

Monmouth County Citizen Participation Plan



Monmouth County Division of Planning

Office of Community Development

March 13, 2014



I. Purpose

This Citizen Participation Plan is for the County of Monmouth, New Jersey (the County) which administers Federal Entitlement Programs funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the County. The purpose of this Citizen Participation Plan is to provide the citizens of Monmouth County with a plan setting forth how they may choose to have a voice in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Federal Entitlement Programs funded through HUD.

This Citizen Participation Plan is designed to serve the following specific purposes:

- A. To present in a logical sequence the various components of the Community Development Program;
- B. To identify the departments or agencies of County government responsible for administering components of the Community Development Program;
- C. To clarify the opportunities that individual citizens, community organizations, and neighborhood groups will have to work with County officials in developing each part of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, from application development to program evaluation;
- D. To indicate alternate courses of action that the Federal regulations make available to citizens and organizations;
- E. To act as a coordinating vehicle for citizen participation to be used by all agencies or officials responsible for various components of the County's Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans.
- F. Encourage engagement by low- and moderate-income persons, non-English speaking persons, local and regional institutions, organizations (businesses, developers, community and faith based), in the development and implementation of Community Development programs.

Any questions or comments on substantive issues or the adequacy of the Citizen Participation Plan should be referred to:

**Monmouth County Office of Community Development
Program Director
Hall of Records Annex Building
2nd Floor
1 East Main Street**

Freehold, NJ, 07728;

Phone: (732) 431-7460 or e-mail: communitydevelopment@co.monmouth.nj.us.

II. Mechanisms for Development of Citizen Participation

A. The Monmouth County Office of Community Development shall be responsible for the implementation of the Citizen Participation Plan as well as its development and dissemination.

B. All public notices and/or advertising shall be done in the Asbury Park Press, a newspaper of regional circulation and cultural significance to the municipalities, institutions, and citizens of Monmouth County. All noticing will also be placed on the Monmouth County Division of Planning, Office of Community Development webpage.

C. The County will issue an advertisement in the non-legal notice section of the Asbury Park Press concerning the availability of this Citizen Participation Plan. The advertisement will appear at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan and will indicate the locations at which the document will be made available for public review.

D. Any individual citizen or organization submitting a written comment will receive a response from the County concerning the recommendation and the decision made with respect to that recommendation. Correspondence should be addressed to the Monmouth County Community Development Program Director. (See contact information in section I. Purpose)

III. Consolidated Plan Process

A. Purpose of Consolidated Plan

HUD provides regulations and procedures for applying for entitlement funds with a rule that consolidates into a single submission the planning and application aspects of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program, and Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program. HUD also provides rules to consolidate the reporting requirements for these programs, replacing the general performance reports with one performance report. This document is referred to as the Consolidated Plan.

The Consolidated Plan serves the following functions: (1) A planning document for communities, which builds on a community participation process; (2) An application for federal funds under HUD's formula grant programs; and (3) A strategy to be followed in administering HUD programs.

In general, the Consolidated Plan cites estimated housing needs projected for the ensuing five-year period. The Annual Action Plan describes the County's intended use of the entitlement funding to be received for a particular fiscal year.

B. Development of the Annual Action Plan Application

1. Provision of Adequate Information

At the time that the County initiates the preparation of the Annual Action Plan in a new program year, a package of information will be compiled by the Office of Community Development for reference by individual citizens or organizations. This package will include:

- a. The total amount of entitlement funds to be made available to the County;
- b. The range of activities that may be undertaken with Federal funds and the kinds of activities that were previously funded and are still eligible under Federal regulations;
- c. The types of activities ineligible under Federal regulations;
- d. The process to be followed in preparing and approving the application, including the tentative schedule of meetings and hearings;
- e. The Citizen Participation Plan:

Residents and organizations in Monmouth County will be able to review this information relative to the Citizen Participation Plan at the Monmouth County Office of Community Development, Hall of Records Annex Building, 2nd Floor, 1 East Main Street, Freehold, NJ 07728.

2. Provision of Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be provided by the Monmouth County Office of Community Development upon request by citizens and citizen organizations so that they may adequately participate in planning, implementing, and assisting Entitlement Program development and for those groups of low- and moderate-income persons and groups of residents of blighted neighborhoods. Technical assistance will consist of:

- a. Answering questions orally or in writing concerning the procedures and timetable for the preparation of applications, the eligibility under Federal regulations of various types of proposals or other Federal regulations governing application development or program implementation.
- b. Provision of available information and data, which would pertain to the preparation of proposals for funding through the Entitlement Program or statements of view concerning ongoing programs or policies.

Citizens or organizations requiring technical assistance should contact the Monmouth County Community Development Program Director. (-see contact information in section I. Purpose)

3. Consultation with Public and Private Agencies

During the preparation of the Consolidated Plan, the Office of Community Development will consult with other public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social and fair housing services. Agencies to be consulted include, but are not limited to those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, homeless and chronically homeless persons, and low- and moderate-income persons and households. Specifically, during development of the homeless strategy and identification of resources available to address the needs of homeless persons, the

Office of Community Development will consult with the Continuum(s) of Care that serve Monmouth County. In addition, the Office of Community Development will notify local health departments, local public housing agencies and their residents, municipalities within Monmouth County, adjacent counties, and the State of New Jersey of the opportunity to participate in plan development. This consultative process may include meetings with individuals or organizations, focus groups, questionnaires as well as other methods of communication conducted via electronic media.

4. Public Hearings:

Public hearings by which residents and organizations of Monmouth County will be given an opportunity to obtain information on the Entitlement Programs and to provide input into the development of the programs and applications for these funds.

All public hearings will be coordinated by the Office of Community Development, which is responsible for program administration as well as preparation of the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan.

Persons who are elderly or handicapped and who would otherwise be unable to attend may request transportation to these meetings. The Office of Community Development will be charged with attempting to arrange transportation and notifying the individual of the arrangements or the unavailability thereof. Generally, such requests should be made at least five (5) working days prior to the hearing day. Such person should request such assistance by contacting the Monmouth County Community Development Program Director. (See contact information in Section I)

In the event significant numbers of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to attend public hearings, translation assistance will be provided so that they may participate effectively in the hearing.

The County will hold at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizen views and to respond to proposals and questions. These hearings will be held at two different stages of the program planning process. Hearings shall be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries with accommodations for persons with disabilities.

a. General Public Hearing (Hearing #1)

Each year, a public hearing will be used to obtain the views of citizens and organizations regarding overall community development and housing needs, development of proposed activities, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income, and to review program performance. Comments or recommendations on programs and projects will be encouraged. Notice of the hearing will appear in the non-legal notice section of the Asbury Park Press and shall be published at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the public hearing.

b. Annual Action Plan Public Hearing (Hearing #2)

Upon completion of the proposed Annual Action Plan, the County shall publish a summary of the Plan allowing sufficient time to permit citizens to comment on the Plan prior to its approval and adoption. The notice will appear in the non-legal section of the Asbury Park Press at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the adoption of the Plan and will indicate the locations at which the Plan will be made available for public review.

A public hearing will be conducted during the thirty (30) day review period of the proposed Annual Action Plan. The notice of this hearing may be combined with the notice of availability of the Draft Consolidated Plan for public review. However, the notice must allow at least fifteen (15) from the date of notice publication to the date of hearing. Where the Annual Action Plan and Comprehensive Plan are to be approved and adopted in the same year, public hearings for each may be combined into one.

Public hearings will be coordinated by the Office of Community Development, which is responsible for program administration as well as preparation of the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan.

Following the thirty (30) day review period, the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders will take formal action on the application. The Office of Community Development will make necessary arrangements to forward it to the appropriate funding agency.

5. Acceptance of Written Comments, Proposals, or Recommendations:

During program planning, citizens and organizations within Monmouth County will have an opportunity to submit comments, proposals, or recommendations on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Any resident or property owner in Monmouth County or any organization representing Monmouth County residents or property owners may participate.

A summary of all comments, written and oral, received during either a published public comment period or public hearing, will be attached to the report to which they refer, in accordance with HUD requirements. The summary will set forth the action, if any, that has been taken or is proposed to be taken with respect to the comment, proposal, or recommendation.

However, written statements that are intended to suggest modifications to the application may only be considered if they are received by the end of the thirty (30) day review period on the draft Action Plan.

Such comments, proposals, or recommendations may be directed to the Monmouth County Community Development Program Director. (-see contact information in section I. Purpose)

5. Availability of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan

After the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plan have been adopted, the County shall publish a notice in the non-legal notice section of the Asbury Park Press indicating its content and availability. A reasonable number of hard copy documents will be made available free for distribution upon request.

C. Complaint Procedure:

Any individual or organization may choose to file a complaint concerning the County's Entitlement Programs. Complaints should be forwarded to the Monmouth County Community Development Program Director. (See contact information in section I. Purpose)

The complaint must be made in writing and should contain the following information:

- a. The name and signature of the complainant, or if any organization has prepared the complaint, the name and signature of the officer of the organization responsible for correspondence.
- b. The address to which the County's response should be mailed.
- c. A telephone number where the complaint or an individual knowledgeable about the substance of the complaint can be reached during daytime hours.
- d. The nature of the complaint, including any relevant information or documentation.
- e. A recommendation concerning how the complainant wishes to have the matter resolved.

The Office of Community Development will make every reasonable effort to provide a written response to a complaint within fifteen (15) days of its receipt. The County will indicate its position on the matter as well as the appropriate measure that shall be to be taken to address the situation. Falsified, anonymous, or fictitious complaints will not receive a response.

D. Filing Objections with Federal Funding Agency

Individuals or organizations who have followed the procedure described above to resolve complaints may choose to file an official objection with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Newark Field Office, One Newark Center, 1085 Raymond Boulevard, 13th Floor, Newark, NJ 07012-5260; Phone (973) 622-7900 or Fax (973) 645-2323. Citizens are encouraged to bring complaints first to the local level for resolution since HUD procedures require the County to respond to any complaint filed with HUD.

E. Criteria for Amendment to Programs

1. The County may determine that a substantial amendment to its approved programs is necessary.

A substantial change warranting the need for a substantial amendment is defined as the increase or decrease in the cost of an approved activity by more than 25 percent (\$50,000 maximum change) or the change (increase or decrease) in the service area and/or class of

beneficiaries of an activity. Such a course of action would constitute the need for a substantial amendment to an approved program. The County may decide to amend its approved programs based upon one of the following decisions:

- a. To make substantial change in its allocation priorities;
- b. To undertake an activity, using a substantial amount of funding from any program (including program income), which was not previously described in an action plan or funding application; or
- c. To make a substantial change to the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

In the case of a substantial amendment, the County shall provide citizens with reasonable notice of and opportunity to comment on such a proposed change in its use of funds. The Office of Community Development will publish a notice in the non-legal section of the Asbury Park Press on the proposed program change and provide interested parties or affected citizens at least thirty (30) calendar days to submit comments on the amendment. The County shall consider any such comments and, if deemed appropriate, modify the proposed amendment accordingly. The amendment is subject to approval by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

2. The County may decide to make a revision to its approved programs. A revision is defined as a change in the budget for activities of less than a 25 percent (and less than \$50,000) and will not substantially change the scope or beneficiaries. These types of revisions do not require the thirty (30) day public notice, but will require approval by the Board of Chosen Freeholders.
3. On completion of all amendments and revisions, the Monmouth County Office of Community Development will make the amendment public and will notify HUD that an amendment has been made. The Office of Community Development may submit a copy of each amendment to HUD as it occurs, or at the end of the program year.

F. Annual Performance Report

The County is required to file an annual performance report to HUD. The Office of Community Development will publish a notice of completion of the report in sufficient time to permit citizens to comment on the report prior to its submission to HUD. The notice will appear in the Asbury Park Press at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the submission of the report and will indicate the locations at which the report will be made available for public review. The County will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings in preparing a performance report. If required by program regulations, a summary of these comments or views shall be attached to the performance report.

G. Policy on Acquisition and Relocation

The County will not use funds provided under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, to assist or undertake activities other than code enforcement which are anticipated to cause permanent displacement.

Should displacement become necessary as a result of unforeseen circumstances that may occur, the County will provide relocation assistance, as described in 24 CFR Part 570.606(b)(2), to each low- and moderate-income household displaced by the demolition of housing or by the conversion of a low- and moderate-income dwelling to another use as a direct result of assisted activities.

H. Use of Plan

The County shall follow the Citizen Participation Plan for all funding applications and amendments to the approved applications.

This Citizen Participation Plan may be modified from time to time by the County provided such revisions are consistent with Federal and State law, regulations and administrative requirements covering citizen participation. Prior to any modification of the Citizen Participation Plan, the Office of Community Development will publish a notice of modification in sufficient time to permit citizens to comment prior to approval by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The notice shall be published in the non-legal notice section of the Asbury Park Press at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the adoption of the modification by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Any questions or comments on this Citizen Participation Plan or request for information should be directed to: the Monmouth County Community Development Program Director, Hall of Records Annex Building, 2nd Floor, 1 East Main Street, Freehold, NJ, 07728; Phone: (732) 431-7460 or e-mail communitydevelopment@co.monmouth.nj.us.

DRAFT for REVIEW	Notification Time (minimum)	Hearing	Adoption
Citizen Participation Plan	15 calendar days	No	Board of Chosen Freeholders
Consolidated Plan	30 days	Yes	Board of Chosen Freeholders
General Public Hearing (CDBG)	15 days prior to public hearing	Yes	N/A
Transporation Request	5 days prior to public hearing	No	N/A
Annual Action Plan Public Hearing	30 calendar days	Yes	Board of Chosen Freeholders
Annual Action Plan Review Notice	15 calendar days	Yes	N/A
Substantial Amendment	30 calendar days	No	Board of Chosen Freeholders
Comments, Proposals, Recommendations	15 day response time	No	N/A
Complaint	15 day response time	No	N/A
Changes to Plan (not substantial amendment)	None	No	Board of Chosen Freeholders
Annual Performance Report	15 calendar days	No	N/A