

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

THE COUNTY OF ATASCOSA

REGARDING THE USE OF GRANT FUNDS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

This Citizen Participation Plan was prepared in accordance with Section 104(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. The 24 CFR 91.105 federal regulations outline the “citizen participation” requirements.

The plan is to be used to address citizen participation in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. With receipt of HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program funds, the program will be included under this Citizen Participation Plan.

The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) sets forth policies and procedures for citizen participation in the development of project specific applications and substantial amendments to these projects with funding.

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

The COUNTY OF ATASCOSA is certifying to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and State Agencies administering HUD programs that they have an approved Citizen Participation Plan, which:

- provides for and encourages citizen participation with emphasis on participation by persons who are residents of slum and blighted areas, by residents in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, or targeted revitalization areas.
- provides for and encourages citizen participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments, as well as provides information to the public housing authorities within our jurisdiction activities related to these programs.
- provides for and encourages citizen participation of persons with disabilities as well as provides documents in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.
- provides for and encourages citizen participation of all citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, and identifies how the needs of non-English speaking residents will be met in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate.
- provides citizens with reasonable and timely notification and access to local meetings, information, and records relating to the COUNTY OF ATASCOSA’s proposed and actual use of federal Community Development Block Grant funds.
- provides for public hearings and/or public postings to obtain citizen views; to respond to proposals and questions at all stages of the community development program, including at least the development of needs; and the review of proposed activities, and review of program annual performance. If hearings are held, they shall be after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and with accommodations for the disabled; and,
- provides for a timely written response to written complaints and grievances where applicable.

Note to Grant Recipients regarding Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements:

In accordance with federal law, if there is a significant number of the population who are non-English speaking residents and are affected by the CDBG project, such citizens should have 'meaningful access' to all aspects of the CDBG project. To provide 'meaningful access', Grant Recipients may need to provide interpreter services at public hearings or provide non-English written materials that are routinely provided in English. Examples of such vital documents may include Citizen Participation notices (e.g., complaint procedures, hearings notices), civil rights notices, and any other published notice that may allow an eligible person with limited English proficiency to participate in discussing proposed CDBG activities. For more information, see LEP.gov.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

These complaint procedures comply with the requirements of HUD's CDBG Program and Local Government Requirements found in 24 CFR §570.486 (Code of Federal Regulations). Citizens can obtain a copy of these procedures at the COUNTY OF ATASCOSA, 1 Courthouse Circle Drive, Suite 101, Jourdanton, TX 78026-3446, 830-769-3093, during regular business hours.

Below are the formal complaint and grievance procedures regarding the services provided under the CDBG program.

1. A person who has a complaint or grievance about any services or activities with respect to the CDBG project, whether it is a proposed, ongoing, or completed CDBG project, may during regular business hours submit such complaint or grievance, in writing to the COUNTY OF ATASCOSA Civil Rights Officer, at 1 Courthouse Circle Drive, Suite 101, Jourdanton, TX 78026-3446 or may call 830-769-3093.
2. A copy of the complaint or grievance shall be transmitted by the Civil Rights Officer to the person/division that is the subject of the complaint or grievance and to the County Judge within five (5) working days after the date of the complaint or grievance was received.
3. The County Judge or their representative shall complete an investigation of the complaint or grievance, if practicable, and provide a timely written answer to person who made the complaint or grievance within fifteen (15) days. The response may be a time extension to further review the complaint or grievance.
4. If the investigation cannot be completed within fifteen (15) working days per 3 above, the person who made the grievance or complaint shall be notified, in writing, within twenty (20) days where practicable after receipt of the original complaint or grievance and shall detail when the investigation should be completed.
5. If necessary, the grievance and a written copy of the subsequent investigation shall be forwarded to the CDBG Program Manager for their further review and comment.

If appropriate, provide copies of grievance procedures and responses to grievances in both English and Spanish, or other appropriate language.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

When requested, the COUNTY OF ATASCOSA shall provide technical assistance to groups that are representative of persons of low- and moderate-income in developing proposals for the use of CDBG funds. The COUNTY OF ATASCOSA, based upon the specific needs of the community's residents at the time of the request, shall determine the level and type of assistance.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT

Citizens will be provided reasonable advance notice of, and opportunity to comment on proposed activities in an application to the state and for grants already made regarding activities which are proposed to be added, deleted, or substantially changed from the entity's application to the state. The public outreach and notification will be accomplished through one or more of the following methods:

- a) Publication of notice in a local newspaper—a published newspaper article may also be used so long as it provides sufficient information regarding program activities and relevant dates.
- b) Notices prominently posted in public buildings and distributed to local Public Housing Authorities and other interested community groups.
- c) Posting of notice on the local entity website (if available).
- d) Public Hearing; or
- e) Individual notice to eligible cities and other entities as applicable using one or more of the following methods: Certified mail, Electronic mail or fax, First class (regular mail), Personal delivery (e.g., at a Council of Governments meeting).

These details will be included in the Public Comment Version of the Application, prior to submission.

Citizens, with emphasis on persons of low- and moderate-income who are residents of slum and blight areas, shall be encouraged to submit their views and proposals regarding community development and housing needs. Citizens shall be made aware of the location where they may submit their views and proposals.

PUBLIC COMMENT PROVISIONS AS REQUIRED BY CERTAIN STATE AGENCIES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

When public notice is the sole required notification process for the submission of an application from a State agency, the following provisions shall be observed the COUNTY OF ATASCOSA

A copy of a substantially complete application will be made available to allow for 14 days of public comment, but are not limited to:

1. The amount of CDBG funds expected to be made available for the current fiscal year (including the grant and any anticipated program income).
2. The range of activities that may be undertaken with the CDBG funds.

3. The estimated amount of the CDBG- funds proposed to be used for activities that will meet the national objective of benefit to low- and moderate- income persons.
4. The proposed CDBG activities likely to result in displacement and the unit of general local government's anti-displacement and relocation plans required under § 570.488.
5. The development of housing and community development needs

When a public hearing is required for submission of an application from a State agency, the following provisions shall be observed by the COUNTY OF ATASCOSA:

1. As stated in the COVID-19 Disaster Declaration Proclamation dated March 13th, 2020; public hearings may be held virtually or in person, pursuant to Section 418.017 of the code; “authorization to use all available resources of state government and of political subdivisions that are reasonably necessary to cope with this disaster.” Public notice of all hearings must be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the scheduled hearing.
2. When a significant number of non-English speaking residents are a part of the potential service area of the CDBG project, vital documents such as notices should be published in the predominant language of these non-English speaking citizens. An interpreter should be present to accommodate the needs of the non-English speaking residents at all public hearing where applicable.
3. Each public hearing shall be held at a time and location convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries and will include accommodation for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities must be able to attend the hearings and the COUNTY OF ATASCOSA must plan for individuals who require auxiliary aids or services if contacted at least two days prior to the hearing.
4. A public hearing, when required by a Federal Program, shall be held after 5:00 PM on a weekday or at a convenient time on a Saturday or Sunday.
5. If the agency requires a public hearing for submission, then a public notice shall be posted at Courthouse and the community’s website notifying the public of the project selected at least 5 days prior to the submission of the application.

The COUNTY OF ATASCOSA shall retain documentation of the hearing notice(s), a listing of persons attending the hearing(s), minutes of the hearing(s), and any other records concerning the proposed use of funds for three (3) years from closeout of the grant to the state. Such records shall be made available to the public in accordance with Chapter 552, Texas Government Code.

Weldon P Cude, County Judge

Date