



CITY OF BIDDEFORD
DRAFT CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION PLAN

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT BLOCK PROGRAM
ENTITLEMENT PROGRAM**

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Introduction

The City of Biddeford as a HUD CDBG Entitlement Community has adopted a Citizen Participation Plan to encourage the participation of all citizens in compliance with section 104(a)(3) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5304 (A)(3)). This plan strongly encourages citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), Consolidated Annual Action Plan, the Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan, and any substantial amendments to any of the documents deemed necessary. A substantial amendment is described on page 5 of this document.

The principal focus of the Citizen Participation Plan is to create opportunities for participation by the citizenry in the planning, development, and implementation of the Consolidated Plan. A principal focus of the Citizen Participation Plan will be to provide formal and informal mechanisms, which will encourage and facilitate citizen input particularly from those persons of low and moderate income who are most likely to be affected by CDBG projects.

Citizens Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will consist of three to five members representing residents and/or property owners of low and moderate-income areas and/or persons representing organizations serving LMI persons. Representation will include low and moderate-income persons, including those living and/or owning property in areas potentially targeted for CDBG projects. In addition, the City of Biddeford will make whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation of representatives of underserved populations including; minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. Specific accommodations will be made for any participating citizen so as not to limit their involvement in the CAC. This could include assistance from the CDBG Coordinator, translation services, etc. The CAC may expand its membership to seven members at the beginning of the second year of the Consolidated Plan. The selection of persons to serve on the CAC shall be at the discretion of the Mayor of Biddeford consistent with the guidelines herein prescribed.

Under the direction of the City's Community & Economic Development Director, the CDBG Coordinator will direct and coordinate all activities of the CAC. The CDBG Coordinator will be tasked with being the contact point for various non-profits (including philanthropic organizations), public housing authorities, businesses, and residents of assisted housing developments, social services (including faith based organizations) and any population that would be eligible for CDBG funding. The CDBG Coordinator will be tasked with encouraging

collaboration between various entities as the Consolidated Plan is developed. Subject to review and recommendation of the CAC, the CDBG Coordinator and/or Economic Development Director will present the Consolidated Plan, projects, substantial amendments and any other activities regarding the Plan to the City Manager for final approval by the City Council.

The CAC will provide comments and/or recommendations in areas such as the assessment of needs, reviewing potential projects, and conducting Public Hearings to keep the citizenry informed. The CAC will be tasked with reviewing the Consolidated Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER), Consolidated Annual Action Plan and any substantial amendments to any of the foregoing documents prior to publication, public review and public hearings.

GENERAL PROCESS

Citizen Comment and Access to Information

Citizen Participation Plan – The *City Council* will adopt the Citizen Participation Plan after a Public Hearing is held and a public comment period of 15 days. A Citizen Participation Plan summary will be published in the local media and formatted upon request for non-English speaking persons or citizens with disabilities. An informational session regarding the Consolidated Plan, its process of development and types of projects CDBG funds will also be presented at this time.

Consolidated Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER), Annual Action Plan, Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan, and Substantial Amendments – Prior to the publication and submission of any of these final draft documents, the City of Biddeford will hold a Public Hearing and conduct a 30-day comment period, *except in the case of the CAPER, which will have a 15-day comment period.*

Notification to Housing Authorities and Surrounding Communities

The City of Biddeford will notify and send its housing authority and surrounding communities an Executive Summary of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Citizens Participation Plan, and Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan, 30 days before it is adopted. A draft of the documents will be made available upon request 10 days prior to the Public Hearing in order to receive comments regarding the impact of the potential projects and plans on the surrounding communities, if any.

Information Access Strategy

The City of Biddeford will publish an Executive Summary of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan in *The Journal Tribune* and/or *The Courier* 10 days prior to the Public Hearing. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the plans, and a list of the locations where copies of the entire proposed plans may be examined. A number of free copies of the plans will be available upon request. Every reasonable means will be used to accommodate requests for copies in a format for non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities. Copies of the plans will also be available at the City Hall and McArthur Library. The plans will include the amount of assistance that the City of

Biddeford expects to 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. The Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan posting will include the report compiled from the HUD Assessment Tool and the Plan with strategies to address the identified housing issues. In addition, every effort will be made to give additional access to the plans by placing them on the City's website at www.biddefordmaine.org.

The same process will be implemented for the Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report, and all proposed substantial amendments. Access to records will be open and available upon request within 5 business days excepting information deemed confidential by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Public Hearings

Public Hearings will be held as part of the Citizen Participation process. A General Public Hearing will be held prior to the publication of the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan, to obtain the views of citizens and to address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, proposed strategies and actions for the Consolidated Plan and AFFH and a review of program performance. A General Public Hearing will be held after publication of the draft Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan, and followed by a thirty-day comment period.

A Public Hearing will be held prior to the submission of the Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report and Annual Action Plan. Additional public hearings will be held when substantial amendments are proposed to any documentation regarding the Consolidated Plan and related documents.

All notices of Public Hearings will be legal advertisements published in *The Journal Tribune* and/or *The Courier* 10 days prior to the Public Hearing date. Notices will also be posted in the City Hall at the main office entry and the Clerk's Office, and at the McArthur Library. The notice will also be posted on the City of Biddeford website at www.biddefordmaine.org. Copies of proposed documents will be available at the Biddeford Economic Development Office and at the McArthur Library. To encourage input and participation the CD Coordinator will coordinate with the Heart of Biddeford, a Main Street organization to reach out to the business community and through the CPPC to reach faith based and philanthropic organizations. The Public Hearings will be held at the City Hall in Council Chambers or at other appropriate locations that are convenient, ADA compliant and accessible to the public. Special accommodations for those with disabilities and/or language barriers upon request will be available to the extent possible by the City. To ensure those with disabilities and/or language barriers know of these accommodations, the CD Coordinator will reach out to the Seeds of Hope Neighborhood Center and Community Partners for Protecting Children who work with these populations and/or have access to interpreters and translation services. These entities will reach out to these populations to make them aware of services in order to encourage their participation. The same process will be implemented for any public meetings, hearings, or other forums seeking public input.

Public Comment

All comments received during any comment period will be taken into consideration by the City of Biddeford and the CAC. A summary of any comments or views not accepted in the AFH will be attached to the final Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, CAPER, and/or AFH.

Complaints

The City of Biddeford will respond to all complaints related to the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, CAPER, and/or AFH Plan in writing within 15 working days from the time of receipt. Complaints may be written or oral and directed to the following office: CDBG Coordinator, City of Biddeford, 205 Main Street, Biddeford, Maine 04005. The CDBG Coordinator shall be charged with responding to the complaint upon prior consultation with the Economic Development Director and City Manager.

Technical Assistance

Staff shall make reasonable efforts to provide technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding under any of the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and/or needs identified in the Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan. The CDBG Coordinator will be tasked with providing a form and/or assistance to the individual or group requesting assistance. All proposals that qualify for CDBG funding will be considered by the CAC consistent with the guidelines and requirements governing CDBG.

Consolidated Plan and AFH Plan Amendments for Priorities, Projects, Activities and Funding Revisions

An amendment to the Consolidated Plan or AFH may be necessary for a variety of reasons including but not limited to: other funding becoming available to complete a project, another project of the same nature is deemed a better solution, changes in data that reflect the need to reconsider projects and/or priorities, and/or another project is deemed to have a higher priority. Also, programmatic or budget changes may occur including but not limited to the following: new activities, overrun/under-run situations, fund transfers, and/or reductions/increases in HUD Entitlement funding.

There will be 30 calendar days following an advertised and posted Public Hearing, to receive comments on the Consolidated Plan substantial amendment or any revisions to the AFH and before the Consolidated Plan substantial amendment or AFH revision is submitted to HUD for review. The Public Hearing and citizen input process will follow the same process as outlined in the Public Hearings section of this document. Only after review and approval by HUD will the Consolidated Plan Substantial Amendment or AFH revision be implemented.

A summary of citizen comments or views from the Public Hearing and 30 day comment period will be attached to the Substantial Amendment and/or revision when submitted to HUD. A summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons why, shall be attached to the Substantial Amendment and/or revision of the Con Plan or AFH and submitted to HUD for review.

The City of Biddeford defines amendments as either substantial or minor when proposing to amend its approved Consolidated Plan. The following defines substantial and minor amendment, as well as funding revisions, and the process to be implemented accordingly.

1. Substantial Amendments – Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and AFH

Substantial Amendments are defined as follows:

- A. The City proposes to use more than 25% of its fiscal year allocation, from any one HUD program, to undertake one or more new activities.***
- B. The City proposes to alter the location or beneficiaries of previously approved activities whose cost exceeds 25% of the fiscal year allocation for any one HUD Program.***
- C. The City proposes to alter the 5-year strategy within the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and/or AFH by adding a new priority, previously not considered, in order to undertake new activities that fiscal year, delete a priority, and/or change a priority in a way that would affect its implementation or funding.***

Since the City of Biddeford has developed a five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and AFH with defined activities targeted for funding and program implementation, flexibility is needed in order to accommodate activities in coordination with such things as construction schedules, other funding, changes in data, and/or the addition of other activities that could be encompassed in the priorities as stated by the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, or AFH.

2. Minor Amendments – Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and AFH

- A. A minor amendment will be considered when one approved activity or program encompassed in one of the five years of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, or AFH, is exchanged for another approved activity from another year that falls under the same priority due to a situation such is as listed above, and that does not exceed 25% of the current annual allocation.***
- B. A minor amendment will be considered when a new or approved activity or program is added to the current year's Annual Action Plan or AFH that does not change the funding allotment for that activity or program.***
- C. In a minor amendment situation the CAC will review and recommend the action to the Mayor and City Manager and then for approval by the City Council, through the Director of Economic Development.***
- D. In a minor amendment situation no Public Hearing will be required.***

Funding revisions are defined as minor programmatic or budgeting changes necessary to fund new activities/programs and/or secure adequate funding to complete approved activities.

Funding revisions will be addressed in the following ways and only pertain to the Annual Action Plan and AFH, since revisions to the Consolidated Plan are Major Amendments:

3. Funding Revisions – Annual Action Plan and AFH

- A. Any fund transfers under 25% of the current annual allocation of CDBG funds conducted from one-approved activity to another, including contingency and reprogrammed funds, in an overrun/under-run situation, will be approved on an administrative basis.**

Anti-Displacement Policy

Assistance will be provided if persons should be displaced by any of the City of Biddeford’s CDBG funded projects. Households will receive appropriate notices and other advisory services to assure they are fully informed of their rights, make informed decisions, and receive referrals to appropriate services that may be needed.

Replacement housing including the offer of a comparable replacement dwelling and if necessary, financial assistance to make the unit affordable, will be provided if such a displacement should occur during the implementation of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. Every effort will be made to provide financial assistance in the form of a Replacement Housing Payment or tenant-based assistance, such as Section 8 Certificate vouchers. In addition, displaced persons will receive assistance in the form of moving and related expenses to help cover costs of the move. The City of Biddeford in compliance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development CDBG Program will review each situation on a case-by-case basis. The City of Biddeford will provide displaced persons/businesses with all the benefits and assistance prescribed pursuant to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.

Specific Requirements for the Assessment of Fair Housing and Plan Development

1. Additional Consultations

- A. 91.100 (a)(1) and (5), and 91.100 (c)(1)-(3)**

Housing Organizations

The City will seek consultations with the state Continuum of Care and by conducting a survey of nonprofit housing organizations that provide housing to Biddeford residents and conduct up to three meetings to discuss the data received and provide an open forum for AFH issues, strategies and goals.

Public and Private Affordable Housing Owners and Developers

The City will seek consultations by conducting a survey and seeking input through a meeting with the following public and private affordable housing owners/developers and management

corporations that manage/develop housing for Biddeford residents and regionally. The Heart of Biddeford, a Main Street organization will reach out to the business community to participate. Up to three follow up meetings to discuss the data received and provide an open forum for AFH issues, strategies and goals may be scheduled.

Government

The City will seek consultations by conducting a survey of the following government entities within and adjacent to Biddeford to receive input regarding problems and solutions that are not only Biddeford specific but regional issues pertaining to the AFH. Up to three meetings will be held to discuss the data received and provide an open forum for AFH issues, strategies and goals.

Social Service Providers

The City will seek consultations by conducting a survey of the following social service providers in Biddeford to receive input regarding problems and solutions that are not only Biddeford specific but regional issues pertaining to the AFH. Up to three meetings will be held to discuss the data received and provide an open forum for AFH issues, strategies and goals. The City will begin with the largest network of social service providers available and outreach to social service organizations and faith based organizations that provide health services and social services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, homeless persons, and other protected populations. They will provide links for the survey and input from the nonprofits that are part of their organizational network.

Housing Enforcement Agencies

The City will seek consultations by conducting a survey of the following housing enforcement agencies in Biddeford and regionally to receive input regarding problems and solutions that are not only Biddeford specific but regional issues pertaining to the AFH. These agencies provide legal, protection, code, and other forms of enforcement services and assistance to public housing residents and protected populations. Up to two meetings will be held to discuss the data received and provide an open forum for AFH issues, strategies and goals.

2. Direct Citizen Participation

A. 91.105(a)(1) and (a)(2)(i) through (iii)

The City will seek input for the AFH by conducting a survey and holding meetings in a multi faceted approach as follows to ensure outreach directly to citizens.

- 1 meeting each with Focus Groups held in two neighborhoods where housing rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization is targeted, to conduct the AFH survey and receive input as to issues, strategies, and goals for Biddeford's AFH.
- 1 outreach effort to organizations/sites that work with "food security" issues.
- Coordination with social events (10) held at public housing sites of 40 or more units in order to conduct surveys with tenants and take input from residents

- 3 outreach meetings with the largest social service network who coordinates the social service network in Biddeford and regionally, to conduct the survey and receive input for the AFH from smaller direct service nonprofits. From the smaller nonprofits the City will receive information on where and how to contact ethnic groups and minorities for their input.
- One potluck supper and/or desert social for all Biddeford citizens to understand the AFH, fill out a survey (assistance will be provided), and give input as to the issues, strategies and goals for the Biddeford AFH.
- Citizens needing interpretive assistance of any kind will be provided upon request to the Community Development Coordinator's Office for all meetings and public hearings.

3. Development of the AFH

A. 91.105(b)

The development of the AFH, document availability, review and comment period, public hearings, and final approval, will follow the same process as the Consolidated Plan process as stated in the GENERAL PROCESS portion of this document. However, in the case of the AFH, the draft document will have additional review through the following list of meetings which will also be advertised through public bulletin board postings, email, public access television, local newspaper (ten days in advance), and on the City's website. All meetings and public hearings will be held in ADA compliant locations and interpretive services for those with language or special needs will be accommodated to the extent possible by request to the City. Drafts of the AFH documents will be made available free upon request to the City and posted on the City's website, placed at the library and Community Center, and available at the Economic and Community Development Office at City Hall. Documents in forms accessible to persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency will be made available to the extent possible upon request to the City.

A meeting will be held prior to the public hearing with the consulting organizations including the Housing Organizations, Public and Private Affordable Housing Owners and Developers, Government Entities, Housing Enforcement Agencies, and Social Service Providers in Council Chambers at City Hall for a presentation of the draft AFH and to receive any input or comments.

A second meeting will be held out in the community prior to the public hearing for the smaller direct social service nonprofit organizations, faith based organizations and citizens, for a presentation of the draft AFH and to receive any comments.

After the public hearing and during the 30-day comment period, comments and input received will be incorporated into the AFH as alternative options and a second public hearing held to review input and comments received and implement any final changes or inclusions/deletions. A summary of any comments or views not accepted in the AFH will be attached to the final Plan. The final draft of the AFH will be presented to Council for approval and submission to HUD.

