

**City of Fond du Lac
Community Development Block Grant Program**

Citizen Participation Plan

A. Background: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program was established by Congress in 1974 with the passage of the Housing and Community Development Act. The program provides funding for three (3) broad goals:

- 1) decent housing;
- 2) a suitable living environment; and
- 3) economic opportunities

These three (3) broad goals are primarily oriented to serve the needs of low and moderate income persons living within the City.

The City of Fond du Lac has been an Entitlement Community under the CDBG program since 2004. The City receives a regular annual allocation of CDBG funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG funds are managed through the Consolidated Planning process, which identifies housing and community development needs, and identifies strategies to meet those needs. The process encourages citizens to participate in the Consolidated Planning process as outlined below.

B. Introduction: Citizen Participation Plan

The Citizen Participation Plan serves as the foundation for developing stronger citizen relationships throughout the City of Fond du Lac. The City supports and encourages participation of citizens, community groups, and other interested agencies in both the development and evaluation of programs and activities funded with CDBG and included in the Consolidated Plan. Increased citizen and community involvement is an important component of understanding the needs in the City and developing appropriate strategies to address those needs.

The City of Fond du Lac has adopted this Citizen Participation Plan in compliance with Section 104 (a)(3) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as well as 24 CFR 91.105, the federal regulations governing public participation in the Consolidated Planning process.

Copies of the Citizen Participation Plan are available in the Community Development Department and on the City web site.

C. CDBG Policy and Administrative Oversight

The City of Fond du Lac's Community Development Department will provide planning and administrative oversight of CDBG funded activities. Policy oversight including, but not limited to, approval of all housing loans, economic development project participation, and other financial assistance will be the responsibility of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Fond du Lac (RDA).

D. Public Hearings

Two (2) public hearings will be held each Program Year to provide opportunities for public participation at different stages of the CDBG Program Year and planning process. **Virtual or remote access meetings will be allowed per City resolution and/or as provided under a HUD waiver.**

- 1) The Annual Action Plan – Needs Assessment Public Hearing is held to identify community development needs and programs. The RDA utilizes the feedback and comments from the public hearing in determining CDBG funding recommendations for the next year. Following the public hearing, the RDA will allow at least 30 days to receive citizen comments.

- 2) The Annual Action Plan – Adoption Public Hearing corresponds with the draft publication of the CDBG Annual Action Plan which outlines the proposed activities for the upcoming Program year. Following the hearing, the RDA will allow at least 30 days to receive citizen comments before submitting the Annual Action Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Notices of public hearings are published in the local newspaper (Action Advertiser), on the City of Fond du Lac web page, posted at a public area at the City/County Building, Library and distributed via email to interested parties.

E. Public Comment Periods

The Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER) summarizes the activities undertaken the previous Program Year. A notice is published in the local newspaper notifying the public of the availability of the draft CAPER report and to provide comments which will be included in the submission of the final report. The RDA will allow at least 30 days to receive citizen comments from the date of the publication of the Notice.

Notices of public comment periods are published in the local newspaper (Action Advertiser), on the City of Fond du Lac web page, posted at a public area at the City/County Building, Library and distributed via email to interested parties.

***In the event of disaster/emergency events, a 5-day notice/comment period of a proposed change/amendment may be provided as allowed under a HUD waiver.**

F. Consolidated Plan-Public Hearing/Comment Period

Citizens are encouraged to participate in the public hearings and comment periods that occur as part of the development and adoption of the Five Year Consolidated Plan for the CDBG Program. The development of the Consolidated Plan includes identification of long-term housing and community development related strategies. The draft of the Consolidated Plan will be available on the City of Fond du Lac web page and in hard copy at the Community Development Department.

The development and adoption of the Five Year Consolidated Plan will follow requirements of Section D. Public Hearings.

G. Accessibility

All City residents, namely persons of low-and-moderate income, persons with disabilities, persons with limited English-speaking ability and persons of racial minority are encouraged to contribute input regarding CDBG-funded activities. No person shall be excluded from participation in the City of Fond du Lac CDBG programs on the grounds of race, color, national origin/ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, age, religion, marital status, familial status, lawful source of income, or domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking victims.

To encourage equal access in participation for persons with disabilities, all CDBG-related hearings and meetings are held at the City/County Building which is handicapped accessible. With advanced notice, the City will also provide interpreters for speaking and hearing impaired persons.

Public hearings will take place at 5:00 p.m. at the City/County Building, 160 S. Macy Street, with concern for reaching all residents including the disabled, non-English speaking population and racial minority. All public hearing notices shall be published at least 15 days in advance of the hearing

H. Access to Records & Technical Assistance

The Community Development Department shall provide citizens, agencies, and other interested parties with access to information and records related to the City's CDBG Program, including reports, policies, and CDBG funded activities for the last seven (7) years. A printed copy of the current Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and CAPER will be available to the public in the Community Development Department at City-County Government Center, 160 S Macy Street. Electronic versions of both reports will be available on the City's web page.

Staff shall provide technical assistance to organizations that serve low and moderate income persons in developing their CDBG subrecipient applications. In addition, an organization that receives CDBG funding will receive technical assistance in the implementation and reporting of their activity to insure compliance with HUD regulations.

All citizens and/or local agency representatives are encouraged to contact staff with questions about both program guidelines inquiries and general community developments in the City.

I. Amendments

The City will amend its approved Consolidated Plan whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

-) To make a substantial amendment in allocation priorities or a substantial amendment to the method of distribution of funds;
-) To carry out an activity not previously described in the Action Plan, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income); or
-) To substantially amend purpose, scope, location or beneficiary of an activity.
-) To amend or revise the Citizen Participation Plan

Substantial amendment is defined as a change in a planned or actual activity proposed after the official adoption of the Consolidated Plan that affects 10% or more of the City's current annual allocation of CDBG funds. Substantial amendments to the approved Consolidated Plan must be authorized by the RDA, and will be made public by postings and public notices in the newspaper. The City will receive and consider comments on substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan for 30 days before implementing those amendments.

J. Anti-Displacement

It is the policy of the City of Fond du Lac to minimize the displacement of individuals and businesses which may result from CDBG activities. In cases where displacement is absolutely necessary, relocation benefits will be paid in accord with the Uniform Relocation Act, other applicable federal regulations, and Chapter 32 of the Wisconsin State Statutes.

K. Objections to CDBG Documents

Citizens may provide comments regarding the Consolidated Plan, Annual Plan, substantial amendments, the Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER) or other CDBG-related matter at any time during the Program Year. Comments must include identification of unmet requirements and relevant supporting data and will be considered on the following grounds:

- 1) Stated needs and objectives are inconsistent with available and reliable data
- 2) Stated projects are inappropriate for meeting needs and approved objectives
- 3) Consolidated Plan elements do not comply with federal regulations for the CDBG Program

Comments must be submitted by email or in written form to the City of Fond du Lac, Community Development Department, 160 S. Macy Street, Fond du Lac, WI 54935. Upon receipt, the Executive Director/Secretary of the Redevelopment Authority shall respond in writing, where practicable, within 15 days.

L. Disaster/Emergency Events

It may be necessary to expedite substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan and Citizen Participation Plan in the event of a declared disaster or emergency. There are three types of disasters/emergency events that may necessitate an expedited substantial amendment including (1) Man-Made disasters, (2) Natural disasters, and (3) Terrorism. Man-Made disasters can include chemical spills, mass rioting, power outages, plant explosions, etc. Natural disasters can include earthquakes, tornadoes, wild fires, flooding and public health issues such as wide-spread disease such as the coronavirus disease. Terrorism events include bomb threats, biochemical attacks, or cyber-attacks like hacking, phishing, and virus distribution, etc.

These expedited substantial amendments may include funding new activities and/or the reprogramming of funds including canceling activities to meet needs resulting from a declared disaster or emergency. Therefore, the City of Fond du Lac may utilize CDBG funds to meet these needs with a 5-day public comment period instead of a 30-day public comment period, which is otherwise required for substantial amendments.

M. **Complaints**

Any participant of a specific CDBG funded activity or program may file a complaint in writing with the Executive Director/Secretary of the Redevelopment Authority within 30 days of the action that gave rise to the complaint. The complaint should include the basis for which the participant believes that an action is not in compliance with CDBG regulations and/or the City's CDBG Program policies and guidelines. The Executive Director/Secretary shall respond, where practicable, within 15 days. Upon receiving the response of the Executive Director/Secretary, the program participant may request the RDA to review the matter. The program participant must submit the request by email or in writing within 30 days of the date of the response and the matter will be brought before the RDA at the next available meeting.