

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
City of Portland
Bureau of Housing and Community Development

I. Overview

On behalf of the City of Portland, the Bureau of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) administers the following grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME, Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons With Aids (HOPWA). BHCD also participates in the planning of a formula grant available through the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Act and provides grant administration for HCD programs funded by the City's General Fund.

Each fund has different regulations, program requirements, and target populations. Federal grants are awarded to the City based on a formula that takes into account things such as number of households in poverty, age of housing stock, population and economic growth, and in the case of HOPWA, the number of reported cases of people with AIDS in the metropolitan area. The U.S. Congress appropriates federal grants annually so grant amounts may vary from year to year.

In the past before receiving federal entitlement grants, the City was required to submit to HUD a separate plan for how each grant would be spent. In 1994 HUD instituted a process that replaced the four previously separate planning processes with a single *Consolidated Plan*.

The *Consolidated Plan* is intended to establish a unified vision for community development that supports coordinated strategies that further the goals intended by Congress to: (1) provide decent housing; (2) provide a suitable living environment; and (3) expand economic opportunities.

Citizen participation is an integral component of the *Consolidated Plan* effort. People who are low-income or who live in low-income neighborhoods are important participants in the *Consolidated Plan* process.

The *Consolidated Plan* regulations require that the Bureau follow a detailed citizen participation plan that addresses the following elements: participation; access to meetings; access to information; access to records; publishing the plan; public hearings; notice of hearings; comments; technical assistance; complaints; and amendments.

Notwithstanding the Bureau's commitment to a meaningful citizen participation process, this plan recognizes that the City Council is the elected body that represents citizens and has the ultimate responsibility and authority for the implementation of the *Consolidated Plan* and all housing and community development programs.

II. Objectives of the Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Portland is committed to meaningful involvement of local citizens as planners, advisors, and partners in community development. This plan is intended to respond to the *Consolidated Plan* process. The Citizen Participation Plan describes the framework and process to be used to develop and implement the City of Portland's housing and community development program through the *Consolidated Plan* process. The objective of the Citizen Participation Plan is to encourage the involvement of all interested citizens, particularly low and moderate-income citizens, and residents of low and moderate-income areas in a participatory process. An evaluation of the *Consolidated Plan* process and this citizen participation plan will be the basis for review, and if necessary revision of the citizen participation process and structure.

III. Citizen Participation Structure

A. Bureau Advisory Committee (BAC)

The Bureau Advisory Committee (BAC) is a 15-member citizen panel convened to provide budget advice, assist in the development of performance measures for program areas, review annual performance at program area and contractor level, report biannually to the Housing and Community Development Commission (HCDC). The BAC represents underrepresented populations and low-income neighborhoods.

The formation of a citizen panel is not a city or federal requirement. The benefit of the BAC is that it is a focused, diversified group, representing low-income neighborhoods who assist the Bureau in budget allocations and program evaluation. The existence of the BAC is an important means of strengthening the input of citizens into the Bureau's activities.

B. Housing and Community Development Commission (HCDC)

The HCDC is an interjurisdictional commission made up of 15 citizens: nine appointed by the Portland City Council, three by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, and three by Gresham City Council. HCDC members are expected to provide a balanced citizen-based perspective that includes knowledge and expertise in housing development, finance, management, social services, community affairs, and consumer interests. In making appointments jurisdictions also take into account the income, racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the community.

HCDC members serve a term of three years. HCDC meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month, September through July, at 5:30 p.m. Meetings are usually held in the Portland Building, but once or twice a year are held in Gresham. In addition to regular monthly meetings of the full commission, HCDC has committees or *ad hoc* groups that work on special projects. Committees have both HCDC and non-HCDC members. The Portland appointees to the HCDC and BAC members may be asked to hold joint meetings or hearings. Generally, the HCDC focuses on broader policy and allocation issues that have countywide or regional significance, while the BAC is involved in more detailed budget review.

Responsibilities of the HCDC

- Provide policy advice to Cities of Portland and Gresham, and Multnomah County on housing and community development policies;
- Recommend the allocation of federal funds and other flexible funds that relate to housing; and
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of the housing delivery system by providing coordination among diverse public agencies.

C. Office of Neighborhood Involvement

The Bureau will coordinate its citizen participation efforts with the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI). ONI is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date address list for recognized neighborhood representatives that will be incorporated into the Bureau's mailing list. The ONI Coalition Offices will be the primary point of contact to exchange information on issues of citywide concern. Area specific coalitions and neighborhood associations will be the point of contact for policies or projects that may affect a particular area.

D. Community-Based Contractors

In carrying out HCD programs the Bureau contracts with organizations and agencies which carry out activities in neighborhoods. It is the Bureau's expectation that contractors will consult with neighborhood associations and other community groups as necessary.

E. Community/Neighborhood Plans

Community needs and strategies are developed through community and neighborhood plans developed with the assistance of the Bureau of Planning and/or the Bureau of Housing and Community Development. Citizen participation, particularly that of low-income individuals, is an essential part of the planning process. The Bureau will encourage the involvement of low-income individuals to participate in community and neighborhood planning efforts.

Adopted community and neighborhood plans will serve, as the basis for needs assessment, strategies and action plans for the HCD program. Not all neighborhoods needs or strategies meet the federal eligibility requirements or national objectives, but to the extent that prioritized activities are eligible activities that serve national objectives, the Bureau will consider them for funding.

F. Integrated/Target Area Strategies

There may be instances when the City embarks on a short-term focused investment strategy in a particular neighborhood to combat conditions of slum and blight, housing deterioration, economic stagnation, or public safety problems.

The Bureau will ensure that target area strategies are developed with the involvement of affected citizens.

G. Competitive Allocation Panels

When the Bureau sponsors competitive grant programs (e.g. Community Initiatives, Operating Support Program, etc.), it will ensure that citizens are involved in developing criteria and recommending funding awards to the Commissioner-in-Charge. If a competitive grant program is geographically based, the Bureau will recruit citizens that reflect the diversity of the specific geographic area to serve on an allocation panel. For all competitive allocation panels the Bureau will ensure that low-income citizens and/or interests are represented.

G. Other Citizen Commissions and Organizations

The City of Portland and Multnomah County have a commitment to citizen participation and involvement as evidenced by their appointment of citizens to numerous boards and commissions. As much as possible the Bureau will identify Boards and Commissions with mutual interests in aspects of the HCD program and solicit their input before making a substantial change in policy or programs.

Some of the Commissions that have interests in the HCD program are: the Portland Development Commission; the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families and Community Action; the City of Portland Planning Commission; the Portland-Multnomah County Commission on Aging; the City of Portland Energy and Environment Commission; the Housing Authority of Portland Board; and the Metropolitan Human Rights Commission. This is not an inclusive list, but an acknowledgement that there are existing structures for citizen involvement that will be taken into account to ensure coordination. The Bureau will not consult with every Board and Commission on every issue, but will seek input from citizens who may be involved in related policy or program development.

IV. Public Meetings and Hearings

There will be many opportunities for public involvement through meetings, workshops and hearings. At least two public hearings will be held to obtain views of citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties on housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and review of program performance.

The Bureau Advisory Committee (BAC) and/or the Housing and Community Development Commission may separately or jointly sponsor public hearings on behalf of the Bureau.

Public hearings will be conveniently timed and located so as to ensure the maximum participation by people who might or will benefit from program funds, including people with disabilities and minorities. When a significant number of non-English speaking residents are expected to participate, an interpreter or interpreters will be available.

In addition to required public hearings, the Bureau may use other alternative methods to encourage citizen participation. Public forums, surveys, focus groups, open houses, and workshops may be used to solicit citizen input.

All comments that have are received in writing or orally at the public hearings will be considered in the preparation of the final *Consolidated Plan*. A summary of these

comments will be attached to the final *Consolidated Plan*. If comments are not incorporated into the *Consolidated Plan*, the reasons shall be attached to the plan.

A. Public Notice Policy

City-wide public hearings shall have extensive public notice, including:

- ❑ notices in neighborhood newsletters;
- ❑ notices in the non-legal section of newspapers, including *The Oregonian*, *The Scanner*, *The Portland Observer*, *El Hispanic News*, *This Week*, and neighborhood newspapers;
- ❑ mailed notice to mailing list maintained by the Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

Generally, notice will be given 15 days in advance of the meetings.

B. Access to Information/Records

The Bureau shall ensure full public access to program information provided such information does not infringe upon any individual's rights. Upon request and given reasonable time to respond to requests, information will be available during normal working hours, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Bureau , 421 SW 6th, Suite 1100-A, 823-2375.

Examples of information available include the amount of funds available, prior and current year applications, prior and current year performance reports, copies of federal regulations, records of meetings and hearings, audits, and other key policy documents that influence the HCD program development. Records will be maintained for five years.

Copies of the Citizen Participation Plan, the *Consolidated Plan*, and any performance reports will be made available at no charge to citizens who request them. In addition, review copies will be made available at the Central Library.

C. Bilingual Opportunities

Upon reasonable request, or upon identification of a specific need, the Bureau will provide public notices and summaries of basic information in other languages. Also upon reasonable request, the City of Portland will provide translators at workshops and public hearings to facilitate participation of non-English speaking citizens. To arrange this service, please contact the Bureau at least 5 days prior to a scheduled meeting or workshop.

D. Hearing Impaired Opportunities

Upon reasonable request, the Bureau will provide "signing" translators. To arrange this service please contact the Bureau at least 5 days prior to the meeting at 823-2375.

E. Meeting Accessibility

The public hearings will be held in locations that are accessible to people with disabilities. All Bureau Advisory and Housing Community Development Commission meetings will be public meetings and will be held in wheelchair accessible locations.

V. Criteria for Substantial Amendment

A substantial change is defined as: (a) changing the amount budgeted for a project by 25%, plus or minus (unless a minus is merely the result of an underrun); (b) changing the purpose, scope, location, or intended beneficiaries or canceling or adding a new project. A minor change in location is NOT a substantial change, if the purpose, scope and intended beneficiaries remain essentially the same. Also, if capital dollars are simply used for a different portion of the project (e.g. rehabilitation rather than acquisition) this does not constitute a substantial change.

Prior to amending the Action Plan the City shall provide citizens with 30 days notice of and opportunity to comment on substantial amendment(s). All comments that have are received in writing or orally at the public hearings will be considered, and if deemed appropriate, the City shall modify the amendment(s). A summary of these, and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefore shall be attached to the substantial amendment(s) of the *Consolidated Plan*.

Amendments and substantial changes to the use of ESG and HOPWA funds may require review by other planning bodies since eligible activities and recipients are countywide (ESG) or multi-county (HOPWA).

VI. Complaint Procedure

Complaints, inquiries, and other grievances related to the Housing and Community Development (HCD) program can be made by writing to the Bureau of Housing and Community Development at 421 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97204, or by telephoning the Director of the Bureau of Housing and Community Development at 823-2375. Bureau staff will make every effort to provide a substantive written response to every written citizen complaint within fifteen days of its receipt.

VII. Technical Assistance

The Bureau will provide technical assistance as appropriate to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance for the preparation of grant applications to the Bureau or to HUD. Technical assistance may consist of workshops, one on one assistance, or information and referral. When the Bureau initiates a request for proposals it will provide a pre-application or bidders workshop to ensure that all organizations are aware of the opportunities and limits of the funding source. The Bureau's provision of technical assistance does not include the preparation of grant applications for individuals or organizations. The Bureau's provision of technical assistance will be limited by funds and staff availability.

The Consolidated Plan Process 1999- 2000

The *Consolidated Plan* process replaces existing requirements for planning and applying for funds under the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA programs. The following process conforms with HUD's regulations (1995).

November, 1998	Formation and first meeting of HCDC's McKinney Advisory Committee for the development of the Continuum of Care and prioritization of projects for submission of an application to HUD for McKinney funds
January, 1999	Public Hearing before HCDC on housing and community development needs and performance
End of February	Draft <i>Consolidated Plan</i> Available for 30 day public review and comment*
March	Public Hearing: City Council adopts budget for FY1999-2000
April	Public Hearing before HCDC on proposed <i>Consolidated Plan</i> and strategies
May	Public Hearing: City Council adoption of <i>Consolidated Plan</i> <i>Consolidated Plan</i> submitted to HUD (by May 15)
July	HCDC reviews McKinney Advisory Committee's recommendations and approves prioritized projects for the community's Consolidated Application to HUD for McKinney Homeless Assistance Funds after receiving public input
July 15	The availability of the Draft <i>Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report</i> , comment period, and September Public Hearing advertised*
September	Public Hearing on Draft <i>Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report</i> before HCDC
October	HCDC solicits public input and reviews the Citizen Participation Plan

A summary of the proposed *Consolidated Plan* submission as well as the Draft *Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report* will be published in one or more newspapers of general circulation. In addition to copies of the proposed plan that will be available at the Bureau, copies will be available at the Central Multnomah County Library, the Housing Authority of Portland, the City of Portland Bureau of Planning, and ONI Coalition Offices.