

CITY OF ALAMEDA
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN 2019-20
(City Council Meeting June 2, 2020)

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 Community Development Department (CDD) and/or its designated program administrator 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 for Program eligibility, also known as Section 8 Income Limits, by family size. (Updated income limits can always be found at www.alamedahsg.org.) **Attachment A to this Plan is a map which shows neighborhoods where at least 48.4% of the households qualify as Low-income based upon the 2010 census data.** 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 talking or writing directly to the City Council, CDD and/or the Housing Authority of the City of Alameda (AHA) as the City's program administrator about housing and community development needs; making proposals for the use of Program funds to benefit low-income residents and/or neighborhoods; and talking or writing directly to the City Council, CDD and/or the

Housing Authority as the City's its program administrator regarding the proposed use of Program funds, performance and results. Low-income residents also may participate as beneficiaries of the program services offered by CDD or by CDD-funded community-based organizations.

REASONABLE AND TIMELY ACCESS TO PROGRAM INFORMATION

How Can Low-Income Residents Learn About the Program?

AHA has a services agreement with the City of Alameda and is the program administrator 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 AHA staff, who may be contacted in person or by phone at 510-747-4300 (Voice), 7-1-1 (TDD) or by email at hainfo@alamedahsg.org Monday - Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. AHA's office is located at 701 Atlantic Ave. in Alameda.

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. AHA staff can provide information regarding HOME-funded activities. Staff may be contacted in person or by phone at 510-747-4300 (Voice), 7-1-1 (TDD) or by email at hainfo@alamedahsg.org Monday - Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. AHA's office is located at 701 Atlantic Ave. in Alameda. 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 AHA website at www.alamedahsg.org. They are also available at the City Clerk's office, 2263 Santa Clara Ave., Room 380, Alameda, CA 94501 during regular business hours. Citizens may request and receive copies of routine public documents related to the Program from the CDD at nominal cost, as set forth in the City's "Standardized Photocopy Fees," included as Attachment B to this Plan; however, the CDD encourages citizens with large requests to call at least one business day in advance.

CDD and/or AHA periodically makes information available to citizens through the publication of notices in a local paper of general circulation. The City Council selects a newspaper of record to publish its notices. Currently, official public notices appear as legal notices in the Alameda Journal. Copies of public notices also are posted or available at the Main branch of the Alameda Free Library, and on AHA's main website www.alamedahsg.org.

CDD and AHA also announce information during the City Council meetings so that citizens have access to this information. In addition, public notices, meeting minutes, and meeting audio files can be downloaded from the City website at www.alamedaca.gov.

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

The following publication schedule generally applies:

Fall/Winter September - February:

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

CDD from time to time becomes aware of additional funds available for allocation. CDD may recommend funding of projects proposed by City staff or others already on file with the AHA. 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.

* For CDBG funding under FY 2019-2020, FY 2020-2021, and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act or CARES Act, the City of Alameda may provide a 5-day notice/comment period beginning April 15, 2020 as allowed under a HUD waiver. This includes any new activities proposed.

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:

- A variation of \$15,000 or more than 25% of the funded amount (whichever is greater);
- 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); and/or

CDD and AHA as the program administrator 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 CDD-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) 12 days 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. The City Council meets in at the City Council Chambers, 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 CDD's Request for Proposals (RFP) provides detailed information regarding Program rules and eligibility and includes instructions for completing the proposal form. CDD 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 Department staff.

Upon request, CDD 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 CDD'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 Community Development Issues?

Citizens may comment on housing and community development issues 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 CDD at the address above. 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?

CDD provides written response to written complaints and grievances from citizens, within 15 business days where practicable. However, citizens having complaints regarding a specific CDD-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 CDD. CDD 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/HOME funding from the City's Community Development Department. It is the City's policy that all aspects of the City's CDBG/HOME program shall be conducted without regard to grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, source of income, genetic information, medical condition, physical disability or mental disability, or any other category protected by law. Requests for reasonable accommodations should be made in advance to the City of Alameda. Hearing impaired TDD (510) 522-8467.

PROVISIONS FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING RESIDENTS

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

The City of Alameda has a network of employees speaking some 40 languages 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/HOME-funded programs, AHA will arrange to have an interpreter present. Please contact AHA staff at (510) 747-4300 (Voice), 711 (TTY/TRS) or email hainfo@alamedahsg.org.

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/HOME-funded programs, the AHA 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 AHA at 510-747-4300 (Voice), 711 (TTY/TRS), or email hainfo@alamedahsg.org at least five business days before the meeting to request any other reasonable accommodations that may be necessary.

EMERGENCY PLANNING: CHANGES TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The City reserves the right to utilize an augmented Citizen Participation Process and shortened public comment periods in order to expedite relief funding, responding directly to or during a nationally, state or locally declared emergency. An emergency may include, but is not limited to, the COVID-19 Pandemic. The City will adhere to the outlined rules and procedures allowed by HUD. The City will host public hearings in a digital format and provide every reasonable opportunity to receive public comment during a reduced public comment period as defined by HUD.

During the digital public hearing, a facilitator will utilize a similar agenda to that of the regularly scheduled in-person hearings. Participants will be given an opportunity to provide feedback or comment. The video conference must allow for public input via a comment/question and answer outlet. A summary of the public hearing comments will be included in the final document.

Access during the shortened public comment period, as allowed by HUD, will also be via a digital format. The City may use any one of the following methods to disseminate information: publish the necessary documents in newspapers, post them on the AHA website and/or alert the public via social media. Any resident who cannot access the documents may request a soft copy via email and efforts will be made to accommodate that request.

DISASTER/EMERGENCY EVENTS THAT MAY REQUIRE EXPEDITED SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

Due to COVID-19, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has issued guidance that waives the Citizen Participation Plan requirements for entitlement recipients, provided that (1) no fewer than five days are provided for public comment and that (2) reasonable notice and the opportunity to comment is provided.

Given the flexibilities issued by HUD, the City reserves the right to utilize an augmented Citizen Participation Process and shortened public comment periods in order to maintain the continuity of government and expedite relief funding in the event of a national, state or local emergency. The City will adhere to the outlined rules and procedures allowed by HUD. The City will host public hearings in a digital format and provide every reasonable opportunity to receive public comment during a reduced public comment period as defined by HUD. A website address for the digital public hearing will be provided via public notice and must not limit the number of participants. Public notices may be through social media, the newspaper or another widely used outlet. During the digital public hearing, a facilitator will utilize a similar agenda to that of the regularly scheduled in-person hearings. Participants will be given an opportunity to provide feedback or comment. The digital public hearing must allow for public input via a comment/question and answer outlet. A summary of the public hearing comments will be included in the final document.

There are three types of disasters/emergency events that may necessitate an expedited substantial amendment, including: (1) Man-Made-disasters, (2) Natural disasters, and (3) Terrorism. Man-made disasters can include chemical spills, mass rioting, power outages, dam failure, plant explosions, etc. Natural disasters can include earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, wild fires, flooding and public health issues such as wide-spread disease such as the recent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Terrorism events include bomb threats, biochemical attacks like the spread of anthrax, or cyber-attacks like hacking, phishing, and virus distribution, etc.