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Citizen Participation Plan

Community
Development
Block
Grant
(CDBG)

2009

St. Tammany Parish Government
Department of Health & Human Services

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A. Introduction

1) St. Tammany Parish receives Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). St. Tammany Parish has a goal of involving citizens in the planning for the use of CDBG funds. HUD also requires the Parish, as an Entitlement community, to publish and adopt a Citizen Participation Plan that details the procedures and policies related to citizen participation.

B. Encouragement of Citizen Participation

1) St. Tammany Parish encourages citizens to participate in the development of the consolidated plan, any substantial amendments to the consolidated plan, and the annual performance report (CAPER).

2) St. Tammany Parish especially encourages participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Who are residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods in St. Tammany?

People who live in continuous areas bound by roads or natural features (rivers, etc) where more than half of the area's residents fall below HUD's "moderate income" guidelines are considered residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods for the purposes of this plan.

3) St. Tammany Parish also encourages participation by all of its citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.

4) St. Tammany Parish encourages the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments, in conjunction with public housing authorities, in the process of developing and implementing the consolidated plan, along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located.

5) St. Tammany Parish shall make an effort to provide information to the housing agency about consolidated plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the housing agency can make this information available at their annual public hearing.

C. Citizen Comment on the Citizen Participation Plan and Amendments

1) St. Tammany Parish will provide citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the original Citizen Participation Plan and on amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan.

2) The St. Tammany Parish Citizen Participation Plan shall be made public by posting it on the Health and Human Services section of the Parish website and by distributing copies at Public Hearings.

3) The Citizen Participation Plan will be available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

Citizens wishing to request an accessible copy of the Plan should contact the St. Tammany Parish Department of Health and Human Services at 985-898-3074.

D. Development of the Consolidated Plan

1) Prior to adoption of the consolidated plan, St. Tammany Parish will make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties information that includes:

- a) The amount of assistance the Parish expects to receive (including grant funds and program income)
- b) The range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income.

2) St. Tammany Parish plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced.

Details regarding the types and levels of assistance the Parish will make available to persons displaced are provided in the St. Tammany Parish Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan.

3) St. Tammany Parish will publish the proposed Consolidated Plan in a manner that affords citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and to submit comments by:

- a) Publishing a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan in at least one newspaper of general circulation
 - i. The summary must describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan and must include a list of the locations where copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan may be examined.
 - ii. Free copies of the Plan will be provided to citizens and groups that request it.
- b) By making copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan available at public libraries and government offices.

4) St. Tammany Parish will accept comments on the Consolidated Plan from citizens for a period of at least 30 days.

5) St. Tammany Parish will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearings, in preparing the final Consolidated Plan.

A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan.

6) St. Tammany Parish will hold at least one public hearing during the development of the Consolidated Plan.

(E) Amendments

1) Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan will be required when:

- a) Changes in the use of CDBG funds are proposed from one eligible activity to another.
- b) Projects are added or deleted from the Plan.

2) When a Substantial Amendment is proposed:

- a) St. Tammany Parish will provide citizens with reasonable notice (at least 30 days) prior to implementation of the amendment;
- b) Notice of proposed Substantial Amendment will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation;
- c) St. Tammany Parish will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, if any, in preparing the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan;
- d) A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan

(F) Performance Reports

1) Citizens will be provided with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on annual performance reports.

- a) St. Tammany Parish will accept public comments on performance reports for a period of at least 15 days prior to submission to HUD.
- b) A notice will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation notifying the public of the comment period.

2) St. Tammany Parish will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings in preparing the performance report. A summary of these comments or views shall be attached to the performance report.

(G) Public Hearings

1) St. Tammany Parish will hold at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions.

2) Public hearings will be conducted at a minimum of two different stages of the program year; at least one of these hearings will be held before the proposed Consolidated Plan is published for comment.

3) Hearings will address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and review of program performance.

The main goal of Public Hearings is to obtain the views of citizens on housing and community development needs, including priority non-housing community and community development needs.

4) St. Tammany Parish will publish a notice in a newspaper of general circulation at least two weeks prior to the hearing date.

5) Information regarding Public Hearings will also be available on the Parish Website at www.stpgov.org.

6) Hearings will be held at times and locations convenience to potential and actual beneficiaries:

i. After working hours when possible.

ii. At locations accessible by goSTAT, St. Tammany Parish's transportation provider.

7) St. Tammany Parish will accommodate persons with disabilities and non-English speaking residents in every way possible.

Individuals who may need assistance are encouraged to call the Department of Health and Human Services at (985) 898-3074 at least three days prior to the Public Hearing to report needs so that they may be accommodated.

(H) Citizen Rights

1) Availability to the Public

a) The Consolidated Plan as adopted, Substantial Amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report will be available to the public on the Parish Website at www.stpgov.org.

Residents without internet access are encouraged to use the free internet at their local public library to access these documents.

b) Citizens with disabilities and others who cannot access these documents online should contact the Department of Health and Human Services at (985) 898-3074 to request copies in an accessible format.

2) Access to Records

a) St. Tammany Parish will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating the Consolidated Plan and the use of assistance under CDBG programs during the preceding five years.

b) Interested citizens should contact the Department of Health and Human Services at (985) 898-3074 or socialservices@stpgov.org to request access to records.

3) Technical assistance

The citizen participation plan must provide for technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low- and moderate-income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs covered by the consolidated plan, with the level and type of assistance determined by the jurisdiction. The assistance need not include the provision of funds to the groups.

4) Complaints

a) St. Tammany Parish will accept and respond to complaints from citizens related to the Consolidated Plan, annual plans, amendments, and performance reports.

b) Citizens wishing to submit written complaints are encouraged to use the attached complaint form. Complaints will also be received by e-mail to socialservices@stpgov.org.

c) St. Tammany Parish will provide a timely, substantive written response to every written citizen complaint, within 15 working days, where possible.

(I) Jurisdiction Responsibility

The requirements for citizen participation do not restrict the responsibility or authority of St. Tammany Parish for the development and execution of its consolidated plan.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

St. Tammany Parish Government
Department of Health & Human Services
Attn: CDBG Staff
P.O. Box 628
Covington, LA 70434
(985) 898-3074
socialservices@stpgov.org

St. Tammany Parish
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
Citizen Comment/ Complaint Form

Date: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Nature of Comment/ Complaint:

Action Requested:

Signature: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Received on: _____ Employee Name & Title: _____

Date Written Response Sent: _____

Action Taken: _____