

**Citizen Participation Plan  
City of Richmond, VA**

# **Citizen Participation Process for Federal Funds City of Richmond, VA**

The Department of Community Development is responsible for assuring that all citizen participation requirements under the federal guidelines are met, by:

Providing for and encouraging citizen participation, with particular emphasis on participation by persons of low- and moderate-income who are residents of slums and blight areas.

Providing citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information and records that relate to the proposed and final use of funds.

Providing technical assistance to groups represent low- and moderate-income persons that request such assistance when developing proposals.

Providing public hearings to obtain citizen views and to respond to proposals and questions at all stages of the community development program, including at least the development of needs, the review of proposed activities and review of the program performance. These hearings shall be held after adequate notice, time and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries and to person with disabilities have been secured.

## **Three methods used to maximize citizen participation are:**

Consultation/focus group meetings

Neighborhood Association and Neighborhoods in Bloom partnership meetings

Public hearings hosted by Community Development and City Council

## **Consultation/Focus Group Meetings**

City staff will hold consultation/focus group meetings with individuals and organizations that are directly or indirectly providing housing and supportive services to low- and moderate income residents of the City of Richmond. These meeting are held as part of the City's process of developing its Consolidated Plan. Summaries of these meetings will be published in the annual consolidated plan and will be available for review before the final draft is submitted to HUD.

The City will hold consultation meetings with non-profit and public housing providers, Neighborhoods in Bloom partnerships; realtors, contractors and developers; social service agencies regarding the needs of children, the elderly, the physically disabled, the homeless and persons with HIV/AIDS; City departments and state and local jurisdictions.

## **Public Hearings**

The Department of Community Development will convene two public hearings, the first to receive input from citizens on the housing and community development needs of low- and moderate-income persons, including priority non-housing community development

needs. The second public hearing will be hosted by City Council for citizens to give input on the Consolidated Plan and the budget for that upcoming year. The Consolidated Plan will consist of the overall identified needs of housing and community development and strategies to address those needs over a five-year period. It also will provide specific activities for the upcoming fiscal year. Adequate and timely notification to citizens about the public hearings will be made through public notices published in local newspapers.

The facilities for the meetings and hearings will be accessible to persons with disabilities. Staff also will coordinate with the City's Hispanic Liaison Office to make available a representative for non-English speaking persons attending the public hearings. The Division of Housing and Neighborhoods shall make all arrangements for public hearings and shall be responsible for handing all public notices.

### **Access to Information**

The proposed Consolidated Plan shall be made available in its entirety for public review/comment for 30 days in public libraries, government offices and on the City's website. Also, a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be published in two local newspapers. Comments will be compiled and added to the Consolidated Plan before it is submitted to HUD.

### **Anti-displacement and Relocation Plan**

The City will comply with the acquisition and relocation requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended and will implement regulations of 49 CFR24.

The City also has in effect and is following a residential anti-displacement and relocation assistance plan required under Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, in conjunction with any activity assisted with funding under the CDBG or HOME programs.

### **Substantial Amendments**

A substantial change to the Consolidated Plan is required when:

- Funding for a new project is in excess of \$15,000;

- An existing project requires adding more than \$25,000; or

- A project requires a change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity.

When it has been determined that a substantial change must be made to the Consolidated Plan, the proposed amendment will be published for review in the local newspapers. Citizens will have a 30-day period to review it and to submit written responses (time period to run concurrently). A summary of these comments and a summary of any comments or views not accepted will be attached to the substantial amendment.

City Council also will review the changes and have a public hearing before amending the Consolidated Plan. The Division of Housing and Neighborhoods shall make all arrangements for public hearings and shall be responsible for handing all public notices.

### **Performance Reports**

Citizens will be given an opportunity to review the Annual Performance Reports before they are submitted to HUD. There is a 15-day period allowed for this review. Copies of the report are placed in local libraries, government offices and on the City's website for people to review. A notice of the availability is published in the local newspapers. Any comments written or orally provided shall be summarized and attached to the performance report for its submittal to HUD.

### **Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance will be provided to any groups or representatives of low- and moderate income people requiring assistance in developing proposals for funding under the Consolidated Plan. The Division of Housing and Neighborhoods shall make all arrangements for training to be provided for all persons desiring to submit an application.

### **Complaints**

The City, through the Department of Community Development, will provide a written response to each complaint received from a citizen on the Consolidated Plan, amendment or performance report (within 15 days, where practicable).