

Citizen Participation Plan

City of Greenwood, Indiana

The basic goals of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program are: provide decent housing, provide a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities principally for low and moderate-income people. To get citizen input on actions to accomplish the goals of this program, the City of Greenwood (City) collects community data, holds public hearings and solicits comments from citizens.

Every five years, the City prepares a five-year consolidated community development plan that outlines Greenwood program funding priorities for CDBG. On a yearly basis, the department reevaluates the five-year plan, makes modifications as needed, and develops a one-year action plan to address specific priorities identified in the community development plan.

As part of the Consolidated Plan Process, the City of Greenwood is responsible for completing an Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing analysis (AFFH). The AFFH will outline strategies the City will take to overcome historic patterns of segregation, combat housing discrimination and foster inclusive communities. The AFFH must cover the entire geographic area of Greenwood, including any new annexations. The following statement of policy outlines the process for citizen participation in planning, implementing and assessing the Consolidated Plan, the AFFH and the One-Year Action Plan.

Statement of Citizen Participation Policy

It is the policy of the City of Greenwood to encourage and seek the advice of its citizens in planning, implementing, and assessing the Consolidated Plan and the One-Year Action Plan.

Participation of low- and moderate-income persons, members of minority groups, residents of areas where a significant amount of activity is proposed or ongoing, the elderly, the disabled, and business and civic groups concerned about the program is encouraged.

All aspects of citizen participation are conducted in an open manner, with freedom of access for all interested persons. However, the City retains the final responsibility and authority for the development of the plans and implementation of the program.

Information Available to Citizens

To ensure that citizens, public officials and other interested parties can participate in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the consolidated plan in an informed manner, the City makes available the following information:

- the current Consolidated Plan, and one-year action plan
- any amendments to the Consolidated Plan or the one-year action plan
- the range of activities undertaken, including amount to benefit low- and very low-income people
- all written requests for funding
- amount of CDBG assistance received each year
- plans to minimize displacement
- written complaints and their responses
- the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Other CDBG information and records are available to the extent consistent with applicable state and local laws concerning personal privacy and confidentiality.

Citizen Participation Procedures

1. Verbal and Written Comments

Any citizen is welcome to make comments or suggestions about the Consolidated Plan to the Mayor, City's Grant Administrator or any City official in person, by phone, or in writing at any time.

Residents of neighborhoods where a significant amount of activity is proposed or ongoing may also bring comments or questions to the meetings of their neighborhood association and request the neighborhood leader to forward those to the City.

2. Public Hearings

In addition to ongoing access to information, citizens of the whole community and interested organizations have an opportunity to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan through at least two public hearings that are held at different stages of the planning process and program year.

The first public hearing is usually held during the late winter or early spring. The purpose of this hearing is to provide a formal opportunity to educate citizens about the range of activities that can be undertaken with CDBG funds and to obtain citizen views and responses concerning:

- the assessment of housing needs in Greenwood
- the long-range unmet non-housing community development needs of Greenwood
- the proposed activities to be undertaken with CDBG funds in Greenwood
- the program performance of the of past projects

At this hearing, after an overview of CDBG, citizens' views are solicited concerning housing and non-housing community development needs.

The second public hearing is usually scheduled in early to middle summer. This hearing is held to solicit comments on the final draft of the Consolidated Plan and One-Year Action Plan. As of the date of the second hearing, a 30-day citizen comment period begins. During this period, a summary of the proposed plan is published in the local paper with information on where an entire plan can be reviewed. This comment period is provided to give citizens a final opportunity to comment on the Consolidated Plan before it is submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a 45-day review period.

The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) will be available for a period of 15-days prior to submission to HUD. The 15-day period shall occur between 60 and 90 days after the end of the fiscal year.

Public Notification of Hearings and Technical Assistance

Community organizations which have indicated an interest in addressing the priorities of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan or who have participated in past programs are notified of hearing dates by email or social media. The media are notified and encouraged to report on upcoming hearings as a matter of public interest. A legal notice is published for general notification as well. Notifications are generally done at least one week

prior to the date of the hearing, but at least within 48 hours, of the hearing. Hearings are held at a convenient time and handicapped-accessible location, with accommodation for the physically disabled and non-English speaking residents where appropriate.

Help is provided to groups representative of low- and moderate-income persons who request assistance in developing proposals for the use of CDBG funds or for other activities related to planning, assessing, and implementing the Consolidated Plan. The level of assistance will depend on the urgency and importance of the request to the plan, the eligibility of the requested activity, and the availability of funds and staff time.

General timeline for development and adoption of One-Year Community Development Action Plan:

Year -Round	Gather community needs information through contact with community groups, neighborhood associations, interested service agencies, or other interested parties.
February - March	Public Hearing #1: Overview of CDBG and HOME, review of past performance, assessment of housing and non-housing needs, and release of project application for funding
March - May	Preparation of Consolidated Plan/One Year Action Plan
June - July	Public Hearing #2: Presentation of Consolidated Plan/One Year Action Plan allocations and citizen comments
July	30 – Day Comment Period
August 15	Submission of One-Year Action Plan to HUD
October 1	Program year start date

Citizen Complaints and Comments

Complaints relative to the CDBG may be registered with the Mayor or any City official at any time. However, for a formal written response, complaints must be submitted in writing to the City with attention to the CDBG Grant Program. A written answer will be provided within fifteen working days, if practicable.

A summary of all comments whether accepted or not and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan, any amendments following, or the performance report.

Criteria for Amendment

The City will amend its approved Consolidated Plan or One-Year Action Plan whenever one of the following decisions is made:

- a change in allocation priorities or method of distributing funds;

- carrying out a new goal or amending a goal in the Action Plan;
- carrying out a new activity which has not been previously described in the Action Plan;
- a substantial change in funding amounts.

Definition of Substantial Change

- changes in funding that is more than 15% of the total annual grant award

Any proposed substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan or One-Year Action Plan will be made available to the public for comment through a notification of change notice published as a display ad in at least one local newspaper. Interested parties will be provided with at least a 30-day comment period regarding the proposed amendment.

Amendment or Modification of Citizen Participation Plan

Any substantial amendments to or modification of the City of Greenwood Citizen Participation Plan will be made available to citizens, public officials, and other interested parties through a notification of change notice in at least one local newspaper. This notice may be in the form of a display ad or a legal notice of reasonable size and may be included with other Consolidated Plan notices being published at the same time.

The City of Greenwood will follow this plan in planning, implementing, and monitoring its community development activities.

In the event of declared National, State, or Local Emergency

In the event of a declared national, state, or local emergency that impacts the usual schedule for the Action Plan, or necessitates an amendment to the Action Plan and when in-person attendance at public meetings is limited, virtual public meetings may be held. The City of Greenwood emergency plan will be followed for approval of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan or substantial amendments to the Plan. The virtual meetings may be conducted in video or audio format. Public notices may be through social media, the newspaper or another widely used outlet. Participants will be given an opportunity to provide feedback or comment. The virtual conference must allow for public input via a comment/question and answer outlet. A summary of the public hearing comments will be included in the final document.

Reasonable accommodations will be made to allow persons with a disability to participate in the virtual meetings and have opportunities to provide comment. The City of Greenwood asks that any individual notify the City of an accommodation needed 24 hours prior to the public meeting so that City staff can address the individual's need.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Greenwood will utilize an allowed waiver of the 30-day public review and comment period for Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan amendments and approvals. This shortened period will be a minimum of five (5) days and will enable the City to expedite funding available for community needs through the CARES Act allocation of CDBG-CV funds. The City recognizes shortened public comment periods may be necessary from time to time during future declared emergencies and will utilize them as allowed by HUD and as necessary to best respond to the needs of the community.

