

CITY OF BATON ROUGE
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
(CPP)

Office of Community Development
222 Saint Louis Street, 7th Floor -- Baton Rouge, LA 70802
PH: 225-389-3039

<https://www.brla.gov/855/Office-of-Community-Development>

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Section 1 – Introduction

The City of Baton Rouge – East Baton Rouge Parish (City-Parish) receives Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investments Partnership Program (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City-Parish and its partner agencies have a goal of involving citizens in the planning for the use of those funds. HUD also requires the City-Parish, as an Entitlement community, to publish and adopt a Citizen Participation Plan that details the policies and procedures related to citizen participation.

The purpose of this Citizen Participation Plan is to outline the process that the City-Parish will follow to conform with the Citizen Participation requirements detailed in 24 CFR 91.105; and to encourage and promote citizen involvement in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Assessment of Fair Housing and Performance Report.

Section 2 – Encouragement of Citizen participation

1. The City-Parish encourages citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, any Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan, the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).
2. The City-Parish encourages participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in areas where entitlement funds are proposed to be used and by residents of predominately low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Low-income neighborhoods are those where more than 50% of the area’s residents have a household income of less than 80% of the area median income.
3. The City-Parish also encourages participation by all its citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. The City-Parish will take reasonable steps to provide language assistance to ensure meaningful access to participation by non-English-speaking residents of the community.
4. The City-Parish encourages the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments, on conjunction with public housing authorities, 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.
5. The City-Parish shall make an effort to provide information to the local housing authority about Consolidated Plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the housing authority can make this information available at their annual public hearings.
6. The City-Parish encourages the participation of local and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, and other organizations (including businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations) in the process of developing and implements the Consolidated Plan along with other required reports

and plans, including but not limited to the CAPER and Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH).

7. The City-Parish encourages participation of the Baton Rouge Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), created in 1975, 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.

Section 3 – Citizen Comment on the Citizen Participation Plan and Amendments

1. The City-Parish will provide citizens with a reasonable opportunity, a minimum of fifteen (15) days, to comment on the original Citizen Participation Plan and on amendments to the Plan.
2. The Plan shall be made public by posting it on the Office of Community Development section of the City-Parish website and by distributing copies via mail and/or e-mail upon request.
3. The Citizen Participation Plan will be available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

Section 4 – Development of the Consolidated Plan

1. Prior to adoption of the Consolidated Plan, the City-Parish will make available to citizens, public agencies and other interested parties' information that includes:
 - a.) The amount of assistance the City-Parish expects to receive;
 - b.) The range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- to moderate-income.
2. The City-Parish plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced.
3. The City-Parish will publish the proposed Consolidated Plan in a manner that affords citizens, public agencies and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and to submit comments by:
 - a.) Publishing a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan in at least one newspaper of general circulation;
 - i. The summary must describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan and must include a list of places (online in electronic format and/or in public facilities in hard copy format) where the Plan is available for viewing;
 - ii. Free hard copies of the Plan will be provided to citizens and groups that request it.
 - b.) By making copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan available online in electronic format and/or hard copies at public facilities and offices when feasible.

4. The City-Parish will accept comments on the Consolidated Plan from citizens for a period of at least thirty (30) days.
5. The City-Parish will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing in preparing the final Consolidated Plan. When it is feasible to hold a face-to-face public meeting at a public facility, verbal comments will be considered.
6. The City-Parish will hold at least one (1) public hearing during the development of the Consolidated Plan. The public hearing will include a presentation of a draft of the Plan followed by a public comment period of thirty (30) days. Virtual presentations via public access television channels and/or online streaming will be used in lieu of face-to-face presentations and hearings when appropriate.

Section 5 – Consolidated Plan Amendments

1. Substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan will be required when:
 - a.) Changes in the use of CDBG funds are proposed from one eligible activity to another;
 - b.) Projects are added or deleted from the Plan.
2. When a Substantial Amendment is proposed:
 - a.) The City-Parish will provide the citizens with reasonable notice (at least 30 days) prior to implementation of the amendment;
 - b.) Notice of the proposed Substantial Amendment will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation;
 - c.) The City-Parish will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, if any, in preparing the Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan;
 - d.) A summary of those comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan

Section 6 – Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) Report

1. The City-Parish will make HUD-provided data and any other supplemental information available to its residents, public agencies and other interested parties.
2. The City-Parish will publish the proposed AFH in a manner that affords citizens, public agencies and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and to submit comments by:
 - a.) Publishing a summary of the proposed AFH in at least one newspaper of general circulation;

- i. The summary must describe the contents and purpose of the AFH and must include a list of places (online in electronic format and/or in public facilities in hard copy format) where the AFH is available for viewing;
 - ii. Free hard copies of the AFH will be provided to citizens and groups that request it.
- b.) By making copies of the proposed AFH available online in electronic format and/or hard copies at public facilities and offices when feasible.
- 3. The City-Parish will accept comments on the AFH from citizens for a period of at least thirty (30) days.
- 4. The City-Parish will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing in preparing the final AFH. When it is feasible to hold a face-to-face public meeting at a public facility, verbal comments will be considered.
- 5. The City-Parish will hold at least one (1) public hearing during the development of the AFH Plan. The public hearing will include a presentation of a draft of the Plan followed by a public comment period of thirty (30) days. Virtual presentations via public access television channels and/or online streaming will be used in lieu of face-to-face presentations and hearings when appropriate.

Section 7 – Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) Revisions

- 1. When revisions to the AFH are required:
 - a.) The City-Parish will provide the citizens with reasonable notice (at least 30 days) prior to implementation of the revisions;
 - b.) Notice of the proposed revisions will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation;
 - c.) The City-Parish will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, if any, in preparing the revised AFH;
 - d.) A summary of those comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons, therefore, shall be attached to the revised AFH.

Section 8 – Performance Reports

- 1. Citizens will be provided with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on annual performance reports.
 - a.) The City-Parish will accept public comments on performance reports for a period of fifteen (15) days prior to submission to HUD;
 - b.) A notice will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation notifying of the

public comment period.

Section 9 – Public Hearings

1. The City-Parish will hold at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions. If circumstances allow, the public hearings will be in-person. Virtual presentations via public access television channels and/or online streaming will be used in lieu of in-person presentations and hearings when appropriate.
2. Public hearings, virtual and/or in-person, will be conducted at two different stages of the program year; at least one of these hearings will be held before the proposed Consolidated Plan is published for comment.
3. Hearings will address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities and review of program performance.
4. The City-Parish will publish a notice in a newspaper of general circulation at least ten days prior to the hearing date.
5. The City-Parish will accommodate persons with disabilities and non-English speaking residents in every way possible. The person in need of special accommodations should contact the City-Parish at 225-389-3039 or via email at ocd@brgov.com to request assistance.

Section 10 – Disaster Recovery Funding, Special Allocations, HUD Waivers

1. In the event the City-Parish receives HUD funding as the result of federally declared disasters or other similar events, the policies, requirements and timelines included in this manual may be adjusted to reflect the waivers and other allowances made by HUD per the applicable event.

Section 11 – Citizen Rights

1. Availability to the Public
 - a.) The Consolidated Plan, as adopted, Substantial Amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report will be available to the public on the City-Parish website at www.brla.gov.
2. Access to Records
 - a.) The City-Parish will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan and the use of assistance under HUD programs during the preceding five (5) years.
 - b.) Interested citizens should contact the Office of Community Development at 225-389-3039 to request access to records.
3. Technical Assistance

The Citizen Participation Plan must provide for technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low-and moderate-income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan, with the level and type of assistance determined by the jurisdiction. The assistance need not include the provision of funds to the groups.

4. Limited English Proficiency

The City-Parish will make every effort to accommodate the needs of non-English speaking residents of the City-Parish in accordance with 24 CFR 91.105 and 91.200. If ten percent (10%) or more of the potential or actual beneficiaries of a HUD-funded project are determined to be non-English-speaking, provisions will be made at the appropriate public hearings for translation of comments and documents into the native language of the majority of the non-English-speaking residents impacted.

5. Complaints

- a.) The City-Parish will accept and respond to complaints from citizens related to the Consolidated Plan, annual plans, amendments and performance reports.
- b.) Citizens wishing to submit written complaints are encouraged to use the attached complaint form. Complaints will also be received by email to ocd@brgov.com.
- c.) The City-Parish will provide a timely, substantive written response to every written citizen complaint, within fifteen (15) working days, where possible.

Section 12 – Jurisdiction Responsibility

The requirements for citizen participation do not restrict the responsibility or authority of the City-Parish for the development and execution of its Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, Assessment of Fair Housing and CAPER.

Questions regarding the Citizen Participation Plan should be directed to:

City of Baton Rouge – East Baton Rouge Parish Government
Office of Community Development
222 St. Louis Street, 7th Floor
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
225-389-3039
ocd@brgov.com

City of Baton Rouge – East Baton Rouge Parish
CDBG, HOME, ESG, HOPWA Programs
Citizen Comment/ Complaint Form

Date: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Nature of Comment/Complaint:

Action Requested:

Signature: _____

For Office Use Only:

Received On: _____ Employee Name & Title: _____

Date Written Response Sent: _____

Action Taken:
