

# **CITY OF LEWISTON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR HUD FUNDED PROGRAMS**

## **I. Introduction**

In 1974, the City of Lewiston was designated as a Community Development Block Grant Entitlement City. These funds are used to fund administration and planning, social services, housing, commercial, and economic development programs, public facilities and infrastructure improvements, and acquisition, demolition and clearance of unsafe structures. Every year the City receives a formula based allocation of entitlement funding. Using CDBG funds to initially capitalize, and periodically recapitalize the programs; the City created housing and commercial revolving loan funds (RLF) used to rehabilitate properties, make general improvements and bring the properties to code. Projects are funded through low interest loans and grants with repaid money going back to the RLF. In 2001, Auburn and Lewiston formed a consortium with Auburn as the lead entity to receive HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds. This is an annual allocation from HUD and the funds are used for Homebuyer Assistance, Homeowner Rehabilitation, Rental Development and Tenant Security Deposits for homeless persons seeking permanent housing.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires recipients of these grant funds to prepare a formal plan as a condition of receiving those funds known as the Citizen Participation Plan. The following is the City of Lewiston's Citizen Participation Plan written in accordance with Section 104(a) (3) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, (42 U.S.C.5304(A) (3), and 24 CFR Part 91 Sections 91.105 and 91.200.

## **II. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)**

This Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) encourages participation from Lewiston residents in developing the 5-Year Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and developing the annual action plans and performance reports. The City especially encourages participation by residents of Census Tracts 201, 202, 203 and 204, which constitute the CDBG target area and which is defined as a low and moderate income area. The City also encourages participation by low and moderate income persons, the homeless, persons with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, public housing authorities, and organizations representing these groups.

To ensure that all constituents are provided with an opportunity to be included in this important planning and implementation process, the City appoints and convenes a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to assist in developing the specific goals and objectives of the Consolidated Plan, the Assessment of Fair Housing, and the annual Action Plan. Committee members are appointed by the Mayor to two year terms coinciding with the City's fiscal year (July 1- June 30). This seven-person Committee includes one Lewiston City Councilor, one representative from the Lewiston Planning Board, one voting City Administration appointed staff member; at

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least two citizens from the City's low/moderate income population in Census Tracts 201-204, with the remainder from the community at large. The Committee is staffed by the Economic and Community Development Department.

Each year in December, at the beginning of the budget process, a Request for Application will be published in a newspaper of general distribution, placed on the website and emailed to applicants who have applied for funding in the past. Qualified agencies and organizations are encouraged to apply for funding. City staff offers two mandatory trainings for all applicants and provides technical assistance to groups representing persons who are of low-moderate income; as well as assistance to ethnic based community organizations that request help in developing proposals for funding assistance under any programs covered by the annual planning process of HUD funded programs. On the Economic and Community Development page under plans and reports, the City has available the Annual Action Plans which details the local government's funding decisions for activities for the last five years. The CAC will read, review, interview and score applications for funding from qualified applicants. The CAC will provide citizen input into the activities that will be funded by these sources during the budget process to ensure that the goals and objectives of the 5 year Consolidated Plan are reflected in the annual Action Plan and reviewed for progress and evaluated for appropriateness in the City's CAPER. During the first meeting of each budget year the CAC, will appoint a Chairperson among its members to serve as a facilitator of the meetings, spokesperson for the committee, and a liaison to the Economic and Community Development Department staff. The CAC will meet during the budget process to review and evaluate requests for funding. The CAC has an important role in this process which includes review of applications for appropriateness and compliance with the goals and objectives of the current Consolidated Plan, and to make a funding recommendation to the Lewiston's City Council for projects to be included in the next annual Action Plan.

The meetings of the CDBG Citizens Advisory Committee are open to the public with meeting times and dates published in advance in a publication of general circulation and on the City's website. Each year the Lewiston City Council will take action on the acceptance of the Action Plan according to the City's Budget timeline, with final approval by City Council no later than May 7th. Final approval will take place at a City Council Meeting following a public hearing. Notice of the City Council meeting and public hearing on the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan will be provided in the local newspaper at least 10 days before the hearing is to take place. Citizens will have a full 30 days from the date of publication to express concerns and comments by email on the City's website by using the following link <http://www.ci.lewiston.me.us/Directory.aspx?DID=7>, or by regular mail addressed to the Director, Economic and Community Development Department, 27 Pine Street, Lewiston, ME 04240.

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During the year, outside of the regular application process, projects for funding in excess of \$10,000 that fall outside of the Program Guidelines, may be presented to the City Council for review and approval. A description of the project; the amount of the funding requested will follow the same public notification process as the regular application process. The action will take place as a public hearing using the same public process as described in the previous paragraph.

### **III. Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing Development:**

The Consolidated Plan is a planning document that outlines and guides CDBG and HOME program expenditures for a five-year period. At the same time, the City will prepare an Assessment of Fair Housing, a process to analyze the local fair housing landscape and set fair housing priorities and goals which will be identified in the Consolidated Plan. (the “Plans”) It is designed to be a collaborative process through which Lewiston establishes a unified vision for community development actions and strategies. It creates the opportunity for strategic planning and citizen participation to take place in a comprehensive context. The Consolidated Plan identifies specific courses of actions for the CDBG funding the City receives. It builds on local assets and responds to the needs of the community and sets forth program goals, specific objectives, annual goals, and benchmarks for measuring progress.

In the preparation of the Plans the City shall encourage the participation of local and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, and other organizations (including businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations) in the process of developing and implementing the Plans. The City shall encourage the participation of public and private organizations and shall consult with broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, agencies whose primary responsibilities include the management of flood prone areas, public land or water resources, and emergency management agencies in the process of developing the Plans. Working in conjunction with the Lewiston Housing Authority, the City shall encourage the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments (PHA) (including any resident advisory boards, resident councils, and resident management corporations) in the process of developing and implementing the AFH and the consolidated plan, along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located. The City shall make an effort to provide information to the PHA about the Plans activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the PHA can make this information available at the annual public hearing(s) required for the PHA Plan.

The City will explore alternative public involvement techniques and quantitative ways to

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measure efforts that encourage citizen participation in a shared vision for change in communities and neighborhoods, and the review of program performance; e.g., use of focus groups and the Internet.

During development of the Plans, the City of Lewiston shall:

A.) Provide to its citizens, public agencies and other interested parties data from HUD as well as any other supplemental information gathered from local sources; state the amount of assistance that the City expects to receive from CDBG and HOME funded programs; describe the range of activities that may be undertaken using these funds; include the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income; identify what steps will be taken to minimize displacement of persons and how displaced persons are to be assisted. This information will be made available during the public planning meetings.

B.) Publish the proposed Plans in a manner that affords citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and to submit comments. This information will be summarized and published in a local newspaper of general circulation in the Lewiston area. The summary will include a description of the contents and purposes of the proposed Plans and will be available for review at the following link <http://www.ci.lewiston.me.us/index.aspx?NID=131> on the Economic and Community Development page of the City's website. Email notification of the same will be provided to agencies that have historically applied for CDBG funds and other partner agencies and stakeholders, such as the Lewiston Housing Authority, Healthy Neighborhood Planning Council and Pine Tree Legal. Citizens and interested parties can utilize The "Notify Me" tool that allows citizens to follow the process by providing their email address. An email will be sent as the planning process commences.

C.) Copies will be available at the City of Lewiston's Economic and Community Development Department offices and at Lewiston Public Library, Lewiston, ME,

D.) Hold two public hearings on housing and community development needs before the proposed Plans are published for comment.

- 1.) The City shall give at least 10 days notice of the hearing to citizens by; publishing notices in newspapers of general circulation in Lewiston which includes information on the purpose, time and location of the hearing; and posting on the City's web site and Facebook page. The City shall hold the public hearing in City Hall, 27 Pine Street, Lewiston Maine at a time and date intended to maximize the participation of interested citizens.

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- 2.) Where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate, the City will provide a qualified interpreter at the public hearing to accommodate the needs of these residents.

E.) The City will accept public comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan for a period of not less than thirty (30) days from the date the public notice is placed in the newspaper of general circulation and on the Economic and Community Development Page of the website under “Plans and Resources” <http://www.ci.lewiston.me.us/index.aspx?NID=131> .

F.) In developing the final Plans the feedback received verbally, in writing, or online during the comment period and at the public hearing will be considered. A summary of the feedback received, including comments received but not incorporated into the final Plans will be included as an attachment to the document. For comments not incorporated, the attachment will explain the reasoning for the exclusion.

**IV. Amendments to the Consolidated Plan and the Assessment of Fair Housing**

There are two types of amendments to the Plans, substantial and minor amendments. The following subsections identify what constitutes an amendment and the threshold for determining the type of amendment, including the public notification and approval process.

**A. Substantial Amendment:**

Any one of the actions listed below in Section IV (A) (a-c) shall constitute a substantial amendment to the Plans:

- a) A change in the City's allocation priorities or change in the method of distribution of funds covered by the Plans;
- b) Implementation of an activity using funds from any program covered by the Plans (including program income) not previously described in the action plan; or,
- c) A change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of a program funded by HUD programs as listed in the Action Plan section of the adopted Plans.

**Public Hearing Requirements for a Substantial Amendment:**

To provide citizens with an opportunity to comment on a substantial amendment, public notice will be published at least 10 days before a public hearing. The public notice will include a summary of the proposed change and its potential effect on households of low and moderate income persons. The summary must be published in a newspaper of general circulation and placed on the Economic and Community Development Department Page on the

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City's website under Plans and Resources. Included in the notice will be the opportunity for interested citizens to comment for a period of not less than thirty (30) days prior to implementing the amendment. The published summary must state that written comments must be submitted to the City by a specified date.

Any comments or views of citizens and units of general local government received online, in writing or orally during the comment period or at public hearings must be considered in adopting a substantial amendment to the Plans. The City shall attach a summary of these comments or views to the substantial amendment as finally approved.

**B. Minor Amendment:**

A minor amendment is defined as a change that does not exceed 10% of the amount of the CDBG Program budget (which includes the annual allocation, reprogrammed funds, and program income) for the year in which the amendment is being considered.

**Public Hearing Requirements for a Minor Amendment:**

There are no public hearing requirements for a minor amendment.

**V. Performance Reports Associated With the Consolidated Plan**

When preparing performance reports associated with the Consolidated Plan, the City shall:

A.) Provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports associated with the Consolidated Plan. Reasonable notice must include a summary of what has been accomplished and its effect on households of low and moderate income. The summary must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in Lewiston and notify interested citizens and groups that they have the opportunity to provide comments for a period of not less than fifteen (15) days before the performance report is submitted to HUD. The published summary must indicate that written comments must be submitted by a specified date to the City.

B.) Consider any comments or views of citizens received online, in writing or orally in preparing the performance report. The City shall attach a summary of these comments or views to the performance report.

**VI. Availability of the Plans and Related Documents to the Public**

A.) The City shall make available to the public free of charge and upon request the final Consolidated Plan as adopted, any substantial amendments, and any associated performance

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reports. Upon request, the City will make these documents available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities.

B.) Comments may be made online at [www.ci.lewiston.me.us/Directory.aspx?DID=7](http://www.ci.lewiston.me.us/Directory.aspx?DID=7) , or in writing, or verbally to the Director, Economic and Community Development Department, City Hall, 27 Pine Street, Lewiston, Maine 04240. All comments submitted to the Economic and Community Development Department will be filed. Prior to filing, appropriate responses will be submitted by the Economic and Community Development Director or his/her designee.

**VII. Complaints Associated with the Consolidated Plan and Related Documents**

The City will provide a substantive written response to every written citizen complaint related to the Consolidated Plan, substantive amendments, and associated performance reports within fifteen (15) working days.

**VIII. Accessibility to Those with Disabilities or Language Barriers**

The City of Lewiston does not discriminate against or exclude individuals from its municipal facilities and/or in the delivery of its programs, activities, and services based on an individual's ethnic origin, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, or inability to speak English.

With proper notice, the City will endeavor to accommodate the needs of those unable to participate in the process as designed. This policy includes but is not limited to providing translation services.

For more information about this policy, contact or call Compliance Officer at 207-513-3000 (TTY) 207-513-3007.

**IX. Effective Date-**

This amendment to the February 6, 2012 Citizen Participation Plan was approved by the Lewiston City Council on November 21, 2017. It will be in effect until amended.