

Citizen Participation Plan

A. Introduction

Citizen Participation is a critical component during the update of the 5-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (collectively referred to as the Plans) whereby residents, property owners and public/private agencies located in the City of Portage and/or serving Portage residents, are provided the opportunity to actively participate in the preparation of the Plan. The City of Portage encourages active citizen participation in conjunction with preparation of the Plans and the Community Development Block Grant Program. Public participation is encouraged through timely public notices, public hearings and publication of information related to the Plans and proposed Community Development Block Grant activities.

B. Work Plan

A work plan has been developed that engages the public at key stages during the 5-year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan update process. Preparation of the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) is completed within 90 days following the end of each program year (which ends on June 30th). A citizen participation plan includes a public awareness campaign that informs the public they are welcome to participate in the Plan Update process. A publicized timeline and clearly established milestones help ensure transparency (refer to Table 1). As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic all public meetings are held virtually until further notice. The public can participate remotely. If special accommodations are necessary for participation of a physically disabled (when meetings resume at Portage City Hall) or non-English speaking person in the planning process, the city will provide the appropriate accommodations.

Table 1

2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan Update Schedule										
Event	Month									
	Sept '20	Oct '20	Nov '20	Dec '20	Jan '21	Feb '21	Mar '21	Apr '21	May '21	July '21
Citizen participation plan										
Data collection										
Draft of community needs assessment										
Public notice & PORTAGER article regarding public hearing										
Public hearing on community needs assessment (2/4/21)										
Draft of Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan										
Provide draft of Plans to Human Services Board										
30-day public comment period and public hearing (4/1/21)										
City Council approval of Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan (5/11/21)										
Submit Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plans to HUD										
Begin new grant year										

C. Citizen/Agency Engagement Efforts

The following summarizes efforts to encourage public participation in order to ensure the most complete and coordinated plan update possible:

1. A minimum of two public hearings will be held prior to the submission of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan to HUD:
 - The first virtual public hearing will be held in February and allow for comment on community development needs and housing priorities and market analysis within the City of Portage.
 - The second virtual public hearing will be held in April on the draft Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan following a 30-day public comment period.
2. Articles will be published in the Portager, a monthly newsletter published by the City of Portage, which is distributed to every active residential and business address in the City of Portage, prior to the each public hearing.
3. Public notices will placed in the Kalamazoo Gazette prior to the public hearings.
4. A webpage dedicated to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan update will be added to the city's website.
5. Press releases will be issued and information will be posted on the City of Portage webpage.
6. Organized neighborhood watch groups will be notified.
7. Local public/private human service agencies located in Portage or that serve Portage residents will be notified and/or consulted during the Plan update process. Information concerning the City of Portage Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan can then also be disseminated to the people served by these agencies.
8. Local units of government will be notified and/or consulted, as needed and appropriate.
9. Opportunities to comment on the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan update at a public meeting will be provided monthly during the Human Services Board meeting.

HUD requires that each community broaden public participation by reaching out to low-moderate income persons; low and moderate income neighborhoods where CDBG funds are proposed for use; minorities; non-English speaking persons; persons with disabilities; public housing residents and local/regional institutions. The efforts summarized above achieve the HUD objective and will be utilized, as appropriate, during the public hearing process involving the 5-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Evaluation Report.

D. Access to Information and Records, Availability to Public

Notice of availability of the draft Consolidated and Annual Action Plans will be published utilizing several methods listed in paragraph C above and distributed in various locations throughout the city including the Community Development Department, Portage Senior Center, Portage Community Center, Portage District Library, and posted to the city website. Citizens are encouraged to obtain and read the proposed Plans and submit comments on the Plans to the Community Development Department of the City of Portage. Copies of the plan will also be available in electronic format. Technical assistance will be provided to any group requesting assistance in submitting information, or a proposal for consideration from the CDBG Program, if the proposal will meet the National Objective criteria of benefiting low/moderate income persons within the City of Portage and is an eligible use of funds. Public hearings include a brief presentation of the purpose of the hearing, amount of projected funds available, proposed use of funds (if applicable), a review of accomplishments of the CDBG

Program and response to any questions that arise. All citizen comments will be recorded, and if an answer is necessary, a timely response to all requests (within 15 days) will be sent to the inquiring individual, group or agency.

E. Public Comments

All comments made in person or in writing relating to the Consolidated Plan or Community Development Block Grant program, which are received prior to the deadline for submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, will be officially incorporated into such documents and a response will be given to the comment within the text of the plan or report.

F. Amendments to Consolidated Plan

Prior to the submission of any substantial change in the proposed use of funds, citizens will be given notice of and an opportunity to comment on a proposed amendment to the Annual Action Plan. A substantial change involves new activities not contained in an approved plan or a change in expenditures that exceed 10% of the overall program year budget. A 30 day comment period, concluding with a public hearing will be provided to accept comments. The availability of the draft plan amendment will be noticed in the newspaper at least 30 days prior to the hearing. Subsequent to the hearing, the amended Annual Action Plan is submitted to HUD.

G. Anti-Displacement

Persons are not expected to be permanently displaced as part of the CDBG Program. Further, preference will be given to project where no permanent or temporary tenant relocation or involuntary homeowner relocation will be necessary. Any project where temporary relocation may become necessary will be at the expense of the property owner.

H. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be provided to any group that requests it in order to develop proposals for funding consideration during development of the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, or to any group requesting information on the Consolidated Plan and/or Consolidated Plan development process.

I. Complaints or Grievances

The Community Development Director or his/her designee will provide a timely written answer to written complaints or grievances within 15 working days.