

# **COSHOCTON COUNTY CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT HOME AND FORMULA**

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION**

The Coshocton County Commissioners have designed this Citizen Participation Plan to provide for and encourage citizen participation in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)/HOME & Formula programs. This Plan is an essential element of the County's community development process and has been developed to comply with the regulations and requirements of the CDBG/HOME and Formula program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The primary goal of this Citizen Participation Plan is to provide all citizens adequate opportunity to participate in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the CDBG/HOME and Formula programs. The Plan sets forth policies and procedures for citizen participation, which are designed to maximize the opportunity for citizen participation in the process, with special emphasis on encouraging participation by persons of low and moderate incomes and residents of areas where community development funds are utilized.

The Coshocton County Commissioners will undertake efforts to provide for citizen participation during the community development process and throughout the planning, implementation and assessment of all CDBG/HOME and Formula programs undertaken by the County. The Coshocton County Commissioners will make reasonable effort to involve citizens in the development, implementation and assessment of community development programs including, but not limited to, the following phases:

- identification and assessment of housing and community development needs; determination of CDBG project(s) and documentation; and the development of CDBG/HOME and Formula programs applications;
- changes and/or amendments to approved CDBG/HOME and Formula projects; and,
- assessment of CDBG/HOME and Formula programs performance.

All phases of the process will be conducted by local officials in an open manner. Citizens are encouraged to participate at all levels and will be given access to program information during each phase of the programs as outlined herein.

## **SECTION 2: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The Coshocton County Commissioners shall provide technical assistance to individual citizens and citizen groups, with particular attention to those groups representative of persons of low or moderate income, as may be required to adequately provide for citizen participation in the planning, implementation and assessment of CDBG/HOME and Formula programs.

Such technical assistance is intended to further meaningful citizen participation in the community development decision making process. Technical assistance will also be utilized to foster public understanding of CDBG/HOME and Formula program requirements.

Technical assistance will be provided on request and may include, but not necessarily be limited to: interpreting the CDBG/HOME and Formula programs and its rules, regulations, procedures and other requirements; providing information and/or materials concerning the programs; and assisting low and moderate income citizens and residents of blighted neighborhoods to develop statements of views, identify their needs, and to develop activities and proposals for projects which, when implemented, will advance the resolution of the needs.

Technical assistance may be obtained by contacting the Coshocton County Commissioners office at 740-622-1753 or through the Coshocton County website at [www.coshoctoncounty.net](http://www.coshoctoncounty.net).

### **SECTION 3: PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Citizen participation in the community development process will be conducted on a community wide basis and will actively involve the views of all citizens, with particular attention to low and moderate income persons and residents of areas where CDBG/HOME and Formula activities are proposed or on-going.

Public hearings will be held during all phases of the community development process, as outlined herein, to allow citizens to voice opinions and concerns regarding the development and performance of CDBG/HOME and Formula programs. Local officials will respond to questions and concerns from citizens at each public hearing. Any questions that citizens may have concerning a program will be answered and their comments, suggestions, and/or concerns will be addressed.

#### **3.1 Public Hearing Times and Locations**

All public hearings will be held at times and locations which will be accessible to all citizens, with particular attention to persons of low and moderate incomes, and residents of CDBG/HOME and Formula programs project areas.

Public hearings will be scheduled for times convenient to the general public, as determined by the County Commissioners. Public hearings may be held at any site which, in the opinion of the local officials, provides adequate access for citizen participation.

Hearings will normally be held at the Coshocton County Commissioners office during regularly scheduled weekly meetings. The site is centrally located generally accessible to all citizens, including persons with disabilities. Hearings may, however, at the option of local officials, be held at alternate locations to be specified in the public hearing notice.

#### **3.2 Fiscal Year Public Hearing**

At least one public hearing shall be held during any program fiscal year prior to the submission of any application to HUD for CDBG/HOME and Formula programs assistance.

The primary purpose of the public hearing shall be to review the most critical needs to be addressed by the CDBG/HOME and Formula programs and to present for public comment and review the program activities which have been selected by the County to address the identified needs.

Citizens will be provided information concerning the CDBG/HOME and Formula programs at this public hearing. Such information shall include the goals and objectives, total amount of funds available; the range of activities which may be undertaken; the application process; the application timetable(s); the schedule of meetings and hearings.

A second public hearing of citizen participation during this stage will inform citizens of the proposed projects to be included in the CDBG/HOME and Formula programs application and to solicit comments from citizens concerning these activities.

### 3.3 Amendment Public Hearings

The County will assure the opportunity for citizens' participation during the implementation of any CDBG/HOME and Formula programs when changes to the project are under consideration. Citizen participation shall be obtained and considered in any amendments to CDBG/HOME and Formula programs which involve significant changes in dollar amounts spent on activities, changes in program beneficiaries, changes in the location of approved activities, and major budget shifts between approved activities.

### 3.4 Public Hearing Notice

Notice of public hearings will be published in a local newspaper at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing date. The County may waive hearing notice requirements in cases where unusual circumstances justify alternative means of notifying the general public. In such situations, shorter notice may be given, and public notices posted in public places may be used in places of a notice published in the newspaper. Each notice shall include the time, date, place, and topics and procedures to be discussed. Notices for public hearings may be run and posted, separately or together, as may be deemed necessary.

### 3.5 Accessibility to Persons with Disabilities

The locations of all public hearings as described herein shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities. A sign language interpreter will be provided whenever the County is notified in advance that one or more deaf persons will be in attendance. The County shall provide a qualified reader whenever the County is notified in advance that one or more visually impaired persons will be in attendance. The County will provide reasonable accommodations whenever the County is notified in advance that one or more persons with mobility or developmental disabilities will be in attendance.

### 3.6 Limited English Proficiency Residents

The County will undertake all reasonable actions to facilitate the participation of persons with Limited English Proficiency. Local officials will undertake all reasonable actions necessary to allow such persons to participate in the community development process. Such actions may include the provision of an interpreter and/or the provision of material in the appropriate language or format for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

## **SECTION 4: CDBG/HOME PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Citizens will be provided full access to CDBG/HOME and Formula program information during all phases of the project. The County shall make reasonable effort to assure that CDBG/HOME and Formula program information is available to all citizens, with particular attention to those of low and moderate incomes and or CDBG/HOME and Formula project areas.

To facilitate citizen access to CDBG/HOME and Formula program information, the Coshocton County Commissioners will keep all documents related to the CDBG/HOME and Formula programs on file in the Coshocton County Commissioners office and information from the project files shall be made available for examination and duplication, on request, during regular business hours.

Materials to be available shall include, but are not necessarily limited to: the Citizens Participation Plan; records of public hearings; prior CDBG/HOME and Formula program applications; letters of approval; grant agreements; labor standards materials; approved CDBG/HOME and Formula program application(s) for the current year; written comments or complaints received concerning the programs; and copies of the

application Federal and State rules, regulations, policies, requirements and procedures governing the CDBG/HOME and Formula programs.

## **SECTION 5: PROCEDURES FOR COMMENTS, OBJECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS**

The scheduled public hearings described in this Citizen Participation Plan are designed to facilitate public participation in all phases of the community development process. Citizens are encouraged to submit their views on all aspects of programs during the comment periods and public hearings. However, to ensure that citizens are given the opportunity to assess and comment on all aspects of the community development program on a continuous basis, citizens may, at any time, submit written comments or complaints to the Coshocton County Commissioners.

Citizens or citizens' groups desiring to comment or object to any phase of the planning, development, approval or implementation of CDBG/HOME and Formula program activities should submit such comments or objections in writing to the Coshocton County Commissioners. Local Officials shall make every effort to provide written responses to citizen proposals or complaints within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of such comments or complaints where practicable.

## **SECTION 6: AMENDMENTS**

The Coshocton County Commissioners may, time to time, modify the provisions outlined herein through amendment to this Citizen Participation Plan. It shall be the policy of the Coshocton County Commissioners to periodically review the effectiveness of this Plan in facilitating citizen participation in the process and in helping to meet the community development needs and goals identified. To this end, the effectiveness of the Plan may be discussed at public hearings held in conjunction with the community development program as discussed herein, and potential amendments to the Plan will be reviewed. Amendments to the Plan will be made as necessary. All amendments shall be approved by resolution by the Coshocton County Commissioners and shall be incorporated into this Plan.