocation for ESG must equal or exceed \$50,000.
 - 4. A change in allocation priorities or a change in the method of

distribution of funds.

- B. City staff will insure that citizens and interested groups have an opportunity to comment on any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan.
1. Notice of the proposed substantial amendment and request for comment will be made through the Laredo Morning Times or other newspaper of greatest circulation.
 2. Citizens will be provided a 30 day comment period to express views regarding the substantial amendment before the amendment is implemented. Copies of the substantial amendment will be made available at the Dept. of Community Development, the office of the City Secretary, and at the public library.
 3. In preparing the substantial amendment, City staff will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally. Comments can be addressed to :

Director:
Department of Community Development
1301 Farragut, Transit Center Building, 3rd Floor, East Wing
Laredo, TX 78042

Or be mailed to:
P.O. Box 1276
Laredo, TX 78042

4. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be made part of the substantial amendment to the consolidated plan.

V. PERFORMANCE REPORTS

- A. Notice of each annual performance report and request for comment shall be made through the Laredo Morning Times or other newspaper of greatest circulation.
- B. Citizens will be provided a 15 day comment period to express views regarding the performance report before the report is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Copies of the performance report will be made available at the Department of Community Development, at the office of the City Secretary, and at the Laredo Public Library.
- C. In preparing the performance report, City staff shall consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally. Comments can be addressed to:

Director
Department of Community Development
1301 Farragut, Transit Center Building, 3rd Floor, East Wing
Laredo, TX 78042

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VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS/MEETINGS

Citizens are required to be provided with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information, and records relating to the Consolidated Plan and the City's proposed and actual use of Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and Emergency Shelter/Solutions Grant funds, through the following actions:

A. Schedule of Public Hearings/Meetings

1. The City will hold at least 2 public hearings each fiscal year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions to be conducted at a minimum of two different stages of the program year. The hearings shall address:
 - a. Housing and community development needs. In order for the City to obtain views of citizens on housing and community development needs, including priority non-housing community development needs, the at least one of these hearings must be held before the proposed consolidated plan is published for comment.
 - b. Development of proposed projects, and
 - c. Review of program performance.
2. If a hearing is scheduled as part of a City Council meeting, a notice of the public hearing will be included in the City Council agenda which will also be posted by the City Secretary 72 hours prior to the meeting date.
3. Public hearings will be held at times and location convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, and with accommodation for persons with disabilities.
 - a. The City will insure that meeting locations are centrally located, accessible by both private and public transportation, and present no barriers to persons with disabilities.
 - b. Upon timely notice (at least 72 hours), City staff will make special arrangements for persons who are hearing impaired or have a special need.
 - c. The City shall ensure that non-English speaking residents be presented with an opportunity to participate and comment in public hearings by conducting, upon request, the hearing in Spanish.

4. Additional public hearings can and will be held upon the request of City Council and/or concerned citizen requests to City Council.
 5. The City shall ensure that public meetings be held in neighborhoods that are in CDBG target areas in order to obtain citizen's views and to respond to proposals and questions.
 6. Advertisement of public meetings shall be made both in English and Spanish in order to afford non-English speakers an opportunity to be aware of public meetings. Advertisements will be in the local newspaper of greatest circulation at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the meeting in order to provide timely notice to neighborhood residents.
 7. As appropriate, press releases will be issued through TV, to announce special scheduled meetings.
 8. As appropriate, flyers noting a neighborhood meeting's purpose and scheduled time shall be distributed at locations frequented by affected residents (i.e. neighborhood schools, recreation centers, housing authority, etc...)
 9. The Public Access Channel shall be utilized to broadcast information about Consolidated Plan meetings, etc... in both English and Spanish.
- B. The intended use of the Community Development Block Grant Program, the HOME Investment Partnership Program, and the Emergency Shelter/Solutions Grant and other applicable HUD program funds will be publicized by and through:
1. Public Hearing. Prior to the request by staff that City Council approve the proposed Consolidated Plan, a hearing will be held, and the specific projects proposed to be carried out will be identified.
 2. Neighborhood meetings. Residents will be encouraged to attend and learn of the proposed and ongoing activities of the City, including the projects/programs funded and proposed to be funded through CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs, at neighborhood meetings held prior to the start of the fiscal year.
 3. City Council Budget Hearings. Proposed CDBG, ESG, and HOME budgets are discussed at City Council Budget Hearings, which are held approximately 60 days prior to the start of the new fiscal year. They are open to the public.

VIII. AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC

- A. City Council meetings will be aired through the Public Access Channel for the purpose of allowing all residents of the community to be informed of City Council Action.

1. The Consolidated Plan, as adopted, substantial amendments, and the annual performance report, shall be available to the public, including the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request, at the offices of the Department of Community Development.
2. It is the City's policy that all information required to be made public by the Texas Open Records Act, be made available for public review in accordance with Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. The City of Laredo will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the City's Consolidated Plan, and the City's use of assistance under the programs covered by 24 CFR 91 during the preceding 5 years.

IX. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical Assistance shall be provided to groups representing persons of low and moderate income that request assistance in developing proposals, be it for CDBG, HOME, ESG or other projects covered under the Consolidated Plan.

- A. City staff shall meet with group representatives informally as well as formally, to discuss program needs and provide guidance as applicable.
- B. City staff shall coordinate with other City Departments to ascertain information needed and/or requested by group representatives.

X. COMPLAINTS

- A. The City of Laredo maintains an Open Door Policy and encourages citizens to express their needs and issues of concern. All grievances shall be addressed in a courteous and timely manner.
- B. Oral complaints will be addressed by the staff person receiving the complaint. If the complaint is not addressed to the satisfaction of the complainant, then the concern will be referred to the staff person's supervisor. If the complainant is still not satisfied, then the concern will be addressed by the Community Development Director. The nature of the complaint will be documented for further reference in the 311 Customer Service system or other complaint documentation system, as appropriate.
- C. Written complaints will be addressed through a formal written response. Staff will respond to such complaints in writing within 15 working days after having received the complaint.

XI. NEEDS OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING RESIDENTS

City staff will accommodate the needs of non-English speaking residents to insure their participation.

- A. Newspaper notices regarding all HUD funded activities administered by the City, substantial amendments, and performance reports will be published both in English and in Spanish.
- B. Depending on the needs of the residents in attendance, staff will insure that public hearings are conducted in English and/or Spanish, as appropriate.
- C. Public comments will be received both in English and in Spanish during City Council meetings where the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments, and the performance report are discussed.

XI. OTHER

- A. The City of Laredo reserves the right to amend its Citizen Participation Plan as it relates to the Community Development Block Grant Program, as necessary, in order to meet the needs of citizens of the community and changes in program requirements.
- B. Following City Council's approval of the amended Citizen Participation Plan, the City of Laredo is responsible for adhering to the citizen participation policies and procedures, as noted, in regard to the development and submission of the Consolidated Plan, Substantial Amendments, and Performance Report.
- C. The Citizen Participation Plan, as amended, does not restrict the responsibility or authority of the jurisdiction for the development and execution of the Consolidated Plan.