

**City of Scranton, Pennsylvania
CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**Office of Economic and Community
Development**

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FOR THE

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Rules and Regulations, the City of Scranton, Pennsylvania (hereinafter "City") complies with regulation [24 CFR 91.105](#), Citizen Participation Plan for local governments. The City has adopted a citizen's participation plan on _____, Resolution No. _____ of 2021 that sets forth the County's policies and procedures for citizen participation.

The City's Participation Plan is designed to ensure that the public interest is protected through provision of adequate opportunity for citizens participation in implementing and carrying out activities under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships Programs (HOME), Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFH), and other federally funded formula grant programs, as described in regulations governing submission of the Consolidated Plan.

The documents and reports subject to this Citizen Participation Plan are:

- ✓ The 5-year Consolidated Plan
- ✓ The Annual Action Plan (as well as Substantial and Minor Amendments to the Annual Action Plan)
- ✓ The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)
- ✓ The Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFH), and/or the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) plans

This plan is intended to establish minimum requirements to ensure citizen involvement in the planning of activities under the afore-mentioned programs. The plan in no way restricts the City from providing additional information and assistance when deemed to be in the best interest of the citizens of the City's plan for citizen's participation shall:

- Provide for and encourage the involvement of interested citizens and organizations, particularly persons of low and moderate income who are residents of slum and blighted areas, or low- and moderate-income neighborhoods as identified by each jurisdiction within the County, and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used.
- Provide for full public access to program information and affirmative efforts to make adequate information available to citizens, the City also is expected to take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation of all its citizens, including minorities and non-English-speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. The City shall encourage the participation of local and regional institutions and other organizations (including businesses, developers, and community and faith-based organizations) in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and the AFH. The City shall also explore alternative public involvement techniques and quantitative ways to 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 use of the Internet, web-based surveys, etc.

- Provide reasonable translation services for any public meeting or public hearing, if the request for such services is requested five business days in advance of the meeting. In addition, all meetings will be conducted in areas that are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- For persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), the City utilizes contracted translation services.
- Provide for and encourage the participation of local and regional institutions, including, but not limited to the homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) 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 Consolidated Plan.
- When preparing the Consolidated Plan and describing the City's homeless strategy and the resources available to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) and persons at risk of homelessness, the County will consult with representatives from local Continuum of Care; public and private agencies that address housing, health, social service, victim services, employment, or education needs of low-income individuals and families; homeless individuals and families, including homeless veterans; youth; and/or other persons with special needs; publicly funded institutions and systems of care that may discharge persons into homelessness (such as health-care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); and business and civic leaders.
- The City will consult with the Continuums of Care in determining how to allocate its ESG grant for eligible activities; in developing the performance standards for, and evaluating the outcomes of, projects and activities assisted by ESG funds; and in developing funding, policies, and procedures for the operation and administration of the Homeless Management and Information System (HMIS).
- When preparing the portion of the Consolidated Plan concerning lead-based paint hazards, the City shall consult with State or local health and child welfare agencies and examine existing data related to lead-based paint hazards and poisonings, including health department data on the addresses of housing units in which children have been identified as lead poisoned.
- Provide for and encourage, in conjunction with consultation with the Scranton Housing Authority (hereinafter "SHA"), the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments, in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, or AFH along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located. The City shall provide information to the SHA about Consolidated Plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the Public Housing Agency(s) can make this information available at the annual public hearing(s) required for the PHA Plan(s).

- Provide information to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties that includes
 - the amount of assistance the City expects to receive, including specific grant funds,
 - the amount of available unspent prior year's funds, and
 - the estimated amount of expected program income.
- Provide for consultations that shall include 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 consolidated plan.
- Provide for and encourage citizens' submission of views, proposals, input and/or complaints regarding the development and performance of the consolidated plan.
In order to stimulate and encourage citizens participation in the City's Consolidated Plan, the City shall, adhere to the requirements contained herein.

1. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. The City shall provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local public meetings relating to the City's proposed and actual use of funds under the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, and the development of an AFH by holding at least two public hearings per year to provide information to citizens, obtain their views and to respond to proposals and questions. Public Hearings will be conducted at a minimum of two different stages in the program year.
At a minimum:
 - i. One public hearing shall be conducted to address the County's housing and community development needs and the development of proposed activities to be carried out under the Community Development Program, and proposed strategies and actions for affirmatively furthering fair housing, and
 - ii. In the event of a Substantial Amendment to the Annual Action Plan, one public meeting shall be conducted to provide citizens with reasonable notice of, and opportunity to comment and provide input on proposed changes in use of funds.
 - iii. In the event of an application for Section 108 funds, at least one public meeting shall be conducted to provide citizens with reasonable notice of and opportunity to comment and provide input on the proposed application and use of funds. Said meeting may, at the County's option, be carried out in conjunction with a public hearing for development of the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, or in conjunction with an amendment to these Plans.
 - iv. One public hearing shall be conducted to review the County's Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) in carrying out activities funded through the CDBG, HOME, ESG, the Revolving Loan Fund and Section 108.
- b. Public hearings will be located at the City of Scranton Municipal Building (City Hall), 340 North Washington Avenue, Scranton Pennsylvania, unless otherwise provided through Notice. The City may, at its option, schedule additional meetings at various accessible locations throughout the City to encourage citizen participation. All Public Hearings shall be conducted at times convenient to the general public.
- c. Should it become apparent that non-English speaking residents could be expected to participate in public hearings, adequate efforts will be made by the City utilizing necessary services, to provide information to these individuals in an understandable

form. Persons requiring specific accommodations for translation services should contact the City of Scranton's Office of Economic and Community Development through the contact person listed at the end of this document within five business days prior to the public hearing.

- d. All public hearings will be held in accessible locations, however, should it become apparent that residents with disabilities (such as, but not limited to visual or hearing impairments) could be expected to participate in public hearings, adequate efforts will be made by the City, utilizing necessary and available services, to provide accommodations for these residents (such as, but not limited to providing oral, Braille, electronic, or large print copies). Persons requiring specific accommodations for a disability should contact the City of Scranton's Office of Economic and Community Development through the contact person listed at the end of this document within five business days prior to the public hearing.
- e. Notice of public hearings will be published in newspapers of general circulation in accordance with Section 3 (Publication of Notices) of this Plan, and on the City's website.

2. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RECORDS

- a. The City will provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the City's proposed and actual use of funds under these programs.
 - i. Upon written request, individuals and groups will be provided with a copy of the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER), AFH, Section 108 applications, and other documents related to program activities.
 - (1) Notice of availability of said documents shall be published in newspapers of general circulation within the City, along with information as to how they may obtain free copies of the documents.
 - (2) Said documents will also be available for inspection at Scranton Municipal Building (City Hall), 340 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, Pennsylvania, via appointment scheduled through the contact person listed at the end of this document
 - (3) Where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to benefit from translation services for these consolidated planning documents, the City will provide translation services. Translation services may be in the form of oral or written accommodations provided by the contact person listed at the end of this document.

3. PUBLICATION OF NOTICES

All notices will provide a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan (and/or amendments to), Annual Action Plan (and/or amendments to), CAPER, or AFH and describe the contents and purpose of the particular plan. The notice will also be posted on the City's home page (www.scrantonpa.gov) as well as the website(s) listed below. The public notice will state that free copies of the particular Plan will be available for review on the City's website and at the following locations for thirty days:

Lackawanna County Library System
website: <https://lclshome.org/>

The City will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally, at any of the public hearings, or during public review, and will address those comments in the preparation of the final Consolidated Plan (and/or its amendments), Annual Action Plan (and/or its amendments), CAPER, or AFH. The City will include any written or oral comments in the final Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, or AFH submitted to HUD. The City will also make copies of the Final Plan available to the general public, at no cost on the City's website (www.scrantonpa.gov). Hard copies will also be available upon request.

- a. Notices of public meetings shall be published in newspapers of general circulation within the City not less than 7 days prior to the public hearing and posted on the County's web page. The advertisement shall state the time, date, location and purpose of the hearing. The notice shall also include other pertinent information relative to the hearing, such as accessibility for disabled persons, etc.
- b. The City may, at its option, utilize other forms of promoting citizen participation in the community development process, including but not limited to public service announcements, mailings, and posting to the City's web page and social media accounts.
- c. A notice of availability of the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan will be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the City, in accordance with Section 5 (Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan) of this Plan.
- d. Notice of the availability of the CAPER will be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the City, in accordance with Section 6 (Consolidated Annual Performance Report) of this Plan.
- e. Notice of a substantial amendment to the City's Annual Action Plan will be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the City and the City's website, along with notice of availability of a Amendment, in accordance with Section 7 (Amendment to Annual Action Plan) of this Plan.
- f. Notice of a minor amendment will be published on the City's website, allowing for a five (5) day public comment period; a Memo will be drafted and read into the minutes as correspondence at the City's weekly Council Meetings explaining the scope and reason for the minor amendment.
- g. A summary of proposed Section 108 application/activities shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the County, along with notice of availability of the Application, in accordance with Section 8 (Section 108) of this Plan.

4. COMMENTS/COMPLAINTS

- a. The City shall respond with a timely written answer to written comments, requests, proposals, complaints and grievances, within 15 working days from receipt, when practicable. Whenever practical, responses will be made prior to formal local approval of any application under question. Said citizen comments will be taken into consideration throughout the planning/performance/evaluation and carry out process of the Five Year Consolidated Plan. The City will include any written or oral comments in the final Consolidated Plan (and/or its amendments), Annual Action Plan (and/or its amendments), or AFH submitted to HUD.

Citizens with complaints (or unable to submit comments orally at a Public Hearing) related to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, amendments, CAPER, or the AFH must submit the complaint in writing to the contact person listed at the end of this document.

If the complaint is given orally, the person initiating the complaint must schedule a meeting with the contact person at the end of this document.

5. CONSOLIDATED PLAN/ANNUAL ACTION PLAN/AFH:
 - a. The County will hold at least one public hearing during the Consolidated/Annual Action Planning or AFH process to:
 - i. obtain the views of citizens on the City's community development and housing needs;
 - ii. provide information to citizens on the amount of available funding and the range of community development and housing activities that may be undertaken;
 - iii. obtain views and comments on activities for inclusion in the development of the Annual Action Plan and respond to citizens questions as they relate to the Consolidated Plan.
 - b. The City shall publish a notice of availability of Consolidated Plan, so as to afford affected citizens an opportunity to comment.
 - i. Said notice shall include the anticipated submission date of the Plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 - ii. Said notice will provide clarification as to where and how the Plan may be obtained and the procedure for submission of citizens' comments or questions.
 - iii. Said Notice shall be published not less than 30 days prior to submission of the Plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 - c. The City shall consider citizen comments on the Consolidated Plan prior to submission of the formal document to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City will include any written or oral comments in the final Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, or AFH submitted to HUD.
 - d. The City's consolidated planning documents shall be approved through legislation prior to submission by HUD.
 - e. The City's consolidated plan shall be submitted to HUD in accordance with any and all federal regulations.
 - i. The City of Scranton's program year begins on January 1 and concludes on December 31.
6. CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER):
 - a. A public hearing shall be held to review the City's performance in carrying out activities under the Community Development Program. Said public hearing shall cover the County's performance for activities funded through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), HOME Investments Partnerships Program (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grants Program (ESG), the Revolving Loan Fund, and Section 108.
 - b. Notice of the completion of the CAPER shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation, in accordance with Section 3 (Publication of Notices) of this Plan. Said notice shall:
 - i. be published not less than 15 days prior to submission of the Report to HUD;
 - ii. inform the public of the date, time and purpose of the public meeting;
 - iii. inform the public when the Report will be available for review and where and how it may be obtained;
 - iv. include the date of submission of the Report to the Department of Housing and

- v. Urban Development; and
- v. clarify the process for submitting comments regarding the plan.
- c. Upon completion of HUD's review of the CAPER, written comments regarding the content will be provided to the City. The City will respond in writing to any questions or concerns. HUD will review the City's response and then issue its final written Assessment of the City's Performance.
- d. A Notice of Availability of the CAPER will be posted on the City's web page in accordance with Section 3 (Publication of Notices) of this Plan.

7. AMENDMENTS TO ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The City must amend any Annual Action Plan whenever it decides:

- 1) not to carry out an activity described in any Action Plan;
- 2) to carry out an activity not previously described; or,
- 3) to change the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another; or
- 4) to substantially change the purpose, scope, location, beneficiaries, or funding of an activity.

Substantial Amendments

With respect to the fourth reason, the following criteria shall be employed by the City to determine when it is necessary for the City to substantially amend any Action Plan for the City's Consolidated Plan.

- a. "Substantial change in purpose" shall mean that the City determines that the original purpose of a proposed activity shall either not be accomplished or shall be accomplished to only a minimal degree or shall mean that a new purpose shall be the primary purpose of such activity. A change in purpose would be a reclassification from one clearly identified project to another.
- b. "Substantial change in scope" shall mean that the City determines that the original scope of a proposed activity shall either not be accomplished or shall be accomplished to only a minimal degree or shall mean that a new scope shall be the primary scope of such activity, such as a change from a public facility project to a public services project.
- c. "Substantial change in location" shall mean that the City determines that the location in which a proposed activity is to be carried out shall be changed so that the activity shall not be carried out at all or to any significant degree in the originally proposed location or shall mean that a new location shall be the primary location for undertaking such activity.
- d. "Substantial change in beneficiaries" shall mean that the City determines that the group or groups of individuals that an activity was intended to benefit or was believed would benefit, shall either not benefit or shall only benefit to a minimal degree or shall mean that another group of individuals shall be the primary beneficiaries of such activity.
- e. "Substantial change in funding" shall mean when a line item/project cost changes more than 25% of the original proposed funding amount unless it is due to a cost overrun or underrun.

All other changes to the Consolidated Plan documents that do not meet the Substantial Amendment criteria defined above will be reviewed and approved by City staff and will not be documented in accordance with Section 3 (Public Notices).

The City shall announce the amendment through Public Notice and introduction of an Ordinance by City Council. After the second reading, the legislation will be tabled for thirty (30) days to allow for public comment. Notice to the public of proposed program amendments shall be shared with through the publication of a Notice as specified in Section 3. The City shall also notify the agency responsible for the activity which may be directly affected by a proposed program amendment. Notice to persons with disabilities shall be provided in a usable form, upon request.

At least 30 days shall be allowed for citizen comments on any proposed Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan substantial amendments. The 30-day comment period shall begin on the date public announcement is made of the proposed substantial amendment. No amendment shall be implemented by the City until after the 30-day citizen comment period.

The City shall prepare a summary of any citizen comments not adopted in response to any proposed Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan amendment, and the reasons that those views were not adopted. Such summary shall be attached to the amended Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.

8. SECTION 108

- a. The City will hold at least one public hearing during the Section 108 Application Process to:
 - i. obtain the views of citizens on the City's community development and housing needs;
 - ii. provide information to citizens on the amount of available funding and the process for obtaining/receiving/utilizing Section 108 funding, along with the range of community development and housing activities that may be undertaken;
 - iii. obtain views and comments on activities for inclusion in the 108 application and respond to citizens questions.
- b. The City shall publish a summary of the proposed Section 108 Application/Activities, so as to afford affected citizens an opportunity to comment.
 - i. Said notice shall include the scheduled date for approval of the Application by City Council, and the anticipated submission date to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 - ii. Said notice will provide clarification as to where and how the Plan may be obtained and the procedure for submission of citizens' comments or questions.
 - iii. Said Notice shall be published not less than 30 days prior to adoption by the City Council.
- c. The County shall consider citizen comments on the Application/activities prior to submission of the formal document to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

9. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- a. The City shall provide technical assistance to groups and representatives of

persons of low, very low and moderate income that request such assistance in commenting on the AFH and in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan. Technical assistance for proposal development cannot occur during an active RFP process. The level of technical assistance shall be at the discretion of the City's Office of Economic and Community Development. To request technical assistance groups or individuals are encouraged to contact the person listed at the end of this document.

10. EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS

- a. At any time, if the City makes an Emergency Declaration as a result of a situation or condition that has arisen through no fault of the City, immediate action or remediation may be taken. A public Notice will be published in the local newspaper of general circulation providing an opportunity for public comment for a period of ten (10) calendar days.
- b. At any time, if a Declaration of Emergency has been ordered by the Governor of Pennsylvania or President of the United States wherein public access at the Municipal Building (City Hall), public hearings, or in-person City Council meetings are unable to take place, the City will make best effort attempts to provide information via the City website and allow for virtual public hearings and Council meetings.

11. REVISIONS TO THE CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION PLAN

- a. Revisions, amendments, and changes may be made to the Citizen's Participation Plan at any time. Citizen's will be afforded an opportunity to comment on any changes for a period of ten (10) calendar days before legislation is passed. A Notice will be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation informing the public of the opportunity to review the Citizen's Participation Plan revisions, amendments, and changes.

Contact Person for this Plan:
Office of the Mayor
311@scrantonpa.gov