

City of Escondido

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Citizen participation is a priority for the City of Escondido. The City of Escondido receives an annual entitlement of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for housing and community development activities to assist low-income persons. In accordance with the Grant, the City must create a 5-Year Consolidated Plan (Consolidated Plan) that addresses affordable housing and community development needs, submit an Annual Action Plan (Annual Plan) to outline spending and activities for the corresponding program years, and provide a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to evaluate the City's accomplishments and use of CDBG, HOME and ESG funds as well conduct an Assessment of Fair Housing every five years.

The following Citizen Participate Plan (CPP) meets HUD standards for:

- Involvement of community members in the public participation process, including public hearings and public comment periods
- Opportunities for involvement of affected persons and other concerned citizens in the planning process
- Transparency of the planning process and freedom of access to the draft Plan
- Public's submission of comments and the standards for the grantee's response
- Continuity of participation throughout all stages of the Plan's development.

Objectives

The primary goal of the CPP is to solicit views and recommendations from members of the community, organizations, and other interested parties and to incorporate the views and recommendations in the decision making process. To accomplish this goal, the CPP mandates that the City will:

- Encourage participation from residents in the development and preparation of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Plan, Assessment of Fair Housing, substantial amendments to these plans, and the CAPER.
- Encourage the involvement by low and moderate income persons, particularly those who reside in CDBG-eligible neighborhoods, areas designated for revitalization, areas designated as a slum and blighted, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, Non-English speaking and limited English proficient (LEP) persons, and residents of public and assisted housing developments in the development of the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing.
- Encourage participation from Continuums of Care, businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, community-based and faith based organizations, resident advisory boards, resident councils, and resident

management corporations during the development and implementation of the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing.

- Provide residents reasonable and timely access to information, meetings, and records.
- Provide residents the opportunity to review, offer input and feedback regarding the use of CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds and the Assessment of Fair Housing, and comment on the CAPER.
- Provide assistance for non-English-speaking and LEP persons upon advance request, provided such services are available.
- Use comprehensive techniques to encourage and measure public participation and review program performance.
- Reasonable accommodations will be provided for those with disabilities upon advance request.

Reviews/Recommendations

Staff reviews proposals and make recommendations to the City Council concerning funding for social services, affordable housing projects, homeless initiatives, and capital improvement projects. City Council meetings are open to the public and available for viewing on the City website. City Council agendas are posted 72 hours prior to a meeting and available on the City's website and at City Hall, 201 N. Broadway.

During the Development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Plans, and Assessments of Fair Housing:

- The City will make a concerted effort to notify residents, social service providers, business groups, nonprofit organizations, community and faith-based organizations, community boards and other interested parties of the development of the Consolidated/Annual Plans, and Assessment of Fair Housing through mailings, including electronic mail, online postings, and newspaper notices.
- The City will issue a Notice of Funding Availability/Request for Proposals inviting proposals for CDBG, HOME and ESG activities. Upon request, the City will provide technical assistance to groups representing low-moderate income persons to develop proposals for eligible activities and comment on the Assessment of Fair Housing.
- The City will make available any HUD-provided data and other supplemental information the grantee plans to incorporate into its Assessment of Fair Housing at the start of the public participation process (or as soon as feasible after).

- Prior to adoption of the Plan(s), the City will make available the estimated amount of CDBG, HOME, and ESG funding that it expects to receive, the activities that may be undertaken, the estimated amount of funds that will be used to benefit low-moderate income persons, and any activities that may result in displacement.
- The City will publish a summary of the proposed Plan(s) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing in the newspaper and have it available on the City's website for a period of ten days prior to a public meeting. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Plan(s) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing and include a list of the locations where they may be examined. The Plan(s) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing will be available for review at Escondido City Hall, on the City's website, and at the Escondido Public Library. The City will provide a reasonable number of free copies to citizens and groups upon request.

Public Hearings

- The City will conduct at least two public hearings each year to obtain residents' views regarding housing and community development needs, proposed allocation of CDBG and ESG funds, strategies and actions taken to affirmatively further fair housing, and approve program/funding activities. The City will conduct at least one public hearing each year regarding the proposed allocation of HOME funds. HOME funds will be conditionally committed to an affordable housing development only after a public hearing to discuss the project.
- The City will conduct at least one public hearing during the development of the Assessment of Fair Housing prior to publishing the Assessment of Fair Housing for public comment. The public hearing must be held prior to formulating the Consolidated Plan.
- The City will conduct at least one public hearing during the development of the Consolidated Plan prior to publishing the Consolidated Plan for public comment.
- The City will receive and consider comments concerning the Plan(s) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing for period of not less than 30 days. All comments received, in writing or orally at a public meeting, will be considered in preparing the final Plan(s) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing. A summary of the comments or views, including those not accepted and the reasons, shall be attached to the final Plan(s) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing
- Public notices, excluding the CAPER, will be published at least ten days prior to a hearing. Notices will include the date, time, location, and summary of the proposed action to help facilitate informed comments. Notices will be published in the newspaper and announced on the City's website.

Amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Plans, and Assessments of Fair Housing

The City will amend its approved Plan(s) whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

- To carry out an activity not previously described in the Annual Plan using funds covered by the Consolidated Plan, including program income.
- To substantially amend the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.
- To substantially amend the allocation priorities or the method of distributing funds.

A substantial amendment is defined as the following:

- An addition, modification, or elimination of a Consolidated Plan goal;
- An addition of a new activity not previously identified in the Annual Plan; or
- A change that affects the funding level of more than \$25,000 for projects budgeted at \$100,000 or less, or greater than 25 percent of projects budgeted at more than \$100,000

Substantial amendments must be authorized by the City Council and will be available on the City's website and through public notices in the newspaper. Minor changes and/or corrections may be made, so long as the changes do not constitute a substantial amendment. Minor changes, including but not limited to modifications of goal outcome indicators, shall not be considered a substantial amendment and do not require public review or a public hearing.

- The City will receive and consider comments concerning substantial amendments and/or Assessment of Fair Housing revisions for period of not less than 30 days. All comments received, in writing or orally at a public meeting, will be considered in preparing the final Plan(s) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing H. A summary of the comments or views, including those not accepted and the reasons, shall be attached to the final Plan(s) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing.
- Public notices will be published at least ten days prior to the hearing. Notices will include the date, time, location, and summary of the proposed action to help facilitate informed comments.

Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPERs)

The City will prepare an annual CAPER to evaluate the progress of the Consolidated Plan and to review accomplishments for the previous program year.

- A comment period of not less than 15-days will be provided. All comments received, in writing or orally, will be included in the final submission to HUD.

Access to Information and Records

- Any citizen, organization, or other interested party may submit written requests for information regarding the Consolidated Plan, Annual Plans, Assessment of Fair Housing, and CAPER, including the City's use of funds under the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs and the benefit to low-moderate income residents during the preceding five years.
- This Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, the current Annual Plan, the current Assessment of Fair Housing, the current CAPER, and any substantial amendments to these plans will be available for public review at City Hall, 201 N. Broadway and on the City's website.

Comment and Complaint Process

The City will consider any comments from citizens received in writing or orally at public hearings in preparing this Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, Annual Plans, CAPERs, Assessment of Fair Housing, and/or substantial amendments to these plans. A summary of all comments will be attached and submitted to HUD.

The City will respond to written complaints received relating to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Plans, Assessment of Fair Housing, CAPERs, and/or substantial amendments. Written complaints must describe the objection and provide contact information of the complainant. The City will respond to complaints within 15 working days of receiving the written complaint, acknowledging the letter and identifying a plan of action, if necessary.

Amendment for 2020 CARES Act Funding

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the City is amending the City's Citizen Participation Plan, to promote and support "social distancing" while continuing to offer the public an opportunity to provide valuable citizen input and insight into the policies and procedures of the Housing & Neighborhoods Services Division, particularly as it relates to the administration and implementation of its federal programs. The following process will be used to solicit citizen participation and input into any programmatic amendments necessary to quickly and effectively administer federal funding made available either directly or indirectly as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Effective May 20, 2020, consistent with the Mega-waiver issued by HUD on March 31, 2020, community input prior to drafting a substantial amendment to any plan will be waived, including but not limited to an approved consolidated plan or annual action plan concerning the proposed uses of CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds.
- Staff will prepare an amendment to any respective plan, where applicable, and the amendment shall include a discussion of the amount of assistance the state expects to receive, the range of activities it will undertake with this assistance, and, to the extent possible, the benefit to low and moderate income people of these proposed activities.
- The Amendment will be posted in a prominent place on the Neighborhood Services website, along with a notice identifying the availability of the amendment. The Notice will include the opportunity to provide electronic comment for a period of not less than five days and information on participation in a "virtual public hearing". As part of the Notice, the state will provide information on how citizens
- Any comments received either at the virtual public hearing or during the public comment period will be considered by the agency before the final amended action plan is submitted to HUD. A summary of the comments and the agency's responses will be an attachment to the final amended action plan.
- The procedures and actions discussed above will constitute the state's citizen participation plan for any substantial amendments, which may need to be made in the course of the program year. A "substantial amendment" to the plan is one which implements a change the use and/or method of distributing those funds.
- This amended citizen participation plan will itself be made available to the public for a five-day public comment period prior to implementation, and any interest groups may review and comment accordingly.