

City of Sebastian, Florida

Citizen Participation Plan

Adopted as part of the 2024-2029 Consolidated Plan by the Sebastian City Council on [Date]

This document supersedes all previous Citizen Participation Plans for the City of Sebastian, Florida.

Introduction

The City of Sebastian, Florida, has developed this Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) to ensure effective public involvement in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and other HUD-funded activities. Prepared in accordance with HUD regulations set forth in 24 CFR 91.105, this plan establishes a process for encouraging citizens, including minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities, to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, its annual action plans, any substantial amendments, the performance report (i.e., CAPER), and the CPP itself.

Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan

The CPP ensures that residents, particularly those of low and moderate income, can participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The plan aims to provide transparency and solicit public input at various stages of the planning process, offering residents of the community where CPD-funded activities will take place an opportunity to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the programs and projects.

Relevant Areas

The term "entitlement areas" refers to cities and counties eligible to receive HUD formula grants directly. For this CPP, "non-entitlement" refers to cities and towns that do not file Consolidated Plans individually or as part of a consortium and are not eligible to receive formula funding from HUD directly. Sebastian is a non-entitlement area and follows the state and local guidelines for CDBG participation.

Public Notice and Outreach

Public notices will be published in local newspapers, posted on the City's website, and displayed at public locations. Notices will be provided in English and Spanish to accommodate non-English speaking residents. Efforts to inform the public will include press releases, social media

posts, mass emails, and website postings. All notices will be published at least 14 calendar days prior to public hearings to ensure ample opportunity for public awareness and participation.

Public Hearings (24 CFR 91.105(e)):

- At least two in-person public hearings will be conducted each year at a minimum of two different stages of the program year, with additional hearings as necessary for substantial amendments.
- "Reasonable notice" will be provided to the public for all hearings, defined as at least 15 calendar days prior to the event, with efforts to provide longer notice periods when feasible.
- Public hearings will be designed to accommodate and encourage participation from all community members, including minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities. This includes providing accessible locations, translation services, and materials in multiple languages.
- To enhance accessibility and participation, hearings will be conducted both in-person and virtually (hybrid access), allowing residents to join in the manner most convenient for them.
- The first public hearing will be conducted to gather input on housing and community development needs before publishing the draft Consolidated Plan.
- The second public hearing will be held during the 30-day public comment period to review and comment on the draft Consolidated Plan.

Encouraging Citizen Involvement

The city will particularly encourage the participation of low-income persons, minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities. Outreach efforts will include:

- Public advertisements in plain, simple language.
- Meetings held at accessible locations and times convenient for potential beneficiaries.
- Translation services provided for significant non-English speaking populations.

Publication of Consolidated Plan Documents

The draft Consolidated Plan will be published for public review on the City's website, and a reasonable number of hard copies will be available upon request. The publication will include details about the amount of assistance expected the range of activities to be undertaken, and efforts to minimize displacement.

Public Comment on the Consolidated Plan Documents

A comment period of no less than 30 days will be provided for the draft Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan (AAP), substantial amendments, and Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) submissions or changes, in accordance with non-state regulations (24 CFR 91.105(b)(4); 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2)) and State regulations (24 CFR 91.115(b)(4); 24 CFR 91.105(b)(4)). The performance report/CAPER requires a 15-day comment period as per non-state regulations (24

CFR 91.105(d)(1)) and State regulations (24 CFR 91.115(d)(1)). Public notices will be published in various media, including local newspapers, websites, and social media, and will be available in English and Spanish to ensure the comment period is accessible and encourages participation from all community members, including minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities. Comments will be accepted verbally at public hearings and in writing, including emails. A summary of comments and responses will be included in the final Consolidated Plan.

Performance Reporting

The CAPER will be made available for public comment for at least 15 days before submission to HUD. The CAPER will be accessible on the City's website, and hard copies will be available upon request. Public comments received will be summarized and addressed in the final CAPER.

Public Access to Records

The City will provide access to information and records related to the Consolidated Plan and the use of assistance under HUD programs for the preceding five years. Reasonable access will be provided to housing assistance records, subject to privacy laws.

Amendments to the Consolidated Plan

A substantial amendment is required when there is a significant change in allocation priorities or the method of fund distribution, the undertaking of an activity not previously described in the action plan, or a change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity. A 30-day public comment period will be provided before implementing any substantial amendments. Notifications will be made through various media, and comments will be summarized and included in the final amendment.

According to 24 CFR 91.105(c) and 24 CFR 91.505, the citizen participation plan must include, among the criteria for a substantial amendment, changes in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another. The plan must provide a comment period of not less than 30 days to receive public feedback. The jurisdiction is required to consider any comments or views of residents received in writing or orally at public hearings.

The grantee shall amend whenever it makes one or more of the following changes:

- A change in allocation priorities or the method of fund distribution.
- Undertaking an activity not previously described in the plan.
- A change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

The criteria for what constitute a substantial amendment will be identified in the jurisdiction's citizen participation plan. These substantial amendments are subject to a citizen participation process in accordance with the jurisdiction's plan.

Complaints and Grievances

Citizens may submit complaints regarding the CPP, Consolidated Plan, amendments, or performance reports in writing or orally at public meetings. The City will respond in writing within 15 calendar days of receiving the complaint. Records of all complaints and responses will be maintained for public review.

Use of the Plan

The City will follow this CPP in the development and execution of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments, and performance reports.

Jurisdiction Responsibility

The requirements for citizen participation do not restrict the City's responsibility or authority in developing and executing its plans.

Anti-Displacement

The City has adopted an Anti-displacement and Relocation Policy to minimize the displacement of low- and moderate-income people and to ensure compensation for those displaced.

For further information or assistance, please contact: **Community Development Department**

[Address]

[Phone Number]

[Email]