

# **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

*Rev. March 13, 2014*

A Citizen Participation Plan sets forth the policies and procedures for citizen participation in the development of the five-year Consolidated Plan, annual action plans and annual end of year reports. The Citizen Participation Plan is designed especially to encourage participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in areas where Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds will be used, as well as minorities, persons with disabilities, residents of public housing and other interested citizens.

Salem's first Citizen Participation Plan was adopted in March, 2000, following a training session conducted by the Coalition for Low-Income Community Development, Inc. This plan is based on information collected during that training, as well as the following sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or National Community Development Association (NCDA) sponsored trainings/meetings; 24 CFR 91.105 in the Consolidated Plan Regulations; and recommendations from other communities and HUD representatives.

The Citizen Participation Plan is typically reviewed and updated prior to the start of the five-year Consolidated Plan process. It was revised in March, 2005 and again in October, 2009. A not less than fifteen-day comment period is advertised whenever the Citizen Participation Plan undergoes significant amendments.

A comment period for the Citizen Participation Plan updated in March, 2014 was advertised on March 20, 2014.

The Citizen Participation Plan is arranged as follows:

1. Assessment of priority needs
  - a. Consolidated Plan
    - i. Factual Data Collection
    - ii. Community input
  - b. Action Plan
2. Advertisement, location and format of public hearings & meetings
3. Preparation of the Plan
4. Availability of Documents
5. Draft plans - Consideration of comments
6. Citizens Advisory Committee
7. Application for Federal Funds Approval
8. Funding Requests
9. Technical Assistance
10. Action Plan Amendments
11. Consolidated Plan Amendments
12. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)
13. Additional Efforts
14. Complaints

The tasks outlined in this plan may be undertaken by staff of the City of Salem Department of Planning and Community Development or by a consultant hired during the Consolidated Plan process.

## 1. **ASSESSMENT OF PRIORITY NEEDS**

### **a. Consolidated Plan**

Salem undertakes a housing and community development needs assessment every five years as part of the Consolidated Plan process in order to identify and prioritize the housing, community and economic development needs of the city's residents. The City specifically targets the following groups for intensive outreach and involvement in the development of the Consolidated Plan:

- Low and moderate income persons;
- Persons with HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS service providers;
- Homeless and homeless service providers;
- Senior citizens and senior service providers ;
- Minorities;
- Non-English speaking residents;
- Residents of public assisted housing and the Salem Housing Authority;
- Community Development Corporations and residents served;
- Mental & physical health agencies;
- Substance abuse prevention agencies;
- Salem Health Department;
- Youth advocacy groups;
- Persons with disabilities and service providers for persons with disabilities;
- Economic development/job creation agencies; and
- Banks, realtors and other community businesses.

Specific types of data to be collected through the needs assessment shall include:

- Elderly and non-elderly homeowner and renter needs;
- Special needs of the elderly, frail elderly, persons with alcohol/other drug addiction, disabled persons, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families);
- Homeless needs for individuals and persons in families with children including;
  - Needs for emergency, transitional and permanent housing;
  - Estimated supportive services slots for job training, case management, substance abuse treatment, mental health care, housing placement and life skills training;
  - Estimated needs of chronic substance abusers, seriously mentally ill, dually-diagnosed, veterans, persons with HIV/AIDS, victims of substance abuse and youth;
  - Community needs including anti-crime programs, economic development, infrastructure, public facilities, public services, senior programs and youth programs;
- Poverty; and
- Barriers to affordable housing.

Factual data collection and community input methods will include:

### **i. Factual data collection**

Factual data to be used in the needs assessment will include information found in the most recent U.S. Census and other available publications including, but not limited to, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, State Unemployment Insurance, property assessments, building permits, National Low Income Housing Coalition's annual Out of Reach report,

Dun and Bradstreet, real estate transactions and the N. S. Home Consortium (Analysis to Impediments, Continuum of Care and any available Consolidated Plan data).

**ii. Community input**

Whenever possible, citizen participation will include presentations at:

- Public hearing(s);
- Neighborhood Association meeting(s);
- Salem Housing Authority Tenant's Association;
- Commission on Disabilities;
- Affordable Housing Trust; and
- Focus groups (i.e. Economic Development, social service groups).

Citizen participation will be encouraged through a variety of methods, including but not limited to:

- Legal advertisement in the Salem News;
- Posted flyers at the Salem Public Library, Salem Council on Aging, Salem Housing Authority, Salem City Hall and Salem City Hall Annex;
- Flyers sent to social service agencies, civic groups, the N.S. Home Consortium, as well as other Salem locations;
- Salem H.O.P.E. distribution list;
- Notification to the Salem City Council;
- The City's official website, [www.salem.com](http://www.salem.com);
- Press release to local media; and
- Salem Access Television community calendar.

Citizen Participation will also include interviews with representatives of various local agencies, such as but not be limited to those serving the elderly, non-English speaking, homeless, substance abusers, veterans, youth, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families), and agencies that provide job training and placement, Lifebridge, the North Shore CDC, Salem Council on Aging, Salem Housing Authority, Salem Health Department, municipal inspection service departments (i.e. building & fire) and local businesses.

**b. Annual Action Plan**

At the commencement of the Annual Action Plan process (during each of the four years between the Consolidated Plan process), citizen participation efforts will be undertaken in order to evaluate how Salem's housing and community development needs and priorities have changed since the completion of the prior Consolidated Plan and to assess any new information received. Citizen participation will be encouraged through a public hearing, legal advertisements in the Salem News, Salem Access Television notice and posted flyers at the Salem Public Library, Salem City Hall, Salem City Hall Annex, [www.salem.com](http://www.salem.com) and the Salem Housing Authority, as well as other locations. In addition, citizen participation efforts may include neighborhood meetings and/or focus groups and notification in newsletters (i.e. Salem Chamber of Commerce, Salem H.O.P.E.).

**2. ADVERTISEMENT, LOCATION AND FORMAT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS & MEETINGS**

Public hearings will be advertised in the Salem News, on Salem Access Television, through English/Spanish notices posted at the Salem Public Library, Salem Housing Authority, Salem Council on Aging, Salem City Hall and Salem City Hall Annex, and on [www.salem.com](http://www.salem.com). Salem News legal ads and SATV ads shall be provided to these media approximately two weeks prior to the hearing. In addition,

advertisement may include one or more of the following: notices in various community newsletters (e.g., Salem Chamber of Commerce) and through a press release distributed to the Salem News, Salem Gazette and/or Salem Patch. Public hearings will be held at 120 Washington Street, which is accessible to people with disabilities and located on or near the bus lines and MBTA train station. Whenever possible, a Spanish translator will be present. One public hearing will be held at least 30 days prior to the completion of the Draft Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan (usually at the start of the annual process). During this hearing, citizens will be given opportunity to review prior year program performance. One public hearing will be held at least 30 days prior to the submission of the final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.

Forums and focus group meetings will be held at various locations and times appropriate to the type of group, population or neighborhood. Forums, focus groups and other meetings may be advertised in the Salem News, on Salem Access Television, through notices posted at the Salem Public Library, Salem Housing Authority, Salem Council on Aging, Salem City Hall and Salem City Hall Annex, and on [www.salem.com](http://www.salem.com). In addition, advertisement may include one or more of the following: posted flyers at elderly and public assisted housing, notices mailed to nonprofit social services agencies, notices in various community newsletters (e.g., Salem Chamber of Commerce) and/or through a press release distributed to the Salem News, Salem Gazette and/or Salem Patch. Forums and focus groups targeted to specific neighborhoods may include distribution of flyers to those targeted populations. Such flyers intended for Point Neighborhood residents shall also be provided in Spanish. Neighborhood meetings in the Point Neighborhood will be conducted by bilingual staff.

Senior transportation is available by contacting the Transportation Coordinator of the Salem Council on Aging at least two days in advance. Persons with other special needs should contact the DPCD for reasonable accommodation and provide ample time for the request to be arranged.

### **3. PREPARATION OF THE PLAN**

Following the Needs Assessment, the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan will be drafted. The Draft will set priorities and will provide for the development of funding decisions based on plan priorities. Included in the plan will be the required HUD forms, data, maps, narratives, illustrations and photographs. The plan will include the amount of assistance that Salem expects to receive, including grant funds and program income, the range of activities that may be undertaken and an estimate of the low and moderate income persons to benefit from the proposed activities.

### **4. AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS**

All public documents are available for viewing at the Department of Planning & Community Development (DPCD). A copy of the Citizens Participation Plan, Draft and Final Consolidated Plan, Draft and Final Annual Action Plan and Draft and Final Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) will be provided to the Salem Public Library and the Salem Housing Authority. Notice of the availability of these documents will be included with the notice of their respective comment periods, and with notice of any public hearings or meetings, and will be published in the Salem News. Additional notice will be posted at Salem City Hall, Salem City Hall Annex, the Salem Public Library, the Salem Council on Aging and the Salem Housing Authority.

Copies of any CDBG or HOME related public document exceeding 10 pages will be provided upon request at a cost of 20¢ per page, free for documents under 10 pages. Full copies of documents are available free by e-mail, as well as on computer disks when the disks are provided by the requester. In addition, copies of these documents will be available for download at no charge on [www.salem.com](http://www.salem.com). Final copies of all plans and reports shall be provided to HUD.

### **5. DRAFT PLANS – CONSIDERATION OF COMMENTS**

All comments received will be reviewed by the Director of the Department of Planning and Community Development, Assistant Community Development Director and the city's consultant (if one has been engaged), but may also be reviewed by the Citizen's Advisory Committee and the Mayor. The City of Salem will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at any public hearing in preparing the final Consolidated Plan. All comments suggesting amendments to the drafts that are considered reasonable, feasible and consistent with HUD regulations will be incorporated into the final plans. A summary of public 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. CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is a group of individuals appointed by the Mayor. The CAC usually includes one City Councilor and one or more of the following: representative(s) from low/mod neighborhoods, representative of a non-profit agency, disabled person, elderly person, minority person, representative of a Salem business, person on public assistance, and/or public employee (i.e. police officer, teacher). The group reviews the funding requests (see Section 8) received by nonprofit social services agencies and makes funding recommendations. The CAC also reviews and comments on the draft Consolidated Plan.

**7. APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL FUNDS APPROVAL**

Prior to submission to HUD, copies of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan will be provided to the City Council, along with a copy of the Application for Federal Funds. The City Council will vote to approve the submission of the Application for Federal Funds. The Application for Federal Funds will be signed by the Mayor and included in the submittal to HUD.

**8. FUNDING REQUESTS**

Annually, the City of Salem will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for funding applications. RFPs issued may be to solicit public services, housing and/or economic development funding requests. Awards are conditional upon available funding.

Funding assistance for Public Services is awarded on a competitive basis in annual funding rounds, which are advertised in the Salem News. Guidelines for the Public Services Program are provided in a separate document. Proposals will be reviewed by the Citizens Advisory Committee and awards are made on approval of the Mayor.

Applications for city-administered programs (First Time Homebuyers Loan Program, Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program and Economic Development Loan Program) are available at the DPCD and may be submitted at any time. Guidelines for these programs are provided in a separate document. Approval of these loans is contingent upon meeting eligibility requirements and the availability of funding. Applications may be placed on a waiting list, if necessary, to accommodate current staffing or funding levels.

Persons, businesses or agencies seeking assistance for other types of assistance (i.e. housing development, or redevelopment) should contact the DPCD.

**9. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Individuals, businesses or agencies needing technical assistance to apply for CDBG or HOME funds or for other assistance regarding CDBG or HOME funded programs may contact the DPCD for consultation.

First Time Homebuyer and Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program technical assistance will be provided by DPCD housing staff. New applicants should meet with DPCD housing staff after reviewing the application guidelines.

Business establishment and business loan application assistance will be provided by the Economic Development Planner. Any person may request a free copy of the *Doing Business in Salem Guide*, which explains how to open a business in Salem and provides other helpful information for businesses and developers.

Assistance to public service agencies will be provided by the Assistant Community Development Director. Agencies receiving CDBG public services funding are required to attend a brief training meeting prior to the start of the funded program.

All other questions or requests for information or assistance should be directed to the Community Development Director or Assistant Community Development Director.

## **10. ACTION PLAN AMENDMENTS**

Amendments proposed for the HUD-approved Annual Action Plan will be evaluated and addressed as follows:

***Minor amendments:*** Minor amendments will be undertaken as necessary with no public comment. Examples of minor amendments include but are not limited to:

- Increase of the budgeted funds for an existing activity in the Annual Plan;
- Cancellation of an activity that was determined ineligible, infeasible or no longer a priority;
- Addition of emergency activities (interim assistance);
- Decrease of the budgeted funds for a loan program activity for which there have been few or no applicants; or
- Addition of an activity that meets the established goals of the Annual Plan and whose proposed budget is under \$50,000.

***Substantial amendments:*** Legal advertisements will be placed in the Salem News for all significant amendments, providing 15-day comment period. Examples of significant amendments include but are not limited to:

- Addition of an activity with a proposed budget of over \$50,000.

## **11. CONSOLIDATED PLAN AMENDMENTS**

Amendments proposed for the HUD-approved Consolidated Plan will be informally reviewed by Community Development staff with staff of the HUD field office, after which a course of action for citizen participation will be determined. At a minimum, substantial amendments shall provide for a public hearing and shall allow for a period of not less than 30 days to receive public comment on the substantial amendment before the amendment is implemented. A substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan shall include but not be limited to, the addition of a set of goals or an activity not previously included in the plan whose proposed budget is over \$200,000 and/or the addition of a Section 108 Loan Guarantee application for an activity not previously included in the plan. The City of Salem will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, if any, in preparing the substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan. A summary of public comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan.

## **12. CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)**

The CAPER must be submitted to HUD within 90 days after the end of the program year (June 30<sup>th</sup>), providing a detailed description of CDBG and HOME funds used during the fiscal year and to what extent they benefited low and moderate income people. Legal notice of the availability of the draft CAPER and 15-day comment period is advertised in the Salem News and is posted at Salem City Hall and Salem City Hall Annex and on [www.salem.com](http://www.salem.com). The City of Salem will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at public hearings, if any, in preparing the CAPER. A summary of public comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views shall be attached to the final CAPER.

## **13. ADDITIONAL EFFORTS**

Citizen participation in CDBG activities is not limited to the formalized procedures noted above. Various CDBG activities include separate public comment opportunities as well as public participation (e.g. neighborhood and school groups are often recruited to design and build playground equipment installation projects). In addition, City administrators (Mayor, City Councilors and/or DPCD staff) are often in attendance at various neighborhood association meetings where needs and proposed or planned activities are discussed. In fact, City Councilors have been instrumental in the formation of new neighborhood associations and groups, and the DPCD has been involved in the formation of neighborhood master plans, revitalization plans and strategies. City representatives are available to meet with residents and business or agency representatives on an individual basis to receive input on needs and ideas for CDBG activities.

Additionally, there are various organizations, committees and groups from which input is gathered. These are particularly important forums where one voice may represent many individuals or population groups. Included are Salem H.O.P.E., the Homeless Outreach Program Advisory Committee, the Commission for Disabilities, Neighborhood Improvement Advisory Council, the Salem Partnership, Salem Main Streets Initiative and the Salem Chamber of Commerce:

Salem H.O.P.E.: Salem H.O.P.E. (Human Organization Partnership Effort) is a networking group of human service agencies that serve Salem residents. It is an open public forum for agencies to learn about the services being provided by other agencies in order to fill in gaps, coordinate efforts and avoid the duplication of services. All human service agency representatives that serve Salem residents are invited to attend the quarterly Steering Committee breakfast meetings held at rotating agency locations. Through this program, agency representatives are introduced to each other and exchange information, announcements and updates. The DPCD provides staff administration and produces a Salem H.O.P.E. quarterly newsletter, which is distributed via e-mail. Salem's Assistant Community Development Director attends all Salem H.O.P.E. meetings. Agencies wishing to be included on the Salem H.O.P.E. mailing list should contact the Assistant Community Development Director.

Homeless Outreach Program Advisory Committee: This forum provides another opportunity for input on Salem's social service needs. The Committee meets once per month during April, July and September at 120 Washington Street. This group is an advisory group to Lifebridge's Street Advocate, who outreaches to homeless individuals encountered in the Salem Central Business District. The Street Advocate works with the individuals to alleviate homeless-related problems with pedestrian, visitor and commercial activity (panhandling, public drunkenness, etc.) and to connect these individuals to shelter, transitional housing, substance abuse treatment and other services. The Committee includes representatives from the DPCD, downtown business community, Lifebridge, Salem Main Streets Initiative, the Salem Police Department and other interested individuals. Salem's Assistant Community Development Director attends all Steering Committee meetings.

Commission on Disabilities: The Commission on Disabilities is a Mayor-appointed, City Council-confirmed board whose seven members meet monthly to advise the City on issues relative to persons with disabilities.

Neighborhood Improvement Advisory Council: The Neighborhood Improvement Advisory Committee works to identify and review issues that affect Salem neighborhoods and to work for the City to address them and improve the overall quality of life. NIAC is comprised of the President (or designee) of each neighborhood organization with the City of Salem.

Salem Partnership: The Salem Partnership is a public/private sector coalition of local leaders who contribute time, energy and special resources to revitalize Salem. The Salem Partnership sponsors, supports and encourages the creation of programs and events that help promote new business development, the growth of Salem's tourist industry and unity within the community. The DPCD's Director is on the Executive Committee of the Salem Partnership.

Salem Main Streets Initiative: The Salem Main Streets Initiative is a preservation-based, volunteer-driven strategy for downtown and neighborhood retail business revitalization. The mission of the Salem Main Streets Initiative is to help plan and direct those activities that preserve, develop and enhance the economic, social and cultural quality of the city's downtown and neighborhood commercial districts. A representative of the DPCD attends Main Streets board meetings and various subcommittee meetings.

Salem Chamber of Commerce: The Salem Chamber of Commerce is an independent association of business and professional people which offers business referrals, networking, participation in cooperative business building events, updates on local business issues through a monthly newsletter and breakfast meetings. The DPCD's Director is a member of the Chamber's Board of Directors.

To keep the public informed of CDBG activities, the City of Salem periodically advertises the availability of loan funds as well as publicizes successful projects and programs through press releases, brochures, flyers and/or newsletters for specific CDBG sponsored projects, programs and events.

The City of Salem makes every effort to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced. A copy of the City of Salem's Optional Relocation Assistance Policy for persons utilizing the Housing Rehabilitation Program is available at the DPCD.

#### **14. COMPLAINTS**

Complaints should be addressed to the Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Salem, 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA 01970, 978 619-5685, Fax: 978 740-0404. The City of Salem will provide a written response to written complaints within 15 working days, where practicable.