



Citizen Participation Plan

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Prepared BY:

**Housing and Community Initiatives Division
30 South Nevada Avenue, Suite 604
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
Phone (719) 385-5912
Fax (719) 385-5475**

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Citizen Participation Plan (“the Plan”) sets forth the City’s policies and procedures by which it encourages local citizens to participate and comment on various housing and community development activities funded through federally funded programs. The programs include the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), and the Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG).

The primary purpose of these programs is to improve communities by providing decent housing; a suitable living environment; and growing economic opportunities. All activities principally benefit low- and moderate- income people.

The Plan was prepared in accordance with Section 104(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. The 24 CFR 91.105 federal regulations outline the “citizen participation” requirements. This document has been established in order for the City of Colorado Springs to be in conformance with the requirements of the regulations.

The Citizen Participation Plan relates 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 changes 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 changes meet 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

ENCOURAGING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Plan provides for and encourages citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated or Annual Action Plans, and the performance report. The City strives to exceed the minimum requirements set forth in regulation by consulting with stakeholders throughout the planning process as well as hosting required public hearings. Citizen Participation activities are documented in the Annual Action Plan. In summary, this Plan

- Provides for and encourages citizen participation with particular emphasis on participation by persons who are residents of slum and blighted areas, and/or in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods or targeted revitalization areas as defined by the City;
- Provides for and encourages citizen participation by people with disabilities, including providing a copy of the Plan in a format accessible to people with disabilities, upon request;
- Provides for and encourages citizen participation by all City citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, and identifies how the needs of non-English speaking residents will be met in the case of public hearings where non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate;
- Provides citizens with reasonable and timely notification and access to local meetings, information, and records relating to the City's proposed and actual use of federal Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Funds and Emergency Solutions Grant funds;
- Provides for technical assistance to groups and organizations representing persons of low- and moderate-income that request such assistance in developing proposals with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the City;
- Provides for public hearings to obtain citizen views, respond to proposals and questions at all stages of the community development program, including at least the development of needs, a review of proposed activities, and a review of the programs' annual performance. The public hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and with accommodations for people with disabilities;
- Provides for a timely written response to written complaints and grievances where applicable;
- Consultations, direct mailings and other contact with local and regional organizations, assisted housing providers, public housing agencies, social service agencies, and advocacy groups, as well as their beneficiaries, will be utilized to encourage further participation.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The City's Housing and Community Initiatives Division will, at a minimum, convene two public hearings to be conducted during the development of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions.

The first public hearing will be held prior to the development of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan for the purpose of soliciting public comment on the affordable housing and community development needs in the City. In addition, the City may hold additional public meetings in various neighborhoods throughout Colorado Springs for the same purpose.

The second public hearing will be held during the 30-day public comment period and prior to submission to HUD.

First Public Hearing

The City will hold the first Public Hearing to obtain citizen views on community development and affordable housing needs and to provide citizens important program information as part of the planning process for the coming program year or years. At the Public Hearing the following information will be made available:

- The amount of HUD entitlement grant, program income, and other funds that are reasonably expected to be available during the program year;
- The range of eligible activities that may be undertaken with CDBG, HOME and ESG funds;
- The estimated amount of those funds to be used for activities that will benefit low- and moderate-income persons;
- A description of CDBG, HOME and ESG activities likely to result in displacement, plans for minimizing such displacement, and the type and level of assistance that will be made available to persons displaced;

Second Public Hearing

Once drafted and before the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan is adopted, the document(s) will be made available publicly for a comment period no less than 30 days. The second public hearing will be conducted during the 30-day comment period to gather comments on the proposed plan. A summary of the written comments received shall be attached to final Consolidated Plan or Annual Plan.

NOTICE

Public Hearings

Advanced notice will be given with enough time for the public to take informed action. A formal public notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the area at least fifteen (15) days prior to such public hearings, and notice will be posted on the City of Colorado Springs website at www.coloradosprings.gov/housing. Additional public notice may include press releases and public service announcements and distribution via email.

Other Public Meetings

In addition to the required Public Hearings, the City will host meetings with stakeholders with particular emphasis on participation by special needs populations and by persons who are residents of slum and blighted areas and/or low- and moderate-income neighborhoods or geographic priority areas as defined by the City. Public meetings will be advertised with full and timely notice through local channels such as email, direct mail and newsletters, but are not required to meet the Public Notice requirements for publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Colorado Sunshine Law

To meet the requirements of the Colorado Sunshine Law (CRS 24-6-402), all meetings where three or more members of a local public body may be in attendance will be posted in the Office of the City Clerk, 30 S. Nevada Avenue, not less than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

PLAN APPROVAL

The draft Five-Year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan will be presented to City Council for approval before it is submitted to HUD.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The City of Colorado Springs will prepare a performance report for submission to HUD on an annual basis which is due within ninety (90) days of the close of the program year. Before the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) is submitted to HUD, it will be made available for public review during a comment period of no less than 15 days. Citizens will be notified of the CAPER's availability through notification in a newspaper of general circulation. The notification will be published on the day the CAPER comment period begins. Comments will be considered from individuals and/or organizations received in writing. A summary of the written comments and a summary of those not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be included in the final CAPER document submitted to HUD.

CONSOLIDATED PLAN AND ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AMENDMENTS

The final Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action 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 Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan; or a change in the purpose, location, scope, or beneficiaries of an activity.

Substantial Amendments

Substantial amendment 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. 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). A summary of the written comments and a summary of those not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be included in the final document submitted to HUD. The following changes are considered substantial amendments:

- Increases or decrease by 50% or more than \$100,000 the amount allocated to an eligible activity of funding within the City's entitlement grant programs.
- Changes in activities proposed, beneficiaries or persons served.
- The proposed amendment deletes an activity described in the Consolidated Plan.
- The proposed amendment adds an activity not described in the Consolidation Plan.

Eligible Activities are allowable uses of the three federal funds (CDBG, ESG, and HOME) covered by the Citizen Participation Plan as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 24 Part 570.201 of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Non-substantial Amendments

Any proposed amendment(s) to the approved Consolidated Plan that does not meet the above definition of a substantial amendment will be approved by the Housing and Community Initiatives Manager. No public notifications, public hearings, and public body approvals are required in this CPP. 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.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

Amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan shall be made only after the public has been notified of the City's intent to amend the Plan. The public notice of the City's intent to amend the Plan shall be published no less than fifteen (15) days prior to a 30-day public comment and review period. The City may publish its intent to amend along with the proposed dates for the 30-day public comment and review period in a single public notice.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance may be requested in writing by neighborhood organizations, advisory groups, project area organizations, groups of low- and moderate-income persons and/or groups of residents of blighted neighborhoods/communities.

This assistance may be requested for the purposes of adequately participating in planning, implementing and assessing the programs, developing proposals for funding, and/or in carrying out CDBG/HOME/ESG Program activities. The level and type of necessary assistance will be determined by the City. If necessary, assistance will be provided by specialists selected by the City.

All written correspondence requesting technical assistance should be addressed to the Housing and Community Initiatives Division. All requests should specify the name of the group or organization, a contact person, the nature of technical assistance requested, immediate problems and the reason for the request.

RESIDENTIAL ANTI-DISPLACEMENT & RELOCATION PLAN

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 Initiatives Division is responsible for tracking the replacement of lower income housing and ensuring that it is provided within the required time period.

AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC

All public information related to the citizen participation plan, the five-year consolidated plan and/or annual plan, substantial amendments and performance report is available for review, during regular business hours, at the Housing and Community Initiatives Division, 30 South Nevada Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903 and on the City's website at www.coloradosprings.gov/housing.

The City also offers, to all non-speaking English persons and upon written request, translated versions of all public hearing notices. Non-English speaking persons who desire translated public notices should formally request these items from the Housing and Community Initiatives Division during regular business hours. This Citizen Participation Plan is currently printed in English and in Spanish.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Citizens, public agencies, and other interested groups will be given reasonable and timely access to the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments, the performance report, and other information and records regarding the Consolidated Plan and use of funding during the preceding five (5) years. Program records are available for citizen review at the Housing and Community Initiatives Division, 30 South Nevada Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903 and on the City's website at www.coloradosprings.gov/housing. Such documents include the following:

- The proposed and final five-year Consolidated Plan
- The proposed and final Annual Action Plans
- Substantial Amendments
- Performance Reports
- The Citizen Participation Plan

- Records of public hearings and public meetings

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Written complaints from the public about the City's citizen participation process, the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, any amendments and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report will receive careful consideration and will be answered in writing within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the complaint. If the complainant is unable to file a complaint due to disability, alternative filing methods will be allowed. Written complaints should be sent to the Housing and Community Initiatives Division:

- Via telephone at (719) 385-6609, TDY: 719-385-5499
- Through e-mail at aicox@springsgov.com
- In writing at 30 South Nevada Avenue, Suite 604, Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

SECTION 108 LOAN PROGRAM

Applications for assistance filed by the City for Section 108 loan guarantee assistance authorized under HUD regulation 24 CFR Part 570, Subpart M, are subject to all provisions set forth within the Citizen Participation Plan. Such applications for Section 108 loan guarantees may be included as part of the process for obtaining CDBG/HOME/ESG entitlement funds, or may be undertaken separately anytime during the program year. The required public hearing to inform citizens of program requirements will be carried out by the Housing and Community Initiatives Division.

We are pledged to the letter and spirit of U.S. policy for the achievement of equal housing opportunity throughout the Nation. We encourage and support an affirmative advertising and marketing program in which there are no barriers to obtaining housing because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

