

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS  
AGENDA ITEM  
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM**

**AGENDA DATE:** November 19, 2024

**CONTACT PERSON(S) NAME AND PHONE NUMBER:** Nicole Ferrini (915) 212-1659

**DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED:** All Districts

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** Goal 8 – Nurture and Promote a Healthy, Sustainable Community

**SUBGOAL:**

**SUBJECT:**

**APPROVE a resolution / ordinance / lease to do what? OR AUTHORIZE the City Manager to do what? Be descriptive of what we want Council to approve. Include \$ amount if applicable.**

Approve the amended Citizen Participation Plan for the City of El Paso's Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Entitlement grants.

Citizen Participation Plan to be revised as amended as follows:

- Criteria for Substantial Amendments
  - Criteria amended to better align with Department's needs
- Community Needs Assessment Process (CNA)
  - The CNA has shifted from a cyclical program year to a more comprehensive timeline in response to the Department's and community's needs.
- Removal of Community Needs Advisory Committee for Citizen Participation, and all mentioned thereof
  - The Community Needs Advisory Committee was removed as the input it provided had already been captured during the CNA process, ensuring that citizen feedback was adequately addressed without the need for a separate committee.
- Assessment of Performance
  - Revised process of the Consolidated Annual Performance Report

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:**

The Citizen Participation Plan (The Plan) provides a guide for citizens and citizen organizations to participate in an advisory role in planning, implementing and assessing the Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Solutions Grants, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and HOME Investment Partnerships Programs. The Plan describes procedures by which each of the requirements of the program will be carried out. Additionally, the Plan sets forth how citizens may participate in the development of the program. Any amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan will be subject to all provisions within this Citizen Participation Plan. At a minimum, citizens shall have an opportunity to submit comments and proposals regarding the program in the following manner:

- Criteria for Substantial Amendments
  - Criteria amended to better align with Department's needs
- Community Needs Assessment Process (CNA)
  - The CNA has shifted from a cyclical program year to a more comprehensive timeline in response to the Department's and community's needs.
- Removal of Community Needs Advisory Committee for Citizen Participation, and all mentioned thereof
  - The Community Needs Advisory Committee was removed as the input it provided had already been captured during the CNA process, ensuring that citizen feedback was adequately addressed without the need for a separate committee.
- Assessment of Performance
  - Revised process of the Consolidated Annual Performance Report

The Plan process centers equity by actively involving people who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality by prioritizing their needs throughout planning and implementation. This is carried out through the Community Needs Assessment process. The Community Needs assessment serves as the starting point in addressing community vulnerabilities. DCHD will launch the Community Needs Assessment process at the discretion of the Department Director or Department Staff. The purpose of the Community Needs Assessment is to obtain citizen's views regarding housing and community development needs and proposed activities that support identified community vulnerabilities. This process will be led by the DCHD Civic Empowerment team. The DCHD Civic Empowerment team's primary objective is to advance equity and improve community outcomes through equitable programming volunteerism, and education designed to empower residents and strengthen their relationship with local government.

**PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:**

2019-2020 Citizen Participation Plan was adopted by Council on August 23, 2018.  
 2020-2021 Citizen Participation Plan was adopted by Council on September 17, 2019  
 2022-2023 Citizen Participation Plan was adopted by Council on January 31, 2023

**AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

NA

**HAVE ALL AFFECTED DEPARTMENTS BEEN NOTIFIED?  X  YES   NO**

**PRIMARY DEPARTMENT:** Office of Climate and Sustainability – Nicole Ferrini

**SECONDARY DEPARTMENT:** N/A

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\*\*\*\*\***REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION**\*\*\*\*\*

**LEGAL:** (if required) \_\_\_\_\_ **FINANCE:** (if required) \_\_\_\_\_

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**  \_\_\_\_\_

**APPROVED FOR AGENDA:**

**CITY MANAGER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:**

That the Citizen Participation Plan for the City of El Paso be revised, as reflected in Attachment A, to: (a) provide revisions recommended by the staff of the Department of Community and Human Development; and update current practices and procedures; (b) revise Criteria for Substantial Amendments; (c) revise Community Needs Assessment Process; (d) remove the Community Needs Advisory Committee for Citizen Participation and all mentions thereof; and (e) revise Assessment of Performance.

**APPROVED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

**CITY OF EL PASO:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Oscar Leeser  
Mayor

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura D. Prine  
City Clerk

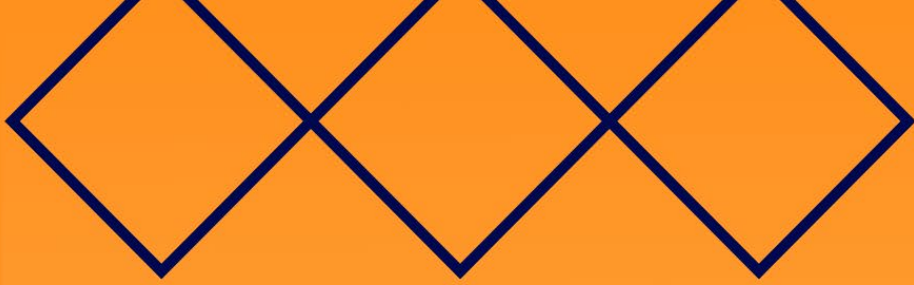
**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

*Russell T. Abeln*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Russell T. Abeln  
Senior Assistant City Attorney

**APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:**

*Nicole M. Ferrini*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nicole M. Ferrini  
Climate and Sustainability Officer

Attachment A



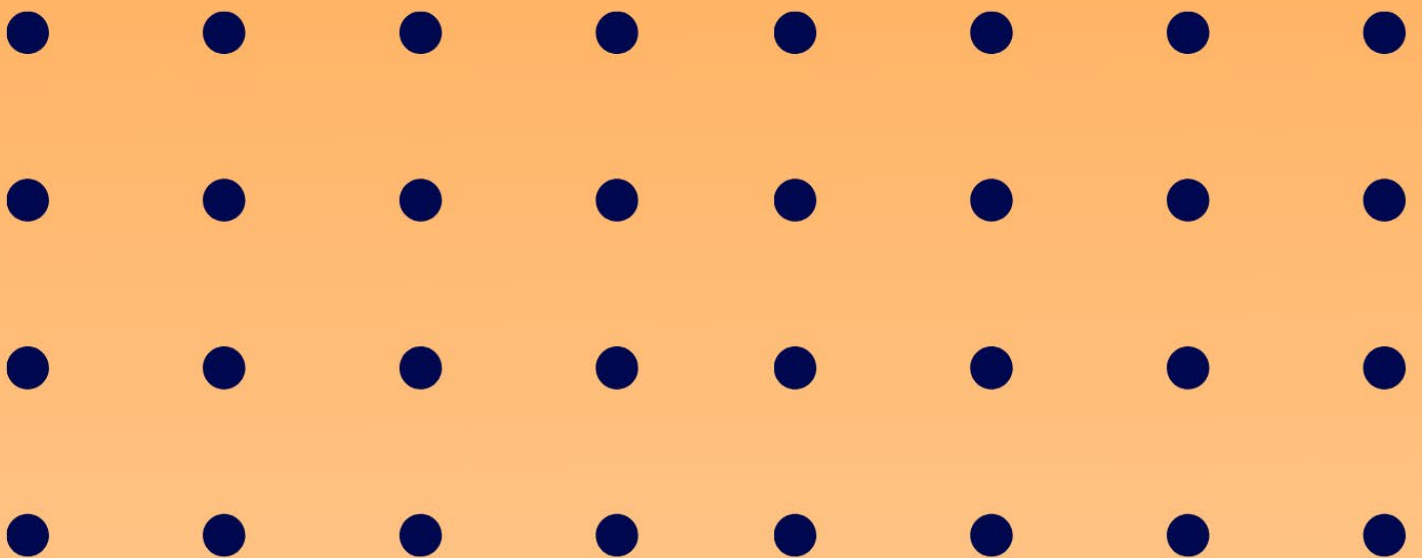
City of El Paso



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# CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Citizen Participation Plan (The Plan) provides a guide for citizens and citizen organizations to participate in an advisory role in planning, implementing, and assessing the Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Solutions Grants, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and HOME Investment Partnerships Programs.

The Plan describes procedures by which each of the requirements of the program will be carried out. Additionally, the Plan sets forth how citizens may participate in the development of the program. Any amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan will be subject to all provisions within this Citizen Participation Plan.

At a minimum, citizens shall have an opportunity to submit comments and proposals regarding the program in the following manner:

- Directly to the Department of Community and Human Development;
- At formal Public Hearings; and
- At community engagement events and town hall forums, including but not limited to the Community Needs Assessment planning process.
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The Citizen Participation Plan is available in English and Spanish at no charge at the Department of Community and Human Development (DCHD), 801 Texas Avenue, El Paso, Texas, 79901. The Plan is also available on the City's website (<http://www.elpasotexas.gov/community-and-human-development>).

The Plan process centers on equity by actively involving people who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality by prioritizing their needs throughout planning and implementation. This is carried out through the Community Needs Assessment.

The City of El Paso is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonable modifications and equal access to communication will be provided upon request. The City of El Paso does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

Citizens are encouraged to obtain copies of the Citizen Participation Plan in order to more effectively participate in the Program.

The Community Needs Assessment (CAN) initiated by DCHD aims to address community vulnerabilities by gathering citizen input on housing and development needs. The CNA process emphasizes equity and community engagement through surveys and roundtable discussions across five key categories: Equity & Inclusion, Housing & Homelessness, Family Stability, Health & Wellbeing, and Food Security. Ultimately, the findings will inform potential projects and actions to enhance community outcomes and strengthen relationships with local government.



# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CNA)

Starting point in addressing community vulnerabilities



## CONSOLIDATED PLAN, GUARANTEED LOAN FUNDS, AND ASSESSMENT OF FAIR HOUSING GUIDELINES

### COMPONENTS OF CONSOLIDATED PLAN

The City of El Paso is required to submit to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) a Consolidated Plan that includes the following components:

- Executive Summary – A summary that includes the objectives and outcomes identified in the plan and an evaluation of past performance.
- Citizen Participation – A summary of the citizen participation process used in the development of the Consolidated Plan, explaining the utilization of public notices, public hearings, public involvement, availability to the public, and technical assistance.
- Housing and Homeless Needs Assessment – An estimate of the city's housing needs for the ensuing five years; a concise summary of the nature and extent of homelessness in the jurisdiction; an estimate of the number of persons in various subpopulations that are not homeless but may require housing or supportive services (special needs); and an estimate on the number of housing units that contain lead-based paint hazards.
- Housing Market Analysis – A description of the significant characteristics of the city's housing market; a concise summary of the needs of public housing; a description (number and targeting) of assisted housing units; a concise summary of the existing facilities and services that assist the city's homeless; a description of the special need facilities and services; and an explanation of the barriers to affordable housing.
- Strategic Plan – A plan for a period established by the city that brings needs, priority needs, priorities, specific objectives, and strategies together in a coherent strategic plan; including the period covered by the plan, a priority needs analysis, and geographic distribution and specific objectives.

- Priority identification – The identification of priority needs, strategies, and objectives related to Housing, Homelessness, Populations with Special Needs, Community Development, and multiple-needs Issues.
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) – The assessment of information on the current state of neighborhood demographics and assets to identify and understand local and regional fair housing issues and to set goals for improving fair housing choice and access to opportunity.
- Annual Action Plan (AAP) – The Annual Action Plan (AAP) is a yearly plan that outlines the actions, activities, and resources the City will use to address the priorities identified in the Community Needs Assessment.

## **LEAD ENTITY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN/ ANNUAL ACTION PLAN.**

The City’s Department of Community and Human Development (DCHD), located at 801 Texas Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79901, is the lead entity for fulfilling the City’s responsibilities in relation to this Citizen Participation Plan. Responsibilities of the Department may include the following:

- Inform the public about the Community Development Program and the citizen participation process through the local media in both English and Spanish languages;
- Facilitate stakeholder consultation and citizen outreach with other public and private agencies including, but not limited to the Local Public Housing Authority, Social service providers, and community-based organizations that represent protected class members;
- Provide technical assistance to representatives of low- and moderate-income persons and groups, neighborhood associations, and other civic and citizen organizations when requested so that they may adequately participate in planning, implementing, and assessing the program;
- Provide technical assistance to representatives of low- and moderate-income persons and groups, neighborhood associations, and other civic and citizen organizations that request assistance in developing proposals and comments
  - Other City Departments: City Departments, in addition to the Department of Community and Human Development, shall be requested to provide technical assistance at public hearings, and at neighborhood association meetings, in order to translate neighborhood needs into specific projects and activities when appropriate.
- Maintain all records of the Citizen Participation process, including minutes of public hearings, and Community Needs Assessment meetings,
- Review all proposals for entitlement grant funding;
- Schedule annual public hearings on program needs, performance, and proposed activities to be conducted at a regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

Public participation is a critical component of effective planning. The City of El Paso relies on feedback from its residents to prioritize resources and identify key priorities and projects. This Plan sets forth the policies and procedures that the City of El Paso will follow to encourage citizen participation in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and any substantial amendments to them; the development of a Guaranteed Loan Program application and subsequent substantial amendments thereof; Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) and any revisions required; and the annual performance report.

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### ENCOURAGEMENT OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The City of El Paso considers it a right of all of El Paso's residents to have the opportunity to provide input and comment on the use of public funds and the needs of the El Paso community related to community development. The Citizen Participation Plan and – Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing are designed specifically to encourage participation by low- and moderate-income persons and residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, particularly those living in areas where Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and Guaranteed Loan Funds are proposed to be used. A map of the City of El Paso, indicating the areas of the City that have been identified as predominantly low- and moderate-income by HUD guidelines, is included in **Attachment B**. The City will take all appropriate actions to encourage the participation of all of its citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities, persons living in areas designated by the local jurisdiction as a revitalization area, and areas designated by either a local jurisdiction or a state as a slum or blight area. The City will encourage the participation of Continuums of Care, businesses, developers, non-profit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations.

The City of El Paso shall consult and coordinate with the key stakeholders and private and public agencies including, but not limited to the Housing Authority for the City of El Paso /Housing Opportunity Management Enterprises (HOME), in order to encourage the participation of residents of public and assisted housing in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Guaranteed Loan Funds and the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the public and assisted housing is located.

The City of El Paso shall provide information to the Housing Authority for the City of El Paso /Housing Opportunity Management Enterprises (HOME) about the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Guaranteed Loan Funds, and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing activities related to the Authority's housing developments and surrounding communities, local and regional institutions. Subsequently, the Housing Authority will, this information available as required under the Comprehensive Grant Program.

Additionally, the City will continue to follow The Plan to serve specifically as a guide to citizens for participation in planning, implementing, and assessing the City's Entitlement.

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## PUBLICATION + GENERAL CIRCULATION

The City will publish the proposed Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, any Guaranteed Loan Application, or Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing to give citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to review and comment on its contents. A summary of these documents will be published in a general circulation newspaper at least 30 days before the final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, is adopted or the Guaranteed Loan Application is submitted. The summary will outline the contents and purpose of the documents and provide a list of locations where the full versions can be reviewed.

Copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Guaranteed Loan Application, or Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing will be available for review at the Department of Community and Human Development (DCHD), located at 801 Texas Ave., El Paso, TX 79901. The City will also provide a reasonable number of free copies to citizens and groups upon request.

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## PUBLIC HEARINGS

The City will hold at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizen comments and to respond to proposals and questions, to be conducted at a minimum of two different stages of the program year. Together, the hearings will address housing and community development needs during the Community Needs Assessment, development

of proposed activities, and review of program performance. At least one of these hearings will be held before the publication of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Guaranteed Loan Application, or Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing for public comment, or before the Guaranteed Loan Application is submitted to HUD. The purpose of the hearing is to gather input from citizens on housing and community development needs.

Notice of the date and time of the public hearings (with sufficient information about the subject of the hearing to permit informed comment) will be published in a general circulation newspaper and on the City’s website. Public hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries. In order to ensure that there is accommodation for persons with disabilities, the City’s Accessibility ADA Coordinator will be consulted about the accessibility of potential meeting sites, as needed.

Public notices about the Consolidated Plan, the Guaranteed Loan Application, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, or substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Guaranteed Loan Program, or Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing will be published in both English and Spanish. In the case of public hearings, the City An interpreter upon request to interpret the proceedings for non-English speakers, and written handouts will be provided in English and Spanish.

Specific efforts will be made to involve residents of low- and moderate-income areas in local meetings related to the Consolidated Plan, the Guaranteed Loan Program, or the Analysis of Impediments to Fair. Such efforts may include but are not limited to, contacting neighborhood associations and organizations in low- and moderate-income areas, distributing handbills or other written literature in eligible areas, posting information on the City’s website, and use of the media. Written citizen proposals and comments will be encouraged throughout the planning and implementation of Community Development needs.

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## PUBLIC COMMENT

- Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Guaranteed Loan Funds, and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing.** A comment period will be provided to receive comments from citizens on the proposed Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, a proposed Guaranteed Loan Application, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, or Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The City shall consider any comments of citizens received in writing, orally at the public hearings, or directly to the DCHD, in preparing the Final Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Guaranteed Loan Application, or AFH. A summary of these comments, and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the Final Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Guaranteed Loan Application, or Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing.
- The following table states the items that require a public Comment Period.

### Public Comment Period

Items Requiring Public Comment	Public Comment Period
Consolidated Plan	30 Days
Annual Action Plan	30 Days
Guaranteed Loan Application	30 Days
Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing	30 Days
CAPER	15 Days

**Substantial Amendments.** The City will provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments. A substantial amendment constitutes a significant change to the program and is described in detail on page 15. A notice of the proposed substantial amendment will be published in a general circulation newspaper and on the City's website. The City will consider any comments of citizens received in writing, or orally, at public hearings or directly to the Department of Community and Human Development, if any, in preparing the substantial amendment. A summary of these comments, and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons, therefore, shall be attached to the substantial amendment. Substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, or Annual Action Plan will be acted upon by the El Paso City Council in open City Council meetings.

- **Performance Reports.** The City will provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports. The City will publish in a general circulation newspaper and the City's website a notice of the availability of the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan performance report before the submission date in order to provide a period to receive comments before the performance report is submitted to HUD.

The City will consider any comments of citizens received in writing, orally at public hearings, or directly to DCHD in preparing the performance report. A summary of these comments or views shall be attached to the performance report.

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## OTHER CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- **Availability to Public.** The Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan as adopted, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, the Guaranteed Loan Application and any substantial amendments thereof, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, and the performance report will be available to the public. These materials will be available upon request at the Office of the City's DCHD, 801 Texas Avenue (3rd Floor), El Paso, Texas 79901; and the City's website. Materials will be made available upon request in a form accessible to persons with disabilities and translated for non-English speaking residents.
- **Access to Records.** The City will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with timely access to information and records related to the City's Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and its use of funds under these programs for the past five years. This information is available on the Community and Human Development page at <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/community-and-human-development/nofa-forms-and-notice/>. If specific information is not published on that page, it can be obtained by submitting an Open Records Request through the City Clerk's Office at <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/city-clerk/>.
- **Technical Assistance.** The City will provide technical assistance to any prospective applicant and/or 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, Annual Action Plan, and the Guaranteed Loan Program. The provision of technical assistance does not guarantee the provision of funds to the groups.
- **Complaints.** The City will provide a timely, substantive written response to every written citizen complaint regarding programs or activities related to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, the Guaranteed Loan Program, or Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing within 15 working days, when practicable. The response will dictate the next steps and tentative timeline. Complaints and grievances should be submitted in writing to the City's DCHD, 801 Texas Avenue (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor), El Paso, Texas 79901.

## DISSEMINATION OF FUNDING INFORMATION

Before the City adopts a Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan submits a Guaranteed Loan Application or develops an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing the City will make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance the City expects to receive or expects to be made available (including grant funds, Guaranteed Loan Funds and anticipated 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 City will publish this information in a general circulation newspaper. The information will also be disseminated at neighborhood and agency meetings during the development phase of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Guaranteed Loan Application, or Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing.

## RESIDENTIAL ANTI-DISPLACEMENT + RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PLAN

The City has adopted a Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan, included as **Attachment D**, which describes in detail the measures that the City will take to assist any persons displaced, and specifies the types and levels of assistance the City will make available (or require others to make available) to persons displaced, even if the City expects no displacement to occur. This Plan is available to the public at the City's DCHD, 801 Texas Avenue (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor), El Paso, Texas 79901.

## CRITERIA FOR SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

Substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, the Guaranteed Loan Program, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, or other grant programs are subject to the citizen participation process. The following criteria will be used to identify substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, the Guaranteed Loan Program, or Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing:

- The City carries out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, not previously described in the action plan; or
- The City changes the location of a physical project outside the previously described area of the population to be served to another eligible area; or
- The City changes the scope and budget of an activity by more than 75%.
- Additionally, the DCHD Director may grant exceptions within this document provided that those exceptions do not violate federal regulations.

The city will revise the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing when:

- Fluctuations in housing prices, availability of affordable housing, or changes in rental markets that could influence fair housing access; or
- Changes in employment rates, income levels, or overall economic conditions that affect housing affordability and access; or
- New laws or amendments related to housing, land use, or civil rights that alter the fair housing landscape; or
- A Presidentially declared disaster and within two years of the declaration; or
- Upon notification from HUD that a change is required and within the time frame specified by HUD.

A revision may not necessarily require the submission of an entirely new Assessment. It need only focus on the material change and appropriate adjustments to the analyses, assessments, priorities, or goals.

## COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Community Needs assessment serves as the starting point in addressing community vulnerabilities. DCHD will thoughtfully launch the Community Needs Assessment process as it deems appropriate, ensuring it aligns with the evolving needs and priorities of the community. The purpose of the Community Needs Assessment is to obtain citizens' views regarding housing and community development needs and proposed activities that support identified community vulnerabilities. This process will be led by the DCHD Civic Empowerment team. The DCHD Civic Empowerment team's primary objective is to advance equity and improve community outcomes through equitable programming volunteerism, and education designed to empower residents and strengthen their relationship with local government.

Community organizations and stakeholders work together across key sectors to take a systemic approach to improving overall community performance through collaboration and partnerships. This collaborative framework is essential to the planning process, allowing businesses, neighborhood associations, organizations, and governments to work more effectively across sectors and align their strategic priorities. The Community Needs Assessment will consist of a combination of surveys and focus groups from organizations representing the following categories:

- Equity + Inclusion
- Housing +Homelessness
- Family Stability
- Health and Wellbeing
- Food Security

**Community Roundtables:** The Civic Empowerment team will lead the Community Needs Assessment by hosting a series of roundtables across the 5 categories listed above. Stakeholders, Neighborhood Associations, and members of the public will be invited to attend. DCHD to provide the community with a list of potential projects or actions that could be pursued over a period of years in order to address community vulnerabilities.

**Perceptions Assessment:** Civic Empowerment will assess perceptions by engaging Stakeholders, Neighborhood Associations, and members of the public by conducting formal stakeholder input sessions. This method allows us to capture stakeholder feedback collected from stakeholders in 12 different categories, ranging from leadership and strategy, health and wellbeing, infrastructure and environment, and economy and society. Participants will be asked to assess whether the input is an area of strength or if it's an area of improvement.

**Presentation of Findings:** DCHD will then present the findings to the City Council. The Annual Action Plan will seek to address these findings.

## ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The Annual Action Plan is developed according to the steps set out below. In the course of this process, City residents will be given the opportunity to submit comments on community needs. A specific effort will be made to inform low- and moderate-income persons and residents of low- and moderate-income areas about the proposal and comment process and to involve them in the process. Such efforts may include, but are not limited to contacting neighborhood associations and civic organizations in low- and moderate-income areas, contacting stakeholders, distributing handbills or other written literature in eligible areas, posting information on the City's website, and use of the media. Citizen comments are encouraged for community needs. DCHD will publish a

notice in English and Spanish in a local newspaper of general circulation stating how and when comments may be submitted and also the date, time, place, and purpose of public hearings held to solicit comments. The media will be used whenever possible to advertise these meetings and promote attendance at these public hearings. Interested persons will also be invited to participate at other points in the process, including the presentation of the draft and final Annual Action Plans. This process will allow low- and moderate-income persons and other interested citizens to participate in the development of the final Annual Action Plan.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

All public hearings and neighborhood meetings will be held at convenient times and locations that permit participation by citizens and organizations. All sites selected will be fully accessible to persons with disabilities. To further accessibility, such hearings and meetings will be conducted at the Center for Civic Empowerment, located at 304 Texas Ave. El Paso, TX 79901. Upon request, accommodations can be made available using the Center for Civic Empowerment's Web Conferencing system, and written handouts will be provided in English and Spanish.

DCHD will make every reasonable effort to inform citizens, particularly low- and moderate-income persons and residents of eligible areas, of the schedule and purpose of these hearings and neighborhood meetings. DCHD will publicize these hearings and neighborhood meetings through various media, the City's website, neighborhood associations, and organizations serving low- and moderate-income persons to encourage citizen input. The purpose and procedures of both the Community Development Program and the particular public hearing or neighborhood meeting will be explained in sufficient detail to allow citizens to understand and effectively contribute to the program.

## STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

- **Community Needs Assessment-** The first step in developing the Annual Action Plan involves defining neighborhood objectives and soliciting preliminary comments on community needs. One citywide public hearing will be held to solicit comments about housing and community development needs and comments for Community Development. In addition, one or more neighborhood meetings may also be held to provide neighborhood residents with an opportunity to propose projects. Specific efforts will be made to inform and involve residents of low- and moderate-income areas. Such efforts may include, but are not limited to, contacting neighborhood and civic associations and organizations in low- and moderate-income areas, distributing handbills or other written literature in eligible areas, posting information on the City's website, and use of the media. Written citizen comments will also be encouraged. A specified period and a reasonable deadline for submission of preliminary proposals and comments will be set and publicized in accordance with the methods stated in this paragraph.
- **DCHD to issue Notice of Funding Availability-** The second step in the development of the Annual Action Plan is for the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to be issued based on prioritized needs established through the community needs assessment, if applicable.
- **Technical Advisory Panel.** The third step of the Annual Action Plan development is a review of proposed projects by a technical advisory panel, which may consist of DCHD staff and subject matter experts. This panel will review all feasible, proposed projects and make a recommendation to DCHD leadership.
- **Presentation of Draft Annual Action Plan to City Council.** During the fourth step of the Annual Action Plan development, DCHD staff, in conjunction with its technical advisory panels, consolidates its recommendations and prepares a final budget recommendation that is presented to City Council. City Council will review the Draft Annual Action Plan, which will be open for public comment for 30 days. This Draft Annual Action Plan will be published in English and Spanish in a local newspaper of general circulation to afford residents and organizations an opportunity to examine its content and to submit comments to the City. Any comments



received will be reviewed and City Council may, at its option, modify the Annual Action Plan after its publication and before adopting a final Annual Action Plan.

- **Public Hearing on Proposed Annual Action Plan.** During the final step, City Council will review comments received since the publication of the Draft Annual Action Plan and formulate its Final Annual Action Plan. This Final Annual Action Plan will be introduced at a public hearing at which residents will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed activities in the budget as well as program performance and needs. Upon completion of the public hearing, the City Council will vote to adopt a Final Annual Action Plan based on budget recommendations and comments presented to the Council. Upon adoption, the Final Annual Action Plan and required certifications will be submitted to the Regional Office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development for review and approval. Copies of this Final Annual Action Plan will be available to the public DCHD, 801 Texas Ave. El Paso, TX 79901, and the City's website.

## SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

A substantial amendment constitutes a significant change to the program, such as adding, deleting, or significantly changing project scopes or allocations according to the following criteria:

- The City carries out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, not previously described in the action plan; or
- The City changes the location of a physical project outside the previously described area of the population to be served to another eligible area (this excludes services); or
- The City changes the scope and budget of an activity by more than 75%.
- Additionally, the DCHD Director may grant exceptions within this document provided that those exceptions do not violate federal regulations.

A notice of a proposed substantial amendment will be published in English and Spanish in a local general circulation newspaper to provide citizens with reasonable notice, and a 30-day opportunity to comment on the substantial amendment. DCHD will record and consider comments received and may modify the proposed substantial amendment if warranted. All amendments must be submitted to City Council for review and approval. Upon approval, amendments will be submitted to the Housing and Urban Development Regional Office. A summary of comments and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefore shall be attached to the substantial amendment. A description of all substantial amendments adopted will also be available to the public at the DCHD office during normal business hours and made available on the City's website.

## PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION + AMENDMENTS

Upon approval of the Final Annual Action Plan, DCHD shall be responsible for initiating and monitoring the implementation of the proposed activities contained in the budget in accordance with the stated objectives. Day-to-day operational decisions and actions necessary to ensure implementation of projects shall be the function of DCHD.

## ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

- **Public Hearings on Performance and Comment Process:** Citizens are encouraged to comment on the performance of the City's DCHD Program and the extent to which project activities achieved their objectives. Comments, inquiries, and complaints may be submitted to the DCHD office or City

Council member. It is the responsibility of any City Council member to forward the comments, inquiries, and complaints received to the DCHD staff for a written response. DCHD staff will respond to inquiries and comments received as expeditiously as possible. Verbal complaints shall be transcribed by the DCHD staff and an appropriate response provided. Written complaints will be responded to in writing by the DCHD office within fifteen (15) working days of their receipt. Citizen comments, inquiries, and complaints may also be presented at public hearings. Each year a public hearing on program performance will be held to solicit citizen comments.

DCHD staff will review all comments, complaints, and suggestions received in assessing program performance and the extent to which projects and activities achieved their objectives. The results of these assessments will be taken into consideration in the planning and selection of future projects and activities proposed for Community Development funding.

- **Performance Reporting:** DCHD annually prepares a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) that includes:
  - Activity Summary
  - Status of Funds
  - Direct Benefit Activities
  - Actions to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH)
  - Anti-displacement

This report includes an assessment by DCHD regarding how the use of all entitlement grants aligns with the objectives outlined in the Final Annual Action Plan.

Once the Draft CAPER is completed, a Public Notice will be published in both English and Spanish in a newspaper of general circulation and on the City's website. This notice will elicit public comment and mark the beginning of the public comment period for the Draft CAPER, which is available free of charge upon request at the DCHD Office.

After the 15-day public comment period concludes, the CAPER, along with any received comments, will be submitted to the Area Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## AVAILABLE INFORMATION

The City shall provide full and timely disclosure of its program records and information consistent with applicable laws and regulations regarding personal privacy and confidentiality. Copies of the following material shall be available for citizen review, upon request, during regular business hours, at DCHD, 801 Texas Avenue:

- All mailings and promotional materials;
- The Citizen Participation Plan and schedules of public hearings;
- The records of DCHD public hearings;
- The proposed and approved annual action plan for the current year;
- The proposed and approved Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, ;
- All prior applications including letters of approval and grant agreements;
- All Performance Reports, Status Reports, and other reports that may be required by HUD;
- Anti-Displacement Strategy and Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy; and

- Copies of the regulations governing the Community Development Program and documents on other important program requirements

## EXPEDITED PROCESS FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has issued specific program waivers and flexibilities to allow grantees to direct federal funds to the COVID-19 pandemic response in an expedited manner. The requirements and procedures described in this section override all applicable requirements and procedures in other sections of this document and apply to all COVID-related funding until all such funding from HUD has been exhausted.

- Public Comment for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program – A notice of proposed Annual Action Plan and/or Consolidated Plan related to the Community Development Block Grant Program, and substantial amendments to the City's Annual Action Plan and/or Consolidated Plan, related to CDBG, will be published on the City's website no less than 5 days before the final plans or substantial amendments are considered for adoption by City Council to provide a period of 5 days for comments from the public.
- Public Comment for Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program – Notice of substantial amendments to the City's Annual Action Plan and/or Consolidated Plan, related to ESG, will be published on the City's website for public review following adoption by the City Council.
- Public Hearings – In-person public hearings are not required. The City may meet public hearing requirements with virtual public hearings if: 1) national/local health authorities recommend social distancing and limiting public gatherings for public health reasons, and 2) virtual hearings provide reasonable notification and access for citizens by the City's certifications, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues, and public access to all questions and responses.

Plan Availability – Policies and Procedures, Citizen Participation Plans, and Annual and Consolidated Plans will be available at the Department of Community and Human Development (DCHD), 801 Texas Avenue, El Paso, Texas, 79901; upon request. The Plan is also available on the City's website (<http://www.elpasotexas.gov/community-and-human-development>).