COLUMBUS, INDIANA
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
(FY2014-FY2018)
AMENDED JUNE 2015

The City of Columbus continues to receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for community development and housing projects. These and other HUD funds are administered by HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD). In 1994, a new process was implemented by HUD whereby all submissions for CPD formula programs, including CDBG, have been consolidated into one single submission known as the Consolidated Plan. This Citizen Participation Plan is designed to encourage citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments to the plans, and the performance report as required by 24 CFR Part 91.105.

A review of the Citizen Participation Plan and any subsequent amendments will be completed on or about April 1. A notice availability of a draft plan or amendment to the plan will be published in the legal advertising section of "The Republic", the local newspaper of general circulation for the area, with a 30 calendar day comment period. Comments on this Plan, the citizen participation process contained herein, or any elements of the Consolidated Plan are welcome at any time. Written comments should be addressed to the Community Development Department, City of Columbus, 123 Washington Street, Columbus, IN 47201.

SCOPE OF PLAN

The Plan is devised to facilitate participation by all citizens of the City of Columbus with an emphasis on very-low and low-income persons, particularly those residing in census tracts with 51% of households being low/moderate income and areas where past CPD funds have been used. Additional actions will be taken to include minorities, and non-English speaking persons, as well as disabled persons including those with mobility, visual, or hearing impairments. Furthermore, this Plan will ensure that citizens will be furnished with information applicable to the Consolidated Plan.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION POLICY

The following policies will be implemented in order to provide for and encourage extensive citizen participation in the City's Consolidated Planning Program.

Public Hearings

The Community Development Department will hold public hearings and meetings designed to review program performance, develop community objectives, identify program needs, and prioritize activities for the Consolidated Plan, and recommend the proposed annual Action Plan. The complete schedule will be published and individual notices published prior to all hearings and meetings, encouraging citizens to attend. The notices will be placed in the newspaper at least 10 days and no more than 2 weeks prior to the hearings.

Technical Assistance

Prior to the beginning of the service organization meeting, a notice shall be placed in "The Republic," the newspaper of general circulation, notifying citizens of the expected entitlement grant and inviting citizens and groups to submit proposals and suggestions for projects to be funded. The notice shall also state that technical assistance can be received through the Community Development Department.

If needed, the Community Development Department and Administrative Resources association (ARa) will provide technical assistance to community organizations, groups representative of low and moderate income persons, individuals, etc., so that they may participate in the planning, implementation and assessment of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans. Such assistance may include presentations by staff, providing information about the program, assistance in submitting a proposal, assistance in carrying out a project if funded, and other reasonable requests. The receipt of a written proposal for funding will be acknowledged by letter within 15 working days. The letter will also inform the applicant of the application process. A second letter will be mailed after the completion of the planning process, stating the status of the proposal and the reason(s) for including or not including it in the application.

Consolidated Plan

During the development of the Consolidated Plan and subsequent annual action plans and/or substantial amendments, staff will conduct at least one public hearing. Hearings will have an emphasis on obtaining the views of other private and public agencies that provide assisted housing (including the Columbus Housing Authority), health services, and social and other services covered by the Plan. Public notice will be given regarding publication and availability of the proposed Consolidated Plan explaining the Community Comment Period and process.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE			
Activity	**Date**	**Notice** *(if applicable)*	**Comment Period** *(if applicable)*
Community Forum (Consultation) for Con. Plan	January-May	10 calendar days	
Community CDBG Application – in preparation of Annual Action Plan or Consolidated Plan, if applicable	April - May	30 calendar days	
1st Public Hearing Scheduled	April - May	10 calendar days	
Draft Annual Action Plan/Con. Plan Complete	June		
Community Comment Period	June - July		30 calendar days
Plan Submitted to HUD	On or before July 15		45 calendar days
CDBG Fiscal Year Begins	September 1		
CAPER available for review	October - November		30 calendar day
2nd Public Hearing - Evaluation Report (CAPER)	November	10 calendar days	
CAPER available for review	October		30 calendar day
CAPER submitted to HUD	On or before November 30		
Substantial Amendment to Annual Plan/Consolidated Plan	As needed	30 calendar days	
Substantial Amendment Public Hearing Scheduled	As needed	10 calendar days	
Plan Amendment - Community Comment Period	From publication date		30 calendar days
Plan Amendment Submitted to HUD	After end of comment period		

Notices

Notice of public hearings and meetings will be published once in the legal section of "The Republic", the local newspaper (with the legal ad being at least 10 calendar days prior to the date of the hearing). The notice shall include, at minimum, the date, time, location, and purpose. The hearings and meetings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries with accommodation for persons with disabilities.

A summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be published in "The Republic" together with a notice of availability of the entire plan at Columbus City Hall, Community Development Department for examination. The Consolidated Plan will also be placed on the City of Columbus, Community Development Department's website for review. The website address is: http://www.columbus.in.gov/community-development/cdbg-information/.

The City, prior to its adoption of the Consolidated Plan, will hold a public hearing to obtain citizen comments. The presentation of subsequent annual Action Plans will be made to the Common Council after public hearings have been held to obtain citizen comment on the proposed Action Plan.

A notice shall be placed in "The Republic" informing citizens and other interested parties of the availability of the adopted Consolidated Plan. A thirty (30) calendar day period to receive comments from citizens or local units of government will be provided prior to submitting the Consolidated Plan and subsequent action plans to HUD. A summary of views and a summary of comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan, amendments to the plan, or performance reports.

Translation and Interpretation Services

If non-English speaking or hearing-impaired residents request assistance to participate in a public hearing, the Community Development Department will retain appropriate assistance to allow such residents to participate. Generally, assistance will consist of obtaining appropriate interpreter services through Columbus Center for Teaching and Learning, Su Casa, or other resources. It will only be considered mandatory where a significant number of non-English speaking or hearing-impaired residents can reasonably be expected to attend. Persons needing special accommodations or translators should make their requests one week (7 calendar days) before the meeting so the City can assure that the special needs are met. These requests should be made to the Community Development Department, 812-376-2520.

Reasonable Accommodation - Disabilities

Reasonable accommodation will be provided for persons with disabilities at all public hearings, and local meetings. Reasonable accommodation for disabled persons include, but are not limited to, holding all meetings in handicapped accessible buildings for persons with mobility impairments; providing written materials in an accessible format, such as in large print, Braille, audio cassette, or computer disk for those with visual impairments; and providing sign language interpreters for persons with hearing impairments, etc. when requested. Persons needing special accommodations or translators should make their requests one week (7 calendar days) before the meeting so the City can assure that the special needs are met. These requests should be made to the Community Development Department, 812-376-2520.

Citizens' Concerns

Citizens dissatisfied with any aspect of the Consolidated Plan process or plan documents are advised to contact the Community Development Department. If a citizen feels their complaint or grievance has not been satisfactorily addressed through discussion, a written statement can be filed. The Community Development Department will provide a written response to the complaint within 15 working days. All written complaints or grievances, and the City's response will be forwarded to the Indianapolis Area Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for review. Complainants will also be provided with the name and address of a HUD person who they can contact directly.

Access to Information

The City will provide full public access to program information. Notices will be published to inform citizens of meetings, hearings, funding availability, activities proposed, and when certain documents have been completed and are available for review. As an ongoing process, the City shall provide full and timely disclosure of records and information (consistent with local, Federal, and State law). Documents, information, and other materials shall be available during normal working hours, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, at the Community Development Department, Columbus City Hall, 123 Washington Street, Columbus, IN. In addition to making files containing program documents reasonably accessible for public review, the Department shall make copies of the Application, Grantee Performance and Evaluation Report, Environmental Review Record, and Citizen Participation Plan available upon request.

Outreach to L/M Income Residents

Outreach efforts to attract participation and inform citizens about programs, such as the housing rehabilitation program or public works projects will be accomplished through public service announcements, brochures, and other means as deemed appropriate by the Community Development Department. In preparing the plan the City will consult with other public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health, and social services, and notify adjacent units of local government if/when appropriate.

Displacement

The City intends to undertake activities with funds covered by the Five-Year Consolidated Plan that minimize displacement of persons. In the event displacement occurs, the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended will be followed. Persons displaced will be provided information on their rights and benefits, and will receive referrals for comparable replacement housing in adjacent neighborhoods. All payments will be in accordance with HUD regulations implementing the Uniform Act.

Performance Reports

The City will prepare a performance report each year on the progress of the Consolidated Plan in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. Citizens will be afforded notice of the performance report through posting and newspapers. The performance report will be available at Community Development Department and at the Clerk-Treasurer's Office for review. The City will receive and consider comments on the performance report for 15 calendar days before the report is submitted to HUD.

Plan Amendment

The City will amend the Plan if, during the program year, it is decided not to carry out an activity described in the action plan, propose a new project, or to substantially change the purpose, location or beneficiaries of an activity. For purposes of this Plan, the criteria for a substantial amendment is defined to be an action which increases or decreases an activity budget by an amount equal to or in excess of twenty percent (20%) of the current entitlement grant, or if the location of a project is changed in a manner that would deprive persons originally included of specific benefits. A public hearing to amend the action plan would be held before the presentation to Common Council. Public notice, as outlined previously in this Plan, would be used to provide citizens an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment.

The city administration reserves the ability to amend this Plan according to time and manpower constraints. The Plan will be subject to annual review by the Community Development Department. Revisions recommended by the Community Development Department shall be incorporated into the Consolidated Plan process and the Plan reprinted prior to development of the next year's Action Plan.

THE COLUMBUS, INDIANA CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN IS ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, INDIANA by and through the Board of Works and Public Safety this 23rd day of June, 2015.

Kristen S. Brown
Mayor

Attested