City of Rome, Georgia

Citizen’s Participation Plan

Community Development Block Grant Program

Introduction

This plan is intended to meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Said requirements are created to provide the opportunity for citizens, nonprofit organizations and other interested parties to participate in the process (the consolidated plan) for determining how CDBG funds are spent each year. They are designed especially to encourage participation of low income residents where housing and community development funds may be spent. This plan also encourages participation of all residents, including minorities, public housing residents and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities in all stages of the consolidated plan process.

Major Plan Components

- **Access to Information**  
  All citizens, public agencies and other interested parties will have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on any proposed submission concerning the proposed activities, including the amount of assistance the City expects to receive, the range of activities that may be undertaken, and the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low income.

- **Anti-displacement**  
  The City will set forth its plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced.

- **Publishing of the Plan**  
  The City will publish its proposed consolidated plan in the local newspaper in summary form so that affected residents can review it and provide comments. The full plan will also be available at the City offices and on the City’s web site. A reasonable number of free copies of the plan will be made available to citizens and groups that request it.

- **Public Hearings**  
  Two public hearings will be held at locations accessible to all citizens – one prior to publishing the annual plan and another nearing completion of each year’s program. A minimum of 7 days notice will be given prior to the hearings.

- **Comments**  
  A minimum of 30 days will be given to citizens and interested parties to comment on the consolidated plan. The comments received will be considered in preparing the final consolidated plan submission.

- **Substantial Amendments**  
  A change in proposed activities involving more than 25% of the total annual funds available will constitute a substantial amendment to the plan and will involve a 30-day comment period prior to implementing the changes.
• **Performance Reports** The City must submit annual performance reports to HUD regarding accomplishments of the CDBG Program. A public hearing will be held prior to submission of this report to inform the public of accomplishments and allow them to review the annual report. The public will be given 15 days prior to submission of the annual report to submit comments to the City regarding the CDBG Program and its accomplishments. The City will consider any comments received in writing or orally at public hearings in preparing the final report. A summary of these comments will be attached to the performance report.

• **Availability to the Public** The City will make available to the public the adopted consolidated plan, any substantial amendments and the performance report. These will be available for review at the offices of the Community Development Department, 607 Broad Street, Rome, 30161. Copies can be received by calling 706-236-4477 and giving adequate time to prepare them. Persons with disabilities needing special copies (digital, etc.) should request these with adequate notification.

• **Access to Records** Any citizen, public agency or other interested party shall have reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the consolidated plan and the use of CDBG Program funds during the preceding five years. These records may be kept at the Record Retention Center on Chatillion Road so adequate time should be given to access them.

• **Technical Assistance** The Community Development Department will provide technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under the consolidated plan.

• **Complaints** All written citizen complaints concerning the consolidated plan, amendments, and performance report shall be provided with a timely, substantive written response (within 15 days, where practicable).

• **Amendments** Citizens will have reasonable notice of, and opportunity to comment on, any substantial change (involving 25% or more of total annual funds) in the proposed use of CDBG funds.

• **Expedited Procedures** The City of Rome has established expedited procedures to draft, propose, or amend consolidated plans and action plans due to Covid-19 for CDBG-CV funds and 2019/2020 CDBG funds. The following procedures will be imposed during the time of the pandemic for the specified grants and program years:
  - A five-day comment period for citizens to review and comment on the proposed plans and activities. The plans will be posted in full on the City of Rome website and in summary form on the City’s social media platforms.
  - A virtual public hearing will be held and will meet the public hearing requirements if:
    1. National/local health authorities recommend social distancing and limiting public gatherings for public health reasons
    2. Virtual hearings provide reasonable notification and access for citizens in accordance with Rome’s certifications, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues and public access to all questions and responses.