

Citizen Participation Plan Warren County, Pennsylvania

Applicability

The legislation which created the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the regulation implementing it encourages citizen participation in planning, carrying out and evaluating local CDBG activities.

As the regulation gives maximum feasible priority to activities which benefit low to moderate income persons, this Participation Plan especially provides for and encourages participation of low to moderate income individuals and families in low to moderate income areas of the county.

Citizen Participation

The County will take whatever action is appropriate to encourage its citizens including minorities, non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities, residents of public and assisted housing developments, extremely low, very low and low to moderate income individuals and families, residents living in slum and blighted areas, areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, residents in predominantly low to moderate income neighborhoods, along with other low-income residents of the County to provide input, suggestions and comments on all CDBG programs and activities. The County encourages the participation of its citizens in the process of administering the CDBG program, in developing the Comprehensive Plan. The County will provide citizens with an opportunity to comment on any substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan.

Access to Information

The County will make available to citizens, public agencies and other interested parties the amount of assistance the County expects to receive from grants and program income. The County will provide an estimated amount that will benefit persons whose income levels range from extremely low to low to moderate income levels. Citizens, public agencies and other interested parties, especially those most affected, will have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on any proposed submission concerning the proposed activities. The County will provide reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the most recent update of the County's Comprehensive Plan to its citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties, especially those most affected will have the opportunity to receive information.

Displacement

The County plans to minimize displacement of persons and will assist any persons displaced.

Public Hearings

The County will provide a minimum of two public hearings during each CDBG program year. One hearing will be held in the beginning stages of developing the proposed Community Development Block Grant fiscal year expenditures. The second hearing will be held before submission of the county's CDBG application and detail proposed expenditures for that program year. These hearings will be held at times and locations convenient for people who may benefit from program funds. The hearings will address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities and review program performance. The hearings will be held to respond to proposals, answer questions and obtain views of citizens, public agencies and other interested parties that will or may be affected by program funds.

Notice of Public Hearings

A "Notice of Public Hearing" will be published in the legal notices section of the *Warren Times Observer* newspaper at least ten (10) days before the date of each public hearing.

Access to Hearings

The County will hold all public hearings in facilities that have access for persons with disabilities.

Comment Periods

The County encourages its citizens to comment during the development of the Comprehensive Plan and on the proposed use of CDBG funds. A summary of all comments shall be kept on file. The County will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at public hearings in selecting projects for CDBG funding. The County will provide timely written replies to complaints and grievances within 15 working days when practical.

Amendments

The County shall modify or amend its approved CDBG contract whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

1. A change in its allocation priorities;
2. A change in its method of distribution of funds;
3. To carry out a new activity using funds from any program covered by the CDBG program not previously described in the CDBG contract;
4. To change the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity.

The County encourages its citizens to comment on CDBG contract modifications and will make the changes available to the public. A letter transmitting the copy of all contract modifications shall be signed by the Warren County Commissioners and forwarded to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for approval.

Availability to the Public

The County will make available to its citizens during normal business hours the proposed use of all CDBG funds. The physical address of the program is the Warren County Courthouse, 204 Fourth Ave., Warren, Pa., 16365 in the Planning and Zoning office.

Access to Records

The County will make available to citizens, public agencies and other interested parties access to CDBG program files during normal business hours. The County will provide citizens access to information and records relating to the preceding five years of the CDBG program, especially to those most affected by the program.

Technical Assistance

The County will provide low through extremely low-income individuals and groups that request assistance in developing a proposal under the CDBG project proposal submission. The assistance shall be provided by the Planning and Zoning Office staff.

Complaints

The County will provide timely written replies to complaints and grievances within 15 days.

Program Year

The County of Warren's CDBG program year runs from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31. The citizen participation planning process begins approximately six months before the FFY application is due to be submitted. It begins with an advertisement in the Warren Times Observer for individuals and organizations involved with low to moderate income individuals and families and leaders to a public hearing held by the Warren County Commissioners.

All comments and complaints may be addressed to:

Warren County CDBG Program
204 Fourth Ave.
Warren, Pa., 16365
(814) 728-3434