

CITY OF TULARE, CALIFORNIA

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN – 2015-2019

PURPOSE

In 1994, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development issued new rules consolidating the planning, application, reporting, and citizen participation processes of four formula grant programs: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Home Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA). The new planning process was intended to more comprehensively fulfill three basic goals: to provide decent housing, to provide a suitable living environment and to expand economic opportunities. The City of Tulare is a CDBG Entitlement Community.

The Consolidated Plan is actually a three-part planning process required by HUD. It comprises developing a five-year strategic plan, preparing annual action plans and submitting annual performance reports. These three parts are intended to furnish the framework whereby the City of Tulare can identify its housing, homeless, community, and economic development needs; identify resources that will be tapped and actions to be taken to address the needs; as well as look back and evaluate the City's progress toward achieving its strategic goals. Completing these documents on time and in a manner that is acceptable to HUD ensures program funding.

The precursor to the Consolidated Plan is the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP). The objectives of the CPP are to ensure that the citizens of City of Tulare, particularly persons of low and moderate income, persons living in slum and blight areas, units of local government, housing agencies and other interested parties, are provided with the opportunity to participate in the planning and preparation of the Consolidated Plan, including amendments to the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Performance Report. In doing so, the CPP sets forth general policies and procedures for implementing and carrying out the consolidated planning process, such as how the Consolidated Plan will be developed, dates and milestones along which the process will proceed, and methods for citizens to offer the City assistance and guidance in the formulation of the Plan. Furthermore, the provisions of the CPP fulfill statutory and regulatory requirements for citizen participation as specified in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's rules for the Consolidated Plan, the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program. In the City of Tulare, the Community Development

Department is the lead agency for developing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting on the achievements of the Consolidated Plan.

The Consolidated Plan identifies the housing and community development needs of the City of Tulare, and sets priorities for spending the HUD grant funds. Public comment is a vital component of identifying the City's housing and community development needs and spending priorities. The Consolidated Plan offers the opportunity for strategic Citywide planning to occur alongside citizen participation.

COMMENT ON THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN AND AMENDMENTS

The City of Tulare Community Development Department will receive comments on the proposed Citizen Participation Plan during a 15 day comment period. In the event that there are substantial amendments to this Citizen Participation Plan, an additional comment period of at least 15 days will be allotted. This proposed Citizen Participation Plan (and, if necessary, the substantially amended Citizen Participation Plan) will be made available to the public before the 15 day comment period begins.

Individuals who require accommodations, including appropriate auxiliary aids, translated documents or interpreters to participate in a public hearing, or who would like to request a copy of the proposed Citizen Participation Plan, or another document, in an alternate format, should contact the Community Development Department at 559-684-4217.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The Consolidated Plan is designed to enumerate the City of Tulare's overall strategy for coordinating federal and other housing and community development resources to provide decent housing, establish and maintain a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities, particularly for low and moderate income persons.

Interested groups and individuals are encouraged to provide input into all aspects of City of Tulare's consolidated planning activities, from assessing needs to setting priorities through performance evaluation. By following the CPP, there will be a number of opportunities for citizens to contribute information, ideas and opinions about ways to improve our neighborhoods, promote housing affordability and enhance the delivery of public services to residents.

Affirmative efforts to encourage and solicit participation from the City's residents and populations least likely to have awareness of HUD-funded programs and processes

including low-income residents, individuals with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, and female-headed households shall include:

1. Advertising the details of the CPP (e.g. documents for public review, meetings, opportunities to provide feedback and comment) in the City's daily newspapers, and other daily or non-daily publications;
2. Sending notice of the CPP (e.g. documents for public review, meetings, opportunities to provide feedback and comment) with advocacy groups, non-profit and for profit organizations, and City and community agencies that provide services to or advocate for low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities and female-headed households; and
3. Posting Notifications on the City's website and at the City Library, Senior Citizens' Center, and City Hall.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PERSONS AND THE LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

The City of Tulare will make every effort to ensure that Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons have meaningful access to federally funded programs and services as is required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The City of Tulare has a diverse population where many languages are spoken. A substantial number of persons that speak these languages do not speak English or do not speak English very well, and are considered Limited English Proficient (LEP).

Regardless of which language a person speaks or their ability to speak English, the City of Tulare will make every effort to ensure that they have meaningful access to federal funding services through either oral interpretation or written translations of vital documents.

Since the City of Tulare has a number of LEP persons, all citywide public notices and public hearings must ensure that language services are provided or available.

The City of Tulare is confident that no person will be denied federally funded services based on their ability to speak English.

The City of Tulare is committed to keeping all interested groups and individuals informed of each phase of the consolidated planning process and of activities being proposed or undertaken under HUD formula grant programs. Opportunities to comment on or participate in planning community development and affordable housing activities and projects will be publicized and disseminated throughout the City.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

At least one public hearing will be held to gather comments on the Consolidated Plan. The hearing will be held prior to drafting of the plan.

A summary of the written and oral public comments from individuals or groups received in writing or at the public meetings will be considered for inclusion in the Consolidated Plan.

All venues used for interviews, focus groups, grant applications, and public meetings are fully accessible to people with disabilities that impact mobility. Should a venue not be fully accessible, the individual(s) should contact the Community Development Department at 559-684-4217.

PUBLICATION OF CONSOLIDATED PLAN DOCUMENTS

The City will publish the draft Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan for public review in a manner that affords citizens, public agencies and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and submit comments. The Draft Plan will be a complete document and shall include:

- The amount of assistance the City expects to receive, and
- The range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income.

A notice for the release of the Draft Plan will be published in a newspaper of general circulation at the beginning of the public comment period. The release will include a list of locations where copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan may be obtained or examined.

Citizens and groups may obtain a reasonable number of free copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan by contacting the Department of Community Development at 559-684-4217.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT CONSOLIDATED PLAN AND ANNUAL ACTION PLANS

One public meeting will be held to gather input from citizens regarding proposed changes. Written comments and citizen participation by low and moderate income individuals, minorities, non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities will be encouraged

through the affirmative efforts outlined in the Encouragement of Citizen Participation section on page 2.

Notices of the meetings will be published in the daily newspaper no less than 15 days prior to the meeting and a press release will be forwarded to all the newspapers. The Department will also attempt to email a copy of the notice or press release to interested parties.

The proposed Consolidated Plan will be made available to interested parties for a comment period of no less than 30 days.

Along with the notification that the proposed Consolidated Plan is available for public comment, a summary of the proposed plan's contents and purpose will be published. The notification will be published on or before the day the proposed Consolidated Plan comment period begins. Locations where copies of the entire proposed plan may be obtained will also be stated in the notice.

The proposed Consolidated Plan will be available on the City's website at www.tulare.ca.gov for the full public comment period. Copies of the proposed plan will also be available from the City's Community Development Department during the public comment period.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

An informed citizenry is critical to effective and responsive housing and community development programs. Efforts to educate residents and empower their participation are an ongoing element of the consolidated planning process.

Public education and outreach will be facilitated through the use of public advertisements that describe the consolidated planning process, opportunities for citizen participation and available funding through the CDBG program.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Groups or individuals interested in obtaining technical assistance to develop project proposals or applying for funding assistance through HUD formula grant programs covered by the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan may contact the staff of the City of Tulare Department of Community Development. Such assistance may be of particular use to community development organizations, nonprofit service providers, and for-profit and nonprofit housing development groups that serve or represent persons of low and moderate income.

SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT CRITERIA FOR THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN

The following will constitute a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan:

1. A change in the method of distribution or grant selection criteria.
2. The addition of an activity not initially identified in the Consolidated Plan.
3. Funding of an activity not identified in the Consolidated Plan as a high or medium priority.

ADMINISTRATIVE AMENDMENTS

Administrative amendments are those that are not considered substantial in nature and pertain chiefly to minor administrative modifications of the programs. Thus they do not require in-depth citizen participation.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE EVENT OF A SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT

In the event of a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan, the City, depending on the nature of the amendment, will conduct at least one additional public hearing. This hearing will follow a comment period of no less than 30 days, where the proposed substantially amended Consolidated Plan will be made available to interested parties. Citizens will be informed of the public hearing through daily newspaper notification and the City's website prior to the hearing.

Citizens will be notified of the substantially amended Consolidated Plan's availability through newspaper notification prior to the 30-day comment period. The substantially amended sections of the Consolidated Plan will be available on the Community Development Department's section of the City's website, www.tulare.ca.gov for the full public comment period.

CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE SUBSTANTIALLY AMENDED PLAN

In the event of substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, the City will openly consider any comments on the substantially amended Consolidated Plan from individuals or groups. Comments must be received in writing or at public hearings. A summary of the written and public hearing comments on the substantial amendments will be included in the amended Consolidated Plan. The final Consolidated Plan will also include a summary of all comments not accepted and their reasons for dismissal.

CHANGES IN FEDERAL FUNDING LEVEL

Any changes in federal funding level after the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan's draft comment period has expired and the resulting effect on the distribution of funds will not be considered an amendment or a substantial amendment.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Performance reports on the CDBG program covered by the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan are to be prepared by the City of Tulare Department of Community Development within 90 days of the start of each program year. Draft performance reports will be made available upon written request. The draft performance report will be available for comment for no less than 15 days, and any public comments received in writing will be reported in an addendum to the final performance report.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

To the extent allowed by law, interested citizens and organizations shall be afforded reasonable and timely access to records covering the preparation of the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, project evaluation and selection, HUD's comments on the Plan and annual performance reports. In addition, materials on formula grant programs covered by the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, including activities undertaken in the previous five years, will be made available to any member of the public who requests information. A complete file of citizen comments will also be available for review by interested parties.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Citizens, administering agencies, and other interested parties may submit complaints and grievances regarding the programs the City of Tulare Community Development Department. Complaints should be in writing, specific in their subject matter, and include facts to support allegations. The following are considered as constituting complaints to which a response is due:

- The administering agency has purportedly violated a provision of the Citizen Participation Plan;
- The administering agency has purportedly violated a provision of federal CDBG program regulations; and

- The administering agency, or any of its contractors, has purportedly engaged in questionable practices resulting in waste, fraud or mismanagement of any program funds.

Residents may also present complaints and grievances orally or in writing at the community meetings and/or public hearing. All public comments, including complaints and grievances, made either orally or in writing within the 30-day public comment period, will be included in the final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. Such complaints or grievances about CDBG may be directed to the City of Tulare Community Development Department.

TIMELY RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the designated representative at the City shall respond to the complainant within 15 calendar days and maintain a copy of all related correspondence, which will be subject to review.

Within 15 calendar days of receiving the complaint, the designated representative shall discuss the matter with the department manager and respond to the complainant in writing. A copy of the City's response will be transmitted concurrently to the complainant and to the Community Development Director. If, due to unusual circumstances, the designated representative finds that he/she is unable to meet the prescribed time limit, the limit may be extended by written notice to the complainant. The designated representative's notice must include the reason for the extension and the date on which a response is expected to be generated, which may be based on the nature and complexity of the complaint.

Public review materials and performance reports will include data, as appropriate under confidentiality regulations, on any written complaints received and how each was resolved.

ACTIVITIES EXEMPT FROM SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

URGENT NEEDS

It may be necessary to amend the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan in the event of an emergency such as a natural disaster. These amendments may include funding new activities and/or the reprogramming of funds including canceling activities to meet community development needs that have a particular urgency. Therefore the City of

Tulare may utilize its CDBG funds to meet an urgent need without the normal public comment period, which is otherwise required for substantial amendments.

To comply with the national objective of meeting community development needs having a particular urgency, an activity will alleviate existing conditions that the City of Tulare certifies:

- Pose a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community;
- Are of recent origin or recently became urgent;
- Are unable to be financed by the City on its own; or
- Other funding resources are not available to carry out the activity.

A condition will generally be considered to be of recent origin if it developed or became critical within 18 months preceding the Community Development Department's certification.

AVAILABILITY OF THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN (CPP)

Citizens and groups may obtain a reasonable number of free copies of the proposed CPP by contacting the Community Development Department at 559-684-4217.