

City of Fresno

Citizen Participation Plan

It is the policy of the City of Fresno (City) to provide for full involvement by the community and its residents in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Act (HOME), HEARTH Emergency Solutions Grant (HESG) and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS/HIV (HOPWA) programs.

This Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) sets forth the procedures and guidelines to be implemented by the City to provide for the continuing participation by the citizens of Fresno. The City acknowledges the need for, and the role, of citizen involvement, but also recognizes that the final determination and responsibility for policy development rests with the City Council.

Citizen Participation Plan

Introduction

The City of Fresno (City) is a federal entitlement jurisdiction that receives federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The City of Fresno receives federal entitlement grant funding for the following program:

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)
- Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)
- Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)

As an entitlement jurisdiction, the City is required to prepare a:

- Five Year Consolidated Plan (Consolidated Plan)
- Annual Action Plan (Action Plan)
- Annual Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Under HUD's Code of Final Regulations for the Consolidated Plan (24 CFR Part 91 Sec. 91.105), the City must adopt a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) that sets forth the City's policies and procedures for citizen participation in the planning, execution, and evaluation of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plans, and CAPER. This CPP provides guidelines for the City to provide and encourage public participation by residents, community stakeholders, and grant beneficiaries in the process of drafting, implementing, and evaluating the Consolidated Plan and related documents. The citizen participation process includes outreach, public hearings, community forums, and opportunities for comment.

Definitions

- **Annual Action Plan:** The Action Plan summarizes the activities that will be undertaken in the upcoming Fiscal Year (FY) to meet the goals outlined in the Consolidated Plan. The Action Plan also identifies the federal and non-federal resources that will be used meet the goals of the approved Consolidated Plan.
- **Citizen Participation Plan:** The CPP provides guidelines by which the City will promote engagement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the distribution of federal funds, as outlined in the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, and CAPERs.
- **Community Development Block Grant:** HUD's CDBG program provides communities with resources to address a wide range of housing and community development needs that benefit very low and low-income persons and areas.
- **Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report:** The CAPER assesses the City's annual achievements relative to the goals in the Consolidated Plan and proposed activities in the Action Plan. HUD requires the City to prepare a CAPER at the end of each fiscal year.

- **Department Of Housing And Urban Development:** HUD is the federal government agency that creates and manages programs pertaining to federal home ownership, affordable housing, fair housing, homelessness, and community and housing development.
- **Displacement:** Displacement refers to the involuntary relocation of individuals from their residences due to housing development and rehabilitation activities paid for by federal funds.
- **Eligible Activity:** Activities that are allowable uses of the CDBG funds covered by the CPP as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 24 for HUD.
- **Emergency Solutions Grant:** HUD's ESG program provides communities with resources to serve homeless individuals and families via Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Homelessness Prevention, Rapid Re-Housing Assistance, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and Administrative Activities.
- **Entitlement Jurisdiction:** A city with a population of at least 50,000, a central city of a metropolitan area, or a qualified urban county with a population of at least 200,000 that receives grant funding from HUD.
- **Five Year Consolidated Plan:** HUD requires entitlement jurisdictions to prepare a Consolidated Plan every five years. The Consolidated Plan is a strategic plan that identifies housing, economic, and community development needs and prioritizes funding to address those needs over a five-year period.
- **HOME Investment Partnerships Program:** The HUD HOME program provides resources to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable rental or homeownership housing or provide direct rental assistance to low-income people.
- **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS:** The HUD HOPWA program provides resources that benefit low-income persons medically diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and their families, including housing and social services, chemical dependency treatment, nutritional services, case management, and assistance with daily living.
- **Low- and Moderate-Income:** As defined annually by HUD, Low- and Moderate-Income (LMI) is 0-80 percent of area median family income (AMI) for a jurisdiction, with adjustments for smaller or larger families. This includes those individuals presumed by HUD to be principally LMI (abused children, battered spouses, elderly persons, severely disabled adults, homeless persons, illiterate adults, persons living with AIDS and migrant farm workers). HUD utilizes three income levels to define LMI households:
 - Extremely low-income: Households earning 30 percent or less than the AMI (subject to specified adjustments for areas with unusually high or low-incomes)
 - Very low-income: Households earning 50 percent or less than the AMI (subject to specified adjustments for areas with unusually high or low-incomes)
 - Low- and moderate-income: Households earning 80 percent or less than the AMI (subject to adjustments for areas with unusually high or low-incomes or housing costs)

- **Public Hearing:** Public hearings are designed to provide the public the opportunity to make public testimony and comment. Public hearings related to the Consolidated Plan are to be advertised in local newspapers and made accessible to non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities.
- **Substantial Amendments:** Amendments are considered “Substantial” whenever one of the following is proposed:
 - A change in the allocation priorities or a change in the method of fund distribution.
 - A change which increases or decreases by 25 percent the amount allocated to a category of funding, or a project or activity budget funded by the entitlement grant programs.
 - To implement an activity using CDBG funds for new programs that were not described in the Consolidated Plan or the current year Annual Action Plan.
 - To change the purpose or intended beneficiaries of an activity approved for CDBG funding, e.g., instead of primarily benefitting lower income households the activity instead proposes to benefit mostly moderate income households.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Contact Information

The City of Fresno is a federal entitlement jurisdiction and is a recipient of grant funding from the federal government.

The City of Fresno’s Charter established a council and manager form of government. Fresno’s City Council is the elected legislative body of the City and is responsible for approving its Consolidated Plan, Action Plans, Substantial Amendments, and CAPERs prior to their submission to HUD.

It is the intent of the City to provide for and encourage citizen participation, with particular emphasis on participation by lower income persons who are beneficiaries of or impacted by entitlement-funded activities. The City encourages participation in all stages of the Consolidated Planning process by all residents, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments, and residents of assisted housing developments and recipients of tenant-based assistance.

In general, hearings will be held at City Hall due to its central location, convenient access, and disability accessibility. Translation services will be provided when there is an indication that non-English speaking persons will be attending. Other reasonable accommodations will be provided on a case-by-case basis.

The General Contact Information for the City’s HUD Entitlement Programs is:

City of Fresno

Crystal Smith

Development and Resource Management Department (DARM)

Housing and Community Development Division

2600 Fresno Street Room 3065

Fresno, CA 93721

559.621.8507 Phone

559.457.1338 Fax

559.621.8721 TTY

crystal.smith@fresno.gov

Citizen Participation Policies

Public Hearings

The City will hold public hearings for Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, CAPERs, amendments made to the CPP, and Substantial Amendments.

The Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, CPP amendments, and Substantial Amendments require two public hearings. One required hearing is before the Housing and Community Development Commission (HCDC) and one required hearing is before City Council for document adoption. The CAPER requires one hearing before City Council for document adoption.

The HCDC public hearings will be held at Fresno City Hall Room 2165N, located at 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721. The City Council public hearings will be held at Fresno City Hall, Council Chambers located at 2600 Fresno Street, Room 2097, Fresno, CA 93721. Listening devices, interpretation services, and other assistance to disabled persons or those with limited English proficiency will be provided upon request, ranging up to five business days prior notification to the City Clerk. Requests for disability-related modifications or accommodations required to facilitate meeting participation, including requests for auxiliary aids, services or interpreters, require different lead times, ranging up to five business days. For this reason, it is important to provide as much advance notice as possible to ensure availability. Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) are available upon request.

Notice of Hearings and Review Periods

To allow the public time to provide comments prior to the submission of approved documents to HUD, the City will hold a minimum 30-day public review and comment period for the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, and Substantial Amendment. The City will establish a public review period of at least 15 days for each CAPER and amendments to the CPP. Copies of the draft plans will be available to the public at City of Fresno Development and Resource Management, Room 3065, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721.

The City will place public notices at libraries, recreation centers, community centers, online through the City's website, and through advertisement in the Fresno Bee in advance of a 30-day public review and comment period.

To ensure that the public, including minorities, persons with limited English proficiency, persons with disabilities, residents of public housing, and LMI residents are able to participate in the public review process, the City will provide residents, public agencies, and other stakeholders with notices on applicable public review periods and public hearings that adhere to the following:

- The notices will be published prior to the start of the public comment period and at least 15 days before the final public hearing and will include information regarding how to request accommodation and services available for persons with disabilities who wish to attend the public hearings.

The notices will be distributed to persons and agencies on the contact list maintained by the City for those parties expressing interest in receiving information and updates related to the City's Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, CAPER, Substantial Amendments and CPP. Interested parties may request to be added to this contact list by sending an email to Crystal.smith@fresno.gov, by calling (559) 621-8003 or by writing to the Fresno DARM, Room 3065, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721.

The notices will be distributed through a variety of methods, including e-mail, newspaper publications and the City's website at www.fresno.gov. The notices will include information on how to obtain a copy of the draft documents and scheduled hearing dates, times, and locations.

The public may file comments on draft plans in writing to the Fresno DARM, Room 3065, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721; via email to crystal.smith@fresno.gov; by phone at (559) 621-8003. Comments may also be submitted in person to Fresno DARM, Room 3065, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721, Monday through Friday during business hours, and during the Council adoption hearing.

When necessary or applicable, the City may combine notices complying with several individual requirements into one comprehensive notice for dissemination and publication.

Comments/Complaints on Adopted Plans

Comments or complaints from residents, public agencies, and other stakeholders regarding the adopted Consolidated Plan or related amendments and performance reports may be submitted in writing or verbally to the General Contact at Fresno DARM, Room 3065, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721. Written comments or complaints will be referred to appropriate City staff for consideration and response. The City will attempt to respond to all comments or complaints within 15 business days and maintain a correspondence file for this purpose.

HUD officials will consider public concerns regarding the City's plans and programs described in this Citizen Participation Plan. Written concerns may be submitted to: Maria Cremer, Director Community Planning and Development Division U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development San Francisco Regional Office, Region IX, One Sansome Street, Suite 1200, San Francisco, CA 94104-4430.

Availability of Draft and Approved Documents

The draft and final versions of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, CAPER, all related amendments, records, and regulations will be available online at the City's website: www.fresno.gov/conplan. Hard copies of all documents will be available at the Fresno DARM, Room 3065, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721 and upon written request. If the City is unable to provide immediate access to the documents requested, it will make every effort to provide the documents and reports within 15 business days from the receipt of the request.

During the 30-day public review and comment period, copies of the document will be available to the public for review at libraries, recreation centers, community centers, and through the City's website at www.fresno.gov.

Displacement Policy

As part of the CPP, the City must maintain a displacement policy. Displacement refers to the involuntary relocation of individuals from their residence due to housing development and rehabilitation paid for with federal funds. The City will continue to use existing federal and state relocation guidelines, as applicable, to minimize displacement and to alleviate the problems caused by displacement. Both the federal government and the State of California have specific requirements dictating the amount of benefits and assistance that must be provided to lower income persons and households relocated from their homes as a result of displacement. Depending on the funding source, displaced persons may be offered one or more of the following:

- A rent subsidy for another unit
- A cash payment to be used for rent or a down payment on the purchase of a dwelling unit
- Moving and related expenses

The City's rehabilitation programs may also incur relocation issues when they provide minor additions to existing dwellings in order to address overcrowding. Any temporary relocation costs are included in the rehabilitation package offered to clients.

Technical Assistance

The City will, to the extent feasible, respond to requests for technical assistance from entities representing LMI groups who are seeking federal entitlement funding in accordance with grant procedures. This may include, but is not limited to, providing information regarding how to fill out applications, other potential funding sources, and referrals to appropriate agencies within and outside the City. "Technical assistance," as used here, does not include the provision of funds to the entities requesting such assistance. Assistance will also be provided by Department of Housing staff to interested individuals and resident groups who need further explanation on the background and intent of the Housing and Community Development Act, interpretation of specific HUD regulations, and project eligibility criteria for federal grants.