



# **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**CITY OF COCOA  
COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES DIVISION**

**May 2024**

Federal funds provided by the  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Community Planning and Development

**Under Review by the City of Cocoa Board of County Commissioners  
(This version supersedes prior versions of the Citizen Participation Plan)**

In accordance with CFR 24, Part 91 and Part 5, Subpart A, Section 5.158, the City of Cocoa is required to develop a Citizen Participation Plan and is hereby certifying that the following policies and procedures are being undertaken:

### **CONSULTATION**

- When preparing the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, the annual Action Plan, the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), and the Section 108 Loan Program, the City shall consult with other public and private agencies which provide housing, health, and social services (including those agencies focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and homeless persons).
- When preparing the portion of the Consolidated Plan concerning lead-based paint hazards, the City shall consult with State or local health and child welfare agencies. The City shall examine existing data related to lead-based paint hazards and poisonings, including health department data on the addresses of housing units in which children have been identified as lead poisoned, if available.
- The City shall consult with local government agencies with metropolitan-wide planning responsibilities, particularly for problems and solutions that go beyond the City's jurisdiction.
- The City shall consult with the local public housing agency participating in an approved Comprehensive Grant program concerning consideration of public housing needs and planned Comprehensive Grant program activities. The City shall encourage the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan, Fair Housing Assessment, and the Section 108 Loan Program along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located. The City shall provide information to the housing agency about Consolidated Plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the housing agency can make this information available at the annual public hearing required under the Comprehensive Grant program. Also, the City shall cooperate in providing resident programs and services and will help ensure that activities with regard to local drug elimination, neighborhood improvement programs, and resident programs and services, funded

under the public housing program and those funded under a program covered by the Consolidated Plan are fully coordinated to achieve comprehensive community development goals.

## **ENCOURAGEMENT OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

### **Regulatory Requirements**

The regulations require that the CPP outline the jurisdiction's process for encouraging citizen participation and input from stakeholders such as local and regional institutions, public housing authorities, Continuums of Care, and other organizations such as businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations in the development of the Con Plan, AAP, CAPER, and fair housing plan. The jurisdiction should encourage participation by low- and moderate-income persons in the community, non-English speakers (or those who speak English less than very well), and persons with disabilities.

The process of citizen participation shall be provided on a community-wide basis, to encourage citizens to participate in the development of the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments, annual Action Plan, and performance reports with particular emphasis on participation by persons of low- and moderate-income, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are proposed to be used. The City will encourage the participation of all citizens, including residents of predominately low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, minorities, non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities. All plans and reports shall be in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. Notices of public hearings and meetings will be circulated to local churches, made available to community groups, organizations and interested persons. Notices will be posted at strategic locations throughout the City, as well as advertised in a newspaper of general circulation.

The City will provide timely and reasonable notice to the public to receive comments on the Consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan, substantial amendments, and performance reports during the planning year. All comments will be reviewed by the City and shall be considered prior to the adoption of the particular plan or document. The City shall respond to any written responses or comments within fifteen (15) working days, where practical. The City will consult with the public housing agency to notify them of the



availability of funding in relation to their housing needs and to provide information on the priority housing and non-housing needs for residents of public and assisted housing in the development of the Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plan. The City shall make available any performance reports to citizens and provide them reasonable notice and opportunity to comment. Reports shall be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation no less than fifteen (15) days prior to submission to U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

### **FAIR HOUSING**

In coordination with the Con Plan process, the County prepares a fair housing plan and reports annual progress toward the identified fair housing goals and actions in the CAPER.

In accordance with new regulatory requirements at 24 CFR Part 5, 24 CFR 5.158 and 5.164, community consultation and citizen participation will be encouraged in preparing and revising the City's Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) to affirmatively further fair housing. The AFH will be prepared and submitted with each new five-year consolidated plan.

Fair housing plans typically contain the following sections:

- A summary of the citizen and stakeholder engagement conducted by the County to gather input from the community on the fair housing issues impacting each jurisdiction included in the plan.
- An analysis of the demographic composition of persons residing in each jurisdiction included in the plan.
- An assessment of the fair housing issues that restrict fair housing choice or access to opportunities.
- An assessment of the contributing factors that create, contribute to, perpetuate, or exacerbate one or more of the identified fair housing issues.
- An identification of the Consortium's fair housing goals and actions to address the identified fair housing issues in each jurisdiction.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN**

The City of Cocoa shall make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance the City expects to receive (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income. The City shall indicate a plan for minimizing displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with federal funds and to assist persons displaced as a

result of such activities, specifying the types and levels of assistance the City shall make available (or require others to make available) to persons displaced, even if the City expects no displacement to occur. This will be accomplished via community meetings, public hearings, legal notices and posted notices at City Hall and throughout the community.

Also, the City shall make available in a newspaper of general circulation, a summary of the consolidated Plan, describing its contents and purpose, a list of the locations where copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan may be examined, and where the copies of the entire document can be reviewed. Copies of the Consolidated Plan, Assessment of Fair Housing, and Section 108 Loan Program Project will be provided at City Hall, the local library, and at the Brevard County Housing & Human Services Department. A reasonable number of free copies of the plan to citizens and groups shall be available upon request. The Plan process will provide for at least one public hearing during the development of the Consolidated Plan and provide a period, not less than thirty (30) days, to receive comments from citizens on the proposed Consolidated Plan. All comments received in writing, or orally at public hearings will be considered in preparing the final plan. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefor, shall be attached and submitted with the final Consolidated Plan.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The City of Cocoa will provide for at least two (2) public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions, to be conducted at a minimum of two (2) different stages of the program year. Together, the hearings shall address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and review of program performance. The City shall obtain the views of citizens on housing and community development needs, including priority non-housing community development and Fair housing concerns, and shall provide at least one (1) of the hearings is held before the proposed Consolidated Plan is published for comment. Public hearings shall be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation one (1) week prior to the public hearing and information will be circulated to local churches, organizations, and at various locations throughout the community. Public hearings shall be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, and with accommodations for persons with disabilities.

In the event a significant number of non-English speaking residents are expected to participate at the hearings, the City will make arrangements for a suitable method of communication to be available to the group, providing a request is made at least two (2) working days prior to the public hearing.

### **MEETINGS**

Citizens will be provided reasonable and timely access to local meetings. Additionally, notices will be sent various housing and community development agencies and posted throughout the City at least one week prior to the meeting date.

### **AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC**

If the City decided to amend or make substantial changes to the adopted Consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan, or performance reports, a public notice will be placed in a newspaper of general circulation making the modified plan available to citizens for review and comment in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

### **ACCESS TO RECORDS**

The City will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records in relation to the consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan, substantial amendments performance reports, and the City's use of assistance under the programs during the preceding five (5) years. All information shall be available to citizens at the City of Cocoa Community Services Office, which is currently located at 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL 32922.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The City, through the Community Services Department, will provide technical assistance to organizations and representatives of persons of low- and moderate-income that requests such assistance in developing proposals and understanding the process of requesting funds. The level and type of assistance will be determined upon the needs of each individual request. City staff will provide speakers to address any community or civic group wishing to obtain information regarding the program.



## **COMPLAINTS**

The Community Services Director or Designee shall make every effort possible to respond in writing within fifteen (15) days to any written or oral complaint, when practical. A citizen may file a written complaint at any time to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at the following address:

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Jacksonville Office of Community Planning and Development  
400 West Bay Street, Suite 1015  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

## **CRITERIA FOR AMENDMENTS**

The City shall provide citizens with reasonable notice of, and opportunity to comment on, proposed changes in the adopted consolidated Plan and annual Action Plan if such change would result in: changes in the City's allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds; and/or carrying out an activity using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income), not previously described in the annual Action Plan.

The City shall apply the following criteria in determining whether a change in an activity represents a substantial amendment. An activity shall be considered substantially changed if:

- The percentage of federal funds expended for the benefit of very low-, low-, and moderate-income persons falls below its required 70% as a result of any proposed increase or decrease in expenditures for any one project or activity.
- Any changes in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity that would increase or decrease the estimated cost of the project or activity by more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount projected in the annual Action Plan.

**Note: Allocations for projects and activities included in the annual Action Plan can be increased or decreased more than twenty-five percent (25%) provided there is not a change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of the activity.**

Reallocation of CDBG and/or Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds in relation to an addition or deletion of priority needs and projects are as follows:

- The addition of a new priority need not included in the adopted Consolidated Plan or a new project in the annual Action Plan which is not cover by a priority need in the adopted Consolidated Plan.
- The deletion of a priority need identified in the adopted Consolidated Plan or a deletion of a project or activity identified in the annual Action Plan which would prevent a priority need identified in the approved Consolidated Plan from being attained.

The City shall provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on any substantial changes and amendments made to the adopted Consolidated Plan. Citizens will be provided a period, not less than thirty (30) days, to comment on substantial amendments before the amendment is implemented. Any comments or views received in writing, or orally at public hearing, will be considered by the City and summarized and attached to the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan for submission to HUD.

The City and members of the Brevard County HOME Consortium are responsible for the development of their respective Citizen Participation Plans, individual CDBG entitlement grants. All HOME and CDBG program amendments initiated by the City must be submitted to Brevard Housing & Human Services for submittal to HUD.

The Citizen Participation Plan was previously approved by City Council on May 27, 2008.

**Approved by the City Council on:**\_\_\_\_\_

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**Michael C. Blake, Mayor**



## Acronyms/Definitions

Acronym	Definition
<b>AAP</b>	Annual Action Plan
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>CAPER</b>	Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report
<b>CDBG</b>	Community Development Block Grant
<b>Con Plan</b>	Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development
<b>CPP</b>	Citizen Participation Plan
<b>HOME</b>	HOME Investment Partnerships Program
<b>HUD</b>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>LEP</b>	Limited English Proficiency