

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Introduction

Guam is committed to providing opportunities for its citizens to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and assessment of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program and the Emergency Solution Grant (ESG). In order to encourage and support participation of citizens, Guam Housing and Urban Renewal Authority (GHURA) will provide adequate information, hold public hearings, and give citizens the opportunity to comment on Guam's plan for implementation and assessment of federal funds. To be eligible to receive CDBG funds, GHURA must adopt a Citizen Participation Plan, and the plan must be incorporated into noticing requirements as set forth by 24 CFR Part 91.105.

Citizen participation is essential for an effective and viable program. GHURA recognizes that exchange of information among citizens and government employees will allow for a stronger, more responsive housing and community development effort on Guam.

The Citizen Participation Plan and related documents will be made available for persons with disabilities and for non-English speaking persons. Interpreters for those with limited English proficiency will be made available to explain the Citizen Participation Plan, as well as provide summaries of basic information about CDBG, HOME, ESG, and the planning process. This is subject to individuals requesting these services from GHURA and allotting a five-day notice to make the necessary arrangements.

Program Year and Funding Availability

Guam's program year runs from October 1 through September 30. The public is notified about the availability of the funding for CDBG, HOME and ESG projects in the same way documents for review are noticed.

Opportunities for Citizen Participation

The CDBG program awards eligible communities a grant as an "entitlement" based upon factors such as population, poverty, overcrowding and substandard housing conditions on Guam. The following are the statutory goals of the CDBG Program: a) Provide decent, safe housing; b) Provide suitable living environments; and c) Increase economic opportunities.

The Plan identifies many opportunities for citizen participation, describes how citizens will be notified of such opportunities, states how complaints related to the CDBG program will be addressed, and provides information on technical assistance available to help with preparing funding proposals.

All citizens, including low- and moderate-income persons, persons living in low- and moderate income neighborhoods, minority populations, non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities, homeless persons and residents of public and assisted housing developments are

encouraged to participate in the development and review of the CDBG, HOME and ESG programs.

The Plan includes the following elements:

1. Identification of community needs during the preparation of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan
2. Technical Workshops and Outreach Meetings
3. Public Hearings
4. Access to Information
5. Comment Periods for the General Public
6. Substantial Amendments
7. Citizen Complaint Process
8. Displacement

1. Identifying Community Needs

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan (“ConPlan”) is Guam’s application for funds for the next fiscal year. It is also a document that sets Guam’s housing and community development priority needs for a five-year period. The ConPlan contains Guam’s strategies for addressing the areas of housing, social services, public facilities and improvements, and homelessness.

The law requires Guam to seek public input to identify such needs. Thus, Guam must consult with low-and-moderate income residents, the general public, local government agencies, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations that work in housing, and economic and community development.

To encourage public involvement, three public hearings will be held in different neighborhoods. Public hearings will be completed 30 days prior to the completion of a draft ConPlan.

2. Technical Workshops and Outreach Meetings

Each year, GHURA conducts at least one technical briefing prior to the due date for funding proposals. The briefing is open to the public, and the specific time and location is published in the local newspaper. The briefing is intended to assist prospective applicants for funding with the application process.

Additionally, GHURA staff will provide technical assistance to organizations, government agencies and residents seeking additional information. All potential applicants for funding are encouraged to contact GHURA staff for technical assistance before completing an application.

3. Public Hearings

GHURA will conduct separate public hearings to gather input on the Annual Action Plan, ConPlan, Substantial Amendments and CAPER. All public hearings will be held at accessible locations, and provisions will be made for people with disabilities when requests are made at least five working days prior to a hearing. Similarly, interpreters will be made available for

individuals with limited English proficiency upon request at least five working days ahead of a hearing.

The hearings will be scheduled after the public has had time to review the documents during the review and comment period. All hearings will be publicly noticed in a local newspaper of general circulation. GHURA will give careful consideration to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as oral testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing. Citizen comments will be included in the reports, as well as explanations as to why any comments were not accepted. Public comments will continue to be accepted for a limited time after a public hearing is held.

4. Access to Information

As required by law, GHURA will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and public records relating to the data or content of the Annual Action Plan or ConPlan. GHURA will also provide the public with reasonable and timely access to proposed, actual and past use of funds covered by the Citizen Participation Plan. It should be noted that the law requires reasonable access to records about any uses of these funds from the previous five years. Finally, GHURA will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to local meetings relating to the proposed use of funds, such as Mayor's Council meetings.

All documents referenced in this Plan will be made available to the public for review and comment through the following means:

- Posted to GHURA web page: www.ghura.org;
- Available for review at the GHURA Main Office at 117 Bien Venida Avenue, Sinajana, Guam 96910;
- Mailed to interested parties upon request; and
- Provided at public hearings.

5. Comment Periods for the General Public

The general public will be provided an opportunity to submit comments orally or in writing at the public hearings. Written comments pertaining to the Annual Action, CAPER, Five-Year Consolidated Plan and substantial amendments also will be accepted during the designated review and comment periods. GHURA will publish a summary of the plans in the local newspaper of general circulation identifying the date and time for written comments to be submitted and the address where comments will be received. GHURA will also make hardcopies of the reports available at their main office, and digital copies available online at the GHURA website.

Except for records exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, the public will have reasonable and timely access to public records including the following:

<i>Annual Action Plan</i>	<i>CAPER</i>	<i>Five-Year Consolidated Plan</i>
<i>Substantial Amendments, if applicable</i>	<i>Citizen Participation Plan</i>	

Upon request by the general public or other interested parties, GHURA may have up to two business days to obtain such public records for review by the requesting party at no cost. These materials will be available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities when requested.

6. Substantial Amendments

The Citizen Participation Plan must be implemented if there is a substantial amendment made to the Annual Action Plan or the Five-Year ConPlan. Substantial Amendments are defined by the regulations in 24 CFR Part 91.505 and Guam's Citizen Participation Plan.

Per Guam's Citizen Participation Plan, the following will be considered a "substantial amendment:"

1. *A meaningful change in the location of an activity.*
 - a. If a project is moved from village to another village
 - b. If a project is being relocated within the same village, but now substantially changes the environmental impact on the area
2. *A change in the type of characteristics of people benefiting from an activity. Examples include:*
 - a. The HUD-recognized income levels of 0-30% of area median income (AMI); between 31%-50% of AMI; between 51%-80% of AMI.
 - b. Race or ethnicity
 - c. Renter or homeowner
 - d. Single households, small (two-four persons), large (five or more persons)
3. *A 25% decrease in the number of low-and-moderate income people benefiting from an activity.*
4. *A change in the scope of an activity, such that there is a 25% increase or decrease in the amount of money allocated to the activity.*

Any substantial amendment to the ConPlan or Annual Action Plan will only be incorporated into the document after a public notice has been provided to the public, and all parties have been given an opportunity to review and provide comment.

7. Citizen Complaint Process

GHURA is responsible for responding to complaints from citizens regarding the CDBG program, including plans, reports and the CDBG funding process. Complaints must be submitted in writing to GHURA by mail or in person, and must clearly describe the circumstances related to the complaint. Complaints must include the name, telephone number and address of the complainant. GHURA will review the complaint and provide a written response to the complainant within 15 days of receipt. Complaints may be mailed or delivered to GHURA at 117 Bien Venida Ave., Sinajana, GU 96910.

8. Displacement

GHURA will make every effort to minimize the displacement of persons occupying low-income housing. If Guam should undertake activities under the CDBG program that result in displacement of individuals, Guam will follow federal regulations under 24 CFR 570.496a(c)(1) and 24 CFR 570.606(c)(1) regarding relocation plans, replacement of housing, and costs before funding is allocated.

Changing the Citizen Participation Plan

The Citizen Participation Plan can be amended with input from local residents, organizations, and other interested persons. Any substantial change to the Citizen Participation Plan must be made available for public review and comment. The following process will take place:

1. GHURA will publish a public hearing notice to consider an amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan. The notice will be published 15 days prior to the hearing.
2. GHURA will consider all oral and written comments regarding the amendment(s) to the Citizen Participation Plan prior to the final preparation of the document.
3. A summary of comments received during the 30-day review and comment period will be attached to the amended plan.
4. The Board of Commissioners will review and vote on approving the amendment(s).

Citizen Participation Plan Timeline

Document	Public Notice #1	Public Notice #2	Public Briefing/ Public Hearing	Public Comment	Final Notice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Funding Availability 	<p>To be available to the public for at least 60 days prior to deadline.</p> <p>(Ex. Jan. 31 for Mar. 30 deadline)</p>	<p>To be published 24 hours prior to Public Briefing.</p> <p>(Ex. Feb. 14)</p>	<p>To be held 15 days after Notice #1 has been published; to be scheduled at 10AM or 10:30AM at a convenient location.</p> <p>(Ex. Feb. 15)</p>	N/A	<p>To be published at least 15 days prior to deadline.</p> <p>(Ex. Mar. 13)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Action Plan (AAP) • 5-Year Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) 	<p>To be available to the public for at least 30 days prior to Public Hearing.</p>	<p>To be published 24 hours prior to Public Hearing.</p>	<p>Public hearing(s) to be held 30 days after Notice #1 has been published; to be scheduled at 10AM or 10:30AM at a convenient location.</p> <p>Public hearings to be held in 3 different locations for ConPlan.</p>	<p>Comments will be accepted for a minimum of 15 days after the Public Hearing date.</p>	<p>To be published at least 10 days prior to close of comment period.</p> <p>??</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial Amendments 	<p>To be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to Public Hearing.</p> <p>(Ex. Nov. 1)</p>	<p>To be published 24 hours prior to Public Hearing.</p> <p>(Ex. Nov. 14)</p>	<p>To be held 15 days after Notice #1 has been published; to be scheduled at 10AM or 10:30AM at a convenient location.</p> <p>(Ex. Nov. 15)</p>	<p>Comments will be accepted for a minimum of 15 days after the Public Hearing date.</p> <p>(Ex. Deadline for comment submission is Nov. 30)</p>	<p>To be published at least 15 days prior to deadline.</p> <p>(Ex Nov. 14)</p> <p>??</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (“CAPER”) 	<p>To be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to Public Hearing.</p>	<p>To be published 24 hours prior to Public Hearing.</p>	<p>To be held 15 days after Notice #1 has been published; to be scheduled at 10AM or 10:30AM at a convenient location.</p>	<p>Comments will be accepted for a minimum of 15 days after the Public Hearing date.</p>	<p>??</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Participation Plan (Amendment) 	<p>To be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to Public Hearing.</p>	<p>To be published 24 hours prior to Public Hearing.</p>	<p>To be held 15 days after Notice #1 has been published; to be scheduled at 10AM or 10:30AM at a convenient location.</p>	<p>Comments will be accepted for a minimum of 15 days after the Public Hearing date.</p>	<p>??</p>

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