

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION PLAN
FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

CITY OF LOCK HAVEN
CLINTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTEMBER 2013



Adopted by City Council – September 23, 2013

Revised – September 14, 2015

Revised – December 4, 2017

Revised – May 5, 2020

CITY OF LOCK HAVEN
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
FOR THE CDBG PROGRAM

Citizens must be provided with information in a timely manner and afforded a reasonable opportunity to participate in the City of Lock Haven's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) planning and evaluation process.

As a requirement of the CDBG Program, the City of Lock Haven shall comply with the following minimum citizen participation requirements in order to maximize opportunities for citizen involvement. In satisfying these citizen participation requirements, the City of Lock Haven shall not be restricted in their responsibility or authority to develop and execute the City's CDBG Program.

A. General Requirements.

The City of Lock Haven shall:

1. Follow procedures which inform and encourage citizens to participate in the CDBG planning and evaluation process. Special emphasis shall be placed on procedures which emphasize the participation of low and moderate income, minority and handicapped persons who reside in slum and blight areas, and in other areas where CDBG funds are proposed for expenditure or are being expended.
2. Provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information and records relating to proposals for the use of funds being applied for as well as the actual prior use of CDBG funds. The City shall take steps to ensure that pertinent application/program information and records are accessible to the public, and that the public has been made aware of when and where material is available for inspection.
3. Hold public hearings to obtain citizen views and to respond to proposals and questions at all stages of the Community Development Program, including at least the development of needs, the review of proposed activities, and the review of program performance. The public hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries and with accommodation for the handicapped. The public hearings will be held in connection with each entitlement allocation. The City shall hold a public hearing for citizen participation in the development of needs, and conduct another public hearing after a plan for use of the funds is published and prior to application approval by City Council.
4. Provide technical assistance, upon request, to groups of persons of low and moderate income, or their representatives, when such assistance is needed in developing proposals for use of CDBG funds.
5. Provide a timely written response to written complaints and grievances. A timely response is one which is made within fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the

written complaint/grievance. Refer to Exhibit A for a Citizens Participation Complaint/Grievance form.

Any citizen or citizen's organizations desiring to comment or object to any phase of the planning, development or approval of the application for CDBG funds, or to the implementation of any CDBG program, should submit such comments or objections in writing to:

Planner & Development Coordinator
Lock Haven City Hall
20 East Church Street
Lock Haven, PA 17745
Phone: 570-893-5903

The person filing the grievance may appeal the decision of the Planner & Development Coordinator by writing to the City Manager within 15 days of receiving the Planner & Development Coordinator's decision.

The City Manager shall issue a written decision in response to the appeal no later than 15 days after its filing.

Documentation of the grievance process, the grievance form and resolution will be maintained in a file within the City Planning Office.

In the event that the person filing the complaint/grievance is not satisfied with the City's decision, he/or she may file a written complaint/grievance with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development on any aspect of the City's CDBG Program. Complaints, grievances or objections should be submitted to:

CDBG Grant Manager
PA Department of Community & Economic Development
Center for Community Financing
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 4th Floor | Harrisburg, PA 17120-0225
Phone: 717-214-5310

6. Identify if and when it may be necessary to meet the needs of non-English speaking citizens. When such needs are identified, the City shall meet these needs as part of the advertising and public hearing requirements.
7. Maintain citizen participation files which contain documentation that demonstrates compliance with all requirements contained in this Citizen Participation Plan.

B. Minimum Citizen Participation Requirements During the Application Planning Development, and Submission Process.

In developing an application for CDBG funds, the City shall meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Provide public notice(s) of the first public hearing to obtain citizens views and comments on how CDBG funds should be used. This public notice shall contain:
 - (a) The date, time and location of the first public hearing;
 - (b) The amount of CDBG funds available;
 - (c) The range of activities which may be undertaken with CDBG funds;
 - (d) The amount of CDBG funds proposed to benefit low and moderate income persons;
 - (e) An identification of activities that could result in displacement and the City's plans for minimizing such displacement. The notice shall state that the City is responsible for replacing all low and moderate income housing units that may be replaced or demolished or converted. The types and levels of assistance the City plans to make available to persons displaced by CDBG funded activities even if no displacement is expected to occur, shall be explained at this public hearing; and
 - (f) A statement that citizens may also comment on the City's prior use of CDBG funds.
2. Hold the first public hearing to elaborate upon the contents of the public notice(s) and to obtain citizen comments and questions. At this public hearing, the City shall explain its responsibility to replace all occupied and vacant occupiable low and moderate income dwelling units that may be demolished or converted to another use. The City's explanation must include the following:
 - (a) Replacement must take place within three years of demolition/conversion;
 - (b) Replacement units must be located within the City's boundaries;
 - (c) The replacement units must be of sufficient size to house at least the same number of occupants that could have been housed in the units demolished/converted;
 - (d) The replacement units must be provided in standard condition;
 - (e) The replacement units must be designed to remain low and moderate income units for at least ten years from the date of initial occupancy.

The City shall explain that prior to obligating or expending funds that will result in the demolition or conversion of low and moderate income housing units, and publicize and provide opportunity for citizen comment on the following:

- (a) A description of the proposed demolition/conversion activity;
 - (b) The general location and the number of units by size that will be demolished/converted;
 - (c) A time schedule for the start and completion of demolition/conversion;
 - (d) The general location and number of units by size that will be provided as replacement units;
 - (e) The source of funding and a time schedule for the provision of replacement units; and
 - (f) The basis for concluding that the replacement units will remain low/mod for at least 10 years from initial occupancy.
3. Following the first public hearing, the City shall consider all comments and views received and develop its proposed use of funds.
 4. Provide public notice(s) on the second public hearing to obtain citizens' views and comments on the proposed use of funds. This public notice shall contain:
 - (a) The date, time and location of the second public hearing;
 - (b) Sufficient detail on the proposed use of funds to permit meaningful citizen comments at the public hearing;
 - (c) The deadline for public comment prior to the date that City Council will meet to consider the application and where and when the proposed application may be inspected prior to the meeting of City Council; and
 - (d) The date, time and location of the meeting where City Council will consider approval of the application. (This meeting shall be after the second public hearing and the deadline for public comment.)
 5. Hold the second public hearing to elaborate on the proposed use of funds and to allow for citizens' comments and questions.

Public notices will be published a minimum of five (5) days prior to the public hearings and in a newspaper(s) of general circulation. Public hearings shall be held at: Lock Haven City Hall Council Chambers, First Floor, 20 East Church Street, Lock Haven, PA 17745. This facility is accessible to the public and persons with disabilities and convenient to potential program beneficiaries and low and moderate income populations. Special accommodations shall be

extended to persons with disabilities, and public notices shall inform such persons as to how they may request and obtain needed accommodations.

The City shall take other reasonable steps to inform citizens, especially those identified in A.1. above. Other informational media that should be considered are:

- (1) Radio/television public service announcements;
- (2) Public and private organization bulletins and newsletters;
- (3) Social service organizations;
- (4) Public housing bulletin boards;
- (5) Minority organizations; and
- (6) Other organizations, institutions or businesses located in or serving low and moderate income areas.

C. Minimum Citizen Participation Requirements for Program Modifications:

When it is necessary for the City of Lock Haven to modify approved projects, the following citizen participation requirements shall be met.

Prior to modifying approved projects the City shall:

1. Provide a public notice, at least once in a newspaper of general circulation, of the proposed modification and provide the deadline by which public comments must be received. The notice shall also indicate the date that City Council will conduct a public hearing concerning the proposed modification. Timeliness of these notifications must be in accordance with the City's Citizen Participation Plan.
2. The City shall consider all comments received as a result of the public notice and hearing, and if appropriate, modify the proposed modification.
3. Upon approval of the modification by City Council, it must be made available for public inspection.

D. Amendments

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Response and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been authorized to waive certain citizen participation requirements. These amendments ensure the safety of the citizen participation process during the COVID-19 pandemic. These amendments are as follows:

1. During the social distancing requirements, as set by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania related to the COVID-19 pandemic, public meetings will be held over virtual platforms to obtain citizens' views and comments on the proposed use of funds.
2. The length of the citizen comment period for a COVID-19 related activity shall be reduced to five (5) days to accept citizen comment. Only modifications from the 2019, 2020, and CARES Act applications having COVID-19 activities can utilize a citizen comment period of five (5) days.

