

Urban County of San Luis Obispo

# DRAFT Community Participation Plan

For preparing and amending  
The Consolidated Plan



Originally approved by the County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors  
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Prepared by  
San Luis Obispo County  
Department of Planning and Building

# Community Participation Plan

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## Section I

### Introduction

To receive funding for Community planning and Development grant programs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities to provide a Consolidated Plan, which outlines community needs for housing and community development. In addition to the Consolidated Plan, the community must adopt a Citizen Participation Plan. The County of San Luis Obispo has adopted this Community Participation Plan that establishes the procedures for involving the public as part of developing and amending the Consolidated Plan for the San Luis Obispo Urban County. This Community Participation Plan complies with the requirements of HUD pursuant to Title 24, Subpart B, Section 91.105.

The Consolidated Plan process is illustrated in the flow chart on the following page.

The Consolidated Plan describes the projects proposed for funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) program and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program.

The primary purpose of the Community Participation Plan is to encourage citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and in any substantial amendments and performance reports. The participation of community members is encouraged, including minorities, non-English speakers and people with physical impairments.

The purposes of the community participation plan are to:

1. Solicit and consider public input when the Urban County's Consolidated Plan is being prepared, amended or reported on; and
2. Provide procedures and guidelines for gaining public input, particularly by persons of low and moderate income to whom federal funds are primarily targeted; and
3. Obtain community ideas and opinions regarding the need for affordable housing, economic development, public services and facilities.

# Consolidated Plan Preparation

<p><b>Annual Performance Report</b> Summarized progress of previously funded projects. Published for public review.</p>	<p><b>August - September</b></p>
<p><b>Information workshops</b> Provide information about available federal funding, eligible types of projects and discuss community needs.</p>	<p><b>August – October</b></p>
<p><b>Request for proposals</b> Prepare and release request for proposals (RFP)</p>	<p><b>August – October</b></p>
<p><b>Initial city and county hearings</b> Formally advertised hearings held by the Board of Supervisors to discuss available funds, eligible projects, and community needs.</p>	<p><b>October – December</b></p>
<p><b>Prepare draft consolidated plan</b> Receive project proposals and comments. Prepare and release draft plan; 30 day public review period.</p>	<p><b>December – January</b></p>
<p><b>Additional workshops</b> Explain draft plan and invite public comments</p>	<p><b>January – March</b></p>
<p><b>Final plan approvals</b> Conduct hearing of each city council and Board of Supervisors for approval of plan. Incorporate comments.</p>	<p><b>February - April</b></p>
<p><b>Submit to HUD</b></p>	<p><b>May</b></p>

## Section II

### Encouraging Community Participation

This section discusses the specific activities and procedures that will be undertaken to encourage the community participation in developing the Consolidated Plan. These procedures will be implemented during each annual plan preparation cycle.

1. **Library:** A public information library will be maintained by the county Department of Planning and Building throughout the process of preparing and implementing the Consolidated Plan. The library will contain program related law, regulations and other information. The library will be available for public use during normal working hours at the county Department of Planning and Building. Department staff will be designated to respond to public inquiries about grant programs.
2. **Project Information:** Information about specific projects is available through the county Department of Planning and Building and each city participating in the program.

**Press Releases:** Press releases will be mailed directly to appropriate media announcing the purpose, time, date and place of any program related to public workshops and meetings.

3. **Meeting Notices:** All public hearings shall be advertised through written notices published in newspapers of general circulation at least 10 days for the incorporated cities and 30 days for the county prior to meetings. When appropriate, press releases and meetings notices will be mailed directly to interested persons, or groups, who request to be placed on the county's mailing list. Applicants for CDBG, HOME or ESG will also receive written notice.

4. **Additional Outreach Efforts:** At minimum, the county will use alternative community outreach methods to:

- 1) Encourage public participation by low and moderate income residents living in slum and blighted areas as defined by the cities' redevelopment agencies within the county. According to HUD 24 CFR, Part 91.5, "low income" is defined not exceeding 50 percent of the median family income for the area and "moderate income" is defined as not exceeding 80 percent of the median family income for the area;
- 2) Engage minorities and non-English speakers by providing a translator at the public meeting, and reaching out to disabled persons by providing user friendly copies of the consolidated plan including Braille

format, oral format, or delivering copies to homebound individuals upon in-advanced request;

- 3) Encourage participation of local and regional community based organizations including businesses and developers; and
- 4) Encourage residents of public and assisted housing developments to participate by informing public housing authorities.

## Section III

### Technical Assistance to Representative Groups

1. **Assistance:** Technical Assistance will be provided upon request to groups representing persons of low or moderate-income. This assistance is to help in the development of proposals for funding under various programs. Such assistance will include the amount of funds available; activities eligible for funding through grant programs; rating factors used to select projects for funding; income requirements that may apply to grant programs; time-frames and deadlines for applications and funding; potential availability of alternative funding and the need for matching funds; referrals to other appropriate funding agencies; reporting requirements for grant programs; and federal laws that may apply to a project.
2. **Staff Availability:** County planning staff will meet with representative groups of low and moderate-income persons upon request to explain the grant programs, rules and procedures.

## Section IV

### Public Hearings and Workshops

The County will hold a minimum of two public hearings each year: one to initiate the Consolidated/Action Plan development and one before the final approval of the Consolidated/Action Plan. Throughout the preparation of the Consolidated/Action Plan, workshops will be held to identify and evaluate needs which may be addressed with CDBG, HOME, or ESG funds. Here “Plan” refers both to the Consolidated and Annual Action Plan.

1. **Needs Workshops:** Prior to the preparation of the Plan, the County Department of Planning and Building will hold a minimum of four public workshops on a countywide basis. Workshops will be conducted in various regions of the county. During these workshops, information will be provided to the public about the types of activities that can be funded and

an estimate of the amount of funds that may be available. Public comments will be invited regarding housing and community development needs, which could be addressed through the CDBG, HOME or ESG programs.

2. **Needs Hearing:** From August through October of each year, the County will conduct an initial public hearing to discuss unmet community development needs. Each city participating in the Consolidated Plan process is encouraged to conduct an initial hearing to discuss the unmet needs. Pursuant to HUD's regulations, section 91.105, this hearing will gain early input from the public and elected officials prior to publishing the draft Plan. This hearing would be formally advertised. Issues such as community needs, amount of funds available, eligible types of projects, and program requirements may be addressed.
3. **Plan Summary Published:** At least 30 days prior to the start of City/County hearings for approval of the Plan, a summary of the Plan will be available to the public at no cost. The summary will also be translated to Spanish.
4. **Comment Workshop:** During the 30-day public review period, the county will conduct at least four advertised public workshops after publication of a draft plan to answer questions and obtain public comments about the proposed Plan. These comments will be summarized and responded to in writing, considered during the public hearings, and attached to the final approved Plan.
5. **Final Plan Approval:** A least one public hearing will be held by each participating city council and the county Board of Supervisors to approve and authorized submittal of the urban county's Plan to HUD. The hearings will be properly advertised along with direct mailing notifying interested parties shall be completed. The public shall have the opportunity to provide testimony at these hearings.

## **Section V**

### **Consolidated Plan Amendments**

When reallocating HUD grant funds from one activity to another activity, the County will amend the Consolidated Plan. Depending on the nature of the proposed changes, amendments are categorized as major, minor, or administrative amendments. The following describes the process for each type of amendment.

#### **1. Major Amendment for Substantial Changes**

A major amendment is required for the following scenarios:

- a. Reallocating more than \$25,000 in CDBG or HOME funds;
- b. Cancelling an existing activity that is not a “public service” or an “administrative” activity;
- c. Adding a new activity. New activity is defined as “new” when this activity never existed within the Consolidated Plan or if a previous activity for a specific location was completed. A “new activity” example includes the “Rehabilitation of the Carnegie Library” activity where a previous activity was completed and closed out a few years ago. Thus, another “rehab” activity for this library will be considered as a new activity;
- d. Changing goals or policies of the Consolidated Plan, due to public request; and
- e. Substantially changing the purpose, scope, service level, location, or beneficiaries of an approved activity.

The major amendment process includes the following steps:

- a. One public hearing will be held;
- b. A 30-day public notice of the date, time, and place of the public hearing will be made available to the public; and
- c. The proposed changes the Consolidated Plan will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation to allow public to determine if they are affected and desire to comment on the proposed changes.

## **2. Minor Amendment for Public Service or Administrative Activities**

A minor amendment is required when an existing “public service” or an “administrative” activity is canceled within the same program year and the reallocated funds are less than \$25,000. Minor amendments can be approved on a consent agenda.

## **3. Administrative Amendment**

An administrative amendment involves the reallocation of less than \$25,000 in funds and does not result in the creation of a new activity or the cancellation of an existing activity.

## **Section VI**

### **Performance Report**

#### **1. Procedure**

The County will prepare an annual performance report, which will be available for public review.

- a. Copies and Meetings.** Copies of the annual performance report will be available for comments at least 15 days prior to submission of the report to HUD. The County Department of Planning and Building may hold a public meeting regarding the annual performance report each year. The meeting would be noticed in the media through press releases.
- b. Available Reports.** Annual performance reports shall be made available upon request.
- c. Comments:** Comments received on the annual performance reports will be considered by the county for purposes of possible revisions to clarify information, correct inaccurate information and to help in the preparation of the Consolidated Plan for the following year.

## **Section VII**

### **Displacement of Persons**

The Community Participation Plan shall, as required by 24 CFR Part 91, Section 91.105, set forth the jurisdiction's plan "to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced..."

The County of San Luis Obispo has in place a Residential antidisplacement and Relocation Plan as required under section 104 (d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which pertains to any funded activity by the CDBG and HOME programs.

## **Section VIII**

### **Comments and Complaints**

- 1. Procedure.** The county and participating cities will consider any comments, views or complaints from community members received in writing, or orally at the public hearings in preparing the final Consolidated

Plan, amendments to the Plan, and/or the performance report.

A summary of comments or complaints, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted, and the reason thereof, shall be attached to the Final Consolidated Plan, amendments to the Plan or the performance report as they are appropriate.

- 2. Response to Complaints.** The Department of Planning and Building will respond in writing within 15 working days where practical to written complaints and grievances related to the programs.

The Department of Planning and Building will ensure that community members with complaints or grievances regarding the Consolidated Plan, amendment procedure and/or Performance Report receive an adequate response to their written complaints.

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