

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Citizen Participation Plan, 2010-2015

The Consolidated Plan is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirement for a county to receive federal housing and community development funding. Each Consolidated Plan must contain a strategy for citizen participation in the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan process.

It is the policy of the County of San Diego to ensure adequate citizen involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of its housing and community development programs. This document outlines the County's plan for soliciting and receiving citizen input during preparation of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan covering the program years 2010 to 2015, and the individual Annual Action Plans during these same years. This Citizen Participation Plan was prepared in accordance with Sections 91.100 and 91.105 of HUD's Consolidated Plan regulations.

Administrative Responsibilities and Contact Information

The County of San Diego (County) is the recipient of all CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds. The City of San Diego is the recipient of HOPWA funds and has contracted with the County to administer the HOPWA program. Specific program information is available at www.sdhcd.com.

The County Department of Housing and Community Development has responsibility for administration of the Consolidated Plan process, which includes all activities related to development and dissemination of Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, and Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Reports. Additional information is available at www.sdhcd.com.

Encouraging Public Participation

It is the intent of the County of San Diego to encourage and facilitate the participation of residents in the formulation of priorities, strategies and funding allocations related to the Consolidated Plan process, emphasizing involvement by low and moderate income persons, especially those living in low and moderate income neighborhoods. The County also encourages participation of minority populations, including people who do not speak English and persons with special needs.

The County shall encourage, in consultation with public housing authorities, the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments, in the process of developing and implementing the consolidated plan. Finally, the County consults with the public and private agencies that provide housing, health and social services to County residents to identify the greatest needs of County residents, particularly low to moderate income residents and those with special needs.

Role of low and moderate income people. The primary purpose of the programs covered by this Citizen Participation Plan is to improve communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and growing economic opportunities—all principally for low and moderate income people.

Because the amount of federal CDBG, HOME, ADDI, ESG, and HOPWA money San Diego County receives and/or administers each year is primarily based on the severity of both poverty and substandard housing conditions in the Urban County, the County recognizes the importance of public participation that genuinely involves people who have experienced these conditions. It is the County's intent to provide opportunities for meaningful involvement by low income people at all stages of the process, including:

- Needs identification
- Priority setting
- Funding allocations
- Program recommendations

Stages of the Consolidated Plan Process

The policies and procedures in this CPP relate to five specific stages of action mentioned in law or regulation. These stages include:

- **Stage 1.** The needs assessment stage, i.e., the identification of housing and community development needs that generally occurs during development of a Consolidated Plan. *For the 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan, this stage occurred between September and December 2009.*
- **Stage 2.** The plan development stage, i.e., preparation of a Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Draft Annual Action Plan. *This occurred during December 2009 and January 2010 for the Five-year Consolidated Plan and during February for the 2010 Action Plan.*
- **Stage 3.** The approval stage, i.e., formal approval by elected officials of a final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. *The timing of this stage depends on the meeting schedule of the County Board of Supervisors, but generally occurs during March.*
- **Stage 4.** The amendment stage, i.e., when a change is made in the proposed use of funds in an Annual Action Plan or to the priorities established in the Consolidated Plan, a formal Substantial Amendment will be proposed, considered and acted upon. (See "Stages in the Process" of this CPP for the definition of what constitutes a substantial amendment). *This stage only occurs if a substantial amendment is required.*
- **Stage 5.** The performance review phase, i.e., preparation of the CAPER. *This occurs during August through September of each year.*

Program Year in the County of San Diego

The "program year" established by the County for these funds is July 1 through June 30.

Public Notice

This section describes how the County will issue public notices about the Five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and CAPER meetings, draft review periods and amendments.

When notice will occur. The County will provide advanced public notice once any of the following documents is available for draft review and comment: the Proposed Annual Action Plan or Consolidated Plan, any proposed Substantial Amendment, and the Annual Performance Report. In addition, the County will provide public notice of all public hearings related to the funds or to the planning process covered by this CPP.

HUD considers two weeks advance public notice to be adequate for the public to permit informed comment. The amount of lead time can also vary, depending on the event. Specific minimum amounts of lead time for different events are described later in this CPP.

Forms of public notice. Public notices will be published in an English-language and Spanish-language general circulation publications. Whenever feasible, display ads and/or press releases for publication in appropriate neighborhood and ethnic newspapers will also be used. Notice will also be given through mailings to other organizations or individuals who have requested receipt of such notices.

The proposed Consolidated Plan will be published to afford citizens, public agencies and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and to submit comments. The requirement for publishing will be met by publishing a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan and proposed projects in the above-mentioned publications.

Public Access to Information

The County of San Diego will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the data or content of the Consolidated Plan, as well as the proposed, actual, and past use of funds covered by this CPP. In addition, the County will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to local meetings related to the proposed or actual use of funds.

Standard documents. Standard documents to which public access will be provided include: the proposed and final Annual Action Plans, the proposed and final Consolidated Plans, proposed and final Substantial Amendments to an Annual Action Plan or Consolidated Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance Reports and this Citizen Participation Plan.

Availability of standard documents. In the spirit of encouraging public participation, copies of standard documents will be provided to the public. These materials will be available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request by calling (858) 694-8724.

Places where standard documents are available. Standard documents are available at the following locations:

- County Department of Housing and Community Development, located at:
3989 Ruffin Road in the City of San Diego; and
- County Department of Housing and Community Development web site:
<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/sdhcd/index.html>.

Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held at key stages of the process to obtain the public's views and to provide the public, to the greatest extent possible, with responses to their questions and comments. The County holds public hearings to obtain input regarding community needs during development of a Consolidated Plan, to review proposed uses of the funds in each Annual Action Plan, and to review program performance. More information about these specific hearings is contained in "Stages of the Process" of this CPP.

Access to public hearings. Public hearings will be held only after there has been adequate notice as described in "Public Notice" of this CPP. At a minimum, an advertisement in an English and Spanish language general circulation publication, published at least ten days before the hearing, is required. The County web-site at www.sdcounty.ca.gov also posts the Board of Supervisors meeting agendas and information on each agenda item.

Public hearings are held before the County Board of Supervisors at the County Administration Center, 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 310, San Diego, California 92101—easily accessible by public transit.

Public hearings and populations with unique needs. All public hearings are held at a location accessible to people with disabilities. If non-English speaking or hearing impaired residents request assistance to participate in a public hearing, the County will provide appropriate assistance to the greatest extent possible.

Public Meetings

The County holds public meetings related to the Consolidated Plan process in Neighborhood Revitalization Areas in and around the month of September. Anyone interested in being notified of the meetings can call or otherwise contact HCD to be placed on the community meeting mailing list.

Because the housing and community development needs of low and moderate income people are so great and so diverse, priorities must be set in order to decide which needs should get more attention and more resources than other needs. This is the basic reason the Consolidated Plan exists.

The County holds public meetings to obtain residents' opinions about needs and what priority those needs have during the development stage of the Consolidated Plan (every 5 years). Public meetings about needs will be completed at least 15 days before a draft Consolidated Plan is published for comment, so that the needs identified can be considered by the County and addressed in the draft Plan.

Draft Annual Action Plan and/or Consolidated Plan

The law providing the funds related to this CPP calls for improved accountability of jurisdictions to the public. In that spirit and in compliance with the terms of the law, the County will use the following procedures:

General information. At the beginning of this stage, usually in August of each year, the County will provide public notice of the anticipated receipt of grant funds, including an estimate of the amount of CDBG, HOME, ADDI, ESG, and HOPWA funds it expects to receive in the following year and a description of the range of types of activities that can be funded with these resources. Also, the notice will provide an estimate of the amount of these funds that will be used in ways that will benefit low and moderate income people. Contact information will be included in the notice so that interested persons can obtain additional information.

The plans of the County to minimize the extent to which low and moderate income people will have to leave their homes as a result of the use of these federal dollars (displacement) are also available at this stage. The County's "anti-displacement plan" describes how the County will compensate people who are actually displaced as a result of the use of these funds, specifying the type and amount of compensation.

Technical assistance. County staff will work with organizations representative of low and moderate income people who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding for an activity. Technical assistance workshops regarding the funding process and how to apply will be provided to interested organizations early in the process.

Availability of a proposed plan. Copies of Proposed Consolidated Plans and/or Annual Action Plans are made available by request. In addition, copies are made available at the locations specified above in "Public Access to Information" of this CPP.

Public hearings and further action. In addition to the public meetings held in the community regarding proposed Plans, public hearings about proposed Plans are held by the Board of Supervisors. All comments from the public meetings, as well as those received in writing during the 30-day public comment period, are presented to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration. All such comments are considered by staff and presented in the final Plans.

Final Annual Action Plan and/or Consolidated Plan

Copies of the final Plan and a summary will be made available to the public upon request at cost. In addition, copies will be available at the locations specified above in "Public Access to Information."

Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan

Occasionally, public comments warrant an amendment to the Consolidated Plan and/or Action Plan. The criteria for whether to amend is referred to by HUD as "Substantial Amendment Criteria." The following are defined as substantial amendments by the County and will require public notice and provision of a public comment period:

- Changes in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another;
- A change in allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
- Carrying out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the plan, not previously described in the action plan;
- A change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity; and
- Any use of HUD 108 financing that was not described in the Consolidated Plan.

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

Public notice and public hearing for substantial amendments. The County will provide reasonable notice of a proposed Substantial Amendment so that residents will have an opportunity to review and comment on it. Notice will be made according to the procedures described in "Public Notice" of this CPP and will allow a 30-day period for public comment. In preparing a final Substantial Amendment, due consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public. The final Substantial Amendment will have a section that presents all comments and explains why any comments were not accepted.

Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Every year, the County must submit to HUD the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), within 90 days of the close of the program year, i.e., by September 28. In general, the CAPER describes how funds were actually spent and the extent to which these funds were used for activities that benefited low and moderate income people.

Public notice for CAPERs. The County will provide reasonable notice that the CAPER is available so that residents will have an opportunity to review and comment on it. Notice will be made according to the procedures described in "Public Notice" above. Public comments will be accepted during a 15-day comment period described in the public notice.

Copies of the CAPER will be made available to the public upon request. In addition, copies will be available at the locations listed in "Public Access to Information."

In preparing a CAPER for submission to HUD, consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, orally or submitted in writing. The CAPER sent to HUD will have a section that presents all comments.

Complaint Procedures

Written complaints from the public about the County's citizen participation process or the Consolidated Plan process will receive careful consideration and will be answered in writing within 15 working days. Written complaints should be sent to the CDBG Coordinator at the following address: County of San Diego, Department of Housing and Community Development, 3989 Ruffin Road, San Diego, CA 92123.

Amending the Citizen Participation Plan

This Citizen Participation Plan can be amended only after the public has been notified of the County's intent to modify it and only after the public has had a reasonable chance to review and comment on proposed substantial changes.

