



**Department of Community and Economic
Development**

City of Jonesboro

Citizen participation plan

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Introduction

This Citizen Participation Plan contains the City of Jonesboro's policies and procedures for public involvement in the Consolidated Plan process and the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money. The Plan provides for and encourages public participation, emphasizing involvement by low and moderate-income people. The City of Jonesboro also encourages participation of minorities, people who do not speak English, and people with disabilities.

The primary purpose of the CDBG program covered by this Citizen Participation Plan is to improve communities by providing: decent housing, a suitable living environment, and growing economic opportunities—principally for low and moderate income people.

Objective 1: Provide timely advance public notices about availability of required documents and public hearings.

Strategies

1. There shall be advance public notice once a federally required document is available, such as the Proposed Annual Action Plan or five-year Consolidated Plan, any proposed Substantial Amendment to the Action Plan or Consolidated Plan, and the Annual Performance Report. In addition, there shall be advance public notice, in conformance with the Arkansas Freedom of Information Law, of all public hearings and public information meetings relating to the funds or planning process covered by this Citizen Participation Plan.

Implementation

1. Public notice will be given in the following forms.
 - a. Public notices will be posted with the City Clerk and published in the *Jonesboro Sun* as an official notice to the newspaper and as display advertisements in a non-legal section of the paper.
 - b. Notice will also be given to organizations and agencies providing services and publishing newspapers and newsletters to lower income people and to any other news media having filed a written request for such notice.
 - c. Notices will also be posted on the City of Jonesboro's Community and Economic Development web site: www.jonesboroisgreat.com.
 - d. The notice will state the time, date, place and subject matter of the meeting. An agenda of items to be considered will also be included.

Objective 2: Provide reasonable and timely access to information and records.

Strategies

1. The City of Jonesboro will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the data or content of the Consolidated Plan, as well as the proposed and actual, and past use of funds covered by this Citizen Participation Plan. The public will be given reasonable access to records about any uses of these funds.

Implementation

1. Standard documents to be made available include:
 - a. The proposed and final Annual Action Plans.
 - b. The proposed and final five-year Strategic Plan (the "Consolidated Plan").
 - c. Proposed and final Substantial Amendments to either an Annual Action Plan or the five-year Strategic Plan.
 - d. Annual Performance Reports.
 - e. The Citizen Participation Plan
2. Copies of standard documents will be provided to the public at no cost and as soon as practicable without delay.
3. Standard documents will be available on the City of Jonesboro Department of Community Development web site: www.jonesboroisgreat.com.
4. Materials will be available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, when requested.
5. All other documents related to the Consolidated Plan process and the use of CDBG funds will be available to the public at the City of Jonesboro Community and Economic Development Department.

Objective 3: Hold public meetings and public hearings to obtain and respond to citizen views.

Strategies

1. Public hearings, to meet federal guideline requirements, will be used as an official forum for obtaining the public's views and to provide the public with the City's responses to public questions and proposals. Hearings will address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and review of program performance. At least one of these hearings will be held before the proposed Consolidated Plan is published for comment. Pertinent documents will be available from the City of Jonesboro Community and Economic Development Department at the time of the first published notice.

Public information meetings will be held at locations in various Participating Communities during the process to develop the three to five-year Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan. The purpose of the meetings will be to inform community residents—especially low and moderate-income residents—of the stages of the planning process (discussed below) and to solicit ideas, input and feedback.

Meetings and hearings will be noticed and conducted in conformance with the Arkansas Freedom of Information Law.

Implementation

1. Public hearings and public information meetings will be held at locations accessible to and times convenient to low and moderate income residents. In general this means they will be held during evening hours at locations such as community centers, libraries and schools.
2. Notice of public hearings and public information meetings will be given in accordance with implementation guidelines under Objective 1. For public hearings the display advertisement in the non-legal section of the *Jonesboro Sun* shall be published at least 14 days prior to the public hearing.
3. A reasonable attempt will be made to notify organizations representing low and moderate-income people and request that they provide their members and constituents with meeting notice and information.
4. Special arrangements to accommodate persons with disabilities and people who do not speak English will be made upon request. All public hearings will be held at locations accessible to people with disabilities.

Objective 4: Provide opportunities for citizen participation in all stages of the process

Strategies

Incorporate citizen participation and input into the following stages of the process:

- Identification of housing and economic/community development needs.
- Preparation of a draft new three to five-year Strategic Plan (the Consolidated Plan), and use of funds for the upcoming year, called the proposed Annual Action Plan.
- Formal approval by the Jonesboro City Council of a final three to five-year Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan.
- On occasion during the year, it might be necessary to change the use of the money already budgeted in an Annual Action Plan, or to change the priorities established in the three to five-year Strategic Plan. In that case, a formal Substantial Amendment will be proposed, considered, and acted upon.
- After a "program year" is complete, an Annual Performance Report must be drafted for public review and comment and then sent to HUD. The "program year" will be consistent with the city fiscal year (calendar year).

Implementation

1. Identifying Community Challenges, Needs and Strategic Objectives.
 - a. Community challenges, needs and strategic objectives will be developed in consultation with citizens and organizations representing citizens (especially low and moderate-income people) through local meetings, opportunity for written comment, posting on the City web site, and with local government elected officials that represent area residents.
 - b. Public hearings about needs will be completed before a draft Annual Action Plan is published for comment, so that the needs identified can be considered by the City and addressed in the draft Annual Action Plan.
2. The "Proposed" Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan
 - a. At the beginning of this stage, City of Jonesboro will provide the public with an estimate of the amount of CDBG funds it expects to receive in the upcoming year, along with a description of the range of types of activities that can be funded with these resources. Also, the public will be given an estimate of the amount of these funds that will be used in ways that will benefit low and moderate-income people.

- b. The plans of the City of Jonesboro to minimize the extent to which low and moderate-income people will have to move from their homes as a result of the use of these federal dollars (called "displacement") will also be available at this time. This "anti-displacement plan" will also describe how the City of Jonesboro will compensate people who are actually displaced as a result of the use of these funds, specifying the type and amount of compensation.
- c. City staff will work with organizations and individuals representative of low and moderate income people who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding for an activity. All potential applicants for funding are encouraged to contact City staff for technical assistance before completing a proposal form.
- d. The City of Jonesboro will notify the public that the Proposed Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan are available.
- e. Copies of the Proposed Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan will be made available to the public as soon as practicable and without delay. In addition, copies will be available at the locations specified above in the section, "Public Access to Information."
- f. So that low and moderate-income people can determine the degree to which they might be affected, they will be provided complete copies of the Proposed Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan, containing: All HUD-required sections, the HUD-required Priorities Table, and a written description of all proposed uses of CDBG. For the Annual Action Plan, this description shall include, at a minimum, the type of activity, its location, and the amount of federal money to be allocated to it.
- g. A public hearing about the Proposed Annual Action Plan will be conducted.
- h. In preparing a Final Annual Action Plan, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as oral testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. The Final Annual Action Plan will have a section that presents all comments and explains why any comments were not accepted.
- i. Copies of the Final Annual Action Plan and a summary of it will be made available to the public for free. In addition, copies will be available at the locations specified above in the section, "Public Access to Information."

3. "Amendments" to the Strategic Plan and Annual Action
 - a. The Final 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 Annual Action Plan; or, a substantial change in the purpose, location, scope, or beneficiaries of an activity. The public will be notified whenever there is an amendment.
 - b. The following will be considered "substantial" amendments:
 - i. A change in the amount of CDBG money from one activity to another such that the funding level of either activity would change by more than 10 percent.
 - ii. The elimination of an activity originally described in the Annual Action Plan.
 - iii. The addition of an activity not originally described in the Annual Action Plan.
 - iv. A change in the purpose of an activity, such as a change in the type of activity or its ultimate objective – for example, a change in a construction project from housing to commercial.
 - v. A meaningful change in the location of an activity.
 - vi. A 50 percent or greater change in the type or characteristics of people benefiting from an activity. Among the "characteristics" are:
 - (1) The HUD-recognized income levels of: 0-30 percent of area median income (AMI); between 31 percent and 50 percent of AMI; and between 51 percent and 80 percent of AMI.
 - (2) Race or ethnicity.
 - (3) Renter or homeowner.
 - (4) Single households, small ones (two to four persons), large ones (five or more persons).
 - vii. A 20 percent decrease in the number of low or moderate income people benefiting from an activity.

- viii. A change in the scope of an activity, such that there is a 20 percent increase or decrease in the amount of money allocated to an activity.

- c. There must be reasonable notice of a proposed Substantial Amendment so that residents will have an opportunity to review it and comment on it. Notice will be made according to the procedures described earlier in this Citizen Participation Plan, with the addition of the following procedures specifically for Substantial Amendments:
 - i. A detailed written description of the proposed Substantial Amendment will be made available to the public. Also, copies will be available.

 - ii. The public has 30 days to review the proposed Substantial Amendment.

 - iii. In preparing a Final Substantial Amendment, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as oral testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. The Final Substantial Amendment will have a section that presents comments and explains why any comments were not accepted.

Objective 5: Establish complaint procedures.

Strategy and implementation

Written complaints from the public should be sent to the Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) and will receive a meaningful, written reply within 15 working days from the Director of the Community and Economic Development.

Objective 6: Establish procedures for changing the Citizen Participation Plan

Strategy and implementation

This Citizen Participation Plan can be changed only after the public has been notified of intent to modify it, and only after the public has had 30 days to review and comment on proposed substantial changes to it.

Objective 7: Establish a committee representative of the communities' demographics

Strategy

Establish a committee to assist in the preparation and review of the City of Jonesboro's Consolidated Plan and recommend ongoing community review of projects.

Implementation

1. Establish the Citizen's Advisory Committee for Community Development Block Grant funding.
2. The Citizen's Advisory Committee is a 13-member body consisting of six Jonesboro City Council members and seven members representing the City of Jonesboro. The responsibilities of the Committee are to:
 - a. Advise on and approve the Citizen Participation Plan;
 - b. Guide preparation of the Consolidated Plan
 - c. Advise the City Council of Jonesboro on the types of initial programs and projects to be funded by CDBG grants consistent with the goals, objectives and priorities of the Consolidated Plan;
 - d. Provide advice on the funding distribution process, schedule and method.