

Citizen Participation Plan for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Winnebago County

PURPOSE

In order for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program to operate effectively, and to address the needs of the citizens of Winnebago County, the entire population must be kept informed. The decision-making process must be open and consistent with State and Federal regulations. To accomplish this, the follow plan will be followed:

PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

1. Winnebago County shall create a Citizen Participation Plan Committee, members of which shall be appointed by the Winnebago County Executive and confirmed by the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors. This Committee shall be responsible for implementation of the Citizen Participation Plan, as well as offering guidance in preparation of the grant application.

Winnebago County shall oversee the preparation of the CDBG grant application.

2. To insure responsiveness to the needs of its citizens, Winnebago County shall provide for and encourage citizen participation. Particular emphasis shall be given to participation by persons of low-to-moderate income.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Winnebago County shall establish a committee composed of persons representative of the County's demographics. This committee must include at least one person of low-to-moderate income.

The committee members should also include representatives from the local government, real estate, banking, and labor communities whenever possible. This committee shall assume responsibility for coordinating all required elements of the Citizen Participation Plan. All committee members must be residents of Winnebago County.

NOTICE OF HEARINGS

1. Official notice of hearings will be by public notice in the *Oshkosh Northwestern* at least two (2) full weeks prior to the hearing. In addition, the public notice shall be posted at the County Administration Building. These notices will include time, place, and date of meetings, as well as a brief agenda.
2. All notifications of meetings and available assistance must be worded in such a way as to encourage low-to-moderate income participation. In addition, all meeting announcements shall include where, and during what time, formation and records relating to the proposed and actual use of funds may be found.

REQUIRED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings shall be held to obtain citizen views and to enable citizens to respond to proposals at all stages of the CDBG Program, including the development of needs, the review of proposed activities, and the review of program performance. Hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and with accommodations for the handicapped, and if needed, non-English-speaking persons.

1. The first hearing will receive citizens' views and provide an explanation of:
 - a. Community development needs, objectives, and strategies.
 - b. The CDBG Program including goals, objectives, application process, amount of funds available, timetable, eligible activities, etc.
2. The second hearing will receive citizens' views and provide a review of the performance of the funded activities.
3. The first public hearing shall be held during the development of the application for funds. The second public hearing shall be held during the implementation of the program. Winnebago County will attempt to have at least one of the public hearings in the service area (if applicable).

PROGRAM INFORMATION, FILES, AND ASSISTANCE

1. Technical assistance will be provided to any citizen who requests information about program requirements. Assistance with the application process will be provided by

Winnebago County staff in the Planning and Zoning Department. A County staff member will meet with citizens on request.

2. Winnebago County will maintain, in the County Administration Building, a record of all citizen participation efforts including minutes of meetings, newspaper clippings, and copies of notices and brochures.
3. Citizens will be invited to make proposals regarding the application. If suitable proposals are submitted in writing, a written response will be provided within fifteen (15) days. Every effort will be made to respond to all proposals prior to the final action on the subject.
4. Citizens may petition or request in writing assistance or changes.

The Winnebago County staff will respond to all such requests within fifteen (15) days after the Industrial Development Board has met to discuss the request.

COMPLAINTS

Winnebago County will handle citizen complaints about the program in a timely manner. By federal regulation, the County will respond in writing to all written letters of complaint within fifteen (15) days after receipt of the complaint. The nature and disposition of verbal complaints will be recorded in a complaint log. The first contact for complaints should be made to the Winnebago County Clerk.

In addition to the above procedure, any citizen wishing to object may complain directly to the following address:

Wisconsin Department of Administration
Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources, 9th Floor
Attention Executive Staff Assistant
PO Box 7970
Madison WI 53707-7970

Written complaints should contain the following information and should be as specific as possible when describing:

1. The Program area being referenced: HOME, Community Development Block Grants for Housing (CDBG-Housing), Community Development Block Grants for Community Development (CDBG-Community Development), Community Development Block Grant Close Program (CDBG-CL), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), etc.

2. The event resulting in the complaint.
3. The dates, details, and reason for the complaint.
4. The complainant's name, address, email address, and telephone number.

NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PERSONS

Winnebago County will regularly survey the municipality to identify non-English-speaking persons and will make all special efforts to assure them equal opportunity in the citizen's participation process.