



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Citizen Participation Plan 2025-2029

*Prepared by the Community Services Department
City of Auburn, AL*



DRAFT

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN 2025-2029

MAYOR

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Citizen Participation Plan

A. Overview

An essential component of determining the need for government action is to obtain input from the local public. The City recognizes that Citizen involvement in program planning and development is essential, not simply because of State and Federal requirements, but because 1) it is better to inform the public about community needs and resources available; 2) to learn more about hidden community needs; and 3) it allows citizens to bring forward ideas on how to address community needs.

The City of Auburn (City) has developed the following Citizen Participation Plan to comply with various citizen participation provisions of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Citizen Participation Plan details the City's strategy in determining Auburn residents' community development needs. Its purpose is to solicit citizen input that is representative and significant, including diverse elements of the population, and impacts what the City proposes.

The goal of the Housing and Community Development Act and the CDBG is to develop viable urban communities. These viable communities are achieved by providing the following:

1. Decent, safe, and sanitary housing.
2. Suitable living environment.
3. Expand economic opportunities.

The program's primary beneficiaries are low to moderate-income households with incomes within 80% of the Area Median, adjusted for family size and established by HUD.

Each CDBG activity will meet one of the three HUD National Objectives:

1. Provide a benefit to low and moderate-income persons.
2. Prevent or eliminate slum and blight.
3. Meet an urgent community need that threatens the health or welfare of residents.

B. Consultation Process

Citizen participation is integral to the development of the Consolidated Plan. The City will consult with the following during preparation:

1. The City will consult with other public and private agencies providing housing, health, and social services.

2. The City will consult with local health and child welfare agencies to obtain data on lead-based paint and gather information on locations of units where lead-poisoned children live.
3. The City will consult with adjacent local government units to identify and discuss non-housing community development needs.

C. Citizen Participation Process

The City of Auburn invites citizen participation throughout the planning, implementation, and assessment of the CDBG program. Citizens will be encouraged to voice their views, specifically those of low to moderate-income persons, minorities, residents in areas where activities are planned or ongoing, older people, people with disabilities, and business and civic groups concerned about community development. The City will encourage, in conjunction with consultation with the Auburn Housing Authority, the participation of the public and assisted housing development residents. The City will make every effort to involve citizens in the following areas of the CDBG program:

1. Development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.
2. Any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.
3. The Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Report.

All meetings related to the Citizen Participation Plan will be public and advertised in advance in the non-legal section of the local newspapers. The City will post notices in various city facilities and in digital formats. The City of Auburn will allow citizens 15 days to comment on the Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Report and 30 days on adopting the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan and on substantial amendments to the plans. A copy of the original plan will be digitally available on the City's website, at city hall, public library, and the Community Services office. The plan will be in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, and the City will consider accommodations.

D. Public Meetings

The City of Auburn will hold at least two public hearings to obtain citizen views on the proposed use of funds, to respond to any grant proposals, and to answer any questions that may arise during any phase of developing the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. A hearing will be held as the plans are being developed to obtain citizen input on housing and community development needs. An additional hearing will be held to receive comments regarding proposed activities before submitting the plan and to review accomplishments. A public hearing will also be held to consider any substantial amendments.

The following guidelines have been formulated for holding public hearings:

1. Public hearings will be prominently advertised in one of the local newspapers (in the non-legal section) at least ten (10) calendar days before the hearing date, with sufficient information published about the subject of the meeting, times, and location. Notices will also be posted in City buildings at least ten (10) days before the hearing.
2. Public hearings will be held at a City building or a location conducive to the intended program beneficiaries. All sites will be handicap accessible.
3. Minutes of all public hearings will be kept. The minutes will be kept on file at the Community Services office to provide documentation of the hearing. The minutes will include a summary of the hearing, including alternatives discussed, levels of opposition to the proposed plan, and the source of opposition.
4. A roster of citizens who attended the meeting will be kept. This record will include each person's or organization's name and address.
5. The following information will be furnished to citizens attending public hearings:
 - (a) Summary of the proposed project.
 - (b) Amount of funds available for proposed community development.
 - (c) Range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount of funds proposed to be used for activities benefiting low- and moderate-income persons.
 - (d) Actual use of funds by grantee. When practicable, outreach public meetings will be held. The time and place of the meeting will be posted – or announced in public places frequented by citizens residing in the service area.

The City of Auburn will use the most current Census to determine the number of residents with Limited English Proficiency. The following procedures will be used to meet their needs:

1. Where the history of public hearings has shown no participation and involvement of Limited English Proficiency residents, and where the Census shows no significant number (less than 5 percent) of Limited English Proficiency residents, no special measures will be taken.

2. Where history of public hearings has shown participation and involvement of Limited English Proficiency residents, and the Census shows a significant number (more than 5 percent), the following measures will be taken to overcome any language barriers that may exist so that the informational needs of these residents will be met:
 - (a) The hearing will be held as scheduled with a translator/interpreter in attendance for translation.

Notices of public hearings will be placed in local specialty newspapers (when available) and posted in appropriate places.

E. Public Records

All program records will be kept at the Community Services Office located at 400 Boykin Street for convenient public inspection between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Records will also be available at the Public Library at 749 E. Thach and City Hall at 144 Tichenor Avenue. Program records will include but not be limited to the following:

The following documents will be available for inspection at the Community Services Office, Public Library located at 749 E. Thach, and City Hall located at 144 Tichenor Avenue:

1. Adopted Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan
2. Substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans
3. Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Report

Generally, copies will be provided at a cost upon request. In addition, many CDBG documents produced by the City are readily available for free on the City's web site.

F. Publications

Before adopting the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, the City of Auburn will make available to citizens the amount of assistance (including grant funds and program income) and the range of proposed activities. A summary of the adopted Consolidated Plan and Action Plan will be published in one or more newspapers of general circulation.

All comments and suggestions regarding the plans are to be received in writing or orally at public hearings. Citizens and other interested groups will have at least 30 days to submit comments on the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan before the plans are submitted to HUD, and a 15-day comment period will be available for the Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. The plan should include a summary of comments received, reasons for the comments, and/or suggestions that were not incorporated.

G. Performance Report

The Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Report will be published, and citizens will have 15 days to comment on it before it's submitted to HUD. If citizens submit comments or suggestions in writing, they will be considered. The performance report will include a summary of these comments or suggestions.

H. Technical Assistance

The City of Auburn will provide the following technical assistance to organizations or groups desiring to develop proposals on behalf of low and moderate-income persons residing in the City:

1. Staff availability to answer questions concerning the CDBG program, including the application process and program management and implementation.
2. Staff assistance in developing the written proposal. Staff will explain how the proposal should be organized and presented.
3. Staff assistance in interpreting program data collected by the City.

Technical assistance should not be construed to infer that the City must subsidize the operating expense of those developing proposals.

All requests for technical assistance must be submitted in writing to the Director of Community Development. If the request falls outside the city staff's areas of expertise, the requesting person/organization will be notified and referred, when possible, to an appropriate agency.

I. Grievance Process

Any citizen/organization (hereafter referred to as the "complainant") who is aggrieved because of any aspect of the local community development program and wishes to file a complaint, or grievance must follow these procedures:

1. The complainant will first present the grievance in writing to the Community Services Director, who will make careful inquiries into the facts and circumstances of the complaint. The Community Services Director will attempt to resolve the problem promptly and give a reply to the complainant within fifteen (15) working days from the date the grievance is submitted.
2. A complainant who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Community Services Director may submit his grievance in writing to the Development Services Executive Director. The Development Services Executive Director will attempt to resolve the problem promptly and give a reply to the complainant within fifteen

(15) working days from the date the grievance is submitted to the Community Services Director.

3. A complainant who is dissatisfied with the Development Services Director's decision may submit his grievance in writing to the City Manager. The City Manager will make a separate inquiry and inform the complainant of his decision and reasons within 15 days where practicable.
4. If the complainant is still aggrieved, their authorized representative may request, in writing to the Mayor, within 30 days, a review of the grievance by the Auburn City Council. Such request will be accompanied by all the facts of the nature of the grievance and all written answers given thereto. The Mayor will introduce the complaint or grievance at the first regular Council meeting. Following receipt of the grievance, all affected parties will be asked to attend the meeting to review the grievance. The Auburn City Council will give their decision in writing to the complainant within 15 working days of the meeting date.
5. If the complainant is still aggrieved, he may submit the grievance in writing to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for review and further information.
6. Suppose the Community Services Director, Development Services Executive, City Manager, or City Council does not act on the grievance within the specified time. In that case, the complainant may submit it to the next higher level, following the applicable procedures.

J. Method of Amendment

Substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan will be considered if the modifications are justifiable and the changes meet one of the following criteria:

1. To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds more than thirty-five percent (35%) of the CDBG annual award plus program income.
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.
3. To change an activity's purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries.

Substantial amendments will be published, and citizens will have 30 days to comment before the amendments are implemented. Comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at public hearings will be considered. A summary of the comments, accepted or denied, shall be attached to the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan.

Amendments to the City of Auburn’s Citizen Participation Plan will be made as required by federal/state regulations and whichever the City of Auburn deems necessary. Citizens will have 15 days to comment on the Citizen Participation Plan amendments.

K. Minimize Displacement

No planned public projects or private development activities would result in displacement. Should such a displacement occur, the City will assist such individuals in acquiring replacement housing, which will be done by all applicable federal statutes and regulations governing relocation assistance.