

CITY OF SCRANTON

Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

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Purpose of Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Scranton is entitled, as per the Housing and Community Development Act, 42 U.S.C. 301 et seq. and participates as an entitlement community in three programs:

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**
- **Home Investment Partnerships (HOME)**
- **Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)**

In applying for these funds and other federal funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the City must meet citizen participation provisions of the above Act and the HUD administrative regulations implementing it. These are found in 24 CFR 91.105 of the federal regulations. The City is required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan that sets forth the City's policies and procedures for citizen participation.

Goal of the Citizen Participation Plan

The goal of the Citizen Participation Plan is to provide a menu of choices for including citizens' voices in decision making. The Citizen Participation Plan must encourage citizens to participate in the development of the City's Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The following individuals are the focus of the Housing and Community Development Act and are especially encouraged to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan: low- and moderate-income individuals, individuals living in low- and moderate- income neighborhoods, minorities, persons with disabilities, non-English speaking persons, and residents of public and assisted housing developments.

Citizen Participation should result in:

- Trust between the government and citizens
- Informed judgment's about City activities
- Face to face deliberation
- Decisions that reflect a thorough consideration of community issues
- Transparent decisions with the stated accountabilities
- Common understanding of issues and appreciation for complexity
- Increase of understanding of the issues
- Generating new ideas

A successful citizen participation plan requires the genuine intent and attitude by the City and its citizens to engage in a public process to help make better decisions.

Criteria for Substantial Amendments

OECD may propose amendments to the Consolidation Plan as needs arise. When a substantial amendment is proposed, OECD will publish notice in the Scranton Times to give citizens an opportunity to comment on the change. Legislation to authorize the amendment will be introduced to City Council in these instances. Citizens will have thirty days to have an adequate opportunity to comment before City Council approves the legislation.

A proposed change constitutes a substantial amendment when:

- An activity is added to or subtracted from the Consolidated Plan
- The location of an approved activity is changed
- An approved activity's intended beneficiaries have changed
- Funding for an approved activity is increased or decreased by more than 25% of the activity's original allocation
- An activity's purpose and/or the scope of the activity has changed in a manner that alters the activity's eligibility

In some cases, an approved activity accomplishes a different National Objective (24 CFR 570.208) than which had been anticipated at the time the activity was included in the Consolidated Plan; the difference does not constitute a substantial amendment.

Performance Reports

The City must provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the performance reports. In accordance with its plan for the objective for development of the Consolidation Plan, the City will provide notice to the citizens about the opportunity to comment on the performance reports. Citizens will have 15 days to comment on the performance report. The City will consider comments of citizens received orally or in writing in preparing the final performance report to be submitted to HUD. A summary of any comments will be attached to the performance report.

Public Hearings

The City must have at least two public meetings per year to obtain citizens views and to respond to proposals and questions at two different stages of the Consolidation Plan process. The hearings must address community development needs, development of proposed activities and review of program performance. The hearings must be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and with accommodation for the disabled.

Public Meetings

The City must provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local program meetings on matters such as:

- Assessing the City's housing and non-housing community development needs
- Developing the Consolidation Plan
- Developing annual Action Plans
- Amending the Consolidation Plan and annual Action Plans
- Implementing the activities contained in the Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plans
- Developing the CAPER
- Completing Environmental Review procedures

OECD publishes the times and places of these meetings in the local newspaper, the Scranton Times and offers to provide a translator and/or an interpreter service by request for non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities.

The OECD staff is also available to answer questions about its programs and to answer citizen's questions about these programs during their normal business day. OECD also offers technical assistance to interested persons, including program participants.

The OECD also reaches out to nonprofit organizations, neighborhood groups, and faith based community groups through a survey designed to help in the determination of priority to be assigned to various types of housing and non-housing community development needs.

The Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee (The Committee) was established with the development of the Consolidation Plan and which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the activities included in the Annual Action Plans, allows for further citizen participation. The Committee is comprised of individuals who represent other governments, the local business community, local non-profit organizations, and faith based community groups. These individuals offer input from unique and varied perspectives. These individuals are chosen to be members of the Committee because they are in position to communicate those views and opinions, as they relate to housing and non-housing community development, that are widely held by their peers and their clientele.

Availability to the Public

The draft of the Consolidated Plan, upon completion, is published and made available to the public. OECD publishes notice that summarizes the contents of the plan and states that a copy of the entire plan is available for review at several locations throughout the City, including:

- Office of Economic and Community Development, 340 N. Washington Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18503
- The Office of the Mayor, The Municipal Building, 340 N. Washington Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18503
- The Office of City Council, The Municipal Building, Scranton, Pa. 18503
- The Scranton Housing Authority, 408 Adams Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18503
- The Albright Memorial Library, Vine Street and North Washington Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18503

Access to Records

The City must provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the City's Consolidation Plan and the City's use of assistance under the programs covered by this part during the preceding five years.

Complaints

The City must provide citizens with its procedure for responding to complaints and must maintain a record of such complaints and their responses. Every reasonable effort must be made to respond to the citizen complaints within 30 working days with a substantive written response.

The appropriate address for submission of such comments and complaints is:

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development
The Wannamaker Building
100 Penn Square East - 12th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3380

For questions regarding the Citizen Participation Plan, contact:

City of Scranton's Office of Economic and Community Development
City Hall, 340 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503
Phone: 570- 348-4216, Ext. 110
FAX: 570-348-4123
TDD: 570-348-4216, Ext. 128