

**Alameda County  
Housing and Community Development Department**

**Citizen Participation Plan**

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## **Introduction**

The Alameda County Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department administers funds from federally funded programs for housing and community development activities throughout Alameda County. Specifically, HCD annually receives funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on behalf of twelve incorporated cities and the unincorporated county participating in the Alameda County HOME Consortium, and on behalf of the five smaller incorporated cities participating in the Urban County along with the unincorporated areas of the County.

This Citizen Participation Plan reflects various ways in which citizens may participate in HCD programs towards the fulfillment of overall HUD Citizens Participation Goals; in accordance with provisions of Section 104(a) of the 1987 Housing and Community Development Act and 24 CFR Part 91 – Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development Programs, Final Rule.

The HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) are three sources of entitlement funding that HCD administers on behalf of HUD for various areas of the County. HCD also takes advantage of other funding to achieve its objectives and is very successful in receiving competitive HUD funds such as Shelter Plus Care (S+C), Supportive Housing Program (SHP), Neighborhood Stabilization (NSP) 1 and 2 funds, and HOPWA Special Projects of National Significance funds. Inasmuch as new funding sources are established and/change each year, this Citizen Participation Plan will apply to all federally funded programs of HCD.

The two primary planning and implementation processes in which citizens may want to participate are the Consolidated Plan and the EveryoneHome processes. The Consolidated Plan, covering HOME, CDBG and ESG funds, governs the use of federal funds in all of the cities in Alameda County except for Berkeley and Oakland (which each publish their own consolidated plans). The EveryoneHome Plan, which covers special needs housing issues, including HIV/AIDS funding, Mental Health Housing funding and federal Homeless Programs funding, guides the entire county and all jurisdictions within it. The implementation of these two plans is accomplished each year through various applications for funding and project identification.

## **General**

### **I. Purpose and Goals**

The overall purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to provide for and encourage citizens to participate in an advisory role in planning, implementing, and assessing the programs of Alameda County Community Housing and Development (HCD) Department. The goals of the plan are to:

- A. Encourage citizens, particularly low and moderate income residents and residents of low and moderate income neighborhoods, to participate in the major planning and implementation efforts of HCD, including the development of the five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments to

Consolidated/Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

B. Provide information on community needs that can be addressed by HCD.

C. Provide community support and participation in various projects sponsored by HCD.

## II. General Approach to Citizen Participation

### A. Open Participation

1. Planning and implementation of programs at HCD will be conducted in an open manner with freedom of access for all interested persons.
2. In the case of target area improvement projects, such as streets or parks, target area residents may be involved in the development and review of policy decisions regarding the design and implementation of such projects.
3. Citizens may be involved in the development of programs offered by HCD, including recommending program policies and funding allocations, preparation of the five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments to Consolidated/Action Plan, CAPER, and Citizen Participation Plan.
4. Citizens may also participate in suggesting program improvements, and in the marketing and evaluation of HCD programs.

### B. Public Review Period

The public review period will be scheduled as required and as detailed in Section V and Section VII of this plan.

### C. Technical Assistance Provided by Both City and County Staff

1. Both City and County staff will offer technical assistance to citizens, citizen organizations, groups of extremely low to moderate income persons, and groups of residents of blighted neighborhoods which request assistance in developing proposals.
2. Technical assistance includes the provision of necessary information, counseling on procedures and processes, and assistance in completion of any and all forms necessary to submit a proposal. Technical assistance does not include writing the proposal.

### D. Bilingual Assistance

HCD recognizes the need of the County's non-English speaking residents and will attempt to meet those needs as stated in its Language Participation Plan. HCD will provide information and staff assistance in languages, as necessary and

reasonably expected to allow non-English speaking residents the opportunity to participate in programs offered by HCD.

### III. Levels of Participation

There are four levels of participation in HCD's citizen participation process: individual citizens, neighborhoods, city participation, cities (including unincorporated county areas), and the Urban County or HOME Consortium. This structure maximizes the opportunities citizens have to participate in HCD Programs. At each level, various forms of information distribution, community outreach, and public hearings/meetings occur to plan and implement the program.

#### A. Individual Citizen Level

Citizens have an opportunity to register comments and/or complaints by email, letter, telephone or in person. A summary of comments, and a summary of any comment not accepted and the reason therefore, will be attached to the applicable document upon submission to HUD. HCD staff will respond to all citizen comments within fifteen (15) working days of their receipt.

#### B. Neighborhood Level

1. Within the unincorporated county and each participating jurisdiction in the Urban County there are target neighborhoods which are the focus of HCD activities. These neighborhoods are those census tracts and block groups in which over 50% of the households have low/moderate incomes.
2. Public meetings, "open houses" and other means of outreach will be used to ensure participation by neighborhoods in the planning and implementation of projects that impact those neighborhoods. These types of meetings will be widely advertized in accordance with the Citizen Participation Plan and substantial efforts will be made to notify neighborhood residents of meetings.

#### C. Jurisdictional Level

At the Urban County, HOME Consortium and other multi-jurisdictional levels, there are entities such as committees or commissions which advise on housing and community development matters, including the formation and operation of HCD programs. These groups may be citizen advisory committees (CACs), housing commissions, planning commissions, etc. and are generally appointed by the respective City Council or by the Board of Supervisors. While not every jurisdiction has a CAC, and those that do may vary in size and structure, these committees address HCD program issues on a project by project basis, and include representation of low and moderate income residents of the target or blighted neighborhoods and members of ethnic groups. The jurisdictional committees and commissions meet regularly and advise staff on project development, implementation, and assessment of performance.

D. Urban County/HOME Consortium Level

1. The County's Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee (HCDAC) advises HCD staff on unincorporated county matters as well as on matters which relate to the entire Urban County or HOME Consortium. These include the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated and Annual Action Plan, CAPER, Housing Rehabilitation Program Policies, Housing Counseling, and Independent Audits.
2. In addition, at least one public hearing will be held annually before the HCDAC prior to the publication of the draft Consolidated or Action Plan to allow citizen review and comment on housing and community development of proposed activities. This hearing will be held as set forth under Section VII. All necessary information for citizen review and assessment will be made available at the hearing as well as in advance of the hearing in accordance with this plan.

The HCDAC is appointed by the Board of Supervisors and represents a cross-section of the population including low and moderate income persons and people with a variety of ethnic backgrounds. One public hearing is held annually before this Committee to allow citizen review and comment on the annual program performance, as set forth under Section VII. All necessary information for such citizen review and assessment is made available at the hearing as well as in advance of the hearing in accordance with the Citizen Participation Plan.

IV. Process and Schedule

Funding Availability

Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties will have information available to them that includes the amount of assistance the jurisdiction expects to receive and the range of eligible activities that may be undertaken. This information will be published in one or more newspapers, of general circulation, placed on HCD's website and posted on HCD's public bulletin board at least 30 days prior to the date applications for funding are due.

A. Program Development

1. Citizens will have the opportunity to submit project proposals for HCD funding. The project selection process will result in the evaluation, prioritization and selection of projects for funding according to needs and objectives.
2. Each jurisdiction may hold a public hearing at the initial stage of application development on community development and housing needs and priorities. For all HCD public hearings, notice of the hearing will be published in at least one week prior to the hearing on HCD's website and in a newspaper of general circulation, including non-English language papers, where they exist. Such notices will indicate the date, time, place and procedures of the hearing and the topics to be considered.

3. The Urban County Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), composed of both City and County staff, will provide technical assistance to the cities' citizen advisory committees and to other citizen groups and organizations on the preparation of project proposals.
4. The HOME Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC), composed of both City and County staff, will provide technical assistance to the cities' citizen advisory committees and to other citizen groups and organizations on the preparation of project proposals.
5. HCD will publish annually, on HCD's website and in a newspaper of general circulation, a summary of the contents of the Consolidated or Action Plan. Annually, the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee will hold a public hearing on the proposed Consolidated or Action Plan prior to final approval.
6. After hearing all testimony regarding the Consolidated or Action Plan, the Board of Supervisors will approve the plan and authorize its submission to HUD.

*B. Program Implementation and Evaluation*

1. All Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) will be informed of the status of projects and major decision points in project implementation. In addition, the Committee will review policy changes.
2. The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) will be made available to the CACs and other interested organizations and individuals for public review and comment. Citizen comments received during the program year will be included in the CAPER.

*C. Alameda County Citizen Complaint Process*

The following process has been developed by the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department (HCD). This process applies to all HUD-funded programs administered by HCD.

All aspects of programs administered by HCD are conducted in the open with freedom of access for all interested persons. Citizens are encouraged to be involved in the development of programs offered by HCD including recommending program policies and funding, the five year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated/Action Plans, CAPER, and the Citizen Participation Plan.

Citizens have an opportunity to register complaints by email, letter, and telephone or in person directly to HCD. Citizens are encouraged to individually register complaints by email or telephone directly to the HCD staff involved in the relevant program, since often complaints can be resolved satisfactorily at this

level. HCD staff will investigate complaints and respond as quickly as possible. HCD staff will respond in writing to all written citizen complaints within fifteen (15) working days of their receipt.

Any citizen not satisfied by the response of HCD staff may request further review of their complaint by written request to the Alameda County Housing Director. Written request may include email or hard copy. The Housing Director will respond in writing to all written complaints within thirty (30) days of their receipt. The Housing Director will consult with and inform the applicable Urban County representative, HOME Consortium representative, and the Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee as appropriate. If not satisfied at this level, citizens may request further review by the Alameda County Community Development Director.

Citizens may also file complaints directly to the U.S. department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Per HUD procedures, HUD will forward the complaint to the Chief Executive Officer of Alameda County. A copy of the letter accompanying the complaint will be sent to the complainant. The Chief Executive Officer has fifteen (15) working days from the date of the HUD letter to respond directly to the complainant and must forward a copy of the response to HUD for their further review.

All documentation including final disposition of the complaint will be retained by HCD for a period of no less than three years from the date of disposition.

D. *RFP Funding Appeals Process*

The process for appealing a HOME, CDBG or ESG funding recommendation made by the HOME Technical Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, or Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee is as follows:

1. An appeal on a HOME, CDBG, or ESG funding recommendation may be made by submitting a written appeal to the HOME, CDBG or ESG Program Manager (whichever is applicable) stating the request for an appeal and the basis for the request within 15 days of the date of the funding recommendation meeting.
2. The HOME, CDBG or ESG Program Manager will have 15 working days upon receipt of the written request to investigate the appeal and respond.
3. If the person making the appeal is not satisfied with the HOME, CDBG or ESG Program Manager's response they may submit a written request for review/appeal to the Housing Director. The Housing Director will have 30 working days to respond.



4. If the person making the appeal is not satisfied with the Housing Director's response, they may submit a written request for review/appeal to the Community Development Agency Director. The CDA Director will have 30 days to respond. The decision of the CDA Director is final.

V. Citizen Comment on the Citizen Participation Plan and Substantial Amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan

The County will provide opportunity for citizens to comment on the Citizen Participation Plan and on Substantial Amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan.

A. Public Review Notice and Period

1. A public notice will be published on HCD's website, and in one or more newspapers of general circulation, which include a summary of the contents of the Citizen Participation Plan or substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan, and a list of locations where complete copies can be examined.
2. The summary of the Citizen Participation Plan or substantial amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan will be available in formats accessible to persons with disabilities and in alternative languages other than English, upon request.
3. There shall be a 30-day public review period for the original Citizen Participation Plan or any substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan. Any comments or complaints of citizens received in writing, by email or orally shall be considered by the County. A summary of the comments or complaints, and a summary of any comments or complaints not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be attached to the Citizen Participation Plan or substantial amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan.

VI. HUD Requirements for Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition

- A. General: HCD will comply with HUD regulations, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition for Federal projects, when real property is acquired to implement HCD's programs and if persons are involuntarily displaced. Guidelines cover real property owners, tenants, businesses and mobile homes.
- B. Acquisition: Real property will be acquired expeditiously and by negotiation only after a written appraisal. Owners will be offered compensation and will be paid before surrendering possession of their property.
- C. Relocation: As soon as feasible, persons scheduled to be displaced are provided a written description of HCD's relocation program. The program includes a description of the replacement housing and other relocation payments, condition of eligibility and procedures for obtaining payment, advisory services that are available, explanation of the 90-day advance notice and assurance that the

displaced cannot be required to move permanently unless at least one comparable replacement dwelling has been made available.

Benefits always include a choice from three or more comparable replacement dwellings or replacement housing payments, transportation to inspect housing, payments for moving and related expenses and counseling to minimize adjustment hardships.

VII. The Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) AND Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated/Action Plans

A main goal of the Citizen Participation Plan is to encourage citizens, particularly low and moderate income residents and residents of low and moderate income neighborhoods, to participate in the development of the five-year Consolidated Plan (Consolidated Plan) and related plans and reports. These include:

- The Five Year Consolidated Plan – a five year plan that guides the use and expenditure of federal HUD funding by HCD.
- Annual Action Plan – the annual submission to HUD of how funds will be spent in the next twelve month period, including any substantial amendments to either the Consolidated or Action Plans. The Annual Action Plan is due to HUD 45 days before the start of the program year (May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year).
- Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) – submitted to HUD annually to report on the actual use of funds in the previous 12 months, compared against both the Consolidated Plan and the annual Action Plan. The CAPER is due to HUD 90 days after the end of the program year (September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year).

A. Consolidated Planning Process

As part of the consolidated planning process, at least two public hearings will be held each program year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions. The public hearings will be conducted at two different stages of the program year with one occurring prior to the Consolidated or Annual Plan being published for comment. Together the hearings must address housing and community development needs, development process of proposed activities, and review of program performance.

1. The first public hearing will be held prior to the draft publication of the five-year Consolidated or annual Action Plan. This hearing will address housing and community development needs and development of proposed activities.
2. The second public hearing will be held during the 15-day public review period for the CAPER. This hearing will address review of program performance.

3. Both public hearings are held during a regular meeting of the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee (HCDAC) which is made up of nine community members appointed by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.
4. All hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries and will accommodate people with disabilities and people who need English language translation services. Notices for the hearings will be published on HCD's website and in one or more local newspapers of general circulation, and notices will be sent to interested parties, including, but not limited to: associations, non-profit organizations, and service providers.
5. There shall be a 30-day public review period during which citizens may comment on the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan. A public notice for the hearings will be published on HCD's website and in one or more local newspapers of general circulation, and notices will be sent to interested parties, including, but not limited to: associations, non-profit organizations, and service providers.
6. Public notices will include a summary of the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan, or CAPER, and include a list of the locations where complete copies may be examined.
7. Summaries of the five-year Consolidated or annual Action Plan and CAPER will be available in formats accessible to persons with disabilities and persons with limited English speaking capabilities, upon request.
8. The five-year Consolidated or annual Action Plan and CAPER will be made available at on HCD's website, libraries, government offices and public places during the 30 or 15 day public comment period, as applicable.
9. The five-year Consolidated or annual Action Plan and CAPER will be provided free-of-charge to a reasonable number of citizens and groups that request them.
10. Any comments or complaints of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearings shall be considered by HCD. A summary of the comments or complaints, and a summary of any comment or complaint not accepted and the reason, therefore, will be attached to the applicable document upon submission to HUD.
11. Annually, during a regularly scheduled meeting of the Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee, a public hearing will be held on the proposed Consolidated or Action Plan prior to final approval.

12. HCD will publish the scheduled meeting dates of the HCDAC meetings on HCD's website and the HCDAC's meeting agenda will also be placed on HCD's public bulletin board allowing for citizen comment throughout the program year.

B. Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated/Action Plans

Citizens will be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments made to the Consolidated or Action Plan.

1. Public Notice and Review

- a. Alameda County HCD will issue a public notice on behalf of any jurisdiction making a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan under the CDBG Urban County, HOME or ESG sections. All public notices shall describe the substantial amendment being proposed to the Consolidated or Action Plan.
- b. Each entitlement jurisdiction is required to issue a public notice for any substantial amendment to its CDBG programs – an Affidavit of Publication must be forwarded to HCD for Consolidated Plan records. All public notices shall describe the substantial amendment being proposed to the Consolidated or Action Plan.
- c. Summaries of the public notice will be available in formats accessible to persons with disabilities and persons with limited English speaking capabilities, upon request.
- d. There will be a public review period of 30 days during which comments on the substantial amendment may be made before the amendment is implemented. Comments may be registered in writing via email, or orally.
- e. Any comments or view of citizens received in writing or orally shall be considered by HCD. A summary of the comment or view, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reason therefore, will be attached to the substantial amendment upon submission to HUD. HCD staff will respond to all comments within fifteen (15) working days of their receipt.

2. Criteria for Substantial Amendments

a. **HOME Program**

- i. The Alameda County HOME Consortium Technical Advisory Committee shall have the authority to establish criteria for substantial amendments for the HOME Program.
- ii. Changes in the use of HOME funds from one eligible activity to another shall constitute a substantial amendment, subject to the requirements set forth under this section.

**b. CDBG Program**

Individual CDBG entitlement jurisdictions shall establish criteria for substantial amendments for their individual CDBG programs. The following applies to the Urban County CDBG Program:

- i. The Urban County Technical Advisory Committee shall have the authority to establish criteria for substantial amendments for the Urban County CDBG Program.
- ii. Changes in use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another shall constitute a substantial amendment, subject to the requirements set forth under this section.
- iii. Changes in dollar amounts of 10% or more on an eligible activity shall constitute a substantial amendment, subject to the requirements set forth under this section.

**c. ESG Program**

- i. The Alameda County Urban County Technical Advisory Committee shall have the authority to establish criteria for substantial amendments for the ESG Program.
- ii. Changes in the use of ESG funds from one eligible activity to another shall constitute a substantial amendment, subject to the requirements set forth under this section.
- iii. Changes in dollar amounts of 10% or more on an eligible activity shall constitute a substantial amendment, subject to the requirements of this section.

**C. Eligible Activities Under Entitlement Programs**

**1. HOME Program**

HOME funds may be used by a participating jurisdiction to provide funds to develop and support affordable rental housing and home ownership affordability through acquisition (including assistance to home buyers), new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, tenant-based rental assistance including security deposit, administrative and planning costs, and/or payment of operating expenses of community housing development organization (CHDO). The housing must be permanent or transitional housing, and includes permanent housing for disabled homeless persons.

**2. CDBG Program**

Individual CDBG entitlement jurisdictions shall describe eligible activities under their individual CDBG Programs.

The Urban County eligible activities are as follows:

- a. Maintain the housing stock by rehabilitating existing substandard housing for low and moderate income persons and people with disabilities.

- b. Acquire/rehabilitate facilities providing programs for the benefit of low and moderate income persons.
- c. Develop rental housing opportunities for low and moderate income households.
- d. Develop ownership housing opportunities for low and moderate income households.
- e. Promote economic development and neighborhood revitalization in target areas that will benefit low and moderate income persons.
- f. Provide assistance for public service agencies benefitting primarily low and moderate income persons.
- g. Provide public improvements in target areas.
- h. Remove architectural barriers and improve physical access and mobility for people with disabilities
- i. Administrative and planning costs.

**3. ESG Program**

Individual ESG entitlement jurisdictions shall describe eligible activities under their individual ESG Programs.

The Urban County eligible activities are as follows:

- a. Street Outreach
- b. Emergency Shelter
- c. Homelessness Prevention
- d. Rapid Rehousing
- e. Administration

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