

Citizen Participation Plan



I. INTRODUCTION

The County Community Services Department (CSD) is the lead agency for the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Consortium which includes the County and the cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Lompoc, Goleta, Santa Maria and Solvang. CSD is also the lead agency for Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Countywide program and for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Urban County Partnership that includes the County and the cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, and Solvang.

On behalf of the Santa Barbara County HOME Consortium and the CDBG Urban County Partnership, CSD's division of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has designed this community-wide Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) to provide for and encourage citizen participation in the annual grant allocation process to award CDBG, HOME and ESG grants. This plan is an essential element of the Consortium's/Urban County's present and future community development process and has been developed to comply with the requirements of 24 CFR 91.105.

The primary goal of this Citizen Participation Plan is to provide all residents of the County and partner cities with adequate opportunity to participate in the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan process, including Action Plan Amendments, Consolidated Annual Performance Reports and updates to the Citizen Participation Plan. The parties invited to be involved in the process comprise neighborhood and citizen groups, non-profit agencies, community-based organizations (including faith-based organizations), social service agencies, business organizations, and Continuum of Care participants. Also invited are residents -- especially low- and moderate-income persons -- and those living in low-income neighborhoods, and special needs populations (and those who represent them), such as the elderly, homeless, abused children, migrant workers, victims of domestic violence, disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS. The Citizen Participation Plan ensures that the views of citizens and other interested parties are fully considered when assessing housing and community development needs and priorities and the distribution of Federal resources through the CDBG or HOME programs.

II. PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The County of Santa Barbara HCD will maintain files of all housing and community development program materials, for a period of at least five years or however longer may be required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Documents will be made available for public review upon request, unless deemed confidential by County Counsel. If copies of documents are requested, a fee may be charged in accordance with the County Clerk's fee schedule. Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans and Substantial Amendments are required to undergo a 30-day public review period and be approved by the County Board of Supervisors. The public notice for this review period shall be published in accordance with Section III of this CPP below.

The draft Consolidated Plans and draft Annual Action Plans for the HOME Consortium, ESG and the CDBG programs will be available for public review on HCD's website www.countyofsb.org/housing or in-person at the following County office buildings in Santa

Barbara and Santa Maria.

Joseph Centeno Betteravia Government Administration Building
511 East Lakeside Parkway
Santa Maria, CA

County of Santa Barbara Community Services Department
Division of Housing and Community Development
123 East Anapamu St., Suite 202
Santa Barbara, CA

After the plans are approved by the Board and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a link to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans will be posted on HCD's website www.countyofsb.org/housing, and be made available at the following County offices:

- County of Santa Barbara Community Services Department, Division of Housing and Community Development, 123 E. Anapamu St. Suite 202, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

III. PUBLIC NOTICE

An advance public notice shall be published at least 10 days prior to a scheduled public hearing (the hearing will be held on or after the 11th day). The public notice will announce the date, time and location of the public hearing. For Consolidated Plan meetings, the public notices will summarize needs, objectives, goals and general funding recommendations for the first year of the five year Consolidated Plan. For subsequent Annual Action Plans, the public notices will include general information about the annual allocation for the County and partner cities in addition to broad categories to be funded such as housing, community facilities, public services, homeless shelters and services. Public notices for Substantial Plan Amendments and any amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) will provide summaries of the amendments proposed and note any updates of the County CPP. The notices shall clearly state the start and end date of the comment period. HCD reserves the right to limit the content of public notices in order to keep costs reasonable; provided, however that public notices contain the purpose, date, time, and location of public meetings and how and where citizens may view documents. The notice shall also request that those individuals needing special accommodations for disabilities (e.g., sign language interpreter, hearing devices) contact the County so that such accommodations can be made.

Public notices shall be posted on HCD's website www.countyofsb.org/housing, posted on public bulletin boards at the County office buildings in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria, and published in the "local" section of a newspaper that is generally circulated countywide (e.g. Santa Barbara News-Press, Santa Maria Times, and Lompoc Record). A "Proof of Publication" shall be requested from each newspaper and kept at HCD.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings will be held on the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, Substantial Action Plan Amendments, and updated CPPs. The County shall provide for language translation for non-

English speaking residents during public meetings and hearings where 30% or more of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate, or upon request made prior to the hearing. Any questions that individuals may have concerning a program shall be answered by HCD staff, and any comments, suggestions, and/or proposals will be received.

- Any sign in sheets circulated at hearings shall be kept, along with agendas, minutes, and proofs of publication, in a public file in the County HCD division.

A. PUBLIC HEARING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

The County will locate and schedule citizen participation meetings so as to be convenient to potential or actual program beneficiaries. To the extent feasible, forums and hearings shall be scheduled after 4:00 p.m. on weekdays to accommodate persons whose employment would prevent them from attending during the day.

Public hearings shall be held at the County office buildings in Santa Barbara and/or Santa Maria. The County shall provide accommodation for persons with disabilities by holding meetings and hearings in accessible facilities and by providing additional accommodations as requested. For meetings where a significant amount (30% or more) of non-English speaking residents are reasonably expected to participate, language translation will be provided.

V. CONSOLIDATED PLAN

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Consolidated Plan is a comprehensive document that includes a five year strategic plan with a detailed description of the housing and community development needs in the County of Santa Barbara and its member cities. The needs are prioritized and goals developed for addressing the needs. This five-year Plan is submitted to HUD every five years.

2. THE PROCESS

- a. Public forums shall be held before the publication of the Consolidated Plan to receive public input about housing and community development needs, priorities and to develop five year goals. The public will be asked to comment on program performance at public forums as well. All public comments will be considered. The public will receive information on the timing and availability of funding, eligible projects, and the amount of funds that will be available to assist special populations and low and very low-income and moderate-income households. These forums shall be publicly noticed in accordance with Section III of this CPP. In addition to these public forums, broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, agencies whose primary responsibilities include the management of flood prone areas, public land or water resources, and emergency management agencies shall be consulted.
- b. As soon as feasible after the start of the public participation process, HUD-provided data or supplemental information to be incorporated shall be made available to the public. HUD-provided data may be made available by cross-referencing to the data on HUD's Web site.
- c. Electronic copies of the draft Plan shall be posted on HCD's website www.countyofsb.org/housing and hard copies shall be made available for public review at all County public housing agency offices, HOME Consortium Member

- Cities, and CDBG Urban County Member Cities during the 30-day review period.
- d. A public notice shall be published which includes a summary of funding available for housing and community development activities, the date, time and place of public forum(s), and initiates a 30-day public comment period on the proposed document. A summary of public comments and any response to those comments, whether incorporated into the plan or not, will be published in the final plan.
- e. A Consolidated Plan public hearing will be held on the departmental agenda of the Board of Supervisors before submittal of the final Plan to HUD.

VI. ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Annual Action Plan is intended to outline the accomplishments toward the objectives, goals and strategies identified in the five year Consolidated Plan. The Action Plan shall outline the amount and source of funding available, the activities for each objective, and goal for each of these activities for the year.

2. THE PROCESS

- a) The County shall publish a notice of funding availability (NOFA) before the adoption of the Annual Action Plan and the start of the County’s fiscal year. The notice shall include the amount of funds available and eligible uses of such funds. The NOFA may exclude funds for affordable housing development in order that HCD may accept applications for housing development on a year-round basis. This will better align the HOME application process with the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee’s application schedule for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and market conditions.
- b) Public forums with Board of Supervisors’ sanctioned County review committees shall be conducted before the publication of the Action Plan to solicit input specific to proposed projects or programs. These forums should be published in accordance with Section III of this CPP.
- c) A public notice shall be published which announces the development of the draft Action Plan, the public meeting date(s), and the 30-day public comment period. All public comments will be considered and a summary of public comments and any response to those comments, whether incorporated into the plan or not, will be published in the final plan.
- d) A public hearing will be held on the departmental agenda of the Board of Supervisors before submittal of the final Action Plan to HUD.

VII. THE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

At the end of each program year, on behalf of the HOME Consortium and CDBG Urban County Partnership, the County of Santa Barbara must submit to HUD its Consolidated Annual Performance

and Evaluation Report (CAPER) within 90 days of the close of the program year. The CAPER provides program and financial performance data, as well as a narrative on progress made towards meeting the goals set forth in the five year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, comparing estimated and actual accomplishments, and assessing the County's overall performance.

2. THE PROCESS

The County shall publish a notice announcing the availability of the CAPER for public review and comment. The comment period shall extend for a minimum of 15 days. Any and all comments received will be considered in the preparation of the CAPER. A summary of all comments shall be duly noted and attached to the CAPER when it is submitted to HUD.

*NOTE: Presentation of the CAPER to the Board of Supervisors is not required before submittal to HUD.

VIII. PLAN AMENDMENTS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans may be amended from time-to-time to add or make substantial changes to projects, activities or programs. If a change meets the definition of "Substantial Change", then the plans must be amended through the citizen participation process.

- HUD requires an amendment to the County's Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan whenever the County makes one of the following decisions:
 - To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
 - To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan (including program income), not previously described in the action plan; or
 - To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.
- HCD provides further definition of a Substantial Change to the Annual Action Plan as:
 - An increase to the funding level of a previously approved activity or program by 50% or more;
 - A change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity to the extent that it would be considered a new activity, at the discretion of HCD;
 - A change in the types of beneficiaries proposed to be served by the activity, such as from homeless persons to elderly persons, when more than 50% of the original beneficiary types will be changed.

Substantial amendments are subject to the citizen participation process in accordance with this Citizen Participation Plan. All amendment(s) must be available to the public for comment through the following process.

2. THE PROCESS

- a) Substantial plan amendment(s) to either the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan require advance notice to the public. A summary of the amendment(s) will be published in a notice to solicit comments over a 30-day period before the amendment is implemented. The publication should follow the requirements outlined in Section III of this CPP.

- b) A public hearing will be held at County office buildings in Santa Barbara and/or Santa Maria. To the extent feasible, public hearings for substantial plan amendment(s) shall be scheduled after 4:00 p.m. on weekdays to accommodate persons whose employment would prevent them from attending during the day in accordance with Section IV of this CPP. In the event of a federal disaster declaration and consistent with any guidance issued by HUD, if any, the County may hold public hearings virtually where the format allows for answers in real time and is available to persons with disabilities or limited English. The County will document the need to alter the format of hearings.
- c) Any and all comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at public hearings will be considered in preparing the amendment to the Plan. A summary of these comments, and a summary of any comments not accepted and reasons therefor, shall be attached to the amendment of the plan.
- d) The amendment(s) will then be placed on the administrative agenda of the Board of Supervisors for consideration of all public comments received and approval before submittal to the Los Angeles HUD field office, and copies will be made available to the public as set forth in Section II of this CPP.
- e) Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the case of a declared disaster, the County may reduce the 30-day comment period in accordance with the guidance put forth by HUD in the Federal Register Notice pertaining to the disaster. In such instance of a declared disaster, public notice of any plan amendment may be reasonably reduced to comply with guidance put forth by HUD in the Federal Register Notice pertaining to the disaster.

IV. ANTI-DISPLACEMENT POLICY

The federal regulations require that jurisdictions set forth their plans to minimize displacement of persons, even if no displacement is expected to occur, and state how this information is available.

The Santa Barbara County HOME Consortium and CDBG Urban County Partnership shall minimize displacement by following the County’s “Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan”. This document is available for public review at the HCD office.

V. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

HCD staff shall provide technical assistance to groups representative of low-income persons that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding received through the CDBG, ESG and HOME programs. Technical assistance will be provided at informational workshops, subrecipient training, and one-on-one meetings as needed.

VI. COMPLAINTS

Residents are encouraged to provide input to the County of Santa Barbara regarding the Consolidated Plan process, the development of any significant amendments, and performance review. A substantive written response will be provided to written inquiries, complaints and grievances within 15 working days from the date of receipt, when practicable. Those making complaints will be encouraged to propose alternatives and solutions for consideration in addressing the issue(s) brought forth.