

**City of North Chicago
Community Development Block Grant
And
HOME Investment Partnerships**

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN



Prepared by the City of North Chicago
Department of Economic and Community Development
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INTRODUCTION

As a direct recipient of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and as a recipient of HOME Investment Partnerships funds as part of the Lake County HOME Consortium, the City of North Chicago is required to prepare and submit a Consolidated Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This plan includes a statement of affordable housing and non-housing community development needs, strategies for addressing those needs, and an Annual Action Plan for use of the City's CDBG funds and the Lake County HOME Consortium's HOME funds. HUD regulations guiding preparation of the Consolidated Plan also require the City to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan that sets forth the City's policies and procedures for participation by residents in matters pertaining to development and amendment of the Consolidated Plan. These guidelines are promulgated at 24 CFR Part 91.

The North Chicago City Council adopted the City's first Consolidated Plan, for fiscal years 1995 through 1999, on May 23, 1995. North Chicago citizens and community organizations were instrumental in formulation of the Consolidated Plan, and will be encouraged to actively participate in implementation of the plan as well as any amendments which may be made to the document.

Citizen participation is a key component of the decision-making process in all city programs. Citizen participation is particularly important to the CDBG and HOME programs as these programs provide funds for neighborhood development and redevelopment. Without citizen input into these activities, the City would have no means of gauging public opinion on past performance of these programs nor would the City be able to schedule future activities conducive to the needs of its residents.

The City of North Chicago, through its Citizens Advisory Committee, the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Lake County Community Development Division, has provided and will continue to provide citizens with adequate opportunities to participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan. Through the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Lake County Community Development Division, the City will provide information to citizens, hold public hearings to obtain views of residents, and provide citizens with opportunities to comment on the activities on the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.

This Citizen Participation Plan identifies the minimum levels of citizen participation activities which will be undertaken by the Citizens Advisory Committee, the Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Lake County Community Development Division as they implement the City's CDBG and HOME programs. The Citizens Advisory Committee, the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Lake County Community Development Division are encouraged to exceed these minimum levels whenever staffing and funding allow.

SCOPE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The City of North Chicago shall provide for citizen participation throughout all stages of the Community Development Program. This includes citizen involvement in the development of the Citizen Participation Plan, and any amendments to this plan, as well as involvement in the following areas:

1. Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan Development – Citizens shall be involved in the development of the Consolidated Plan, including the Annual Action Plan and substantial amendments.
2. Consolidated Plan Implementation – Citizens shall be involved in an advisory role in policy decisions regarding program implementation via the Citizens Advisory Committee.
3. Assessment of Consolidated Plan Performance – Citizens and citizen organizations shall be given the opportunity to assess and submit comments on all aspects of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and the Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), including the performance of any program sub-grantees. Citizens shall also be given the opportunity to assess projects and activities to determine whether Consolidated Plan strategies are being achieved. Citizens shall have opportunities to assess performance through public hearings and meetings, as well as contact with the Citizens Advisory Committee, the Department of Economic and Community Development, and Lake County Community Development Division staff.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) consists of a group of seven (7) members, all of whom are either North Chicago residents or representatives from the business, industrial and institutional use communities. No more than three (3) members shall be from the business, industrial and institutional use communities. The Mayor with consent of the City Council appoints these members. All offices are for two (2) year terms.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) members make recommendations to the City Council on issues related to the CDBG and HOME programs, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Identification of housing and non-housing community development needs of low-income persons and persons with special needs such as homeless persons and non-homeless persons requiring supportive housing.
- Identification of strategies to address housing and community development needs.

- Establishment of programs and activities to further housing and community development strategies.
- Recommendation of CDBG and HOME program activities and budgets.
- Scheduling of Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan preparation and public hearings.
- Evaluation of program effectiveness.

The Department of Economic and Community Development, with assistance from the Lake County Community Development Division, will provide staff support for the Citizens Advisory Committee, as well as communicate CAC recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. All meetings of the CAC are open to the general public.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Citizen Participation Plan provides for hearings to obtain citizen views at different stages of the CDBG and HOME Program. Hearings are held at 6:00 PM at City Hall, 1850 Lewis Avenue, to permit broad participation by all residents. Public hearing arrangements shall facilitate the full participation of persons with disabilities, non-English speaking citizens, and elderly residents. All hearings shall be held in the City Council Chambers, which is accessible to persons with disabilities. Since many CDBG and HOME activities are targeted toward residents of low-income neighborhoods, some hearings may be located at sites within these neighborhoods for the convenience of these residents.

Preliminary Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan Hearings

The City shall hold hearings prior to beginning work on the Consolidated Plan and/or the Annual Action Plan. Purposes of the hearings are to obtain comments on housing and non-housing community development needs, to obtain comments on program progress and performance, and to obtain proposals for use of CDBG and HOME funds for the next year.

Proposed Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan Hearing

The City shall hold at least one hearing to receive comments on the draft Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan. The hearing shall be held at least thirty (30) days prior to submittal of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan to HUD. The City in preparing a final document for submittal to HUD shall consider all comments received regarding the draft plan, whether written or verbal. A summary of comments and City responses shall be included with the final submittal.

Substantial Program Amendments

The City shall hold at least one public hearing on any proposed substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. An amendment to the Plan is considered substantial if it meets any of the following five criteria:

- The amendment proposes to use either CDBG or HOME funds for one or more activities that were not approved as part of the Annual Action Plan.
- The amendment proposes to alter the purpose, location, or class of beneficiaries of activities included in the Annual Action Plan.
- The amendment proposes to increase expenditures for any activity included in the approved Annual Action Plan by more than ten percent (10%) of the amount shown in the approved plan.
- The amendment proposes to support applications by the City or other local agencies for funds from grant programs other than those identified in the approved Consolidated Plan.
- The amendment proposes a strategy not included in the approved Consolidated Plan.

The City shall provide citizens at least thirty (30) days to comment on any proposed substantial amendment prior to taking final action on the proposed amendment. The Department of Economic and Community Development or Lake County Community Development Division shall notify HUD of any substantial amendment adopted by the City Council.

Any proposed amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan not meeting the foregoing definition of “substantial amendment” may be authorized by the CAC without special public notice or public hearing.

Public Notice

The City shall give adequate notice of all public hearings using the following methods.

- Residents of neighborhoods targeted for expenditure of CDBG funds shall be notified of Preliminary Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan hearings and the Proposed Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan hearing by direct mailing of the City’s newsletter.
- The City shall publish a notice of each hearing in legible type in the non-legal/non-classified section of the *Lake County News-Sun* at least fourteen (14) days prior to each hearing. Notices shall indicate the date, time, place, and purpose of each hearing. Public notices shall also include the following information:

- ✓ The amount of CDBG and HOME funds available to the City for community development and affordable housing activities, including the annual grant, program income, and miscellaneous funds.
 - ✓ The range of activities that may be undertaken with CDBG and HOME funds and examples of activities previously funded through these programs.
 - ✓ The process for drafting and approving the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan, including a schedule of meetings and hearings.
 - ✓ The role of citizens in development of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan.
 - ✓ A summary of important program requirements.
 - ✓ Information indicating how citizens can obtain summaries of the City's most recent Consolidated Plan draft, budget and multi-year fiscal plan.
- At the time notices are published in the newspaper, copies of the newspaper text shall be mailed to appropriate neighborhood organizations and social service agencies involved with the CDBG and HOME programs in North Chicago, including the North Chicago Housing Authority.



PUBLIC INFORMATION

The City shall provide the public full access to program information and shall make an affirmative effort to provide adequate information to citizens, particularly low-income residents residing in neighborhoods targeted by the CDBG and/or HOME program. The Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan as drafted and adopted, substantial amendments as proposed and adopted, and performance reports as proposed and adopted shall be available to the general public. Upon request, these materials shall be made available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities.

The City shall provide full and timely disclosure of its program records and information consistent with federal, state, and local laws regarding personal privacy and confidentiality. Citizens may review documents relevant to the CDBG and HOME programs upon request at the Department of Economic and Community Development during normal working hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM).

When the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan has been received and approved by HUD, the City shall publish a notice in the *Lake County News-Sun* stating that the document has been received and approved by HUD and is available to interested parties upon request.

The City shall provide citizens with opportunities to comment on draft performance reports (CAPERs) prior to their submittal to HUD. The City shall publish a notice in the *Lake County News-Sun* announcing availability of a draft performance report. The notice shall be published in the non-legal/non-classified section of the *Lake County News-Sun* at least fourteen (14) days prior to its submission to HUD. A summary of comments received by the City on the performance report (CAPER) shall be attached to the report submitted to HUD.

Copies of proposed and approved Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, the Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPERs), and substantial amendments to the plan shall be available for public review at the following locations:

North Chicago Public Library, 2100 Argonne Drive
Department of Economic and Community Development, 1850 Lewis Avenue

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS AND PROPOSALS

The City shall encourage submission of comments and proposals concerning the CDBG and HOME programs by all citizens, particularly low-income persons and residents of low-income neighborhoods. This includes submission of comments to staff, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and to the City Council.

In notices of public hearings regarding preliminary and draft Consolidated Plans/Annual Action Plans, the City shall make clear the availability of CDBG and HOME funds to eligible subrecipients. Notices shall describe the process by which organizations may apply for CDBG and HOME funds from the City. For full consideration, all proposals shall be addressed to the City in care of the Department of Economic and Community Development.

The City shall provide timely responses to all comments and proposals submitted to the Department of Economic and Community Development, including written responses to written comments and proposals stating the reasons for actions taken by the City on the comments and proposals. All responses shall be made within fifteen (15) working days of submission of comments and proposals.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The City shall provide technical assistance at the level and of the type deemed appropriate by the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Lake County Community Development Division. Technical assistance shall be provided to the CAC and to any neighborhood or area-wide organization so the organization may adequately participate in planning, implementing, and assessing the CDBG and HOME programs. Technical assistance shall also be provided to groups of low-income persons and to groups of residents of neighborhoods targeted by the CDBG and/or HOME program to help such groups complete written comments and funding proposals in connection with the CDBG and HOME programs.

Technical assistance shall be provided either directly or through arrangements with other public or private agencies. All requests for technical assistance should be made in writing to the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Lake County Community Development Division.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints regarding the CDBG and/or HOME program should be addressed to the Economic and Community Development Director, Department of Economic and Community Development, 1850 Lewis Avenue, North Chicago, Illinois 60064. The Director shall respond to any written complaint within fifteen (15) working days of its receipt.

NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING RESIDENTS

The City is dedicated to assuring that all citizens have opportunities to participate in the CDBG and HOME program. All public meetings shall be held in facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. The City shall make accommodations for any resident with a disability requesting assistance in advance of a meeting. For public meetings in which a significant number of non-English speaking residents are anticipated, the Department of Economic and Community Development shall retain translators skilled in the languages represented in the target audience. Translators will also be retained on an as-needed basis when dealing with applicants for Economic and Community Development services.

DISPLACEMENT IN CDBG- AND HOME-FUNDED PROGRAMS

When implementing programs and activities included in its Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan, the City shall minimize displacement of persons and businesses. Whenever possible, projects shall be sited and/or timed to minimize the number of persons who must be relocated to accommodate the projects. Whenever possible, specific properties targeted by the City for acquisition and clearance, shall be acquired by the City when vacant to prevent displacement and to save relocation costs.

In the event that an activity undertaken by the City with CDBG or HOME funds results in displacement of a homeowner, tenant, or business, the City shall provide technical and financial assistance to the person or business owner in accordance with the Federal Uniform Act and with Section 104 (d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. Department of Economic and Community Development staff shall provide each person and business owner to be relocated with information regarding the relocation process and relocation assistance for which the person or business owner may be eligible. Staff shall provide this information both verbally and in writing in a manner easily understood by the client.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Citizen Participation Plan may be amended by action of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the City Council. Before the CAC and City Council take final action on amendments to this plan, citizens must be provided a reasonable opportunity to comment on proposed amendments. The CAC and City Council shall publish notice of any proposed amendment in the *Lake County News-Sun* at least thirty (30) days prior to final action on the amendment. Community and neighborhood organizations involved in the City's CDBG and HOME programs shall be notified in writing of any proposed citizen participation plan amendment at the time the notice of the proposed amendment is published in the newspaper.