

The City of Sandusky Consolidated Plan Citizen Participation Plan

I. The Consolidated Plan

The Consolidated Plan is a requirement of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that larger cities and all states must prepare in order to receive federal monetary assistance from HUD programs. The Plan is a comprehensive strategy developed by the community addressing the affordable housing and community development needs present within the community. Ultimately, the Plan will be used to implement the following HUD grant programs: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Home Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA). Brief descriptions of these HUD grant programs are provided in Appendix A.

As mandated by HUD, The Consolidated Plan must contain the following elements. The City of Sandusky must have the plan submitted to HUD by May 15, 2004.

- I. Needs/Market Conditions;
including an assessment of the community's affordable housing needs, public housing needs, homeless needs, lead-based paint concerns, fair housing concerns, identification of barriers to affordable housing, and community and economic development needs.

- II. Housing and Community Development Priorities and Strategies;
present statistical and analytical information that provides an overall picture of the housing and community development needs of the community. Once gathered, this information will help to establish priorities for assistance and the allocation of resources.

- III. One Year Action Plan.
list the activities the community will undertake to address priority needs and local objectives with anticipated program income and funds received during the next program year under the HOME, CDBG, ESG, HOPWA, Public Housing Comprehensive Grant, and other HUD programs for meeting housing and community development objectives.

II. Guiding Principals in the Consolidated Plan Planning Process

On Thursday, January 29, 2004, the City of Sandusky convened a public hearing to get citizen input on how the city should "involve" citizens in the preparation of a citizen participation plan. At that meeting it was agreed that at least two public hearings would be convened to apprise citizens of the contents of the Consolidated Plan as it evolves. Furthermore, it was agreed that an "oversight" committee identified as the Housing Strategy Workgroup (HSW) made up of providers and extremely low, very low and low income neighborhood consumers from the city be established to oversee the Consolidated Plan's development. The group also agreed that a focus group of HSW members be conducted "prior to" strategy development in order to get direct, structured input into the plan. Finally, the citizens felt that surveys should be taken of both providers and consumers in order to determine program/service needs and strategies to address those needs.

The approach taken by the City of Sandusky regarding the development of the Consolidated Plan is guided by two leading principles:

- Customer Service: Focus program efforts to the most critical needs, i.e. those of extremely low income households.
- Comprehensive Approach: The Consolidated Plan's objective is to achieve empowerment of individuals and families and ensure long-term economic independence.

These two principals are of major importance to the Plan. However, inherent in these two principals is extensive, relevant, and ongoing citizen participation. The City of Sandusky believes it is very important to have widespread, substantive participation throughout the planning process to ensure community "ownership" of the plan. A variety of techniques, including focus groups, public hearings, workshops, etc., will be used to achieve this end. A committee (the Housing Strategy Workgroup; HSW) consisting of key stakeholders in the Consolidated Plan will be formed at the start of the process. In addition, the City and the HSW will facilitate the creation of partnerships among stakeholders that will be critical for implementation of the Consolidated Plan.

III. The Citizen Participation Plan

Introduction:

As part of the Consolidated Plan planning process, the City of Sandusky must prepare and implement a Citizen Participation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that citizens, especially extremely low, very low, low and moderate income citizens, have ample opportunity to engage in developing and overseeing the implementation of the Consolidated Plan. The essential elements of the plan include the following:

· Participation:

The Plan is designed to encourage and facilitate citizen participation, especially by the low, very low, and extremely low income households and those with mobility, visual, and hearing impairments. Citizens will be involved in all HSW meetings, focus groups and surveys.

· Access to Meetings:

Citizens will be given timely notice of upcoming meetings and information review opportunities. Notices will be posted in such a manner to ensure widespread distribution. Citizens will be involved in all public hearings and HSW meetings, including focus groups.

· Access to Information:

Citizens will be given ample opportunity to receive relevant information, review documents, and submit their comments for consideration. Citizens will have an opportunity to receive "Draft" copies of all sections of the Consolidated Plan as the sections are completed.

· Technical Assistance:

Technical Assistance should be provided to any low income resident who requests assistance in developing proposals for the Consolidated Plan submission.

· Public Hearings:

At least two public hearings will be held at convenient times and locations for the people who might benefit from programs and funds resulting from the Consolidated Plan. These meetings are meant to obtain views from citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties in response to proposals and comments throughout the Consolidated Plan planning process. Meeting locations will be handicapped accessible and meetings will be thoroughly publicized, especially in low income areas.

The Sandusky Housing Strategy Workgroup (HSW):

The City of Sandusky has established the Sandusky Consolidated Plan Housing Strategy Workgroup (HSW) to oversee the development and review progress on the implementation of the Consolidated Plan. The HSW is composed of a broad base of community representatives, from both the public and private sectors. Groups and organizations represented include local and county governments, social service agencies, private businesses, community organizations, churches, and residents. A complete list of the HSW participants is contained in Appendix.

The HSW will meet at least four (4) times in locations which are conveniently located and accessible to all residents. A special "focus group" session will be held for HSW members in order to ensure that each member participating has an opportunity for significant input into the Consolidated Plan. As each phase of the Plan is completed, the HSW will meet to review, revise, and approve that particular section. It is anticipated the phases of the Plan the HSW will review and comment on (1) Needs/Market Profile, (2) Priorities and Strategies for community, economic, and affordable housing development, and (3) a one-year action plan. Finally, the HSW will meet to approve the completed Consolidated Plan prior to submission to the Sandusky City Commission and HUD.

The HSW focus group sessions will be conducted using the Nominal Group Technique (NGT). NGT is a structured group facilitation technique that insures that all participants are involved and all participation is considered. Participants will identify their perceptions of local housing and community development issues, needs, barriers, goals and possible solutions to these problems.

The results of the focus groups will be summarized in a written report which will discuss the needs, priorities, goals, and possible solutions which emerged from the focus group. The report will be distributed to all participants, CPC members, and appropriate city officials. It will also be made available to the general public and will be included as part of the formal Consolidated Plan submission.

As part of encouraging citizen participation, the City of Sandusky will convene three (3) public hearings at locations which are conveniently located and accessible to all citizens. Public hearing (1) to discuss citizen participation as part of the Consolidated Plan and public hearings (2) and (3) to discuss the plan's contents. A public hearing will be convened as each phase of the Consolidated Plan is completed consistent with the phases noted above.

Information To Be Provided:

It is anticipated that the City of Sandusky will receive approximately \$967,000 in HUD formula funds for housing, homeless assistance, and community development purposes. The Consolidated Plan will identify the types of activities to be undertaken, and specify the activities and the amount of funds which are targeted to benefit very low and low income households.

The Plan will identify needs/market conditions assessment, including affordable housing needs, public housing needs, homeless needs, lead based paint concerns, fair housing needs,

barriers to affordable housing, and community and economic development needs.

Based on the results of the needs/market conditions assessment, a housing and community development Strategic Plan component will be developed. The strategic plan component will include the following elements:

Housing and Community Development Resources:

A comprehensive list of all public and private resources expected to be allocated under the Consolidated Plan.

Housing and Community Development Objectives and Projects:

All programs and activities to be undertaken during the Consolidated Plan period, including quantitative outcomes and target dates for completion. An Anti-Poverty Strategy addressing how the Consolidated Plan programs and other programs will reduce the number of individuals living below the poverty line will be included.

Coordination:

A discussion of Consolidated Plan programs will be coordinated with other programs to maximize benefit.

After the Five-Year Housing and Community Development Strategic Plan component is completed, a One-Year Action Plan will be developed. The Action Plan will include the following elements:

- How the Housing and Community Development resources identified in the Strategic Plan component will be matched with specific activities
- Dollar amounts requested for each activity
- A description and location of each activity
- The entity responsible for implementation of each activity
- Timeframe for each activity
- A description of other state and federal regulations applying to each activity
- Establishment of administrative structure to carry out the One-Year Action Plan

In all cases, the Consolidated Plan will seek to minimize the displacement of residents from their homes or places of business.

At every public hearing and HSW meeting, the offer of technical assistance will be made. Residents will be clearly informed that technical assistance will be available for all low income residents who need assistance in developing proposals for the Consolidated Plan submission. Requests for technical assistance must be made in writing and submitted to the following address:

Charlene Mockensturm, Director of Community Development
 City of Sandusky
 222 Meigs Street
 Sandusky, Ohio 44870
 419-627-5872

Access To Public Records:

Throughout the planning process, the public shall be allowed access to data, information, and records used to develop the Consolidated Plan. The City of Sandusky will make available a copy of the completed, approved Consolidated Plan **at least 30 days prior to submission** to HUD at the City of Sandusky Municipal Building, 222 Meigs Street and at the Sandusky Public Library, 114 West Adams Street, Sandusky, Ohio.

The City of Sandusky will prepare an Executive Summary to be published in the Sandusky Register so that citizens will have an opportunity to comment on the Plan's contents. The Executive Summary will contain the concerns, contents and purpose of the plan. In addition, the procedures for expressing comments and complaints and for requesting technical assistance will also be published.

A System of Comments, Concerns, and Amendments:

The procedures for voicing comments and concerns regarding the Consolidated Plan will be published with the Executive Summary and will be available with the copies of the Plan at the libraries mentioned above. All comments and concerns must be addressed in writing and mailed to the address below:

Charlene Mockensturm, Director of Community Development
 City of Sandusky
 222 Meigs Street
 Sandusky, Ohio 44870
 419-627-5872

The City will answer with a formal response to each written comment and concern regarding the Plan. All formally submitted comments and concerns will be reviewed and addressed by the city through the HSW. Such comments and concerns will be considered by the HSW and shall be addressed by revising the Plan as recommended by the HSW. It is the intent of the City of Sandusky to avoid such issues by providing extensive, ongoing, and relevant citizen input as the Plan evolves. The public will have the opportunity to attend all HSW meetings and public hearings. It is anticipated that citizen concerns regarding the Plan's contents will be resolved prior to City Commission and HUD approval.

Amendments to the Plan shall be limited to any change within a budgetary item of 30% or more and/or a change within the programmatic/service scope of the Plan. Any amendment shall be preceded by public comment period of two weeks and a public hearing convened at a location convenient and accessible to citizens.

Annual updates of the Consolidated Plan will involve the oversight and review of the Plan by the HSW and Sandusky City Commission. Furthermore, the City, in conjunction with the HSW, will annually hold at least two (2) public hearings and provide for publishing of an Executive Summary of the Plan as noted above. Finally, annual updates will provide for a thirty (30) day comment period. The system of comments, concerns, amendments as previously described will apply to all Plan updates.