

CITY OF MURFREESBORO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The consolidated strategy and plan as required by HUD must result from an effective citizen participation process.

HUD regulations require that each Entitlement city or county develop and follow a detailed citizen participation plan that addresses each of the following elements. Citizens, non-profit organizations and other interested parties must be afforded adequate opportunity to review and comment on the proposed citizens participation plan prior to implementation.

Participation – The plan must provide for and encourage citizen participation, emphasizing the involvement of low-, very low-, and extremely low-income residents where housing and community development funds may be spent. Jurisdictions are expected to take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation of all its residents, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments in all stages of the process.

Notification of meetings of citizens will be accomplished through the publication of notices in the local newspaper, on the government cable channel and on the local radio station. Notices will be made 10 working days before the scheduled meeting. Non-English speaking persons will be encouraged to contact City Hall to request an interpreter and persons with special needs will be encouraged to make those needs known to the Community Development Office.

Access to Meetings – The jurisdiction must afford adequate, timely notification so citizens can attend local meetings and public forums. All meetings will be held in locations that are accessible to persons using wheelchairs and will be published in time for any other special needs to be met.

Access to Information – Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties, including those most affected, must have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on any proposed submission concerning the amount of funds available, including the estimated amount proposed to benefit low-, very low-, and extremely low-income residents. These groups must also have access to the jurisdiction's plans to minimize displacement and assist those displaced as a result of these activities. Citizens and citizen groups must have access to records for at least five years.

Access to Information, contd. – All records of the City are available to the public for inspection except some that are confidential such as medical records, financial records and legal records. All documents concerning the availability of funds will be made available upon request and how funds are being spent or proposed to be spent will always be available to the public for inspection and comments.

Technical Assistance – Technical assistance will be provided to low-, very low-, and extremely low-income groups that request assistance in developing proposals under consolidated submission.

Public Hearings – The City Community Development Office will provide public hearings that are:

- convenient times for people who might or will benefit from program funds;
- accessible to people with disabilities; and,
- adequately publicized.

And are held to:

- obtain views of citizens, public agencies and other interested parties
- respond to proposals and comments at all stages of the consolidated submission process:
 - 1) identifying housing and community development needs
 - 2) reviewing proposed uses of funds
 - 3) reviewing program performance.

NOTE: The Community Development Office will hold at least two public hearings during each program year cycle.

The City of Murfreesboro will publish its proposed consolidated submission so that affected citizens have sufficient opportunity to review it and provide comments. This requirements for publishing will be met by publishing a summary of the proposed consolidated plan in the newspaper and by making copies of the proposed plan available at libraries, government offices, and public places. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the consolidated plan, and will include a list of the location where copies of the entire plan may be examined.

Comments: The citizen participation plan will provide a period, not less than 30 days for the Action Plan and 15 days for the Performance Report, to receive comments from citizens, or units of general local government, the plan amendments, or report that is to be submitted to HUD before its submission. The City will consider the views of citizens, public agencies and other interested parties in preparing its final consolidated submission and will attach a summary of citizen comments, which will include a written explanation of comments not accepted and the reasons why these comments were not accepted.

Timely Response: The City will provide timely, written answers to written complaints and grievances, within 15 days, where practical.

Prior to the submission of any substantial changes in the proposed use of funds, citizens will have reasonable notice of, and opportunity to comment on, the proposed amendment. A substantial change is defined by HUD Regulation 25 CFR 91 as one of the following:

1. When an activity is deleted from a Grantee's Action Plan for that year.
2. When an activity is added to a grantee's Action Plan.
3. When there is a change in expenditure in an activity that exceeds the amount that the grantee has told HUD that it would consider to be substantial.

The City of Murfreesboro has set that an amount that exceeds 15% of each year's allocation as being substantial, and it would require a HUD approved amendment after the 30-day citizen comment period.

Guidance:

Public Housing Residents – The city will cooperate with the local public housing authority and encourage the participation of public and assisted housing residents. The city will make an effort to provide information regarding the consolidated plan and activities available to residents at required public hearings for the Comprehensive Grant program.

Displaced Persons – The City Community Development Office will always be mindful of persons living in housing units where consideration is being given to use Community Development Block Grant funds to carry out programs. It will make every effort to avoid the displacement of families. If persons are displaced because of projects where Community Development Block Grant funds are used, the City will make those household/families whole as required by the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act (URA) 1970 as amended by the Uniform Relocation Act Amendments of 1987 (Title IV of Public Law 100-17).

Displaced Persons (continued) –

If the City does use Block Grant funds in projects that will cause displacement of persons, it will notify those families that will be affected in a timely manner as required by HUD Regulation 49 CFR 24.203. HUD Regulations require at least a 90-day notice. Notice to vacate will in all cases be given at least 30 days before the required move.

Facilitation – The Community development Office will consider various forms and techniques for encouraging citizen participation ranging from small, issue-oriented forums to town meetings.

Citizen Committees – The city will listen to and support citizen advisory committees as they work together for the betterment of Murfreesboro.

Plan Evaluation – The City will share HUD's responses to the submission with all who attended hearings and planning meetings.