

City of Santa Maria

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Adopted: September 2019

Amended: April 2020

Clerical Amendment: May 2020



Prepared By:

**Special Projects Division
110 South Pine Street, Room 107
Santa Maria, CA 93458
(805) 925-0951, Ext. 2118**

BACKGROUND

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the City of Santa Maria to have and follow a Citizen Participation Plan as a condition of receiving funds under the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships Program. Citizen participation has been a requirement of Federal and State Government for many years as outlined in Section 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.105. The Plan must outline the local annual process as well as address key elements mandated by HUD.

The Citizen Participation Plan contains the City of Santa Maria's policies and procedures for involving the community in:

- The development of the Citizen Participation Plan, Annual Action Plan and the Consolidated Plan;
- The review of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER); and
- Any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan.

Included in the Citizen Participation Plan are policies and procedures for developing, reviewing, and amending these documents.

HUD annually provides funds to the City of Santa Maria. Each year, the City of Santa Maria seeks community participation to identify community needs and determine how the City should distribute funds at the local level.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to provide for and encourage participation from all City residents in the development of the Annual Action Plan, the Consolidated Plan and any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and in the review of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The plan will assure that all residents are afforded adequate opportunities to articulate needs, express preferences about proposed activities, assist in the selection of priorities and have questions or complaints answered in a timely and responsive manner.

METHODS OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

The **key elements** for encouragement of all City residents to participate in the development of the Annual Action Plan, the Consolidated Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), and substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan are listed below:

- encouragement of City residents participation;
- provide City residents access to meetings;
- provide City residents access to information;
- technical assistance for all individuals, agencies and groups that request assistance, including groups representative of persons of low and moderate income;
- take reasonable steps to provide language assistance or other means of communication to ensure meaningful access to participation;
- publicly noticed public hearings;
- publication of the proposed Consolidated Plan;
- set period of time for public comment and review; and
- by providing timely response to written complaints and grievances.

Key Elements

The Citizen Participation Plan addresses each of the following ***key elements*** as mandated by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Encouragement of Citizen Participation

The plan will provide for and encourage all City residents to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The City will take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation of all its residents, especially persons who are of low and moderate income, persons living in slum and blighted areas, persons living in areas where funds are proposed to be used and persons living in predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods. Special outreach will be made to involve individuals and organizations that represent low income, minority and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities in accordance with the City's Public Participation Plan. In cooperation with the local public housing authority, the City will encourage the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments. If any specific proposals affect a particular area of the City, the property owners of that area will be notified.

Access to Meetings

The City will afford adequate, timely notification so that residents can attend local meetings and public forums and be involved in decision making at various stages of the program.

Access to Information

The City will make information available to residents, public agencies and other interested

parties, concerning the amount of funding the City expects to receive (including grant funds and program income), the range of proposed activities that may be undertaken and the amount proposed to benefit low and moderate income residents. Also, these groups will have access to the City's plans to minimize displacement and assist those displaced as a result of proposed activities. City residents and groups will have access to information and records covering the preceding five (5) years.

Technical Assistance

The City's Special Projects Division staff will provide information and technical assistance throughout the process to all individuals and groups that request assistance, particularly in developing proposals for the Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan.

Public Hearings

The City will provide at least two public hearings, as required, during each program year cycle with at least one held before the proposed Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan is published for comment. The hearings will be conveniently timed and located for persons who may be affected by the proposed funding, accessible to persons with disabilities and adequately publicized. The hearings will provide the opportunity for comments and views in identifying housing and community development needs, developing proposed activities and reviewing program performance. Notification to the public will be published at a minimum ten (10) days in advance of all public meetings and hearings; however, a 30-day public review period (*Unless during an emergency. See page 10*) will be included in that notice to receive comments from residents of the community on the plan(s). In addition, a press release will be sent out to the local media, the information will be included in the City's electronic newsletter, and the information will be posted on the City's website and the City's library and city hall. This meeting will take place usually in April at City Council.

The second public hearing will be related to the community's unmet needs and priorities. A public workshop will usually take place in August or September, and will take place before the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) goes out for the upcoming CDBG funding cycle. Notification to the public will include a press release to the local media, the information will be included in the City's electronic newsletter, and the information will be posted on the City's website and the City's library and city hall. Following the public workshop, the information gathered will be presented to the City Council in the form of a public hearing for adoption of the set priorities for the upcoming funding cycle.

The abovementioned meetings, along with the contents of the meeting, will abide by the state's Brown Act, which calls for the agenda and reports to be posted at least 72 hours before said meeting.

Publication of the Consolidated Plan

The City will publish its proposed Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan so that affected residents have sufficient opportunity to review it and provide comments. The requirement for publishing will be met by publishing a summary of the proposed plan in one or more newspapers of general circulation and making copies of the proposed plan available at libraries, government offices, public places and the City's website. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan and include a list of the locations where copies of the entire plan may be examined.

Comments

A period of not less than 30 days will be provided to the public for review and comment on the proposed Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan prior to submission to HUD. The City will consider the views of residents, public agencies and other interested parties in preparing its Final Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan and attach a summary of such comments to the Final Plan. A period of not less than fifteen (15) days will be provided to the public for review and comment on the CAPER prior to submission to HUD.*

* *Expedited procedures may take place as a result of a disaster, emergency, pandemic (ex. COVID-19; natural disaster; man-made disaster). See "Expedited Amendment Process for Response to Disaster Relief" on pg. 10.*

Complaints and Grievances

The City will provide timely, written responses to written complaints and grievances within fifteen (15) working days, whenever practical.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Prior to the adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan, implementation of the following public comment, review, and adoption procedures will ensure that all residents have a chance to participate in development of the plan.

Step 1. Notify public

The City will provide a notice of 30-day public review period and public hearing on the Citizen Participation Plan in the Santa Maria Times. The notice will be printed in the Santa Maria Times a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the public hearing date.

Step 2. Allow for public review of Citizen Participation Plan

The proposed Citizen Participation Plan will be available for public review at the following locations:

- City of Santa Maria Public Library, 421 South McClelland, Santa Maria
- City of Santa Maria City Hall, 110 East Cook Street, Santa Maria
- City of Santa Maria, Special Projects Division, 110 South Pine Street, Room 107, Santa Maria
- City of Santa Maria Website (www.cityofsantamaria.org)

Upon request, the Citizen Participation Plan will be made accessible to any persons with disabilities. The City will provide a reasonable number of free copies of the Citizen Participation Plan to residents and groups that request copies.

Step 3. *Accept written or oral public comment*

Comments or views of residents received in writing during the public review period or orally at the public hearing will be solicited and considered by the City of Santa Maria Block Grants Advisory Committee and City Council.

Step 4. *Adoption of Citizen Participation Plan*

The Draft Plan will be adopted upon a majority vote of the City of Santa Maria City Council at a designated and publicly noticed City Council meeting. After adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan, a Final Plan will be prepared. The Final Plan will include a summary of public comments and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefore, all of which will be attached to the final Citizen Participation Plan.

ANNUAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The annual citizen participation process will consist of ***thirteen (13) basic steps*** which are outlined below:

STEP 1. *Notify public of information on annual process and request comments*

Public notices and informational packets will be posted on the City of Santa Maria's website and sent to interested persons, organizations, groups and the news media (both English and Spanish), advising them of the annual citizen participation process and requesting comments and proposals. A bilingual staff person is available for non-English speaking persons who request information or would like to file a comment.

STEP 2. *Conduct public workshop to identify housing and community development needs and review program performance*

The Block Grants Advisory Committee and the Special Projects Division staff will conduct a public workshop at a time and place convenient to the public and accessible to persons with disabilities. At the public workshop staff will provide information and receive

comments and views from the public concerning housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities and past program performance. Public notice of the date and time of the workshop will be posted on the City of Santa Maria's website and sent to interested persons, organizations, groups and the news media (both English and Spanish) in an effort to encourage participation. A bilingual translator and special audio equipment will be available for non-English speaking persons who attend the public workshop.

STEP 3. City Council meeting regarding priorities for the upcoming fiscal year

The Block Grants Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the City Council as to the priorities for the upcoming funding cycle. These priorities were obtained during Step 2 (see above). The City Council will ultimately decide what the priorities should be for the upcoming funding cycle and as a result, the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) will be generated.

STEP 4. 45 Day Written Application and Comment Period

A minimum time period of 45 days will be allowed for the receipt of written applications and comments for the development of the Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan proposed activities and allocation of funds. At the end of the written input period, staff will coordinate and analyze the written input for presentation to the Block Grants Advisory Committee.

STEP 5. Review of Written Applications and Comments by the Block Grants Advisory Committee

The Block Grants Advisory Committee will have a minimum of 30 days to review all written applications and comments prior to conducting site visits of all proposed activities. Staff will prepare an analysis of the eligibility of all proposed activities for presentation to the Block Grants Advisory Committee.

STEP 6. Block Grants Advisory Committee Site Visits on Proposed Activities

The Block Grants Advisory Committee will conduct site visits of all proposed activities and will interview each applicant concerning their proposed program or project.

STEP 7. Block Grants Advisory Committee Adopts Recommendation for Proposed Activities and Allocation of Funds

The Block Grants Advisory Committee will complete its review of all comments and proposals and adopt a recommendation for presentation to the City Council on the proposed activities and allocation of funds. Staff will distribute the Advisory Committee's recommendation to applicants, City Council and news media.

STEP 8. City Council Public Hearing on Consideration of Block Grants Advisory

Committee's Recommendation for Proposed Activities and Allocation of Funds

The City Council will conduct a public hearing to receive comments and consider the Block Grants Advisory Committee's recommendation for proposed activities and allocation of funds in proposed Action Plan.

STEP 9. Publication of Proposed Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan

A summary describing the contents and purpose of the proposed Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan will be published in the Santa Maria Times. The publication will include a list of the locations where copies of the entire plan will be available for review and examination (see Step 2 for locations). As per HUD regulations, a reasonable number of free copies of the plan will be made available to individuals and groups that request it.

STEP 10. 30-Day Public Review Period of Proposed Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan

To provide sufficient opportunity for review and comment, a period of no less than 30 days will be provided to residents, public agencies and other interested parties on the proposed Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. The City will consider all comments and views in preparing its Final Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan and will attach a summary of such comments to the Final Plan.

STEP 11. City Council Adoption of Final Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan

Upon completion of the 30-day public review period and after consideration of all comments and input, the City Council will adopt the Final Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan including the specific activities and allocation of funds. The Final Adopted Plan will be submitted to HUD as required.

During HUD's review period, copies of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan will be made available at the Special Projects Office (110 S. Pine Street, Room 107, Santa Maria) and the City's website, www.cityofsantamaria.org. Both documents, along with other information about the City's programs and projects are also available throughout the year on the City's webpage at www.cityofsantamaria.org.

HUD requires 30-day public review periods for the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan, while the review period for the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) is fifteen (15) days. Questions, concerns, comments and complaints may be directed to the following City department during these review periods, and at any time during the year:

City of Santa Maria
Special Projects Division
110 South Pine Street, Room 107

**CITY OF SANTA MARIA
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

Santa Maria, CA 93458
Phone: (805) 925-0951, extension 2118

It should be noted that HUD officials will consider public concerns anytime regarding the City's plans and programs described in this Citizen Participation Plan, preferably during the 45-day HUD review period. Written concerns may be submitted to:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development
Arnold C. Sison, CPD Representative
Los Angeles Field Office, Region IX
300 North Los Angeles Street, Suite 4054
Los Angeles, CA 90012

STEP 12. Amendments

As defined in Section 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.505 (24 CFR 91.505), the City of Santa Maria will amend its approved plan whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

1. To make a change in its allocation priorities or change the method of distribution of funds;
2. To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan (including program income), not previously described in the action plan; or
3. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

When an amendment take place, the City of Santa Maria will make the amendment public by submitting it to the City Council, posting it on the website, and notifying the public. The document will then be submitted to HUD for approval.

In regards to substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, per the regulations (24 CFR 91.105 and 91.115), the grantee shall identify the criteria it will use for determining what constitutes a substantial amendment. The City of Santa Maria identifies a substantial amendment as the following:

1. An increase to the funding level of a previously approved activity or program by 50 percent or more;
2. A change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity to the extent that it would be considered a new activity, at the discretion of the City of Santa Maria; or
3. A change in the types of beneficiaries proposed to be served by the activity (ex. from homeless to youth), when more than 50 percent of the original beneficiary types will be changed.

A substantial amendment will require, at a minimum, that Steps 8 through 11 of the entire citizen participation process be repeated.

STEP 13. 15-Day Public Review Period of Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

To provide sufficient opportunity for review and comment, a period of no less than fifteen (15) days will be provided to residents, public agencies, and other interested parties on the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The City will consider all comments will attach a summary of such comments to the final HUD report.

CDBG FUNDING CYCLE TIMELINE (subject to change depending on HUD's allocation process)

<u>Month:</u>	<u>Actions Taken:</u>
August	Needs Assessment Public Workshop / Adopt funding priorities for upcoming fiscal year
September	City Council / Public Hearing regarding proposed funding priorities. Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) / Request for Capital project proposals and applications issued
October	Capital project proposals submitted to City Council for prioritization
November	Mandatory pre-application workshop for sub-recipients
December	Deadline for written applications, staff analysis of applications, Advisory Committee Regular Meeting to form site visit teams and give an overview of the application review procedures
January	Advisory Committee Regular Meeting to review criteria, prepare for site visits, and conduct site visits
February	Advisory Committee Regular Meeting to review site visit team reports, and special Advisory Committee meeting to conduct deliberations.
March/April	City Council / Public Hearing on proposed plan.
April	Begin 30-day review period of proposed Annual Action Plan based on the City Council's decision.
May	City Council final approval of Annual Action Plan and submission of plan to HUD at least 45 days before the start of the new fiscal year.

EXPEDITED AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR RESPONSE TO DISASTER RELIEF

In the event of a disaster, emergency, or pandemic, the City of Santa Maria may implement the amended guidelines imposed by HUD pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, supplemental assistance under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES), or other supplemental appropriations, either directly from HUD or through the State of California. A disaster, emergency, or pandemic is not limited to: infectious diseases, man-made disasters, terrorism, natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, fires, and other events that cause great damage or loss of life.

Allocation Process

- The City of Santa Maria may establish an amended approach (other than what is in this plan) to the allocation and funding process when managing and expediting CDBG and CDBG disaster-relief funding (ex. CDBG-CV). This may mean City Staff can decide on the proposed activities, allocations, and priorities of the funding, and present the recommendations to the City Council. The public will be notified and a proper public comment period will be implemented.

Amendments

- In light of COVID-19, HUD is also “waiving 24 CFR 91.505 to facilitate the use of the CDBG-CV funds to the extent necessary to require submission of the substantial amendment to HUD for review in accordance with 24 CFR 91.500.”

Public Participation Process

- When submitting and/or amending a Consolidated Plan/Action Plan, the proposed plan or amendment will be posted on the City’s website, www.cityofsantamaria.org.
- The City will notify the public of said proposed plan or amendment through at least two (2) of the following ways: City Council agenda, press release(s), public service announcement(s), public notice(s), social media, e-mail blast/newsletter, the City’s website, legal ad, or as otherwise required by HUD.
- The City will ensure that the public has equal access to information about the programs, including persons with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
- Public notices for hearings shall be posted on the City of Santa Maria’s website (via City Council Agenda, press release, or notification on the home page of the City’s website). Said notices shall provide a minimum of five (5) days for public comment. The public comment period may be adjusted per HUD’s amended guidelines.

- The City will receive comments either via e-mail or by mail to the Special Projects Division and/or the City Clerk's Office of the City of Santa Maria.
- The City will consider all written and verbal comments regarding the Consolidated Plan / Action Plan amendment.

Urgent Need Waivers

- Waivers to any of the Citizen Participation Plan requirements in this entire plan may be approved by HUD to expedite the City's ability to address a local urgent need. The City will consider any waiver available. Said waivers are not limited to those in this plan.

The above-mentioned public participation plan may be adjusted based upon the guidance and direction of HUD, the State of California, and any other governmental/health organization.

ROLE OF SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION

The Special Projects Division will organize and provide staff support throughout all stages of the citizen participation process. The primary function of the division will be:

1. To inform residents of impending plans, reports or review via email, news releases, website postings, mail and other methods.
2. To provide additional information and technical assistance to those who request it.
3. To provide staff support and organize any citizen participation meetings to discuss public concerns and interests.
4. To analyze and compile public input. The staff will respond to the public, and report to the Advisory Committee and the City Council.
5. To act as liaison between the residents and the Advisory Committee and City Council.
6. Whenever possible, to provide written responses to all written proposals submitted, prior to the final adoption of the Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan.
7. To make every reasonable effort to provide written responses in answer to complaints within fifteen working days.

8. To provide opportunities for participation by minorities and non-English speaking persons. All public notices, news releases, and general program information will be provided in Spanish as well as in English. Verbal Spanish translation services will also be provided at the required public workshops and hearings.
9. To provide opportunities for participation by persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments in all stages of the process.

PROCEDURES FOR RECORD KEEPING

With regard to participation in HUD's Community Planning and Development Programs, particularly the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships Programs, the City of Santa Maria will maintain the following records and provide access to these records to the public for a minimum of five years:

1. Written records describing the process used to inform the public concerning the amount of funds available for proposed community development and housing activities, the range of activities that may be undertaken, and other important program requirements.
2. Written records of public hearings held to obtain the views of City residents, public agencies and other interested parties on housing and community development needs, proposed uses of funds and program performance.
3. Written records of the opportunities provided the public to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.
4. Copies of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan and related records.
5. Copies of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and related records.

These records will be retained on file in accordance with federal, state and local requirements in the Offices of the City Clerk and the Special Projects Division. All original documents will be kept on file with the City Clerk with copies kept on file with the Special Projects Division.

RESIDENTIAL ANTI-DISPLACEMENT & RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PLAN

The federal regulations require that jurisdictions set forth their plans to minimize displacement of persons, even if no displacement is expected to occur, and state how

this information is available.

The City of Santa Maria's CDBG program will minimize displacement by following the City's CDBG "Residential Anti-Displacement & Relocation Assistance Plan". This document is available for public review at the Special Projects Office, 107 S. Pine Street, Santa Maria.

METHODS OF SOLICITING CITIZEN INPUT

- **ELECTRONIC MAILINGS**
Electronic mailings like e-mails and newsletters will be sent out to interested organizations and individuals. A mailing list will be maintained and updated on a regular basis.
- **WEBSITE**
Notices, agendas, news releases, annual action plans, the consolidated plan, annual performance reports and application forms will be posted regularly on the City's website at <http://www.cityofsantamaria.org>.
- **NEWS RELEASES**
News releases will be mailed out to all news media at all stages of the citizen participation process. Every effort will be done to ensure that the information is sent out in English and Spanish.
- **LEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS**
Legal advertisements will be published in the legal section of the local newspaper when legally required.
- **BULLETIN BOARDS**
Information may be posted on public bulletin boards at City Hall, the Public Library, City Departments, community recreation facilities and any other available bulletin boards in public places within the City.

DEFINITIONS

Annual Action Plan The City is required to prepare an Annual Action Plan which describes how it will use CDBG and HOME funds during each new fiscal year to address the needs discussed in the Consolidated Plan. The Annual Action Plan must be consistent with the multi-year Consolidated Plan. The Annual Action Plan must be submitted to HUD 45 days prior to the beginning of the program year. For the City of Santa Maria, the beginning of the program year is July 1st.

CDBG Program	Community Development Block Grant Program is administered by HUD and is authorized under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. The purpose of CDBG Program is to enhance and maintain viable urban communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and the expansion of economic opportunities, principally for low and moderate income persons.
CHDO	Community Housing Development Organizations are housing non-profit organizations that meet certain requirements set forth by HUD under the HOME program. The federal government requires the City to set aside 15% of its HOME Program allocation for CHDO's.
CAPER	Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report describes the accomplishments of the City's CDBG and HOME programs at the end of each fiscal year. The Plan is an assessment of the City's progress in accomplishing the goals of the Annual Action Plan and the Consolidated Plan. There is also a discussion of some of the additional funds that the City has accessed during the year to leverage the HUD funding.
Consolidated Plan	The City is required to prepare a five year Consolidated Plan to receive Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds. The plan includes a description of the housing and community development needs of the City, the City's priorities given the limited financial resources available to the City, and a strategy toward addressing those needs.
HOME	Home Investment Partnerships Program is administered by HUD as authorized by the 1990 National Affordable Housing Act, as amended by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992. The intent of the HOME Program is to expand the supply of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing.
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the federal agency which administers the CDBG and HOME funds. The City must abide by HUD regulations for these programs as a condition for receiving these funds.