

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Updated 5/5/2020

Federal Regulations have consolidated the planning requirements for four U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Planning and Development formula programs: **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**; **HOME** Investment Partnerships (**HOME**); **Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)**; and **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)**. This plan will govern citizen participation should the City participate in any or all of these programs.

The purpose of this plan is to identify ways in which citizens of La Crosse can participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and Strategy, as well as be provided with relative information.

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1. Participation: The City of La Crosse will encourage citizen participation in all aspects of the Consolidated Plan, and particularly the participation of low-, very low-, and extremely low-income residents.

Citizens will be afforded opportunity to comment at public hearings, as well as provide written comment to the City Planning Department at any time during the development of the plan. Public Hearings will be noticed in the La Crosse Tribune. The City of La Crosse will compile a list of interested parties who wish to be notified directly of meetings relative to the Consolidated Plan.

At the beginning of the planning process, a public hearing will be held for the purpose of obtaining information from the public, as well as interested agencies. The public will also be given 30 days in which to provide written comments regarding needs which will be included in the Action Plan.

A component of the Consolidated Plan will be the Action Plan and citizens will be given at least 14 days from the noticed starting date to submit applications to the Community Development Committee for consideration for funding of activities which will be included in the Action Plan.

2. Access to Information: Citizens, public agencies and other interested parties have opportunity to receive information through public hearings, direct contact with the City of La Crosse Planning Department or via review of draft and final documents which are available at City Hall and **on the City's website, the La Crosse Library System and the La Crosse Public Housing Authority**. Public Hearings are noticed in the La Crosse Tribune **and on the City's website**.

3. Anti-displacement: It is unknown if residential displacement will occur as the result of activities identified in the City's that Consolidated Plan. However, it is the policy of the City of La Crosse to minimize such activities that might displace residents. The City also attempts to minimize the displacement of businesses. If there is any

residential displacement as a result of a City implemented Consolidated Plan activity or if there is a City funded Consolidated Plan activity that results in an acquisition by an entity that is not a City agency, the City will conform to the most recently-approved state and federal acquisition and/or relocation regulations.

When it is necessary to displace occupants, whether business or residential, the policy of the City is to assist the displaced persons under the provisions of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended. The City will include as eligible project costs reasonable relocation benefits to any person involuntarily, temporarily or permanently, displaced as the result of Consolidated Plan funded acquisition activities even if they are not covered by the Uniform Act. The City of La Crosse will also comply with the provisions of Chapter 32 of the Wisconsin Statutes concerning relocation and relocation payments.

Relocation assistance and advisory services will be provided in accordance with the needs of those persons to be displaced including, but not limited to, social service referrals, job counseling referrals, housing referrals and counseling, and transportation to available replacement housing, if necessary.

4. Publishing the Plan: The City will make the Consolidated Plan available to the public by:

- a. Publishing in the La Crosse Tribune a summary that describes the contents and purpose of the plan and identifies the locations where copies of the entire plan may be viewed.
- b. Making copies of the plan available at City of La Crosse City Hall, **on the City's website**, and the La Crosse Public Library, and ~~the La Crosse Housing Authority~~.

5. Public Hearings: Public hearings will be held periodically throughout the development of the Consolidated Plan to obtain views of citizens, public agencies, and interested parties, as well as to respond to proposals and comments. At a minimum, the City will hold public hearings for the following purposes before the identified committees:

- a. A public hearing will be held at the start of the planning process to give public, agencies, and interested parties opportunity to comment on, or identify, housing and community needs. (Community Development Committee)
- b. A public hearing will be held to give the public opportunity to comment on past program performance. (Community Development Committee)
- c. Public hearings will be held to give the public opportunity to comment on the proposed Consolidated Plan. (~~Highways, Properties and Utilities Committee~~ **Finance and Personnel**) ~~and (Committee of the Whole)~~
- d. Public hearings will be held to give the public opportunity to comment on the proposed use of funds. (~~Highways, Properties and Utilities Committee~~ **Finance and Personnel**) ~~and (Committee of the Whole)~~
- e. **Insert The public will also be given the opportunity to submit comments in writing through the City's website.**

If more than one public hearing is held before a committee at a given meeting, each hearing will be held separately.

The Community Development Committee may from time to time deal with issues affecting non-English speaking residents. If any non-English speaking group does not have adequate representation, an independent translator will be hired to translate information at public forum upon request.

Public hearings will be held in City Hall **or virtually through a web conference that people can access by phone or through the Internet**, or other public facilities. The City will make reasonable effort to accommodate persons with disabilities.

6. Notice of Hearings: Public hearings will be noticed in the media and publicized in the La Crosse Tribune with a display ad at least ten (10) days prior to such hearings.

7. Access to Meetings: Public hearings will be held in City Hall, **or held virtually through web conference**, or at other public facilities. The City will make reasonable effort to accommodate persons with disabilities. Local media will be noticed of public meetings at least 24 hours in advance of such meetings. Interested parties may also receive meeting notices.

The City will make available to the public information regarding the amount of money the jurisdiction expects to receive and the range of activities that may be undertaken.

8. Comments: The Consolidated Plan will be made available to the public for comment for at least thirty (30) days prior to submission of the Plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City will consider the views of citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties in preparing the final Consolidated Plan and will attach to the final plan a summary of such comments. Included in the summary will be an explanation of comments not accepted and the reasons why those comments were not accepted.

9. Substantial Amendments: When the City elects to amend the Consolidated Plan, to not carry out an activity listed in the Action Plan component of the Consolidated Plan, to carry out an activity other than those previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan, or to substantially change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity, the City will afford affected citizens an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments. A substantial change, as referenced herein, shall mean any change in the scope of an activity which will cost more than 25% of the amount of money allocated to it in the Action Plan, or any change to the purpose, location, or beneficiaries of an activity as presented in the Action Plan.

Insert. Amendments that do not meet this definition shall be called standard amendments. Standard amendments do not require citizen participation.

10. Disaster or Emergency Events that may require expedited substantial amendments

It may be necessary to expedite substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan in the event of a declared disaster or emergency, for example in the case of a flooding event or the recent coronavirus disease (Covid-19). These expedited substantial amendments may include funding new activities and/or reprogramming of funds, including canceling activities to meet needs resulting from a declared disaster or emergency. Therefore, the City will use CDBG or HOME funds to meet these needs with a 5-day public comment period, instead of a 30-day comment period.

11. Performance Reports: Citizens will be given opportunity to comment on Consolidated Plan related performance reports. The City will make reports available to the public by:

- a. Publishing in the La Crosse Tribune a notice of availability of performance reports that describes where copies of the reports may be viewed. Notice shall be published, at a minimum, 15 days before submission.
- b. Making copies of the reports available at City of La Crosse City Hall, the La Crosse Public Library, **and the City's website. ~~the La Crosse Housing Authority.~~**

12. Availability to the Public: The City will make the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments and performance reports available to the public by:

- a. Publishing in the La Crosse Tribune a summary that describes the contents and purpose of the plan and announces the availability of the performance reports. The notices will identify the locations where copies of the entire plan or reports may be viewed.
- b. Making copies of the plan and reports available at City of La Crosse City Hall, **the La Crosse Public Library, and the City's website. ~~and the La Crosse Housing Authority.~~**

13. Access to Records: The jurisdiction will maintain information and records relating to the consolidated plan and use of assistance under the programs covered by the plan for a minimum of five years. Citizens, public agencies and other interested parties may gain access to such information by contacting the City Planning Department during regular business hours.

14. Technical Assistance: Technical assistance will be provided to low-, very low-, and extremely low-income groups that request assistance in developing proposals under the consolidated submission. The Community Development Committee may from time to time deal with issues affecting non-English speaking residents. If any non-English speaking group does not have adequate representation, an independent translator will be hired to translate information at public forum upon request. Contact the City Planning Department, City Hall, 400 La Crosse Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601. Telephone number: (608) 789-7512.

15. Complaints: The City will provide timely, written answers to written complaints and grievances within fifteen (15) days, where practical.

16. Amendments: Prior to submission of any substantial change to the proposed use of funds, the City will publish a notice of such changes and give the public 30 days within which to comment on the proposed changes. **Unless there is a disaster or emergency event, in those cases, the public will be given 5 days to comment.**

17. Submission Requirements: The City will:

- a. Prepare an Executive Summary that communicates the key elements of the plan to citizens.
- b. Provide public notices through non-legal sections of the newspaper and media notices. Notices for public hearings shall be published at least **14 10** days prior to public hearings.
- c. Hold public hearings in late afternoon or early evenings in handicapped accessible facilities at City Hall or in neighborhoods that may be affected by funded activities.
- d. Consider providing technical assistance to proposals that strengthen and expand the role of community based development organizations in planning commercial, affordable housing and other public improvements.

18. Contact: Questions and comments can be directed to the City Planning Department, City Hall, 400 La Crosse Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601. Telephone number: (608) 789-7512.

