

**CITY OF NEW HAVEN
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

Adopted: March 1995

Revised: February 1998

Updated: January 2006

INTRODUCTION

In order to receive Entitlement funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) each jurisdiction is required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan that sets forth its policies and procedures for citizen participation. Entitlement fund programs include the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the HOME program, the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. The Citizen Participation Plan must provide for and encourage citizens to participate in the development of its Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan and the Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. HUD requirements are designed especially to encourage participation by low- and moderate- income persons and by residents in areas where Community Development funds are proposed to be used. Each community is also expected to take appropriate actions to encourage the participation of all its citizens including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.

APPLICABILITY

In 1995, upon notification from HUD that the City ' s major entitlement funding programs required a consolidated submission, Mayor John DeStefano, Jr. convened an inter-agency task force to work with all segments of the New Haven community and develop a process by which the City would meet its annual submission deadlines and other programmatic requirements. The task force was comprised of representatives from city departments having an integral role in implementing federally-funded programs including the Office of Housing and Neighborhood Development (now the Livable City Initiative -- LCI), the Office of Business Development, the City Plan Department, the Office of Legislative Services, the Welfare Department (now under the auspices of the Community Services Administration), the Health Department, the Human Resources Administration and the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, representatives of the Housing Authority of

New Haven and the Vision for a Greater New Haven were participants in this effort. The process, developed by the task force in 1995, continues to be the core of the City's Citizen Participation Plan. However, the establishment of the Livable City Initiative and its neighborhood-based outreach approach in July necessitated revisions to the initial plan in 1998 and improved methods for the dissemination of information have been reflected in this updated 2006 Version.

HUD regulations require that the City prepare a full Consolidated Plan that updates its housing and community development needs, outlines its goals and priorities and develops a strategic plan at least every five years. The Consolidated Plan document is supplemented on an annual basis with an Annual Action Plan that describes the community development resources available to the City and a proposed use of funds by project and/or activity.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- **Consultation with Elected Officials:** In order to create an effective method of understanding the needs and priorities of the residents of New Haven, the elected officials (Alderspersons) of each targeted neighborhood will receive background information about the federal regulations governing Consolidated Plan Resources (CDBG, HOME, ESG, HOPWA) and the City's housing and community development goals and objectives. At the start of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan Development process local officials will be provided with an information packet describing the resources available, local goals and priorities, program eligibility and past performance information to assist in community outreach. Elected officials will be encouraged to work with their constituents to develop and represent existing neighborhood and city-wide needs, assist with the establishment of programmatic goals, objectives and strategies and help develop targeted investment criteria. As appropriate throughout the process, elected officials will be asked to facilitate neighborhood meetings as well as help identify community-based agencies, neighborhood institutions and other appropriate groups to participate in city programs.

- **Neighborhood Consultations:** Neighborhood residents are given numerous opportunities to comment on and make suggestions to the City's community development plans and activities. With the creation of the Livable City Initiative (LCI) the City has developed a structured system of neighborhood outreach. Each neighborhood has a designated Neighborhood Specialist from LCI staff. The Neighborhood Specialists serve as the liaison between neighborhood residents and City administration. Neighborhood Specialists work with community residents, police substation personnel and Community Management Teams/Neighborhood Improvement Committees to develop long-range plans and solutions to community needs. As part of the collaborative outreach process Neighborhood Specialists will also be utilized to facilitate the Citizen Participation process at the neighborhood level.

Meetings will be held at times and locations accessible to community residents. Spanish-speaking translators will be present as appropriate and assistance for the hearing impaired will be made available if it is determined through advance notice that such assistance will be needed. In addition to the presentation of background material to initiate discussion, an outline of the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan process will also be available. Neighborhood maps and information on past spending patterns will be available as appropriate. The proposed timeframe for the process including deadlines, meeting dates and the availability of draft documents for comment and review will also be presented.

Copies of all draft documents and informational materials will be made available for review at each neighborhood police substation. Meeting notices and other public notices relative to the Consolidated Plan are also posted at each sub-station by the Neighborhood Specialists.

Citizens are also given the opportunity to comment during Mayor's Night In and Mayor's Night Out programs and by scheduling meetings with City staff. Agencies that are applying for funding within a particular neighborhood will be requested by the City to present their activities before the appropriate neighborhood committee. Committees forward recommendations and comments to the City in reference to these activities.

- **Consultations with Other Collaborators:** To ensure community development activities represent the needs of the community, the administration will schedule informational opportunities for potential recipient agencies. At least two (2) informational meetings will be held to accommodate representatives of potential recipient agencies. Information will be made available which describes expected funding levels, past funding investments, meeting schedules, and the legislative review process. The application for funding and approval criteria will also be reviewed. Eligible activities and beneficiaries will be detailed. It is not expected that individual citizens will be involved in the development of agency applications. Most individual citizen requests for funding will be originated through agencies or city departments that accept individual requests for assistance, such as LCI. LCI will accept applications for CDBG and HOME funds for homeowner rehabilitation and homebuyer assistance on an on-going basis. In addition, LCI will review applications for assistance for larger projects from not-for-profits both through the advertised process and on a continuing basis while funds are available.

- Letters announcing the availability of funds and the location(s) of the information meetings will be sent to local agencies that provide public service, housing rehabilitation, community development and economic development assistance and other groups that provide service to citizens who are presumed to be income eligible. A list of over 150 agencies have been identified by City departments as past or potential recipients. A notice of availability of funds, which includes the announcement of the application process and dates for the informational meetings, is also published in the New Haven Register, regional publications of general circulation and papers targeting the Hispanic and Black/African-American populations.

- In addition to local activities, City representatives participate in regional discussions of community development issues through meetings with the South Central Regional Council of Governments, the Connecticut Council on Municipalities, the Regional Growth Connection, the Regional Growth Partnership, the Affordable Housing Roundtable and other

such entities. Through these venues discussions of housing, community development, special needs, economic development, employment needs, job training needs and transportation needs of the region are possible.

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED

In order to ensure access to information, the public will have access to reports, information and records during normal working hours (9am to 5pm) throughout the year. Copies of draft materials will be placed in the Office of the City/Town Clerk, LCI, Office of the Development Administrator, and the Main Branch of the Public Library until a Plan is adopted. In addition, copies will be placed at all Police Substations and the Office of Management and Budget. Copies of draft documents, final plans and reports and supporting documentation are also posted on the City's website for review and comment.

If the information requested should be about items not covered in the current Consolidated Plan every effort will be made to ensure that the request be referred to the proper agency responsible for the item in question.

TYPES OF INFORMATION TO BE MADE AVAILABLE

- Consolidated Plan overview
- Five Year Consolidated Plan
- Annual Action Plans
- Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports
- Citizen Participation Plan
- Maps of the City (Census Tracts, Wards, Neighborhoods)
- Schedule for Legislative Review of Consolidated Plan
- Dates of opportunities for public participation and comment
- Previous Spending Patterns
- Resources available for the next fiscal year
- Eligible activities which benefit low, very low, and extremely low income persons
- Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan

NOTIFICATION OF CITIZENS

- A Notice describing the availability of federal funding and dates for the informational workshops will appear in the New Haven Register during the month of October.
- It is estimated that the Draft Plans or Annual Action Plans will be available no later than March 1 prior to the new fiscal year. A Notice will appear in the appropriate publications announcing the availability of the Draft Plan for review and comment. Draft Plans will be available for review at the Main Branch of the Public Library, the City/Town Clerk's Office, Police Substations, City Plan, Office of the Development Administrator and other accessible locations.
- A Summary of the Draft Plan or Annual Action Plan will be published and made available.
- A schedule of neighborhood meetings and Aldermanic hearings will be published.
- Notification will also be provided by publications in a Spanish language newspaper and one with a predominately African American circulation.
- At the end of each program year, the City will publish a notice of the availability of its Annual Performance and Evaluation Report.

PUBLICATION OF A DRAFT CONSOLIDATED PLAN OR ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

- The City of New Haven will publish an open letter to the residents of the City inviting participation in the development of a Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan and advertising the availability of community development funding.
- The City of New Haven will publish a summary of the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan prior to its availability in at least one general circulation newspaper and a notice of availability in one Spanish language newspaper and one with a predominately African-American circulation as available. The summary will include:
 - * A description of the plan contents
 - * Amount and type of funding available
 - * The locations where the Consolidated Plan is available for review
 - * An Annual Action Plan and Budget

- * A schedule of neighborhood meetings and Aldermanic hearings will be included.

- The City will make efforts to provide Spanish language equivalents of all notices and plan summaries.
- The City will provide alternate methods of communication upon request for those with special needs.
- Copies of Draft Plans will be posted on the City's website for public review and comment as a means to increase convenience and availability to the public.
- Copies of the draft Five Year Consolidated Plan will be sent to the Regional Council of Governments and neighboring municipalities.

COMMENT PERIOD

Citizens will be encouraged to comment upon the Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan. They will be asked to submit comments during public hearings and other public meetings, neighborhood meetings and in writing. The comment period will extend for at least thirty (30) days. All comments will be considered and a written response from the appropriate City Department will be issued within fifteen (15) days of receipt as appropriate.

Written comments shall be sent to:

Office of Management and Budget
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510
Re: Consolidated Plan

Phone: (203) 946-8390

Fax: (203) 946-7924

- Schedule of public meetings for comments will be published at least one week prior to the beginning of the public comment period.
- Responses in Spanish will be available.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The annual performance report, as required by HUD shall be made available in the same locations as the Consolidated Plan documents to afford all citizens sufficient opportunity to comment before submission to HUD. Notification of the availability of such report shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation. An Executive Summary and notification of availability will also be posted on the City's website. Citizens will be afforded a period of fifteen days in which to examine and submit comments on the performance report.

The City shall consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally in preparing the performance report and will attach a summary of comments or views to the performance report.

Upon submission of the final annual performance and evaluation report to HUD, the Office of Management and Budget shall make it available to the public.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Access to federal regulations, previous applications and correspondence, agreements, amendments to previous grants and applications, minutes or summaries of all public hearings or meetings, Performance Reports, and other federal and local procedures and policies regarding contracting, rehabilitation, environmental reviews, fair housing, equal opportunity, relocation or other related and relevant documentation will be available through the Management and Budget Office of the City during normal working hours. Translation services will be available upon request.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In order to ensure that the public has an understanding of the schedule and application process two technical assistance workshops/informational meetings will be scheduled prior to the application submission period. Staff of the appropriate city departments will be available at the workshops and for individual consultation up to the application deadline. Staff will be available to review with the applicant the scope of the work to ensure their submission meets eligibility requirements. Assistance to Spanish speakers and persons with disabilities will be available.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There will be a minimum of two periods during the program year when public hearings/meetings will allow citizens to comment on housing and community development needs. Priorities for non-housing needs will also be sought. The first will occur at the beginning of the application period. These opportunities will allow citizens to comment upon past and current spending needs and to testify about community need. This process will guide staff during the preparation of a Draft Plans. During late February, or the month of March at the latest, public meeting(s), accessible to potential and actual beneficiaries, will be held to review the Draft Consolidated Plan or Action Plan. Spanish translation will be available. In addition, the legislative review process contains additional opportunity for citizen comment. The schedule of meetings will be published in the Notice advertising the availability of the Draft Plans. Such notices will be published to give citizens adequate advance notice of the scheduled meeting dates.

COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

Citizen comments and complaints will be taken at public hearings, neighborhood meetings, and in writing. Additionally, citizens are encouraged to comment during any public hearing or neighborhood meeting. All comments and complaints will be acknowledged and answered in writing by the appropriate City department within 15 working days of receipt. All comments and complaints should be sent to:

Office of Management and Budget
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510
Re: Consolidated Plan

Phone: (203) 946-8390
Fax: (203) 946-7924

A summary of all such comments will accompany final Plan submissions to HUD.

PLAN AMENDMENTS

Any substantial change in the activities adopted in the Strategies and Goals or the One Year Action Plan will require an amendment to be submitted to HUD. A substantial change will mean any new use of funds, major reprogramming of funds (a reprogramming of more than 0.5% of the grant allocation for a given program year or \$100,000 whichever is greater), or a change in the method of distributing funds not previously contemplated in the original submission. Such changes must be approved by the City's legislative body. In order to advise residents of such changes the City will publish notice of the public hearing wherein changes will be discussed. Every effort will be made to inform those affected by major changes by posting notices in neighborhoods and City offices, libraries, City/Town Clerk office and other appropriate locations. At least one public hearing will be held at which citizen comment will be solicited. All comments will be considered before final adoption of an amendment. The final amendment will then be available to the public.