



Citizen Participation Plan Charleston, West Virginia

Introduction –

The city of Charleston is required by law to develop and follow detailed, written policies and procedures – a citizen participation plan – to involve the public, particularly low- and moderate-income people, in developing and implementing its Consolidated Plan and its integral components – annual action plans, annual performance reports and amendments. Additionally, this plan must be published and available to the public.

The Consolidated Plan (Con Plan) is a five-year plan, describing the city’s development needs, resources, priorities and proposed activities to be undertaken under certain U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) and any additional federal grants and/or sources of federal funding.

The city of Charleston and the Charleston/Kanawha County Consortium believe involving the public is a vital part of the Con Plan process. As such, they will provide the public opportunities to participate and will consult with other public and private agencies providing assisted housing, health services, social services, child welfare agencies (regarding lead-based paint), adjacent local governments (for non-housing community development needs) and local housing authorities in planning and implementing the Con Plan.

This plan provides information on:

- Encouraging public participation, with special emphasis on involving low- and moderate-income people, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods;
- Providing the public with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information and records relating to the City/Consortium’s use of funds;
- Providing technical assistance to groups representative of low- and moderate-income people that request help in developing proposals;
- Timely responses to complaints and grievances.

Encouraging Public Participation –

The law (24 CFR 91.105) requires the citizen participation plan to provide for and encourage public involvement, emphasizing participation by low- and moderate-income people – especially those living in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. This participation is to occur as the Con Plan is being developed, if and when any substantial amendments to the document are proposed and when performance is reported. Additionally, the city will encourage minorities, non-English speaking people and people with disabilities to participate by contacting groups and agencies that



represent or serve these populations. Current program documents are in English only, however, if other languages are needed, please contact the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development.

The city will provide information to the Charleston Housing Authority to ensure that residents of their public housing developments are informed about the entire Con Plan process and their opportunities to participate. The city will request the Housing Authority make this information available to their residents and inviting their participation.

Local Meetings-

Charleston will host, at a minimum, two public meetings each year. The first meeting will explain the city's Con Plan process, announce the funding and availability of technical assistance, solicit the public's opinions on housing and community development needs and report on program performance. A second public meeting will be held later in the program year and when the draft plan is completed to solicit comments on the strategies and proposed use of funds.

These meetings will be held at a time and place convenient to the majority of the target population – low- and moderate-income people, residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and other likely to benefit from the program. Additionally, the meeting location will be within or in close proximity to a CDBG-eligible area, convenient to public transportation and accessible to people with disabilities.

Public Meeting Notices –

Notice of all public meetings will be published as display ads in local, general circulation newspapers and posted on the city's website, www.charlestonwv.gov at least 14 days prior to the meeting.

Meeting information will be emailed or sent electronically to known stakeholders, including public and private agencies providing housing assistance, health services, social services, child welfare services, economic development services, job training and employment assistances services, neighborhood organizations, the Charleston-Kanawha Housing Authority and other interested parties.

All notices will be posted to the city's website and social media. Each notice will specify the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting, as well as contact data for additional information.



Information –

Charleston will provide program and policy information to known stakeholders including the general public, public and private agencies providing housing assistance, health services, social services, child welfare services, economic development services, job training and employment assistance services, the Charleston-Kanawha Housing Authority and other interested parties. This information will include:

- The funding (grant funds and program income) the city expects to receive through the Community Development Block Grant, Home Investment Partnership, and any additional Federal Funding Initiatives or programs and the estimated amount that will benefit low- and moderate-income people;
- The range of activities that may be undertaken, as well as, activities previously funded;
- The city's process of developing the Con Plan and its components including applications that may be submitted by potential subrecipients;
- The public's role in the program; and
- Other materials as needed to inform and educate the public about the programs.

This information will be provided by email, at public meetings and on the city's website www.charlestonwv.gov.

The proposed and adopted Citizen Participation Plan, Con Plan, Annual Action Plan, as well as, substantial amendments and the performance report will be accessible to the public at no cost on the city's website www.charlestonwv.gov. Additionally, these documents will be available for review at the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development and the Kanawha County Public Library's main branch. A reasonable number of free copies will be available upon request from the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development.

A summary of the proposed Con Plan will be published in local, general circulation newspapers. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Con Plan and will include a list of locations where copies of the entire plan may be reviewed.

These materials will be available upon request in a form accessible to persons with disabilities.

Comments –

Comments noted at a public meeting and written or emailed comments made during the Con Plan process will be accepted by the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development until a specified date, typically for at least 30 days. The comment period associated with a specific activity will be published in a display ad in local, general circulation newspapers. All comments will be considered. A summary of all comments including comments not accepted and the rationale for their rejection will be attached to the final Con Plan and/or performance report, as appropriate.



No activity may be undertaken prior to the expiration of the public comment period. If adverse comments are received, they must be addressed prior to the implementation of the activity or amendment and included in the Con Plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Amendments –

Amendments that fall under the definition of “substantial change” shall be subject to a 30-day public comment period. “Substantial change” shall be defined as:

- Any new activity;
- Any cancellation of budgeted activity;
- A 25 percent increase or decrease in an activity; or
- Any change in an activity’s national objective designation.

A summary of any substantial amendment will be published in local, general circulation newspapers, followed by a 30-day public comment period which will be defined in the public notice.

All comments will be considered. In the event that adverse comments are received during the 30-day comment period, the amendment must be presented at the next meeting of Charleston City Council’s Finance Committee for action. A summary of all comments pertaining to amendments including comments not accepted and the rationale for their rejection will be included in the annual performance report.

No amendment may be undertaken prior to the expiration of the public comment period.

Technical Assistance –

The Mayor’s Office of Economic and Community Development will assist organizations and individuals’ representative of low- and moderate-income people interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding for an activity. Requests for technical assistance must be made in writing, specifying the name of the organization or individual requesting assistance, the name, address, phone number and/or email address of contact person; the nature of technical assistance requested; immediate problems and the reason for the request.

The Mayor’s Office of Economic and Community Development will determine the level and type of assistance provided. If necessary, assistance may be provided by specialists jointly selected by the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Community Development and the organization/individual requesting assistance.



Complaints and Grievances –

Substantive, written responses to written complaints and/or grievances will be provided within 15 working days of receipt, where practical.

Relocation –

The city's policy is to administer the Community Development Block, Home Investment Partnership, and all other federally designated grants and programs without displacement. In the event displacement is unavoidable, the city and/or other responsible party(s) will comply with the regulations of the Uniform Relocation Act and Section 104(d).

Access to Records –

Program information and records are available upon request at the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development during normal business hours. Such documents include the following:

- All mailing and promotional materials;
- Records of public meetings;
- All key documents, including prior applications, letters of approval, grant agreements, the citizen participation plan, performance reports, evaluation reports, other reports required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the proposed and approved application for the current year;
- Copies of the regulations and issuances governing the program; and
- Documents regarding other important program requirements, such as contracting procedures, environmental policies, fair housing and other equal opportunity requirements, and relocation provisions.

For more information about the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development or to submit comments about the programs:

Mail: Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development
105 McFarland Street
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Email: MOECD@CityofCharleston.org

Phone: (304) 348-8035

TDD: (304) 348-1085

FAX: (304) 348-0704



Declaration of an Emergency –

When a Declaration of an Emergency has been ordered by the President of the United States, or the Governor of West Virginia, the City of Charleston will follow the following process concerning public hearings and public display of plans.

- If the City is unable to hold open public hearings in person, the City will be allowed to instead hold virtual public hearings through conference calls or an online video conference call platforms as long as the public is able to provide public comments during the virtual public hearing.
- If the City is not able to publicly place the plans on public display at the locations referenced in the Citizen Participation Plan, the City will put the plans on the City's website (<https://www.charlestonwv.gov>) and will also email copies of the plans to any person who will request a copy of the plans via email upon request.
- If the City Council is unable to conduct an open public forum type meeting, the City then can approve the plans at a City Council meeting through an on-line virtual City Council meeting, if an in-person Council meetings are not happening because of the Emergency.

When a Declaration of an Emergency has been ordered by the President of the United States, or the Governor of West Virginia, the City of Charleston will follow the following process concerning public comment periods for substantial amendments, Consolidated Plans and Annual Action Plans:

- A summary of any substantial amendment will be published in local, general circulation newspapers, followed by a public comment period no less than five days, reduced from the 30-day comment period, which will be defined in the public notice.
- All comments will be considered. In the event that adverse comments are received during the 5-day comment period, the amendment must be presented at the next meeting of Charleston City Council's Finance Committee for action. A summary of all comments pertaining to amendments including comments not accepted and the rationale for their rejection will be included in the annual performance report.