CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

For

Community Development, Housing, Homelessness and Special Needs

City of Springfield, Massachusetts

Updated: May, 2013

Table of Contents

1. Introduction & Encouragement of Citizen Participation..... 3

2. National Objective and Objectives and Outcomes..... 3-4

3. Anti-Displacement..... 5

4. Publication of Materials/Notices..... 5

5. Administration..... 6

6. Development of Consolidated Plan..... 6

7. Review Period.....6

8. Public Hearing.....7

9. Application for Funding RFP).....7

10. Amendments.....7-8

11. Technical Assistance..... 8

Introduction & Encouragement of Citizen Participation

Understanding the importance of citizen input, it is the City of Springfield's goal to encourage citizen participation in the development of its five year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, particularly from those citizens most affected by Community Development Programs. This Citizen Participation Plan establishes the policies and procedures that the City of Springfield will follow to ensure that participation is as inclusive as possible.

The City of Springfield intends that its Community Development Program has the support of the largest possible number of people in the community. Emphasis is placed on opportunities for participation by low/moderate income persons and the organizations and agencies that serve low/moderate income persons through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

Encouragement of Citizen Participation

The City will implement this Plan that is designed to encourage citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Performance Reports, CAPER. As described within this section, the City will encourage the input of low moderate income residents by (1) outreach to the public through mailings, (2) conducting a series of public hearings at various stages of the planning process, (3) creating a system to accept and respond to written comments from the citizens.

To ensure participation among low/moderate income residents the public hearings will be held in areas where funds are mostly to be spent and to public housing residents.

The City is committed to making information available and accessible to all interested parties. At a minimum, the City will provide information concerning proposed activities, including amount of assistance, range of activities to be undertaken and the amount that will benefit low/moderate income persons.

National Objectives

Under HUD regulations, each activity to be funded must meet one or more national objective: Serve low or moderate income residents, (the activity benefits people in an area with an established percentage of low income and moderate income residents, or benefits a group of individuals presumed under HUD regulations to be low or moderate income); **OR** eliminate or reduce slum and blight; **OR** meet an urgent need (damage caused by flood, tornado, hurricane, etc.).

Each activity to be funded must meet one of the following Objectives and Outcome:

OBJECTIVES

1. ***Suitable Living Environment***
   In general, this objective relates to activities that are designed to benefit communities, families, or individuals by addressing issues of their living environments.

2. ***Decent Affordable Housing***
   The activities that would be found under this objective are designed to cover the wide range of housing possible under HOME, CDBG, HOPWA, or ESG. This objective focuses on housing programs where the purpose of the program is to meet individual family and community needs and not programs where housing is an element of a larger effort (such as would be captured above under Suitable Living Environment).

3. ***Creating Economic Opportunities***
   This objective applies to the types of activities related to economic development, commercial revitalization, or job creation.

OUTCOMES

1. ***Availability/Accessibility***
   This outcome category applies to activities that make services, infrastructure, housing, or shelter available or accessible to low and moderate-income people, including persons with disabilities. In this category, accessibility does not refer only to physical barriers, but also to making the basics of daily living available and accessible to low and moderate-income people.

2. ***Affordability***
   This outcome category applies to activities that provide affordability in a variety of ways in the lives of low and moderate-income people. It can include the creation or maintenance of affordable housing, basic infrastructure hook-ups, or services such as transportation or day care.

3. ***Sustainability: Promoting Livable or Viable Communities***
   This outcome applies to projects where the activity or activities are aimed at improving communities or neighborhoods, helping to make them livable or viable by providing benefit to persons of low and moderate income people or by removing or eliminating slums or blighted areas, through multiple activities or services that sustain communities or neighborhoods.

Anti-Displacement Plan

The City is sensitive to displacement and the effects resulting therefrom. Therefore, prior to commencement of a project funded through the City that either potentially, or most certainly, displaces a person or persons, top City officials will consider the overall public benefit(s) of the project and discuss potential alternatives to determine whether the project should move forward. Authorization will be given only when there is significant public benefit that outweighs the displacement. In the event that displacement will occur, the City will provide the necessary assistance to affected persons to minimize the trauma of displacement. Assistance would include: moving expenses, rental assistance, assistance with identifying other housing, etc. The actual type and level of assistance will be made on a case-by-case basis, but will be sufficient to ease the transition for the displaced persons.

Publication of Materials/Notices of Hearings

To ensure that the City provides for maximum citizen participation and offers reasonable opportunity for examination and submission of contents, it will:

1. To ensure participation among low/moderate income residents in areas where funds are proposed to be spent and to public housing residents, the City will publish legal notices 14 days prior to public hearings and releases of all documents and informing citizens where documents will be available for public review. Hearings are conducted within CDBG target areas; where the majority of the funds are used especially in the NRSA neighborhoods. Legal notices are also published in Spanish in the Republican and in LaVoz, Spanish newspaper to accommodate non-English speaking residents.
2. The City will also increase its efforts to maintain communication with directors of programs to notify them of pertinent dates and presenting them with information. The City will utilize the Springfield Republican; LaVoz, Spanish newspaper; Springfield Republican section Neighborhoods Plus and mailings to notify residents when and where documents will be available for public review. The documents, mailings and notices will be posted on the City of Springfield's Office of Community Development website: www.springfieldcityhall.com
3. Notify, via direct mail, an extensive mailing list of all organizations and interested parties of the purpose, date, time and place of hearings, and inviting them to attend. Organizations are encouraged to invite persons that they serve.
4. Notify, via direct mail, an extensive mailing list of organizations and interested parties notifying them of the period of review for the consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, any substantial amendments and Performance Reports. The mailing will include a listing of locations where these documents will be made available for review.
5. Utilize the Office of Community Development's web site to publicize public hearings, periods of review, summaries of information, etc.

The City will continually review this policy and will modify accordingly.

Lead Agency and Administering Agencies

Office of Planning and Economic Development OPED) is the lead agency responsible for administering the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan, and this Annual Action Plan. This Division is made up of the following departments: Community Development, Planning and Economic Development (OPED), Housing, Building, and Neighborhood Services. The Division administers funds provided to other City Departments to carry out the plan, which include Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Elder Affairs, and Health and Human Services. The Division also administers grant funding to various agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Development of the Consolidated Plan

HUD regulations require recipients of CDBG funding to prepare a Five-Year Consolidated Planning Strategy (Consolidated Plan). The Con Plan identifies and prioritizes community development needs, project proposals and the specific funding needs of programs. The Office of Community Development will solicit community input for the Con Plan to understand community needs and to further explain the consolidated planning process.

Summary of the Development Process

- Data Collection
- Con Plan Draft process
- Public Review
- Staff editing plan; finalizing document for HUD
- Submission of plan to HUD for review and acceptance

Period of Review

The City's Draft Consolidated Plan, Draft Annual Action Plan and any substantial amendments will be made available for public review and comment for thirty (30) days prior to submission to HUD. The Performance Report, CAPER, will be made available for public review and comment for fifteen (15) days prior to submission to HUD. All of these documents will be available for review at multiple locations, including the Office of Community Development's website, to increase the likelihood of citizen participation. Those locations are as follows:

Office of Community Development, 1600 East Columbus Avenue; Office of Housing, 1600 East Columbus Avenue; Office of Planning and Economic Development, 70 Tapley Street; Office of Neighborhood Services, 70 Tapley Street and the Office of Health & Human Services, 95 State Street and the City's website www.springfieldcityhall.com.

To further elicit comment, the City offers citizens the opportunity to present testimony at public hearings or, if they prefer, written commentary may be submitted. All citizen input

received will be incorporated into the City's Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments and Performance Reports.

Public Hearings

The City will conduct a series of public hearings to address housing and community development needs during the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. The City will hold at least two (2) hearings during this phase. These hearings will be held in neighborhoods where the majority of funding will be spent.
In order to receive input on the Draft Consolidated Plan and Draft Annual Action Plans, the City will hold a public hearing during the 30-day comment period. All comments received will be incorporated into the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, as will minutes of the public hearings. If any comments are not accepted, the City will set forth the reasons within its Plan.
A public hearing will be held to obtain comments on the City's Performance Reports, CAPER.

To address the needs of residents with disabilities and language barriers, the City publishes materials in English and Spanish, holds meeting in accessible buildings and will utilize a translator for its Spanish residents during the public hearings.

Application for Funding

To encourage participation, provide an opportunity for interested persons to develop innovative initiatives, and to offer a fair, competitive method to receive assistance through the formula grant programs, the City will solicit applications through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The Office of Community Development also requests that the city departments submit proposals, interdepartmental requests, for funding and/or provide input on the types of activities that should be addressed with our funding. The Office of Community Development will review the program and fiscal sections of the RFP's. The Committee is comprised of City Staff and a representative from the Mayor's Office which will read all RFP's in their entirety and score the proposals based on several criteria. Based upon the input from the Committee and the Office of Community Development's Director of Finance & Administration the Mayor will then make his final funding decisions for the proposed activities.

Amendments

Once the final Consolidated Plan has been submitted by the City of Springfield for HUD's approval, significant changes to the accepted Plan will require citizen notification and comment. The criteria defining a significant change will include:
(a)activities which will require new goals/objectives for the current fiscal year;
(b)an activity which will require a funding change that exceeds 50% of the approval allocation for that activity.
If these actions occur within the fiscal year of the approved Plan, community development officials will seek public opinion for the proposed change. A notice (published in English and Spanish) and will be placed in the local newspaper summarizing the significant change. The City of Springfield will make available at the aforementioned locations information describing the details of the change to the

Consolidated Plan. Public input will be solicited for a period of 30-days and reviewed at the conclusion of that time. The proposed change accompanied by a summary of the public comments will be submitted to the HUD regional office for review.

Technical Assistance

The City of Springfield will provide technical assistance to any organizations who have received funding through our programs, either upon their request or the City of Springfield will request it. During the RFP process, technical assistance is not provided; however, the subrecipient can put any questions regarding the RFP in writing and they will be answered and put on the website. The OCD will not provide any information that will give one applicant an advantage over another.

APPROVED:

Domenic J. Sarno
Mayor

Date Signed: June 7, 2013