

CITY OF CHESTER

DRAFT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

ADOPTED DECEMBER 9, 2009

AMENDED MAY 13, 2015

I. Purpose

It is the purpose of this Citizen Participation Plan (Plan) to set forth how the citizens of the City of Chester may have a voice in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Federal Entitlement programs funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as specified in 24 CFR Part 91.105. These programs include the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), the Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG), and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA). As of the date of the adoption of this Amended Citizen Participation Plan, the City of Chester receives entitlement grants for the CDBG and HOME Programs.

Specifically, this Plan provides for and encourages citizens of the City of Chester, especially low to moderate income residents, to participate: 1) in the development of the five-year Consolidated Plan; 2) in the development of the Annual Action Plan; 3) in the development of any substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan; and 4) in the preparation of the Annual Performance Report.

This Plan is designed to serve the following specific purposes:

- A. To present in a logical sequence the various components of the Entitlement Programs.
- B. To identify the responsible departments or agencies of the City government who administer components of the Entitlement Programs.
- C. To clarify the opportunities which individual citizens, community organizations, and neighborhood groups will have to work with municipal officials in developing each part of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, from application development to program evaluation.
- D. To indicate the alternate courses of action which the Federal regulations make available to citizens and organizations.
- E. To act as a coordinating vehicle for citizen participation to be used by all agencies or officials responsible for various components of the City's Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans.

This Plan will discuss the components of the Plan development process in chronological order. For the most part, the language utilized will be simple, and technical jargon will be kept to a minimum. Any questions or comments on substantive issues or the adequacy of the Citizen Participation Plan should be referred to the Chester Economic Development Authority, Executive Director, 1 Fourth Street, P. O. Box 407, Chester, PA 19016, Phone (610) 447-7853 or e-mail ceda@ceda.cc. CEDA may also be reached through the Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service as follows:

Dial 7-1-1
TTY Users: 1-800-654-5984
Voice Users: 1-800-654-5988

II. Mechanisms for Development of Citizen Participation

- A. On behalf of the City of Chester, the Chester Economic Development Authority (CEDA) shall be responsible for the preparation of the Citizen Participation Plan including any revisions which may be appropriate at the time the City begins planning for each new funding program year.
- B. CEDA will provide City Council with a copy of the existing Citizen Participation Plan or with any proposed revisions at the start of the program funding cycle. City Council will announce its availability for public review and take any required actions on any proposed revisions in accordance with the provisions of the then governing Plan.
- C. CEDA will issue a notice/place an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation in the City concerning the availability of the Citizen Participation Plan. Efforts will be made to meet all requests for information from persons with limited English proficiency.
- D. Any individual citizen or organization submitting a written comment will receive a response from the City/CEDA indicating the actions taken concerning the comment and the decision made with respect to that comment. Correspondence should be addressed to Chester Economic Development Authority, 1 Fourth Street, P. O. Box 407, Chester, PA 19016.
- E. To accommodate non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities, material on the programs covered by the Plan shall be made available in alternate formats, upon request. Each publication on the programs covered by the Plan shall include the above statement so that affected citizens may request information in a format that they can understand.
- F. The City shall make use of its website to provide information on the Plan. Advertisements for public comment, public hearings, and availability of program

documents or benefits shall be published on the website at www.chestercity.com. CEDA will also publish the same information on its website at www.ceda.cc.

III. Consolidated Plan/Annual Plan Process

A. Purpose of Consolidated Plan

HUD has established regulations and procedures for applying for entitlement funds with a Rule that consolidated into a single submission the planning and applications aspects of the CDBG, HOME, ESG and HOPWA programs. This submission includes a five-year Consolidated Plan and an Annual Action Plan. The Rule also consolidates the reporting requirements for these programs into a document referred to as the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

The Consolidated Plan serves the following functions: (1) A planning document for communities, which builds on a community participation process at the lowest levels; (2) An application for federal funds under HUD's formula grant programs; and (3) A strategy to be followed in administering HUD programs.

The Consolidated Plan includes estimated housing and non-housing needs projected for the ensuing five-year period. The Annual Action Plan describes the City's intended use of the entitlement funding to be received for a particular fiscal year.

B. Development of the Annual Action Plan Application

1. Provision of Adequate Information

At the time that the City initiates the preparation of the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan for a new program year, a package of information will be compiled by CEDA for reference by citizens, public agencies or other organizations. This information will include:

- a. The total amount of entitlement funds to be made available to the City (or an estimate if that information has not been made available by HUD at the initiation of the Annual Action Plan process).
- b. The range of activities that may be undertaken with the entitlement funds anticipated to be available to the City and the kinds of activities which were previously funded and are still eligible under Federal regulations for the programs covered by this Plan.

- c. An estimate of the amount of the entitlement funds that will be used to benefit low to moderate income residents.
- d. The types of activities ineligible under Federal regulations covered by this Plan.
- e. The process to be followed in preparing and approving the application to HUD for funds, including the tentative schedule of meetings and hearings.
- f. The Citizen Participation Plan.

This information will be reviewed at the initial public hearing and City residents and organizations, upon request, will be able to review this information during normal business hours at the office of the CEDA, 1 Fourth Street, P.O. Box 407, Chester, PA, on the City's website at www.chestercity.com or on CEDA's website at www.ceda.cc.

2. Provision of Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be provided to citizens and citizen organizations so that they may adequately participate in planning, implementing, and assisting Entitlement Program development and to groups of low and moderate income persons and groups of residents of blighted neighborhoods which request assistance in preparing proposals by staff personnel within the City. Technical assistance will consist of:

- a. Answering questions orally or in writing concerning the procedures and timetable for the preparation of entitlement program funding applications, the eligibility under Federal regulations of various types of proposals or other Federal regulations governing application development or program implementation.
- b. Provisions of available information and data which would pertain to or support the preparation of proposals for funding through the entitlement programs.

Citizens or organizations requiring technical assistance should contact CEDA, 1 Fourth Street, P.O. Box 407, Chester, PA 19016, phone (610) 447-7850. CEDA may also be reached through the Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service as listed in Section I. E. above.

3. Public Hearings

Public hearings will be another basic way by which City residents and organizations will be given an opportunity to obtain information on the Entitlement Programs and to provide input into the development of the programs and applications for these funds. The City of Chester will hold at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions. These hearings will be held at two different stages of the program planning process.

a. Initial Public Hearing

The purpose of this initial hearing is to obtain the views of citizens and local organizations regarding overall community development and housing needs in the City of Chester. Comments, recommendations or suggestions on specific ideas or projects will be encouraged.

The first hearing will also provide a summary of program requirements, answer questions about the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan process and direct citizens and groups as to the process for review of proposals of citizens and organizations at the initial stage of preparation of the program.

This hearing will typically be conducted by CEDA, on behalf of the City. The hearing will be held at a convenient time and location, typically at Chester City Hall in the evening after normal business hours.

Persons who are elderly or handicapped and who would otherwise be unable to attend may receive transportation to these meetings if such transportation can be arranged. Such persons should contact CEDA, 1 Fourth Street, P.O. Box 407, Chester, PA 19016, (610) 447-7850, or e-mail ceda@ceda.cc and request such assistance. Requests can also be made through the Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Center. CEDA will be charged with trying to arrange transportation and notifying the individual of the arrangements or the unavailability thereof. Generally, such request should be made at least two (2) working days prior to the hearing day.

Notice of the hearing will appear in the non-legal section of a newspaper of general circulation within the City. These notices shall be published at least fifteen (15) days prior to the public hearing.

In the event significant numbers of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to attend the initial public hearing, translation assistance will be provided so that they may participate effectively in the hearing.

b. Second Public Hearing

A second hearing will be undertaken when the draft application for funding has been prepared.

Upon completion of the proposed Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, the City shall publish the proposed Plan or summary of the Plan in sufficient time to permit citizens to comment on the Plan prior to its approval and adoption by the City Council. The notice will appear in the non-legal section of a paper of general circulation at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the adoption of the Plan and will indicate the locations at which the Plan will be made available for public review.

The second hearing will be conducted during the thirty-day review period of the proposed Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan. The notice of this second hearing may be combined with the notice of availability of the draft Plan(s). However, the notice must allow at least fifteen (15) days from the date of publication to the date of hearing.

This hearing will typically be conducted by CEDA, on behalf of the City.

Following the 30-day review period, the City Council will take formal action on the application and forward it to the appropriate funding agency.

In the event significant numbers of persons with limited English proficiency can reasonably be expected to attend public hearings, translation assistance will be provided so that they may participate effectively in the hearing.

c. Availability of Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan for public review

In order to provide an opportunity for the public to examine the contents of the proposed Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, it shall be available for review for a minimum thirty (30) day period.

Typically it will be available for review at the CEDA office, at the City Clerk's office in City Hall and at the J. Lewis Crozer Library, 620 Engle Street. The documents will also be available on the City's website and CEDA's website.

4. Acceptance of Written Comments, Proposals, or Recommendations:

At the time that planning begins for each year, organizations, residents, and other interested parties within the City will have the opportunity to submit comments, proposals, or recommendations on the housing and community development needs of the City.

Any comment, proposal or recommendation may be directed to the attention of CEDA, 1 Fourth Street, P.O. Box 407, Chester, PA 19016, phone (610) 447-7850, e-mail ceda@ceda.cc, or through the Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Center. At all times all written comments received will be sent a written response no later than fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt, setting forth the action taken or to be taken with respect to the comment, proposal, or recommendation. However, written statements which are intended to suggest modifications to the application can only be considered if they are received by the end of the thirty-day review period on the draft Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan.

5. Availability of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan

After the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plan have been adopted, the City shall publish a notice in a newspaper of general circulation indicating its content and availability. The Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan will be available on the City's website and on CEDA's website and will be made available in alternative formats accessible to persons with disabilities and persons of limited English proficiency upon request to CEDA.

C. Complaint Procedure:

Any individual or organization may choose to file a complaint concerning the City's entitlement programs. Complaints should be forwarded to CEDA, 1 Fourth Street, P.O. Box 407, Chester, PA 19016, or e-mailed to ceda@ceda.cc. The complaint should contain the following information:

1. The name and signature of the complainant, or if any organization has prepared the complaint, the name and signature of the officer of the organization authorized to speak for the organization regarding the complaint.

2. The address to which the City's response should be mailed.
3. A telephone number where the complaint or an individual knowledgeable about the substance of the complaint can be reached during daytime hours.
4. The nature of the complaint, including any relevant information or documentation.
5. A recommendation concerning how the complainant wishes to have the matter resolved.

CEDA will make every reasonable effort to provide a written response to a complaint within fifteen (15) days of its receipt. The City will indicate its position on the matter and the action it proposes to take. CEDA will not be obligated, however, to respond to any anonymous or fictitious complaints.

If CEDA's response does not resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the complainant, he or she, within two (2) weeks of the response by CEDA, may request a meeting with the appropriate City officials to resolve the problem. This meeting, whenever possible, shall be held within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the request for a meeting. Following such meeting the City shall notify the complainant of its proposed resolution within ten (10) working days of the date of the meeting. If the complainant feels that the response is still not satisfactory, the complainant may follow the procedure described in the following section.

D. Filing Objections with Federal Funding Agency

Individuals or organizations who have followed the procedure described above to resolve complaints may choose to file an official objection with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Philadelphia Regional Office, Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3390. Persons may choose to file a complaint directly with HUD and not follow the local complaint procedure established in Section III C. above. Following the local complaint procedures is not a prerequisite to filing an objection with HUD. However, citizens are encouraged to bring complaints first to the local level for resolution since HUD procedures require the City of Chester to respond to any complaint filed with HUD. Therefore, the best chance for immediate resolution to the problem rests at the City level.

E. Amendments To Consolidated Plan and Action Plan

1. Substantial Amendment to Consolidated Plan

A substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan means an amendment that changes the intent of the Plan by modifying adopted priority needs and implementation strategies. Substantial amendments require a public hearing and City Council approval. CEDA staff will provide recommendations for changes to the City Council. Written notices of City Council consideration of a substantial amendment shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation to provide a period, not less than thirty (30) days, to receive comments on the substantial amendment before City Council adoption. The proposed Substantial Amendment, along with a summary of any comments received, will be attached to the proposed Amendment to the Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD.

2. Minor Amendment to Consolidated Plan

A Minor Amendment is defined as an Amendment that changes the text of the Consolidated Plan to correct errors or changes to the text which will not modify the intent of the Plan by changing adopted priority needs and implementation strategies. CEDA will recommend all Minor Amendment changes to City Council for approval in accordance with HUD procedures.

3. Substantial Amendment to Action Plan

A Substantial Amendment means an amendment that changes approved programs based upon one of the following decisions:

- a. To make a change in an approved program that increases or decreases the cost of the approved activity by more than 50% or changes (increases or decreases) the service area and/or class of beneficiaries of an activity by more than 50%;
- b. To undertake an activity using funds from any entitlement program (including program income) which was not previously described in an approved Annual Action Plan;
- c. To change one eligible activity to another;
- d. To decide not to carry out an activity for which funding is approved;
- e. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

In such an instance, the City shall provide citizens with reasonable notice of an opportunity to comment on such proposed changes in the use of funds. The City will publish a notice in the non-legal section of a newspaper of general circulation in the City of the proposed program change and give interested or affected citizens at least thirty (30) calendar days to submit comments on the amendment. The City shall consider any such comments and, if the City deems appropriate, modify the amendment. The City will notify HUD of the proposal and provide a description of any changes as they

occur or at the end of the program year. A letter transmitting such description to HUD shall be signed by the Mayor of the City or his/her designee.

4. Minor Amendment to Action Plan

A Minor Amendment means any change to a project contained in an Annual Action Plan that does not meet the conditions for a substantial amendment. CEDA will have discretion to decide minor amendments to Annual Action Plans. Notwithstanding this authority, CEDA may refer a minor amendment to the Mayor or the Mayor's designee for approval.

F. Annual Performance Report

The City is required to file a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to HUD. The City will publish a notice of completion of the report in sufficient time to permit citizens to comment on the report prior to its submission to HUD. The CAPER will be made available in alternative formats accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request to the City. The notice will appear in a paper of general circulation in the City at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the submission of the report and will indicate the locations at which the report will be made available for public review. The City will consider any comments or views of citizens received during the public review period in preparing its CAPER. A summary of these comments will be attached to the CAPER.

G. Policy on Acquisition and Relocation

The City of Chester has adopted a Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan stating that the City will take every measure to minimize the displacement of persons or businesses. To the extent that such relocation activity is necessary, the City will have responsibility to insure that requirements are met for notification and provision of relocation assistance in accordance with applicable Federal regulations and guidelines.

H. Use of Plan

The City shall follow the Citizen Participation Plan for all covered entitlement program funding applications and amendments to the approved applications.

I. Citizen Participation Plan Modifications

This Citizen Participation Plan may be modified from time to time by the City provided such revisions are consistent with Federal and State law, regulations and administrative requirements covering citizen participation. Prior to any modification of the Citizen Participation Plan, the City will publish a notice of

modification of the plan in sufficient time to permit citizens to comment prior to approval by the City Council of the City of Chester. The notice shall be published in a local newspaper of general circulation at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the adoption of the modification by the City Council.

Any questions or comments on this Citizen Participation Plan or request for information should be directed to:

Chester Economic Development Authority
1 Fourth Street
P.O. Box 407
Chester, PA 19016
Phone (610) 447-7850
E-mail ceda@ceda.cc
Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay System:

Dial 7-1-1
TTY Users: 1-800-654-5984
Voice Users: 1-800-654-5988