

PASSAIC COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Prepared for  
Passaic County Planning Department  
930 Riverview Drive, Suite 250  
Totowa NJ 07512  
(973) 569-4040

Prepared by:



**JULY 2008**

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Section I	Introduction.....	1
Section II	Certification of Compliance .....	1
Section III	Community Development Needs/Public Hearings .....	3
Section IV	Request for Proposals.....	4
Section V	Citizen Access to Information .....	4
Section VI	Performance Reports .....	5
Section VII	Amendment Process .....	6
Section VIII	Complaint/Objection Process .....	6
Section IX	Technical Assistance .....	7
Section X	Bilingual Requirement .....	8
Section XI	Disability Requirement.....	
Section XII	County’s Responsibility .....	8
Section XIII	Section 108 Loan Program .....	8

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

### I. INTRODUCTION

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. This document has been established in order for Passaic County, NJ to be in conformance with the requirements of the regulations.

The Plan sets forth the County’s policies and procedures by which it encourages local citizens to participate and comment on the federally funded Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG Program Currently, Passaic County does not receive an entitlement grant under the HOME program, the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program or the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. However, if it does in the future, these programs will be included under this Citizen Participation Plan.

The provisions concerning citizen involvement in implementing and assessing the Community Development program apply to all activities that are ongoing, as well as to all future activities. This plan shall remain in affect until all activities are completed, or until this Plan is superseded by a new Plan.

Passaic County is preparing its Citizen Participation plan as part of the preparation of its Annual Consolidated Plan for FY 2008. This Plan will be adopted by Board of Freeholders at the same times as the County’s Five Year Plan for 2008-2012. It is anticipated that the Freeholders will adopt this plan in August 2008 and submit this final plan to HUD for approval.

### II. CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

As part of the County’s submission of its Five Year Consolidated Plan, and any amendments thereto, the County will submit certification to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that the County is following an approved Citizen Participation Plan, which:

- (a) Provides for and encourages citizen participation with particular emphasis on participation by persons of low and moderate income who are residents of slum and blighted areas and of areas in which funds are proposed to be

- used, and provides for participation by residents in low and moderate income neighborhoods or targeted revitalization areas within/as defined by the County;
- (b) Provides for and encourages citizen participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments, as well as providing information to the housing agency about Consolidated Plan activities related to its developments;
  - (c) Provides for and encourages citizen participation of persons with disabilities as well as provide a copy of the participation plan in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request;
  - (d) Provides for and encourages citizen participation of all of Passaic County's 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;
  - (e) Provides citizens with reasonable and timely notification and access to local meetings, information, and records relating to the County's proposed and actual use of federal Community Development Block Grant Funds;
  - (f) Provides for technical assistance to groups/organizations representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the County;
  - (g) Provides for 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 programs' annual performance. The hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and with accommodations for the disabled;
  - (h) Provides for a timely written response to written complaints and grievances where applicable.

### III. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS PUBLIC HEARINGS

Passaic County will, at a minimum, convene two (2) public hearings conducted during the development of the Five Year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions. The first public hearing will be held during the development of the Five Year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan before the proposed Plan is published for comment. The second public hearing will be held during the 30-day public comment period.

#### *First Public Hearing*

The County will hold the first Public Hearing to obtain citizen views on community development and housing needs and to provide citizens important program information as a part of the planning process for the coming program year. At the Public Hearing the following information will be made available:

- The amount of Entitlement Grant, program income, and other funds expected to be available during the program year;
- The range of activities that may be undertaken with CDBG funds, and the local priorities established for such use of funds;
- The estimated amount of those funds to be used for activities that will benefit low and moderate income persons;
- A description of CDBG activities likely to result in displacement, plans for minimizing such displacement, and the type and level of assistance that will be made available to persons displaced;
- The process to be followed in determining the use of CDBG funds, including the schedule of meetings at which County's Planning Department will recommend projects for funding and when the Board of Freeholders will adopt the Plan.

#### *Second Public Hearing*

Once drafted and before the Five Year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan is adopted, the document (s) will be made available to interested parties for a public comment period no less than 30 days. A public meeting will be conducted during the 30-day comment period to gather comments on the proposed plan. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of comments and views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to final consolidated plan.

IV. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Passaic County may solicit proposals for CDBG funding that address identified community development and/or housing needs prior to the first Public Hearing, or anytime during the course of the program year.

Proposals for CDBG funds must include the name and status (for-profit, non-profit) of the agency responsible for the implementation of the project, the location of the project, the sources of funding available to undertake the described activity, the need for block grant assistance, and the anticipated accomplishments and/or beneficiaries of the project.

Proposals are to be submitted to the Passaic County Planning Department, 930 Riverview Drive– Suite 250, Totowa New Jersey 07512. All proposals will be responded to within fifteen (15) working days from receipt, where feasible.

V. CITIZEN ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Passaic County will provide for full public access to program information and will make affirmative efforts to make adequate information available to citizens. Program records are available for citizen review upon request in the Planning Department, 930 Riverview Drive – Suite 250, Totowa New Jersey 07512 during normal working hours. Such documents include the following:

- All mailings and promotional material
- Records of Public Hearings/Meetings
- All key documents, including prior applications, letters of approval, grant agreements, the citizen participation plan, annual performance reports, and other reports required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Copies of the regulations and issuances governing the program(s)

Documents regarding other aspects of the program such as contracting requirements, environmental procedures, fair housing and other equal opportunity requirements and relocation policies will be available for public inspection. Passaic County will publish a Notice of Public Hearing in the *Herald News*, including the schedule of Public Hearings and other meetings

that may be sponsored by the County. Also, notices will be published announcing the availability for public view of such documentation relating to the Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER), the Citizen Participation Plan, the Five Year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Consolidated Pan and all amendments to the Plan and use of CDBG funds. These notices will appear in the non-legal classified section of the newspaper and will be printed in easy readable type.

In addition, the County will make available all information during regular working hours at the following locations, which are conveniently located for persons affected by the program as well as being accessible to the handicapped.

- ❑ Planning Department, 930 Riverview Drive– Suite 250, Totowa New Jersey 07512;
- ❑ County Administration Building at 401 Grand St, Paterson, NJ
- ❑ Passaic County Housing Authority: 100 Hamilton Plaza, Paterson
- ❑ Passaic County website: **[www.passaiccountynj.org](http://www.passaiccountynj.org)**

Persons requiring assistance to participate may contact the Planning Department and at 973-569-4040 (T.T.D Users call 7-1-1, NJ Telecommunications Relay Center.)

## VI. PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Before the Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) is submitted to HUD, it will be made available to interested parties for a comment period of no less than 15 days. Citizens will be notified of the CAPER's availability through newspaper notification in the Press of Passaic County. The notification will be published the day the CAPER comment period begins. Comments will be considered from individuals and/or groups received in writing. A summary of the written comments and a summary of those not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be included in the final CAPER.

VII. AMENDMENT PROCESS

Passaic County will consider the following criteria as constituting a substantial change to the Consolidated Annual Plan thereby requiring an amendment:

- An activity added to or deleted from the Consolidated Annual Plan;
- A change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity previously described;
- A fifty (50) percent change in CDBG funding where the CDBG share is \$25,000 or less, or
- A twenty-five (25) percent change in CDBG funding where the CDBG share is more than \$25,000.
- Or an increase or decrease in the amount of funds available to the Grantee from HUD or via unanticipated Program Income.

In the event of an amendment to the Consolidated Plan, the proposed amended Consolidated Plan will be made available to interested parties for a comment period of no less than 30 days.

Citizens will be notified of the amended Consolidated Plan's availability through newspaper notification in the *Herald News*. The notification will be published the day the amended Consolidated Plan comment period begins.

VIII. COMPLAINT/OBJECTION PROCESS

Citizens may register complaints regarding any aspect of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program by telephoning the Planning Department at 973-569-4040 or by writing to the Director, Planning Department, 930 Riverview Drive – Suite 250, Totowa New Jersey 07512.

All complaints so received by the Department will be referred to a staff person who will investigate all complaints. All complaints will be addressed in writing within fifteen (15) working days, where feasible. Further appeals of the staff determination must be submitted in writing to the Planning Director at the aforementioned address. The Director will respond in writing within fifteen (15) working days, where feasible.

Citizens wishing to object to HUD approval of the final Consolidated Plan



may send objections to the HUD Field Office at One Newark Center, 13th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102-5260. Objections should be made within thirty (30) days after the County publishes notice in the *Herald News* that an application has been submitted to HUD. Any objections made will only be submitted to HUD for the following reasons:

- The applicant's description of needs and objectives is plainly inconsistent with available facts and data;
- or the activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the applicant;
- or the application does not comply with the requirements of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME or other applicable laws;
- or the application proposed activities which are otherwise ineligible under the program regulations.

Objections should include both an identification of requirements not met and available facts and data.

#### IX. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance may be requested in writing by appropriate organizations, community-wide advisory groups, project area organizations, groups of low and moderate income persons and/or groups of residents of blighted neighborhoods.

This assistance may be requested for the purposes of adequately participating in planning, implementing and assessing the program; developing proposals and statements of views; organizing and operating neighborhood and project area organizations or in carrying out Community Development Program activities. The level and type of necessary assistance will be determined by Passaic County. If necessary, assistance will be provided by specialists jointly selected by the County and groups of organizations in need of assistance.

All correspondence requesting technical assistance should be addressed to the Director, Passaic County Planning Department, 930 Riverview Drive – Suite 250, Totowa New Jersey 07512. All requests should specify the name of the citizen groups or organizations as well as a contact person, the nature of technical assistance requested, immediate problems and the reason for the request.

X. BILINGUAL REQUIREMENT

Whenever a significant number of low and moderate income persons and residents of blighted neighborhoods speak and read a primary language other than English, the County will provide that all notices of public hearings and summaries of basic information be produced in such language or languages upon request and that bilingual opportunities be offered at required public hearings.

XI. DISABILITY REQUIREMENT

All public notices and other written correspondence will provide citizens the opportunity to communicate with the county through Text Telephone services provided by the NJ Telecommunications Services (7-1-1). When requested, the County will provide any and all grant related material in an alternative format or make arrangements for the information to be presented in a manner accessible to persons with disabilities. All public hearings will be held in places that are accessible to persons with mobility disabilities.

XII. COUNTY'S RESPONSIBILITY

The requirement for citizen participation does not restrict the responsibility or authority of the County for the development and execution of its Consolidated Plan.

XIII. SECTION 108 LOAN PROGRAM

Applications for assistance filed by the County for Section 108 loan guarantee assistance authorized under HUD regulation 24 CFR Part 570, Subpart M, are subject to all provisions set forth within this Citizen Participation Plan. Such applications for 108 loan guarantee may be included as part of the process for obtaining CDBG Entitlement funds, or may be undertaken separately anytime during the program year. The required public hearing to inform citizens of program requirements will be carried out by the Planning Department.