

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizens are encouraged to express views and make comments regarding the identification of housing and community development needs with the City of Bristol, Tennessee and to respond to proposed projects throughout the year. The annual Action Plan is submitted to HUD by May 15 each year and covers both Community Development Block Grant funds and Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium funds.

Citizens are also encouraged to review and comment on the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report that is prepared annually and submitted to HUD by September 30. Activities and programs that may be addressed by the CDBG program must meet at least one national objective as determined by the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development:

1. Provide benefit to low and moderate income families.
2. Aid in the prevention of slums and blight.
3. Address other community development needs having a particular urgency because of posing a serious or immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community and where there are no other financial resources available



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

NORTHEAST TENNESSEE/VIRGINIA HOME CONSORTIUM

MARCH 2003

1.0 PURPOSE

The Citizen Participation Plan for the Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium represents a document and program that will actively seek the advice and input of the citizens residing within the Consortium boundaries in the preparation, administration and implementation of HOME and Community Development Block Grant programs. The Citizen Participation Plan shall be in compliance with Section 91.105 of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Final Rule.

The express purpose of this Plan is to develop mechanisms to ensure the citizens of the City of Bristol Tennessee have an opportunity for ongoing citizen participation. It is also intended to establish procedures through which the members of the Consortium may solicit and receive input from citizens, nonprofit organizations, and other interested parties and to give them an adequate opportunity to review and comment on the Community Development program and the goals, objectives and projects in the Consolidated Plan/Action Plans.

The Consortium shall make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance expected to be received (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income.

2.0 METHODS OF APPROACH

Several approaches or techniques will be utilized to implement the Citizen Participation Plan. All methods shall retain the primary purpose of soliciting and receiving citizen input for the HOME and CDBG programs, goals, objectives and projects.

Development of the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan

The Consortium shall encourage, in conjunction with consultation with public housing authorities, the participation of residents of public and assisted-housing developments 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.

The Community Development staff members within the Consortium shall contact other City departments, local agencies and organizations to assist in the identification of housing and Community Development needs, review proposed use of funds, and review program performance. Public agencies and other interested parties shall include, but not be limited to, public housing authorities, community development advisory committees, nonprofit service providers, local government commissions and other interested parties.

As lead agency for the preparation of the Consolidated Plan, the City of Bristol, Tennessee, has the primary responsibility for developing and implementing the Citizen Participation Plan.

Public Hearings

The members of the Consortium, will conduct two Public Hearings each fiscal year. At each Public Hearing, citizens will be invited to participate for the purpose of obtaining their views, as well as those of public agencies and other interested parties. The Public Hearings will identify housing and community development needs, review proposed uses of funds, and review program performance associated with the HOME and CDBG Programs.

1. Prior to the drafting of the Consolidated Plan, a Public Hearing will be conducted at a location serving each of the members of the Consortium. These hearings will be advertised at least two weeks prior to the meetings in the local newspaper of general circulation *in large print*.

The purpose of the Public Hearing will be to obtain the views of citizens, public agencies and other interested parties regarding the identification of housing and community development needs and to respond to proposals and comments received from citizens. Interested parties are encouraged to comment on the Consolidated Plan at this Public Hearing or within thirty (30) days following the Public Hearing.

2. A second Public Hearing will be conducted by the governing body of each member of the Consortium once a draft of the Plan has been prepared.

This hearing will be advertised at least two weeks prior to the meeting in the local newspaper of general circulation *in large print*.

The notice will include information that includes the amount of assistance expected to be received (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income.

Citizen comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan (housing and community development needs and development of proposed activities) that have been received in writing or by telephone will be addressed, as well as any from those attending this meeting. The governing body will adopt the proposed Plan at this meeting.

Once the proposed Consolidated Plan is drafted, it will also be made available at public locations, i.e., Public Library, with information directing interested parties to the appropriate office where free copies of the complete Consolidated Plan may be obtained.

Performance Reports

Citizens shall be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports at a Public Hearing. Notice of such Public Hearing shall be placed in the local

newspaper of general circulation *in large print* allowing a **fifteen-day comment period** on the Performance Report. Any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally shall be considered, summarized and attached to the Performance Report.

Once the Annual Performance Report is drafted, it will also be made available at public locations with information directing interested parties to the applicable Community Development Office.

Provisions for Participation

The Community Development staff will ensure participation activities are designed to provide for and encourage the participation of all citizens with an emphasis placed on residents with low, very low or extremely low household income who are most likely to be affected by the expenditure of housing and community development funds, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where housing and community development funds may be spent. Participation is encouraged at all stages of the planning, development and evaluation of housing and community development programs by all those who may be affected or wish to be involved in the process. Efforts will be made to assure that minorities, non-English-speaking persons, as well as persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairment have adequate assistance required to fully participate in the process. Anyone needing special assistance or interpretation may make special arrangements by contacting the Community Development Office in their area.

The Citizen Participation Plan guarantees the availability of information and technical assistance for the citizens, public agencies and other interested parties, including those most affected to have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan/Action Plan including the estimates of amounts of funds available and the estimated amount proposed to benefit low, very low, and extremely low income residents. The Consortium members shall also provide citizens, public agencies and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan and the use of assistance during the preceding five years per Section 91.105(h) of the Final Rule. Community Development information can be procured from the members of the Consortium.

Displacement

Plans to minimize displacement and assist those displaced as a result of these activities shall be made available to all citizens, public agencies and other interested parties. Displacement shall be minimized by working with citizens to provide adequate housing through the Home Ownership Program. Where voluntary acquisition is involved, the local HUD-approved Acquisition and Relocation Guidelines shall be invoked; where involuntary acquisition is involved, the Federal Acquisition and Relocation Guidelines shall be invoked.

3.0 COMMUNITY-WIDE AND PROJECT AREA ACTIVITIES

In keeping with the scope of the HOME and CDBG Programs, the Consortium has established and will utilize the Community Advisory Committees or a local governing body, if no advisory group exists, to provide broad citizen representation of the Consortium concerning the HOME and CDBG goals, objectives and projects.

- * It is the responsibility of the group or governing body to act as a communication link between the citizens of the Consortium and the Community Development staff.
- * The group or governing body should make every effort to gather information regarding concerns of the citizens in regard to HOME and CDBG projects and to communicate these concerns to the appropriate officials.
- * The group and/or governing body will disseminate project information to the Community Advisory groups and to other interested citizens. They shall bring to the attention of the members of the Consortium those situations which may be particular to the locality, including special needs and specific problems, and will identify housing and community development needs, use of funds, and program performance. Meetings will be open to the public and conducted on a regular basis. A copy of the Bylaws of the Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium is attached to this Plan which explains the Consortium's organization and operation.

The Citizen Participation Plan for the Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium will utilize other citizen groups that operate in each of the localities to provide ongoing opportunity to comment on the HOME and CDBG programs, goals, objectives and projects in keeping with the scope of the Consolidated Plan. Discussion will be conducted in an effort to identify housing and community development needs, review proposed use of funds and review program performance on an annual basis. The Community Development staff will ensure that special procedures will be utilized to assist low and moderate income persons, elderly, handicapped, and non-English-speaking persons serving on or attending meetings dealing with HOME and CDBG issues and to afford them access to information and materials concerning the Consolidated Plan.

4.0 COMPLAINTS

All appeals of administrative decisions by the Consortium or requests for dispute resolution relating to Consortium activities shall be in writing and submitted to the First Tennessee Development District. The Consortium shall review the matter at the next

regularly scheduled meeting and shall respond in writing within thirty (30) days of the decision.

5.0 AMENDMENTS

Prior to the adoption of any substantial change, citizens shall be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments. A change to the Consolidated Plan shall be considered as a substantial amendment when the Consortium:

1. Makes a substantial change in its allocation priorities or a substantial change in the method of distribution of funds.

6.0 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN AMENDMENT

This Plan may be amended from time to time in order to enhance the process for encouraging constructive citizen participation in the Comprehensive Plan program, goals, objectives and projects. Prior to publication of this Plan and/or substantial amendment, the citizens of the Consortium, nonprofit organizations, public agencies and other interested parties shall be invited to comment on the Plan/Amendments by notification in a local newspaper of general circulation. This Plan will be made public in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

The members of the Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium are fully committed to the use of the Citizen Participation Plan.

THIS DOCUMENT WAS MADE A PART OF THE 2003-05 CONSOLIDATED PLAN FOR THE NORTHEAST TENNESSEE/VIRGINIA HOME CONSORTIUM AND WAS APPROVED BY THE KNOXVILLE REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AS THE OFFICIAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE