

TOWN OF UNION, NEW YORK

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 104 (a) (3) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the Town of Union has established a Citizen Participation Plan for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to provide for and encourage citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated and Annual Action Plans, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated or Annual Action Plans, Section 108 Loan Guarantees, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The Citizen Participation Plan is designed to encourage participation by low-and-moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low-and moderate-income neighborhoods, CDBG Target Areas. The Town also seeks to encourage the full participation of all its citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. The Town will encourage the participation of residents of assisted housing developments in the process of implementing the Consolidated or Annual Action Plans along with other low-and moderate-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located.



The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to indicate the means through which residents of the Town may obtain information pertaining to community development and through which residents may become active in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the five-year Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans. The intent is to obtain maximum participation of residents at all stages of the process and to assist citizens so that they can make informed contributions and combine efforts effectively. All aspects of the process will be conducted in an open manner and all information will

be available to citizens upon request. The specifics of the available types of information are discussed later in this document.

Another goal of the Citizen Participation Plan is to involve people who ordinarily are not involved in the process of community development. This group includes members of minority groups, the elderly, the disabled, and people of low-and moderate-incomes. The Citizen Participation Plan has been developed in the hopes that increasing information flow, both to and from these residents, will assist members of these groups so that their opinions may be made known. To accomplish this task, the Town has established a system through which citizen articulation may be funneled to the Planning Department and the Town Board and Village Boards and vice versa.

CITIZEN COMMENT ON THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN AND AMENDMENTS

The Citizen Participation Plan and amendments to the Plan are subject to full disclosure, review, and public comment prior to approval by the Town Board. Prior to taking action on the Citizen Participation Plan and approving substantial amendments, the Town of Union shall take the following steps:

1. Full copies of the Citizen Participation Plan and proposed substantial amendments shall be made available for public view at the Town of Union Office Building, village halls in Endicott and Johnson City and at the public libraries in Endicott and Johnson City. Electronic versions of the plans will also be posted on the Town's web page. The copies will be made available to

the public, not less than ten (10) days before the Town of Union's public hearing. The plan will be placed in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

2. The Town of Union will place an advertisement or legal notice in the local newspaper, the Press & Sun Bulletin, notifying the public of the availability of the plan at the various locations and will include information on how to comment on the plan.
3. The Town Board will schedule a public hearing on the plan or substantial amendment to same. The public hearing will be advertised in the legal notices section of the Press & Sun Bulletin. Provisions will be made for persons with disabilities, upon request, and for non-English speaking residents in the case where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate.
4. The Town Board will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearing. The Town Board will take action on the plan or substantial amendments at an open meeting.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN

In order to engender full citizen participation in the development of the Town of Union Consolidated Plan, the Town will encourage direct input to the Town Board, prior to formulation and approval of the Consolidated Plan. The Town will undertake the following steps to ensure full citizen input, review and recommendations prior to the adoption of the Consolidated Plan.

1. The Town will publish in the newspaper an advertisement or legal notice providing the citizens, public agencies and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance the Town expects to receive (including CDBG 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. 
2. The Town will send a notice to Town of Union Housing Authority, housing service providers, and other related agencies with information as explained above and a request for direct input into the formulation and development of the Consolidated Plan.
3. The Town Board will advertise and hold a public hearing prior to formulating the Consolidated Plan to solicit input into the plan development process. The above information will be made available prior to the public hearing.
4. With the written and oral citizen input and the input from the various contacted agencies, the Town of Union Planning Department will develop a preliminary Consolidated Plan.
5. Full copies of the preliminary Consolidated Plan will be made available for public view at the Town Office Building, village halls in Endicott and Johnson City, and at the public libraries in Endicott and Johnson City. Electronic versions of the plans will also be posted on the Town's web page. The copies will be made available to the public, not less than ten days before the Town of Union's public hearing. The plan will be placed in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request, and for non-English speaking residents in the case where a

significant number of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate.

6. The Town of Union will place an advertisement or legal notice in the local newspaper, the Press & Sun Bulletin, notifying the public of the availability of the plan at the various locations, the 30-day period of review, and a summary of the plan. The summary will include the contents and purposes of the Consolidated Plan. Copies of the plan will be made available in printed and/or electronic format to agencies, organizations, or individuals requesting same. The copies will be free. Twenty-five free copies will be made available to individual requests for same. Printed copies will be distributed on a one copy per agency, organization, or individual basis.
7. The preliminary Consolidated Plan will be submitted to the Citizen Advisory Council for Community Development for their recommendation.
8. The Town of Union will notify adjacent municipal governments, Broome County, and New York State of the non-housing community development plan.
9. The Town Board will schedule a public hearing on the preliminary Consolidated Plan. The public hearing will be advertised in the legal notices section of the Press & Sun Bulletin. Provisions will be made for persons with disabilities, upon request, and for non-English speaking residents in the case where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate.
10. The Town Board will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearing. A summary of the comments and views and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be included in the final Consolidated Plan.
11. The Town Board will schedule a public hearing on the Final Consolidated Plan. The public hearing will be advertised in the legal notices section of the Press & Sun Bulletin. Provisions will be made for persons with disabilities, upon request, and for non-English speaking residents in the case where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate.
12. Any comments and views, in writing or oral, will be added to the final Consolidated Plan. The Town Board will take action on the Consolidated Plan at an open meeting.

The same procedures described above shall be substantially undertaken in preparation of Annual Action Plans that are not prepared as part of the five-year Consolidated Plan. The only difference in procedure is that the Annual Plans prepared in between Consolidated Plans shall require only two public hearings. The first public hearing shall be conducted prior to the onset of annual planning activities and the second after release of the draft Annual Action Plan.

AMENDMENTS TO CONSOLIDATED OR ANNUAL ACTION PLANS

The Town of Union will amend its approved Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

1. To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds.
2. To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans, not previously described in an Annual Action Plan.
3. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.



Any amendment that results in a change that affects an allocation equal to or exceeding ten percent of the program's funds available for the program year shall be considered a substantial amendment and will follow the procedures listed below. Amendments that impact General Administration (including yearend rollover of funds from the same activity from one fiscal year to another, Project Delivery Costs, and Planning and Management, in themselves, will not be considered to be substantial amendments. Any amendment that results in a change that reduces the benefit to low- and moderate-income people by ten percent or more will be considered a substantial change and shall follow the procedures listed below:

1. Copies of the substantial amendment to the approved Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans will be made available for public view at the Town Office Building, village halls in Endicott and Johnson City and at the public libraries in Endicott and Johnson City. Electronic versions of the plans will also be posted on the Town's web page. The copies will be made available to the public not less than ten (10) days before the Town of Union's public hearing on same. The amendment to the approved plan will be placed in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.
2. The Town of Union will notify adjacent municipal governments, Broome County, and New York State of substantial amendments to the non-housing community development plan.
3. The Town of Union will place an advertisement or legal notice in the local newspaper, the Press & Sun Bulletin, notifying the public of the availability of the amendment to the approved Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans at the various locations, the 30 day (15 for Annual Plan) public comment period and a summary of the amendment to the Plan.
4. The Town Board will schedule a public hearing on the amendment to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans. The public hearing will be advertised in the legal notices section of the Press & Sun Bulletin. Provisions will be made for persons with disabilities, upon request, and for non-English speaking residents in the case where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate.
5. The Town Board will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearing. A summary of the comments and views and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be included in the substantial amendment to the approved Consolidated or Annual Action Plans.
6. The Town Board will take action on the substantial amendment to the approved Consolidated or Annual Action Plans at an open meeting.

SECTION 108 LOAN GUARANTEE APPLICATION

In order to engender full citizen participation in the development of the Town of Union's application for a Section 108 Loan Guarantee, the Town will encourage direct input to the Town Board, prior to approval of the application. The Town will undertake the following steps to ensure full citizen input, review, and recommendations.

1. The Town will publish in the newspaper an advertisement or legal notice providing the citizens, public agencies and other interested parties information which includes the amount of guaranteed loan funds expected to be made available for the coming year, the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income, and which activities is likely to result in displacement.
2. Full copies of the guaranteed loan application will be made available for public view at the Town Office Building, village halls in Endicott and Johnson City, and at the public libraries in Endicott and Johnson City. Electronic versions of the application will also be posted on the Town's web page. The copies will be made available to the public, a minimum of fifteen days before the Town of Union's public hearing. The application will be placed in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.
3. The Town of Union will place an advertisement or legal notice in the local newspaper, the Press & Sun Bulletin, notifying the public of the availability of the guaranteed loan application at the various locations. Twenty-five free copies will be made available to individual requests for same. Printed copies will be distributed on a one copy per agency, organization, or individual basis.
4. The Town Board will schedule a public hearing on the guaranteed loan application. The public hearing will be advertised in the legal notices section of the Press & Sun Bulletin. Provisions will be made for persons with disabilities, upon request, and for non-English speaking residents in the case where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate.
5. The Town Board will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearing. A summary of the comments and views and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be included in the application.
6. The Town Board will take action on the guaranteed loan application at an open meeting.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Citizens, agencies, and interested parties will be provided with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the Town's Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The Town will take the following steps to ensure participation:

1. Copies of the CAPER will be made available for public view at the Town Office Building, village halls in Endicott and Johnson City and at the public libraries in Endicott and Johnson City. Electronic versions of the plans will also be posted on the Town's web page. The copies will

be made available to the public, a minimum of fifteen days before the Town of Union's public hearing. The CAPER will be placed in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

2. The Town of Union will place an advertisement or legal notice in the local newspaper, the Press & Sun Bulletin, notifying the public of the availability of the CAPER at the various locations and the fifteen-day period of review.
3. The Town Board will provide an opportunity for public comment relative to the CAPER at a regular Town Board meeting. The date and time of the meeting will be advertised in the legal notices section of the Press & Sun Bulletin. Provisions will be made for persons with disabilities, upon request, and for non-English speaking residents in the case where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate.
4. The Town Board will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally. A summary of the comments and views and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be included in the CAPER.
5. The Town Board will take action on the CAPER at an open meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Town of Union will conduct a minimum of three public hearings on the Consolidated Plan. The public hearings will be scheduled prior to the formulation of the Consolidated Plan, upon the publication of the preliminary Consolidated Plan, and upon the publication of the final Consolidated Plan. Additional public hearings are required before the approval of a substantial amendment to the Consolidated or Annual Action Plans.

The public will be informed of the public hearings by the publication of a legal notice in the newspaper that is published at least ten working days prior to the hearing. The public hearings will be scheduled to coincide with regular Town Board meetings which are usually held on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 P.M. The public hearings are held at the Town of Union Office Building located at 3111 East Main Street in Endwell. The Town Office Building is centrally located within the Town and is located on the main public bus route. The Town of Union Office Building is fully accessible to people with disabilities. People with disabilities needing special services, such as signing, will be accommodated upon prior notification and request to the Town. The special services are indicated in the public notice. If a large number of non-English speaking people are expected to participate in a public hearing, the Town of Union will have translation services provided through a local agency.



ACCESS TO RECORDS

The Town of Union will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Town's Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans and the Town's use of assistance under the programs covered by this part during the

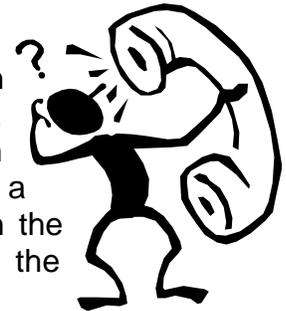
preceding five years. The Town of Union has an adopted Freedom of Information policy and procedure, which will be followed to ensure timely access.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Town of Union will provide technical assistance to groups or 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. The Town will assist by providing a format for the proposal that is consistent with the manner in which funding is approved, such items as proposed budget, including match if required, national objective, beneficiaries of the program and measurable accomplishments. The Town of Union will not provide funds to the groups to assist in the preparation of proposals.

COMPLAINTS

The Town of Union will provide a substantive written response within fifteen working days, where practicable, to any written complaint from a citizen, public agency or interested party related to the Consolidated or Annual Action Plans, plan amendment, and/or CAPER. When notified of a problem prior to a written complaint, the Town will attempt to provide sufficient information on the Consolidated or Annual Action plan amendment or CAPER to answer the concerns.



DISPLACEMENT POLICY

The Town of Union does not anticipate causing displacement under any of its programs. Consistent with Section 902 of the Housing and Community Development Amendment of 1978, it is the policy of the Town of Union that a Community Development Block Grant activity will not be undertaken if there are other feasible alternatives that will not cause displacement. If displacement occurs, the Town of Union will undertake the following steps to offer the following services:

1. Displaced people will be counseled on how to find a new residence.
2. People will be provided with information on available rental units. This list is maintained as part of the Section 8 Rental Assistance program.
3. Displaced people will be given the highest ranking under the Town of Union Section 8 Rental Assistance Program.
4. Relocation costs are eligible activities under the housing rehabilitation programs.
5. The Town of Union will comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act.