

## **CITY OF ALAMEDA CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

The City of Alameda (City) is an Entitlement City in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. CDBG regulations require Entitlement jurisdictions to have a Citizen Participation Plan which describes the City's policies and procedures for public involvement in the CDBG program and offers provisions which:

- Provides for and encourages citizen participation, particularly by persons of low-income and in low-income neighborhoods;
- Provides citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information and records related to the City's proposed use of Program funds;
- Provides for technical assistance in developing proposals for funding;
- Provides for convenient and accessible public hearings to obtain citizen views and questions regarding needs, proposed activities and Program performance;
- Provides for timely written answers to written complaints and grievances; and
- Provides non-English speaking and disabled residents a method for participating in public hearings.

The following text describes actions to be taken by the City of Alameda (City) and/or its designee to ensure that the above requirements are met.

### **PARTICIPATION OF LOW INCOME PERSONS AND RESIDENTS OF LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS**

#### **Who Are Low-Income Residents? Where Are Low-Income Neighborhoods?**

To be eligible for Program assistance, a family must have an income at or below 80% of adjusted median income (AMI). Annually, HUD publishes income data<sup>1</sup> for Program eligibility, also known as Section 8 Income Limits, by family size. (Updated income limits can always be found on the City of Alameda website at [www.alamedaca.gov](http://www.alamedaca.gov).) Persons whose incomes are at or below 80% AMI, and/or who live in assisted housing and/or a low-income neighborhood are particularly encouraged to become familiar with the purpose and activities of the Program.

#### **How Can Low-Income Residents Participate in the Program?**

Low-income residents may participate in the Program by communicating directly to the City Council and/or its designee about housing and community development needs; making proposals for the use of Program funds to benefit low-income residents and/or neighborhoods; and communicating directly to the City Council and/or its designee regarding the proposed use of Program funds, performance and results.

Low-income residents also may participate as beneficiaries of the program services offered by City, or by City-funded community-based organizations. Contact information for City Council members and/or its designated staff may be obtained by visiting the City website at [www.alamedaca.gov](http://www.alamedaca.gov).

## **REASONABLE AND TIMELY ACCESS TO PROGRAM INFORMATION**

### **How Can Low-Income Residents Learn About the Program?**

The City is responsible for providing information about CDBG. Requests for specific information regarding the activities, regulation and/or administration of the CDBG program should be directed to City staff, who may be contacted in person or by phone Monday - Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The City is located at 950 West Mall Square, Suite 205, Alameda, CA 94501; 510-747-6890 and (510) 522-7538 (TDD).

Alameda County Housing and Community Development (ACHCD) is the lead agency for the consortium of public agencies which administers HOME funds throughout Alameda County, including within the City of Alameda. Information regarding HOME-funded activities in Alameda is available at City Hall West located at 950 West Mall Square, Suite 205, Alameda, CA 94501 or by phone at (510) 747-6890. For more information regarding the HOME Consortium's Citizen Participation Plan, including public hearings and opportunities to comment on the proposed use of HOME funds, contact ACHCD at (510) 670-5280 (Voice), (510) 265-0253 (TDD).

Citizens are encouraged to review and print available program documents, including Request for Proposals and proposed and adopted Program Plans and Performance Reports, on the City website at [www.alamedaca.gov](http://www.alamedaca.gov).

The City periodically make information available to citizens through the publication of notices in a local paper of general circulation. The City Charter requires that the official newspaper be designated every year. Currently, official public notices appear as legal notices in the Alameda Journal. Copies of public notices also are posted or available at City Hall and City Hall West, and on the City's main website [www.alamedaca.gov](http://www.alamedaca.gov).

The City also announce information during the City Council meetings so that citizens have access to this information. City Council meeting materials and videos are available on the City of Alameda's website, [www.alamedaca.gov](http://www.alamedaca.gov).

### **When Is Published Information Regarding CDBG and HOME Activities Made Available?**

The following publication schedule generally applies:

#### Fall/Winter September-January:

- Invitation of Public Comments Regarding Housing and Human Services Needs;
- Announcement of Public Hearing on Housing and Human Services Needs, Program Performance, and if appropriate, Proposed Program Funding (30-day comment period);

- Notice of Program Funding Availability;
- Request for Proposals (RFP) for CDBG Projects (May be annually or every other year).

#### Spring/March-April:

- Invitation of Public Comments regarding, and Announcement of Public Hearing on Proposed Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan for use of Program Funds (30-day comment period).

#### Summer/Fall August-September:

- Notice of Program Performance Report Availability (15-day comment period).

The City may become aware of additional funds available for allocation. The City may recommend funding of projects proposed by City staff or others already on file with the City. Publication of these and other proposed actions not listed above will be noticed in accordance with the following:

- Notices of public hearings are published at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting at which the hearing will take place.
- Invitations for public comments and/or submission of other written materials are published at least fifteen (15) days in advance of the submission deadline.

Regulations require an amendment to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan when the City decides not to carry out an activity, decides to add a new activity, or substantially changes the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity. "Substantial change" in an activity includes:

- More than 25% of the funded amount for the annual project;
- A 50% or greater variation in the quantifiable objectives of the activity (such as number of persons served, units of service, linear feet of concrete, etc.);
- A change in the goal(s) of the activity (such as job creation, acquisition of a facility, provision of child care);

The City publishes notices announcing proposed amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. Citizens' comments (30-day comment period) regarding these amendments are considered by the City Council during deliberations on the proposed amendments.

The Alameda City Council meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month beginning at 7:00 p.m. Public hearings and other City-related items to be considered by the City Council are identified in the meeting agenda, which is available from the City Clerk's office (City Hall, 2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 380) on Thursdays preceding the City Council meeting. An agenda is posted on the bulletin board outside of City Hall and on the bulletin board at the meeting site and can be accessed on the City's website: [www.alamedaca.gov](http://www.alamedaca.gov). The City Council meets at the Council Chamber, City Hall, Third Floor. The City Hall is on a major bus line and has public bicycle, automobile and disabled parking immediately adjacent to the building.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME GROUPS**

### **What Assistance is Available to Help Groups Develop Proposals for Funding?**

The Housing and Human Services Division (HHS) and/or the grantee's designee Request for Proposals (RFP) provides detailed information regarding Program rules and eligibility and includes instructions for completing the proposal form. The City and/or the grantee's designee formally requests program proposals through a published notice, which includes the schedule for submission and possible funding. Proposals are accepted, evaluated, and may be recommended to the City Council for partial or full funding per the published schedule. RFP's are released annually or every other year depending on funding needs.

During this process, groups desiring information and guidance regarding the development of a specific project proposal should attend the pre-proposal conference at the beginning of the RFP period and may reserve up to 30 minutes of staff time; additional time may be allocated upon request and at the discretion of staff.

Upon request, the City and/or the grantee's designee will also accept and review Program proposals at other times of the year and will provide guidance as to the eligibility and appropriateness of the proposed projects. Such proposals may, at City's discretion, be recommended for funding through amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, subject to citizen comment and City Council adoption.

It should be understood that the proposer is responsible for both the content and preparation of the proposal, and that the staff makes no commitments regarding the feasibility and/or fundability of a specific project.

## **CITIZEN'S VIEWS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THE PROGRAMS**

### **How Can Citizens Comment on Housing and Human Services Concerns?**

Citizens may comment on housing and human services concerns at public hearings before the City Council, as described above. The City Council will consider oral and written citizen comments on all aspects of the Program prior to Council actions. A summary of such comments will be attached to the related Program documents as adopted by the City Council. Citizens may comment on non-agenda housing and community development items during the Oral Communications portion of City Council meetings, generally held the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Records of oral and written comments are retained by the City for a minimum of five (5) years. In addition, citizens may comment orally or in writing directly to the City at the address stated in the public notice. Generally speaking, no record of oral comments made directly to the Department is retained by the Department; therefore, if a citizen desires his or her comments to become a matter of permanent record, comments should be made in writing.

## **TIMELY WRITTEN ANSWERS TO WRITTEN COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

### **How Are Complaints and Grievances Regarding the Program Handled?**

The City provides written response to written complaints and grievances from citizens, within 15 business days where practicable. However, citizens having complaints regarding a specific City-funded agency or organization are encouraged to direct their complaints to the Board of Directors of that agency and to send a copy of the complaint to the City. City program staff will review subgrantees' responsiveness to such complaints as part of its regular monitoring process and respond if and as appropriate.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The City of Alameda encourages minorities, women, and people with disabilities to participate in the planning and implementation of, and to seek CDBG funding from the City. It is the City's policy that all aspects of the City's Community Development Block Grant program shall be conducted without regard to gender, marital status, disability, race, political affiliation, religious creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identification, or age. Requests for reasonable accommodations should be made in advance to the City of Alameda. Hearing impaired TDD (510) 522-7538.

## **PROVISIONS FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING RESIDENTS**

### **How Can Non-English Speaking Residents Participate in Public Hearings?**

The City of Alameda will encourage comment and participation by non-English speakers (Chinese (Traditional), Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese), and, when feasible, translation services will be available upon request by contacting the Program Administrator.

The City of Alameda has a network of employees who can act as interpreters for residents seeking information regarding programs. If notified at least five business days in advance that non-English speaking residents wish to participate in a public hearing for CDBG-funded programs, the City will arrange to have an interpreter present. Please contact City at (510) 747-6890 (Voice) (510) 522-7538 (TDD).

## **PROVISIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

If notified at least two business days in advance that person(s) with disabilities will need assistance to participate in a public hearing concerning CDBG-funded programs, the City will arrange to have an interpreter, reader, or aide available as needed. Accessible seating for persons with disabilities (including those using wheelchairs) is available. Minutes of the meeting are available in enlarged print. Audiotapes of the meeting are available upon request. Please contact the City at 747-6890 (Voice), 522-7538 (TDD) at least five business days before the meeting to request any other reasonable accommodations that may be necessary.

