

The City of Springfield

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT –

DISASTER RECOVERY

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno

August 2013

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Introduction and Encouragement of Public Participation

The City of Springfield is the recipient of a Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Grant (CDBG-DR) in accordance with the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013 (Public Law 113-2 approved January 29, 2013). These funds are being made available to assist disaster recovery efforts in response to major disasters declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974 for disaster in 2011, 2012, and 2013. A requirement of this program is the adoption of a Citizen Participation Plan. The Federal Register at 78 FR 14329 contains a list of waivers which permits changes to the City of Springfield's Consolidated Plan Citizen Participation Plan.

The primary goal of the City of Springfield Citizen Participation Plan is to provide all citizens with the opportunity to participate in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the City's CDBG-DR programs. The Plan sets forth policies and procedures for citizen participation, which are designed to maximize the opportunity for citizen's involvement in the community development process. The City will provide all citizens with the opportunity to participate, with emphasis on low and moderate income individuals, and access to non-English speaking or those requiring special options due to disabilities. The City will also consult with owners of all HUD-subsidized housing impacted by the tornado to learn about their unmet recovery needs.

Public Hearings

Unlike the Citizen Participation Plan for the Consolidated Plan process, there is no requirement for a public hearing relative to the CDBG-DR Action Plan.

The City held three public hearings to gather input on the plan:

- July 10, 2013, JC Williams Center, 116 Florence St., Topic: "Infrastructure"
- July 11, 2013, Italian Cultural Center, 36 Margaret St., Topic: "Economic Revitalization"
- July 17, 2013, JC Williams Center, 116 Florence St., Topic: "Housing"

These meetings were held at sites located in the low-income neighborhoods impacted by the June 2011 tornado, and Spanish translation was available at the meetings. Sixty-three individuals attended the meetings.

Notice of meetings was posted on the City's website and published in the *Springfield Republican* (Neighborhood Plus and the Classified-Legal section) and *La Voz*, and announced on WAMC and WSPR (Spanish-language radio stations). Flyers advertising the meetings were distributed

to community groups, neighborhood council, City Council members, and a large database of stakeholders and residents who have expressed interest in community development activities within the City. The meeting notices also encouraged city residents to comment in writing.

Public Notice and Comment Period

A draft Action Plan was released on August 21, 2013, following a press announcement on August 20, 2013. The draft was published on the City's website www.springfield-ma.gov/planning/cdbg-dr. This website is featured prominently on, and is easily navigable



from, the City's homepage (www.springfieldcityhall.com).

The draft Action Plan was also made available in paper copy in English and Spanish at the following locations: Office of Community Development, 1600 East Columbus Ave.; Office of Housing, 1600 East Columbus Ave.; Office of Planning and Economic Development, 70 Tapley St.; Office of Neighborhood Services, 70 Tapley St.; Office of Health & Human Services, 95 State St.; Mayor's Office, 36 Court St.; and City of Springfield Central Library, 220 State St.

The formal public comment period on the draft Action Plan opened at 5pm (EST) on August 22, 2013 and extended for a 7 day period until August 29, 2013 at 5:00pm (EST). During the comment period, public comments could be submitted as follows:

- Electronically on the City's CDBG-DR website at www.springfield-ma.gov/planning/cdbg-dr
- Written comments mailed to:
Office of Community Development
1600 East Columbus Avenue
Springfield, MA 01103
- Via telephone by contacting 311, the City of Springfield's main source of government information and non-emergency services.

At the end of the comment period, all comments were reviewed, and a summary of the comments and City response are included in the Appendix to this document. The Final Action Plan, incorporating changes made following the public comment period, is posted in English and Spanish on the City's CDBG-DR website. Paper copies will be made available upon request.

Limited English Proficiency and Access for Persons with Disabilities

The City is committed to providing access to the Action Plan programs for all its citizens. These efforts include special consideration for those with limited English proficiency (LEP) and persons with disabilities. The City performed the four-factor analysis prescribed in the Federal Register 72 FR 2732, and, as a result of the analysis, has determined that it will provide the draft Partial Action Plan, final Partial Action Plan, and any ensuing substantial amendments in both English and Spanish. Key participant documents such as application forms will also be available in both English and Spanish. No language group other than Spanish exceeds 5% of the population citywide.

To ensure meaningful access to vital documents for participant information, the City will respond to identified language needs in making translation available as requested and reasonable in other languages.

Individuals with disabilities may request auxiliary aids and service necessary for participation by contacting (TTY/TDD) (413)787-6641. Program application procedures will also follow prescribed guidelines to ensure access for individuals with disabilities. As requested, application and other key materials will translated into Braille and other formats for persons with visual impairment.

The Final HUD-Approved Action Plan

Following HUD approval of the Action Plan, it will be posted on the City's CDBG-DR website www.springfield-ma.gov/planning/cdbg-dr.

Copies of the Final Action Plan will also be made available upon request.

Performance Review

Springfield will enter its Action Plan into HUD's Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting (DRGR) System, where it will include detailed performance metrics and performance schedule. The performance metrics will be based on quarterly expected expenditures and outcomes. DRGR quarterly reports will be posted on the City's CDBG-DR website at www.springfield-ma.gov/planning/cdbg-dr; so that the public can access information about plan progress.

Action Plan Amendments

The following events would require a substantial amendment to the Action Plan:

- Change in program benefit, beneficiary, or eligibility criteria;
- A new allocation or re-allocation of more than \$1,000,000; or
- The addition or deletion of an activity.

A substantial amendment to the Springfield DR Action Plan will follow the same requirements as the publication of the original action plan in accordance to the Citizen Participation Plan.

These requirements include:

- Publication of the Substantial Amendment in English and Spanish on the City's website;
- A comment period of at least 7 days;
- Submission of comments as follows:
 - Electronically on the City's CDBG-DR website at www.springfield-ma.gov/planning/cdbg-dr;
 - Written comments mailed to: Office of Community Development, 1600 East Columbus Ave., Springfield, MA 01103
 - By telephone by contacting 311, the City of Springfield's main source of government information and non-emergency services.
- City review of all comments received, with City response incorporated into the final document; and
- Publication of the Final Substantial Amendment in English and Spanish on the City's website.

The City shall notify HUD of any non-substantial amendments, and post these amendments on the website. Every amendment, substantial or not, shall be numbered sequentially.

Citizen Complaints

Citizens with complaints about CDBG DR funding or programs may submit complaints to:

Office of Community Development
1600 East Columbus Avenue
Springfield, MA 01103

The City shall provide a written response to every complaint relative to the CDBG-DR grant within fifteen (15) working days of receipt if practicable.