

# **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

## **• Introduction**

In accordance with 24 CFR Section 91.105, the Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development has prepared a Citizen Participation Plan to explain the opportunity all residents have to participate in the process of preparing the Consolidated Plan.

The Citizen Participation Plan outlines the process used to encourage the active participation of all residents of Sarasota County in the development of the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan and the Performance Report. The plan is designed to encourage participation by low and moderate income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in area where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of low and moderate income neighborhoods, defined as being neighborhoods that have a majority of residents earning less than 50% of the Area Median Income in the City of Sarasota and those meeting the exception criteria in Sarasota County.

The Sarasota Consortium will encourage the participation of all of its citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. The Sarasota Consortium will encourage the participation of local and regional institutions and other organizations (including businesses, developers, and community and faith-based organizations) in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan.

Finally, the Sarasota Consortium will encourage, in consultation with public housing agencies, the participation of residents of public and assisted housing development, in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan along with other low income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located.

The Sarasota County Commission (County) and the City of Sarasota Commission (City) have agreed to form a consortium of geographically contiguous units of local governments for the purpose of administering housing and community development activities. The County and the City through Interlocal Agreements have committed to jointly administer the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Neighborhood Stabilization Programs (NSP), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program, and the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program through the Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development.

The City and the County are responsible for the adoption of a Citizen Participation Plan setting forth the policies and procedures for citizen participation in the preparation of the Consolidated Plan. This adopted plan applies to both the City and the County.

## • **Development of the Consolidated Plan**

### **Introduction**

Prior to the City and County adopting a Consolidated Plan, the Sarasota Consortium will make available to citizens, public agencies and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance that the Sarasota Consortium will receive (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income.

### **Publication of the Proposed Consolidate Plan**

The Consortium shall publish the proposed Consolidated Plan on the City of Sarasota's Office of Housing and Community Development website to give citizens, public agencies and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and submit comments. In addition, hard copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be placed and available for review in all Sarasota County libraries, the Sarasota County Board Records Offices (Sarasota and Venice locations), the Sarasota City Auditor and Clerk's Office, the Newtown Redevelopment Office and at the Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD).

To encourage citizen participation, an e-mail giving the location of the Consolidated Plan on the website will be sent to the following:

- Neighborhood Organizations Representing Low and Moderate Income Neighborhoods;
- Front Porch;
- The African American Chamber of Commerce;
- The Newtown Community Redevelopment Corporation;
- The Newtown Community Development Corporation;
- The Laurel Civic Association;
- The Sarasota NAACP;
- The Latin American Chamber of Commerce;
- The Suncoast Center for Independent Living;
- The Sarasota, Venice, North Port and Englewood Chambers of Commerce;
- The Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness;
- Affordable Housing Providers and Developers participating in Consortium Programs;
- The Sarasota and Venice Housing Authorities;
- The cities of North Port and Venice;
- The Regional Planning Council; and
- The Florida Department of Community Affairs.

Private Citizens who request to be provided notice will also be placed on the e-mail notification.

A summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be published in *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* and *Tempo News*. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan, and will include a list of locations where copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan may be examined. The Consortium will print 10 free copies of the plan and provide those copies to citizens and interested parties as requested.

## **Public Meetings**

The Sarasota Consortium will hold two community visioning sessions and four focus groups on the following topics:

- Community and Economic Development;
- Affordable Housing;
- Specials Needs Affordable Housing; and
- Homeless Services.

These public meetings will be held to seek input from the community on issues and solutions for housing and community development throughout Sarasota County. They will be held throughout Sarasota County at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries and with accommodations for persons with disabilities.

A translator will be provided at the prior written request of an individual or organization representing non-English speaking persons. Written requests must be made to the Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development a minimum of three days prior to meeting dates.

## **Public Hearings**

The Consortium will hold at least one public hearing during the development of the Consolidated Plan. The purpose of this specific public hearing will be to obtain the views of citizens on housing and community development needs, including priority non housing community development needs. This hearing will be conducted before the proposed consolidated plan is published for comment.

## **Comment Period**

Citizens will be given at least 30 calendar days to comment on the Consolidated Plan. The 30 day period will begin after the proposed Consolidated Plan is published in the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* and the *Tempo News*.

## **Public Comment**

The Sarasota Consortium will consider all comments received during the public comment period, in writing or orally at the public hearings, when preparing the final consolidated plan.

A summary of all comments or views received during the public comment period and a summary of any comments or view not accepted and the reasons the comments were not accepted will be attached to the final Consolidated Plan.

## **Adopted Consolidated Plan**

The adopted Consolidated Plan will be posted on the OHCD website.

# **• Substantial Amendments**

## **Introduction**

The Consolidated Plan may be amended in order to make a substantial change in allocation priorities, in the method of distributing federal funds, or to carry out any activity using federal funds from program income that was not described in the Action Plan.

## **The Criteria for a Substantial Amendment**

The criterion for determining whether a change is considered a “Substantial Amendment” is:

- When a change is made in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another.
- When the service area, budget, or beneficiaries are changed so that 50 percent or more of the intended beneficiaries no longer benefit from the project unless the change is made due to an increase or decrease in funding or if the project or activity is funded using other local, state or federal funds

## **Public Notice of a Substantial Amendment**

All substantial amendments will be published on the City of Sarasota’s Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) website to give citizens, public agencies and other interested parties reasonable notice and the opportunity to comment on the substantial amendment. Citizens will be given at least 30 calendar days to comment on the Substantial Amendment. The 30 day period will begin after the proposed Substantial Amendment is published on the OHCD website.

In addition, OHCD will use email mailing lists maintained by neighborhood organizations representing low and moderate income areas to increase knowledge of the proposed changes.

### **Public Comment**

The Sarasota Consortium will consider all comments received during the public comment period, when preparing the substantial amendment for the approval of the City and / or County Commissions.

A summary of all comments or views received during the public comment period and a summary of any comments or view not accepted and the reasons the comments were not accepted will be attached to the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan.

## **• Performance Reports**

### **Introduction**

Each year the Consortium will issue a Performance Report showing the progress it has made in implementing the Consolidated Plan.

### **Publication**

The annual Performance Report will be published on the City of Sarasota's Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) website to give citizens, public agencies and other interested parties reasonable notice and the opportunity to comment on the performance report. Citizens will be given at least 15 calendar days to comment on the Performance report prior to its submission to HUD. The 15 day comment period will begin after the proposed Performance Report is published on the OHCD website.

In addition, OHCD will use email mailing lists maintained by neighborhood organizations representing low and moderate income areas to promote a Public Hearing on the annual Performance Report.

### **Public Hearings**

The Consortium will hold a minimum of one public hearing to consider any comments or views of citizens in relation to the published Performance Report.

### **Comment Period**

The Sarasota Consortium will consider all comments received during the public comment period, prior to submitting the final Performance Report to HUD. A summary

of all comments or views received during the public comment period will be attached to the Performance Report.

## • **Public Hearings**

As described above, the Consortium will conduct at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions and will be conducted at two different stages of the program year.

All public hearings will be advertised on the Office of Housing and Community Development website and in a display ad in the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* and the *Tempo News*. The ads published in the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* will be published at least two weeks before the date of the public hearing.

The public hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries and with accommodations for persons with disabilities.

A translator will be provided at the prior written request of an individual or organization representing non-English speaking persons. Written requests must be made to the Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development a minimum of three days prior to hearing dates.

## • **Availability to the Public**

The Sarasota Consortium will make the adopted Consolidated Plan, any Substantial Amendments, and Performance Reports available to the public by publishing them on the Office of Housing and Community Development website. The documents will be placed in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

## • **Access to Records**

Citizens, public agencies, or any interested parties will have reasonable and timely access to information and records related to the Consolidated Plan and the use of assistance under the programs covered by the plan during the preceding five years to the closeout of a grant year.

Minutes from Public Meetings and Hearings will also be available through the Office of Housing and Community Development.

## • **Technical Assistance**

The Consortium will provide for technical assistance to groups representative of low- and moderate-income persons that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance covered by the Consolidated Plan. Technical Assistance will be limited to providing information about the availability of funds and information on how to complete any application for funding. The Sarasota Consortium will not prepare applications for funding for any group.

## • **Complaints**

The Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development will provide a written response to written complaints from citizens related to the Consolidated Plan, Amendments and Performance Reports. In the case of a petition, the Office of Housing and Community Development will provide a written response to the group or individual submitting the petition, rather than provide a written response to each individual person signing the petition.

Where practicable, the Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development will deliver a written response to complainants within 15 working days.

## • **Anti-Displacement**

The Consortium will seek to minimize displacement of persons and will assist persons displaced as a result of any housing and community development activity. Copies of the current Anti-Displacement Plans are included in the Consolidated Plan in the “Anti-Displacement Plans” Section.