



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

for Consolidated and Annual Plan strategy and plan submission and program public input requirements for Housing and Community Development programs; HUD programs; and DRU programs

- A. **General.** In the development and subsequent amendments to the City of Slidell Consolidated and Annual Plan, along with the submission of annual performance and action reports and general CDBG programming, this Citizen Participation Plan shall be the policy document to be followed in ensuring adequate citizen participation.
- B. **Purpose and Objectives.** The purpose and objectives of this citizen participation plan are:
1. **Participation.** Provide for and encourage citizen participation, with particular emphasis on participation by persons of low and moderate income citizens who are the primary clients for the City of Slidell HUD programs, as well as minorities, non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities, residents of public and assisted housing developments, and recipients of tenant-based assistance in all stages of the process;
 2. **Access to Information.** Provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to information regarding local meetings and records related to the development of public policies and strategies concerning housing and community development activities, the amount of assistance the City of Slidell expects 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;
 3. **Anti-Displacement.** Identify the plans of the City of Slidell to minimize the displacement of persons and the type and level of assistance that will be provided to any displaced person(s); and, the manner in which information regarding displacement will be disseminated to the public. The City of Slidell will make every effort to avoid the displacement of any resident in the implementation of its housing and community development activities. The level and type of displacement assistance shall be determined by the Planning/CDBG Director of the City of Slidell and based upon the specific need of the individual or group; document displacement scenarios that may be of emergency nature or non-emergency.
 4. **Publishing the policies and the Plans.** Provide for the procedures to be followed in publishing the proposed Consolidated Plan or Annual Plan or a summary of such Plans or qualified amendments, so that affected citizens have sufficient opportunity to review it and provide comments;
 5. **Public Hearings.** Provide for the number of hearings and when public hearings are to be conducted during the program year so as to obtain citizens' views and respond to proposals and questions regarding the housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and program performance;

- i. Identify how the needs of non-English speaking residents will be met in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate;
 6. **Access to Meetings.** Provide for procedures to be followed to ensure reasonable and timely access to meetings;
 7. **Comments.** Provide for a period of not less than thirty (30) days, prior to the submission of the Consolidated or Annual Plan to consider the views of citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties in preparing the City of Slidell's final plan or consolidated submission;
 8. **Substantial Amendments.** Specify the criteria the City of Slidell will use for determining what changes in its planned or actual activities constitute a substantial amendment to the consolidated plan and how citizen comments will be properly afforded in the final decision for amendments to be made;
 9. **Performance Reports.** Provide citizens with reasonable notice and opportunity comment on performance reports, called CAPER reports.
 10. **Availability to the Public.** Provide how the City of Slidell will ensure that the consolidated plan as adopted, substantial amendments, and the performance report will be made available to the public, including the availability of the materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request;
 11. **Technical Assistance.** Provide technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that requests such assistance in developing proposals addressing housing and community development activities;
 12. **Complaints.** Provide procedures to handle complaints from citizens related to the consolidated plan, plan amendments, and performance reports.
 13. **Amendments.** Specify procedures by which citizens will have reasonable notice of and opportunity to comment on a substantial change in the proposed use of funds prior to submission.
 14. **Disaster Response and Emergency Preparedness.** To specify emergency procedures in the event of a local, state and/or national natural disaster or emergency.
- C. **General Procedures.** The City of Slidell, through the implementation of its Consolidated Plan or amendment, and in the submission of the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) will:
1. Make available to the citizens, public agencies and other interested parties of the City of Slidell, information concerning the amount of assistance the City of Slidell expects to receive (including grant funds and program income); the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income;
 2. Make the proposed Annual Plan and Consolidated Plan available to the public by publishing a summary of the plan in the Official Journal, and by providing copies of the entire Consolidated Plan to the library, municipal offices, and other appropriate public agencies;

- i. The length of time provided for affected citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties to examine its content and submit comments on the proposed Annual Plan or Consolidated Plan will be at least thirty (30) days prior to submission of the document to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
3. Make the Annual Action Plan and/or substantial amendment to the City of Slidell's Consolidated or Annual Plan available to the public by publishing a summary in the Official Journal, and by providing copies to the municipal offices, and other appropriate public places.
 - i. The length of time provided for affected citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties to examine its content and submit comments on the proposed Annual Action Plan and/or substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan will be at least thirty (30) days prior to submission of the document to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 - ii. The length of time provided for affected citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties to examine its content and submit comments on the proposed CAPER Plan will be at least fifteen (15) days prior to submission of the document to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
4. For Consolidated or Annual Plans, conduct at least two (2) public hearings per year per year, to provide an opportunity for citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties to suggest projects, comment on, and respond to, recommendations and issues regarding housing and community development needs of the City of Slidell and the information going into the plans or being sent to HUD.

At least one (1) public hearing will be held during the development of the Annual Plan or Consolidated Plan in order to obtain the view of citizens on the housing and community development needs. At least one (1) hearing must be held before the proposed Annual Plan or Consolidated Plan is published for comment. Together, these public hearings must address housing and community development needs, proposed project or activity budgets, development of proposed activities, and a review of program performance.

5. Provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the City of Slidell and its use of assistance under the program covered by the Consolidated or Annual Plan during the preceding five (5) years.
 - i. Make available to interested citizens the Consolidated or Annual Plan, as adopted, substantial amendments, and performance reports, including information regarding the availability of materials in forms accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. To the extent of practical, all requests for information will be properly answered within fifteen (15) days from the date the request is made. Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodation to access information must contact the City to discuss their particular needs. The City will fulfill all requests for reasonable accommodations.
 - ii. Consider any comments or views of citizens. A summary of these comments or views will be attached to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments, and/or the CAPER.
 - iii. Ensure that the official Consolidated or Annual Plan, CAPER, any amendments thereto, and all required reports are available to the public for review, upon request.

6. For the duration of the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic and in accordance with guidance from HUD,
 - i. The public comment period will be noticed and shall be for a five (5) day period for comments on the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan Amendments. The 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and Citizen Participation Plan.
 - ii. Reasonable Notice and opportunity for comment will be provided;
 - iii. Reasonable Notice for public hearings will be provided;
 - iv. The requirement to hold in-person public hearings is suspended to allow for virtual public hearings in order to comply with social gathering requirements.

D. Scheduling and Providing Notices of Public Hearings.

Adequate notice shall be given for all public hearings. The public hearings shall be scheduled early in the planning process to ensure adequate public participation and allow sufficient time to develop the Annual Plan, Consolidated Plan and all other required reports.

1. The City of Slidell shall publish in the Official Journal, a minimum of 10 days prior to the date of each public hearing, a legal or non-legal advertisement stipulating the location, time, and purpose of the public hearing. The location of the public hearing shall be convenient to potential and/or actual beneficiaries and have accommodations for persons with disabilities. (see item F4 below for exceptions during urgent need situations)
2. Citizens, with particular emphasis on persons of low and moderate income who are residents of slum and blighted areas, shall be encouraged to submit their views and proposals regarding housing and community development needs. Through the public notice, citizens shall be made aware of reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, as well as where they may submit their views and proposals should they be unable to attend the public hearing.
3. Where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate in the public hearings, an interpreter shall be present to accommodate the needs of the non-English speaking residents.
4. Reasonable accommodations shall be made to meet the needs of any persons with a disability who notify the Community Action Agency of the City of Slidell of intentions to participate in the public hearings.
5. Minutes of all public hearings and an attendance roster shall be kept.

- E. Technical Assistance.** When requested, the City of Slidell, through its Planning Department or other appropriate office or organization, shall provide technical assistance to facilitate citizen's participation, particularly to groups or representative of persons of low to moderate income. The level and type of technical assistance shall be determined by the Planning Director and based upon the specific needs of the individual or group.

- F. Amendments.** The City of Slidell shall involve citizens in substantial amendments (i.e.: removal of, or adding new projects or activities to the Plan, or making budget changes that exceed 10% of the annual HUD CDBG allocation) to the Annual or Consolidated Plan or adopted CDBG budget. (Budget

revisions of less than 10% of the annual allocation and not involving new activities or projects, do not require amendments or public notice).

1. Citizen Participation shall be accomplished by means of a publicized notice to obtain citizens' views prior to the submission of a request for an amendment to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Plan or their budgets. Only substantial amendments will require a public hearing. Minor amendments or budget revisions less than 10% and not including a new activity or project, will require only a posted public notice at the Slidell CDBG-Planning office. Reasonable notice and opportunity for public hearings and comment must be provided.
2. The procedures for scheduling and providing notice of the public hearing for substantial amendments shall conform to provisions set forth in Section D.
3. Minutes of the hearing and a roster of those in attendance shall be included with the amendment request.
4. Where the Mayor or Council deem an activity an emergency or urgent need negatively impacting the health and/or safety or residents or structure, and the may impact CDBG funding, the City may temporarily forgo the required public notice requirement, but must afterwards document their actions and decisions in a public notice and give the public an opportunity to respond, make comments, or ask questions.

G. **Annual Action Plan.** The City of Slidell shall follow the procedures for publication, distribution, and allowance for public review and comments of the Annual Action Plan, as stipulated in Section D.

H. **Complaint Procedures.** The City of Slidell shall maintain a written citizen and administrative complaint procedure, all written citizen complaints which identify deficiencies relative to the implementation of the City of Slidell's Consolidated Plan will merit careful and prompt consideration, and will be handled according to the procedures set forth herein. Questions and comments on the City level should be directed to CDBG, c/o Planning Department, P. O. Box 828, Slidell, Louisiana 70459, by calling 985-646-4320 or by emailing cdbg@cityofslidell.org. Individuals who wish to object to any aspect of the Consolidated or Annual Plan, CAPER, and/or any other required report may file an official complaint on the forms furnished by the City Planning Department for the City of Slidell.

1. Within three (3) business days of the date on which the complaint was received by the Slidell Planning Department, the Planning Director shall forward the complaint along with her comments, to the Mayor (see Exhibit A, "Complaint Form").
2. A copy of the written complaint shall be forwarded to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 500 Poydras Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130, within three (3) days of the date on which the complaint was filed with the City of Slidell.
3. All good faith attempts will be made to satisfactorily resolve any complaints at the local level.
4. A written response from the City of Slidell Planning Director or Mayor to the complainant will be made within fifteen (15) days, where practical, from the date on which the complaint was filed with the City

5. A copy of the response from the City of Slidell, and any other correspondence relating to the same, shall be forwarded to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Section, 500 Poydras Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130.
6. The complainant shall be made aware that, if he or she is not satisfied with the response, a written complaint may be filed with the Community Development section of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 500 Poydras Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130.
7. Persons wishing to object to the approval of the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments, and/or an Annual Action Plan, filed by the City of Slidell may make such objection known to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will consider objections made only on the following grounds:
 - i. The City's description of needs and objectives are plainly inconsistent with the available facts and data;
 - ii. The activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the City, and;
 - iii. The Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments, and/or Annual Action Plan do not comply with the requirements set forth in the Final Statement or other applicable laws and regulations.
- I. **Objections.** Such objections should include both an identification of the requirements not met and, in the case of objections relative to sub-paragraph (I) above, the complainant must supply the information upon which he or she relied to support the objection.
- J. **Disaster or Emergency Relief.** In the event of a local, state, and/or national natural disaster or emergency, existing and new funding may be allocated or re-allocated in an expedited timeframe to streamline the allocation process and reduce delays in accessing grant funds. The citizen participation requirement will be followed for substantial amendments per HUD notices, waivers, award letters or other HUD communication to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s). When necessary, the requirement to hold in-person public hearings will be suspended to allow for virtual public hearings. Reasonable notice and opportunity for public hearings and comment will be provided.


G. G. Cromer, Mayor

10/20/2020

Date