

**COOK COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
GRANT PROGRAM
(CDBG)**



**Program Year 2009
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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Prepared by Cook County Department of Planning and Development
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I. OPERATING PRINCIPALS OF THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS

- A. Under the provisions of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended in 1990, Cook County is eligible to receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds if certain statutory requirements are met. Among these requirements is a provision requiring a County to have a combined population in excess of 200,000 persons excluding communities of 50,000 persons or more. Cook County meets the population requirements only after suburban municipalities elect to include their population in the urban county total.
- B. The Citizen Participation Plan for the Cook County Community Development Block Grant Program recognizes the role of suburban municipalities in the urban county qualifications process. It is appropriate that suburban municipalities play an important role in the Cook County Community Development Block Grant Citizen Participation Process.

II. FRAMEWORK FOR THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS

- A. Cook County's Citizen Participation Plan provides a framework for public participation.
- B. A municipality electing to apply for Community Development Block Grant funds must provide citizens with an adequate opportunity to participate in an advisory role in planning, implementing, and assessing that municipality's Community Development Block Grant Program. A participation process shall:
 - 1. Be conducted in an open manner, with freedom of access for all interested parties;
 - 2. Involve low and moderate-income households, civic organizations, the elderly, the handicapped, and residents of neighborhoods in which Community Development funded activities are proposed or on-going;
 - 3. Provide information in an adequate and timely manner to these citizens regarding access to local meetings and records related to the subrecipient's proposed use of CDBG funds; and be continual throughout the Community Development process, including the planning, application and implementation stages.
 - 4. Allow for technical assistance to representatives of low and moderate income people who ask for such assistance when forming proposals for CDBG activities. The municipalities shall determine the type and level of technical assistance.
- C. Public hearings and meetings, neighborhood and community meetings, and town meetings are the most effective methods of generating citizen participation. In particular, public hearings allow municipalities to gather citizens' views, address proposals for funding, and respond to inquiries at all stages of the program, including the assessment of needs, proposed grant uses, and program performance reviews.

Therefore, each municipality applying for Community Development Block Grant funds must develop its application through a series of community and neighborhood meetings. At least one (1) formal public hearing is required on a community-wide basis seeking input from residents on community needs. At least one (1) other public hearing is then required to present the municipality's Community Development Plan and its proposed CDBG application to local residents. Therefore, it is required that

municipalities conduct at least two public hearings in compliance with the Citizen Participation Process as outlined in this Handbook.

- D. Adequate notice of the hearings is required (see Section III.B). All meetings must be held at times and locations convenient to people actually or potentially affected by the program, with accommodations for the handicapped. In the event that a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be expected to participate in a public hearing, the municipality must identify how the needs of non-English speaking residents will be met.
- E. Municipalities are required to make timely written responses, within 15 working days if feasible, to address written complaints and grievances from citizens.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF A CDBG APPLICATION

A. The Cook County Community Development Block Grant Program fiscal year begins October 1st. Applications for Program Year 2009 Community Development funds requested by municipal and non-municipal applicants must be submitted to the Cook County Department of Planning and Development no later than February 20, 2009.

B. Notification to the Public:

1. The public must be notified as to the total amount of Community Development Block Grant funds available through the Cook County Community Development Block Grant Program, the project categories for which the applications may be submitted, and the stated objectives of the Cook County program.
2. The general public shall be notified by the governing body of each municipality that conducts the public meeting(s) and public hearing(s) during the development of the Community Development Block Grant application.
3. **The public shall be notified of each formal and informal hearing at least ten (10) days prior to the date of each hearing.** The public notice shall be made through publication in the non-legal section of the community newspaper(s), posting of notices in public places such as municipal buildings and schools, and mailings to civic organizations and neighborhood groups.
4. During the public hearings, the municipality must provide its citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the citizen participation plan and on any substantial changes to the citizen participation plan. **Substantial changes include a change in type, location or scope of the original plan that will increase the requested amount or approved amount by more than 50%. All substantial changes require a formal public hearing pursuant to III C.**

C. Preparation of the Application:

1. Any non-municipal entity (i.e., non-profits requesting capital improvements/ facilities) must apply through the municipality in which it proposes to undertake an eligible activity.
2. The governing body of each municipality shall prepare the following:

- a. Identification of basic community development and housing needs and priorities in each designated neighborhood and/or commercial development area;
 - b. Completion of the Community Development Plan; and,
 - c. The annual community development program which shall include requests for Community Development Block Grant funds to address those needs.
3. The municipality will be responsible for insuring that the standards of citizen participation set forth in this plan, particularly regarding the involvement of low and moderate income households, civic organizations, the elderly, the handicapped, and residents of the neighborhoods in which Community Development funded activities are proposed or ongoing, are adhered to during the development of the application.

D. Availability of Subrecipient Applications for Public Inspection:

1. During the preparation of the application, any neighborhood group, civic organization, or individual shall have the opportunity to review, consistent with the appropriate State and local laws regarding personal privacy and obligations of confidentiality, all program documents and records during the development of the application.
2. Prior to submission of the applications for Community Development Block Grant funding, the governing body of each applicant's municipality shall make available for public inspection a copy of the final application that will be submitted to Cook County. Availability of the application at the required formal public hearing should be announced to those in attendance.
3. Applicants must maintain a copy of the proposed application in their permanent CDBG files as part of the public record. Any organization or individual wishing to file an objection to the application must do so by **April 28, 2009** by notifying the municipality and Cook County, in writing, of specific objections. The municipality must respond to any complaint within fifteen (15) days to both Cook County and the individual or organization making the complaint. Those organizations or individuals with objections must direct them in writing to the municipality and Cook County at the following address:

Cook County Bureau of Administration
Department of Planning and Development
69 West Washington Street, Suite 2900
Chicago, IL. 60602-3007.
ATTN: Grants Manager

IV. PROGRAM AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

- A. Subrecipients awarded CDBG funds must submit an Annual Performance Report to Cook County reflecting all CDBG actions between October 1 and September 30 of the preceding program year by **August 31, 2009**.
- B. The municipality shall make available to the public a copy of its annual Subrecipient Performance Report. The report is a required CDBG document and is part of the public record.

- C. The municipality shall conduct a performance hearing for each program year of the Community Development Block Grant Program or until all open projects are completed. **The performance hearings shall be scheduled during the month of November.** The performance hearings shall include discussion of the status of each project not completed, estimated completion dates for these projects, and the financial status of these open projects. The municipality is responsible for submitting a certified copy of the public notice as well as minutes of this performance hearing to Cook County by **December 31, 2009.**

V. REQUESTS FOR PROJECT CHANGE

The County will review a preliminary request for eligibility, feasibility, and principal benefit. The County will then notify the subrecipient if the request for a project change is acceptable. Upon positive notification by the County, the subrecipient then must submit a formal request for a project change.

- A. The municipality will be responsible for insuring that citizens have had an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes.
- B. A certified copy of the public notice is required indicating at least a ten (10) day comment period, and shall be made through publication in the **non-legal section** of community newspaper(s), posting of notices in public places, (such as municipal buildings and schools), and mailings to civic organizations and neighborhood groups.
- C. If the information is to change the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another, the subrecipient must make the request available for a 30-day public comment period before final approval.

VI. COOK COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Prior to the submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for its annual grant, Cook County must:
 - 1. Develop a proposed statement of community development objectives Cook County proposes to pursue; and
 - 2. Develop a list of community development activities that Cook County proposes to carry out with anticipated CDBG funds.
- B. Cook County has a Community Development Advisory Council, (CDAC) which is appointed by the President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners with the consent of the Board of Commissioners. The CDAC represents all areas of the County with the majority of the members representing low- and moderate-income interests. The representatives are mayors, private sector individuals, and non-profit representatives.
- C. Cook County with the Community Development Advisory Council, must meet the following citizen participation requirements prior to submission to HUD:
 - 1. Furnish citizens with information concerning the amount of CDBG funds expected to be available (including the annual grant and program income) for community development

and housing activities, and the range of activities that may be undertaken with those funds.

2. Hold three (3) regional public hearings which will provide information and requirements for Community Development funds and also obtain the views of citizens on Cook County's housing and community development needs.
 3. Hold one public hearing at which the non-municipal subrecipients must present their proposals for Community Development funding to the public and the Community Development Advisory Council.
 4. Hold one public hearing to present the recommended projects selected for funding to the public and the Community Development Advisory Council.
 5. Request final recommendations for funding from the Cook County Community Development Advisory Council.
 6. Submit recommendations to the Cook County Board of Commissioners for approval. Approval must be given before results are submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 7. Cook County will publish community-wide its proposed statement of community development objectives and projected use of funds to afford affected citizens an opportunity to examine the statement's contents and to provide comments on the proposed statement.
- D. Once Cook County has completed the citizen participation requirements it must consider any such comments and views received and if appropriate, modify the proposed statement. A final statement will be prepared stating the community development objectives and projected use of funds. Cook County will make the final statement available to the public. The Final Annual Action Plan must be submitted to HUD each year by mid-August. The public is invited to inspect objectives and use of funds under the Plan by contacting, Grants Manager, Cook County Department of Planning and Development, 69 West Washington Street, Suite 2900, Chicago, IL. 60602-3007.
- E. Cook County will compile the performance reports of all subrecipients and assemble one complete Draft Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. This report will be available for public viewing and comment. Contact the Cook County Department of Planning and Development, 69 West Washington Street, Suite 2900, Chicago, IL. 60602-3007 to request inspection of performance reports.
- F. Cook County will hold a Performance Hearing during the month of December to review progress and the performance of program-wide activities. At this Performance Hearing, non-municipal subrecipients must present an analysis of the status of each project not completed, estimated completion dates for these projects, and the financial status of these open projects.