

City of Harrisonburg Community Development Block Grant Citizen Participation Plan

Introduction

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is federal funding (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD) that the City is accepting principally to benefit low- and moderate-income (LMI) citizens in the City. To put this \$648,000 funding source to the most appropriate uses, we need to consult all of our citizens, including minorities, non-English-speaking persons, LMI residents, persons with disabilities, and advocates for our senior, disabled, illiterate, homeless, and low-income populations, whom the CDBG is designed to serve. This consultation will be used in the City's development of its Consolidated Plan for use of CDBG funds. For a summary of the allowable uses and national objectives of the CDBG program, citizens should consult the City's web site, www.ci.harrisonburg.va.us, or review the summary attached to this plan (Appendix A).

The City of Harrisonburg recognizes the importance of using extensive citizen participation, especially low- and moderate-income citizen participation, during the development of its CDBG Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments to the Plan, and in CDBG performance reports to be submitted to HUD. This Plan will be made available in draft form for citizen comments prior to its adoption. Upon request, this document will be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities.

The Processes for Consulting our Citizens

The City of Harrisonburg will take the following steps in the administration of its CDBG program.

1. The Process for Informing Citizens

The City of Harrisonburg will encourage citizen participation throughout the process of developing CDBG plans, assessing housing and community development needs, and developing particular CDBG investment proposals. In particular, participation by low- and moderate-income (LMI) residents of project service areas and residents of assisted housing developments will be encouraged. The City also will inform the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority about CDBG activities it plans to undertake. To meet these objectives, the City will inform citizens of public hearings and other meetings and opportunities for participation in CDBG program development through at least two of the following methods:

- a. Advertisement in the Daily News Record (the required public hearings will be announced using this method and at least one other method);
- b. Advertisement through the City web site and local radio and/or television stations, including Spanish-language media;

- c. Distribution of English/Spanish flyers in City buildings, the Massanutten Regional library, LMI areas, and in the proposed service area(s);
- d. Announcements at local community organization meetings; and,
- e. Announcements through local churches, nonprofit organizations serving LMI, disabled, non-English-speaking, and other populations, and other participating entities (stores and businesses) located in LMI and proposed project areas.

The City will keep documentation of how it met the above requirement in its CDBG files for verification.

2. Information to be Made Available

Harrisonburg citizens will be provided with reasonable and timely access to meetings, information, and records relating to the City's proposed and actual use of CDBG funds. Meetings will be conducted according to the standards established for the public hearings cited below (#5). CDBG-related information and records will be made available to interested citizens with the availability of such items announced at least in the same manner as the public hearing advertisements. At a minimum, before the Consolidated Plan is adopted, the City will furnish citizens with information concerning the amount of funds available (including program income, when applicable) for proposed activities and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount to be used for activities that will benefit low- and moderate-income persons, the proposed CDBG activities likely to result in displacement, and plans for minimizing displacement of persons as a result of the CDBG project and plans to assist persons actually displaced by the project. The City's Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments to the Plan, and performance report will be made available at the City Manager's Office, on the City of Harrisonburg web site, and at the Massanutten Regional Library. A summary of the Consolidated Plan will be published in one or more newspaper and reasonable numbers of free copies of the Plan will be made available to citizens and groups that request them.

3. Consultations with Groups Serving the Intended Beneficiaries

The City of Harrisonburg will include consultations with nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and others in the development of its CDBG Consolidated Plan. It is the intent of the City to conduct one or more group meetings with such entities to ascertain Harrisonburg's housing and community development needs, gaps in services, missing services, or those provided by non-City entities for which there may be an advantage to have supplemented by City initiatives or funding. One outcome of such meetings is the prioritization of needs to help steer future CDBG and other investments.

4. Providing Technical Assistance.

Technical assistance will be provided to groups representative of persons of low- and moderate-income that request such assistance in developing proposals for use of CDBG funds, with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the City. The name, address, and telephone number of the City's CDBG contact person(s) will be made available upon request and announced at all public meetings held on the CDBG program.

5. Consolidated Plan Public Hearings

At least two public hearings will be held during the CDBG Consolidated Plan development period and annually after that. One hearing will be held early in the Plan development

process to identify the City's community development and housing needs. The receipt of citizen views on priority nonhousing community development needs will be sought at this first hearing each year. Also to be addressed in one or both hearings are the range of eligible project types funded through the CDBG program, the amount of money available, the proposed activities the City is proposing for funding, and the estimated amount that will benefit LMI persons. A second hearing will be held for public review of and comment on the final draft of the CDBG Consolidated Plan. A minimum of thirty days will be available to receive citizen comments about the Plan. The City will consider all comments received and attach a summary of them to the final Plan, including the views not accepted and reasons why they were not.

These hearings will be held after adequate notice (newspaper advertisement at least seven days prior to the hearing and at least one other type of announcement - see # 1 above), at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and with accommodation for the physically challenged. Both public hearings will be held within eight months of the Plan deadline of May 15. The two hearings will, at a minimum, be held one week apart. Files will be maintained containing documentary evidence that the hearings were held.

In the case of substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan (where activities are to be added, deleted, or substantially changed in terms of purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries), the City will provide its citizens with an opportunity for comment on such changes through a public hearing, after the City has informed citizens of the changes at least seven days prior to the hearing. A minimum of thirty days will be available to receive citizen comments about any substantial amendments to the Plan, and a summary of these comments will be included (including views not accepted and the reasons why they were not accepted) in the amended Plan.

6. Performance Reports

HUD requires that CDBG recipients submit an annual performance report to them within ninety days of the completion of a program year. The first such report (Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, or CAPER) will be due to HUD on September 30, 2005. Harrisonburg will provide a minimum of fifteen days for citizens to provide comments on performance reports prior to their submissions to HUD.

7. Complaint Process

The City will provide, in the public hearing notices, the address, phone number, and times for submitting complaints and grievances in regard to the Consolidated Plan, its substantial amendments, and performance reports, and provide timely written answers to written complaints and grievances, within 15 working days where practicable.

8. Accommodating Non-English-Speaking Residents

Where 5 percent or more of public hearing participants can be reasonably expected to be non-English speaking residents, the City will take measures to accommodate their needs. Census data on the proposed project area and on the City as a whole will be consulted to determine if this provision applies in a particular instance. Meeting this provision will usually mean having printed material available in the non-English language(s) and/or retaining the services of an interpreter(s) for CDBG-related meetings and

public hearings. The City will also take appropriate actions to accommodate the needs of persons with mobility, visual, or hearing impairments who wish to participate in the CDBG program public comment processes described above.

Access to Records

The City of Harrisonburg will provide reasonable and timely access to citizens, public agencies, and others who wish to examine the City's records on producing its Consolidated Plan and its use of CDBG funds.

Minimizing Displacement

In the expenditure of its CDBG funds, the City of Harrisonburg will take measures to minimize the displacement of LMI families that could result from its activities. When this is unavoidable on a temporary or permanent basis, federal law (the "Uniform Act") will be followed. Normally this involves payments to the displaced families to help with the needed relocation and the difference between current rent and the new rent at a comparable dwelling. A more detailed description of the City's efforts to minimize displacement and provide payment when such is unavoidable will be included in the City's Consolidated Plan.

Disclaimer

None of the foregoing may be construed to restrict the responsibility or authority of the City of Harrisonburg in the development and execution of its Community Development Block Grant program.

Appendix A

What the Community Development Block Grant Is All About

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is federal funding (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD) that the City is accepting principally to benefit low- and moderate-income (LMI) citizens in the City. To put this \$648,000 funding source to the most appropriate uses, we need to consult our LMI residents and advocates for our senior, disabled, illiterate, homeless, and low-income populations, whom the CDBG is supposed to serve.

The City of Harrisonburg will conduct public meetings in November - January to gather information from our citizens on the City's housing and community development needs and the priority order in which they should be placed. Please consult the Citizen Participation Plan (above) to see the full extent of the City's efforts to consult its citizens and others in the development of its CDBG program.

The purpose of the CDBG program is to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low- and moderate-income. This may be achieved only by activities that either primarily benefit LMI persons, aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight, or address urgent community development needs. HUD requires, however, that not less than 70% of CDBG funds received by a community principally benefit LMI persons in a given period.

The following are examples of the types of needs the CDBG program is designed to address with acquisition, rehabilitation, or installation:

Housing

- Rehabilitation of LMI-occupied homes (100% LMI benefit required)
- Development costs to support new affordable housing
- Adaptive reuse of existing buildings for new affordable housing (at least 51% LMI benefit required)

Community Services (51% LMI or protected groups benefit required)

- Neighborhood-based community centers
- Transitional housing to prevent homelessness
- Facilities to serve abused children, battered spouses, seniors, disabled, homeless, illiterate, persons living with AIDS, or migrant farm workers
- Sheltered workshops to provide employment to the disabled

Community Facilities (at least 51% LMI benefit required)

- Replacement of deteriorating water or sewer lines or streets
- Sidewalks, greenways, and parks
- Drainage improvements
- Traffic calming to increase safety in LMI neighborhoods

Economic Development (at least 51% LMI benefit required)

- Job creation activities, such as off-site public improvements to help a business creating mostly LMI jobs (not necessarily low-wage: jobs are held by or available to persons not requiring more than a high school education, or the business will provide training for the needed skills)
- Downtown revitalization activities (such as façade improvement grants or loans) to enable City center area businesses increase the appeal of downtown

Public Services (no more than 15% of CDBG for this purpose allowed)

The City of Harrisonburg is able to pay for salaries, office rent, and other related costs for services provided to LMI or protected groups if such services represent new activities, not existing activities already provided by the City or nonprofit organizations within the City. Examples include (if not provided locally by the entity seeking funding): vouchers for public transportation, literacy training for new immigrants, job training for the disabled, budgeting and life skills training for homeless families, counseling for abused children, etc.

Approved by Council: March 23, 2004

2003 low- and moderate-income upper limits on income by household size:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
\$29,250	\$33,400	\$37,600	\$41,750	\$45,100	\$48,450	\$51,800	\$55,100

[also considered LMI are the following groups: abused children, battered spouses, seniors, disabled, homeless, illiterate, persons living with AIDS, and migrant farm workers]

The low- and moderate-income upper limits are revised annually by HUD.

CDBG Contact:

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