

Citizen Participation Plan Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Introduction –

The Town of Shepherdstown is required to develop and follow detailed, written policies and procedures – a Citizen Participation Plan – to involve the public, particularly low- and moderate-income people, in developing and implementing this Plan and its integral components – annual action plans, annual performance reports and amendments. Additionally, this Plan must be published and available to the public.

The Plan is a five-year plan, describing the Town's development needs, resources, priorities and proposed activities to be undertaken under certain U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) and any additional federal grants and/or sources of federal funding.

The Town's believes involving the public is a vital part of the process. As such, they will provide the public opportunities to participate and will consult with other public and private agencies providing assisted housing, health services, social services, child welfare agencies (regarding lead-based paint), adjacent local governments (for non-housing community development needs) and local housing authorities in planning and implementing the Plan.

This Plan provides information on:

- Encouraging public participation, with special emphasis on involving low- and moderate-income people, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods;
- Providing the public with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information and records relating to the Town's use of funds;
- Providing technical assistance to groups representative of low- and moderate-income people that request help in developing proposals;
- Timely responses to complaints and grievances.

Encouraging Public Participation –

The law (24 CFR 91.105) requires the citizen participation plan to provide for and encourage public involvement, emphasizing participation by low- and moderate-income people – especially those living in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. This participation is to occur as the Plan is being developed, if and when any substantial amendments to the document are proposed and when performance is reported. Additionally, the Town will encourage minorities, non-English speaking people and people with disabilities to participate by contacting groups and agencies that

represent or serve these populations. Current program documents are in English only, however, if other languages are needed, please contact Town Hall.

Local Meetings-

Shepherdstown will host, at a minimum, two general public meetings each year. These meetings will solicit public input on the community needs as related to available funding. Shepherdstown will also host public meetings as required by specific funding requirements.

These meetings will be held at a time and place convenient to the majority of the target population – low- and moderate-income people, residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and other likely to benefit from the program. Additionally, the meeting location will be within or in close proximity to a CDBG-eligible area, convenient to public transportation and accessible to people with disabilities.

Public Meeting Notices –

Notice of all public meetings will be published as display ads in local, general circulation newspapers and posted on the Town’s website, www.shepherdstown.us at least 14 days prior to the meeting.

Meeting information will be emailed or sent electronically to known stakeholders, including public and private agencies providing housing assistance, health services, social services, child welfare services, economic development services, job training and employment assistances services, neighborhood organizations, and other interested parties.

All notices will be posted to the Town’s website and social media. Each notice will specify the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting, as well as contact data for additional information.

Information –

Shepherdstown will provide program and policy information to known stakeholders including the general public, public and private agencies providing housing assistance, health services, social services, child welfare services, economic development services, job training and employment assistance services, and other interested parties. This information will include:

- The funding (grant funds and program income) the Town expects to receive through the Community Development Block Grant, Home Investment Partnership, and any additional Federal Funding Initiatives or programs and the estimated amount that will benefit low- and moderate-income people;
- The range of activities that may be undertaken, as well as, activities previously funded;
- The Town's process of developing the Plan and its components including applications that may be submitted by potential subrecipients;
- The public's role in the program; and
- Other materials as needed to inform and educate the public about the programs.

This information will be provided by email, at public meetings and on the Town's website: www.shepherdstown.us.

The proposed and adopted Citizen Participation Plan, as well as, substantial amendments and the performance report will be accessible to the public at no cost on the Town's website: www.shepherdstown.us. Additionally, these documents will be available for review at Town Hall. A reasonable number of free copies will be available upon request.

A summary of the proposed Plan will be published in local, general circulation newspapers. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Plan and will include a list of locations where copies of the entire plan may be reviewed.

These materials will be available upon request in a form accessible to persons with disabilities.

Comments –

Comments noted at a public meeting and written or emailed comments made during the Plan process will be accepted by Town Hall until a specified date, typically for at least 30 days. The comment period associated with a specific activity will be published in a display ad in local, general circulation newspapers. All comments will be considered. A summary of all comments including comments not accepted and the rationale for their rejection will be attached to the final Plan and/or performance report, as appropriate.

No activity may be undertaken prior to the expiration of the public comment period. If adverse comments are received, they must be addressed prior to the implementation of the activity or amendment and included in the Plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Amendments –

Amendments that fall under the definition of “substantial change” shall be subject to a 30-day public comment period. “Substantial change” shall be defined as:

- Any new activity;
- Any cancellation of budgeted activity;
- A 25 percent increase or decrease in an activity; or
- Any change in an activity’s national objective designation.

A summary of any substantial amendment will be published in local, general circulation newspapers, followed by a 30-day public comment period which will be defined in the public notice.

All comments will be considered. In the event that adverse comments are received during the 30-day comment period, the amendment must be presented at the next official meeting. A summary of all comments pertaining to amendments including comments not accepted and the rationale for their rejection will be included in the annual performance report.

No amendment may be undertaken prior to the expiration of the public comment period.

Technical Assistance –

Shepherdstown will assist organizations and individuals’ representative of low- and moderate-income people interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding for an activity. Requests for technical assistance must be made in writing, specifying the name of the organization or individual requesting assistance, the name, address, phone number and/or email address of contact person; the nature of technical assistance requested; immediate problems and the reason for the request.

The Town will determine the level and type of assistance provided. If necessary, assistance may be provided by specialists jointly selected by the Town and the organization/individual requesting assistance.

Complaints and Grievances –

Substantive, written responses to written complaints and/or grievances will be provided within 15 working days of receipt, where practical.

Relocation –

The Town's policy is to administer the Community Development Block, Home Investment Partnership, and all other federally designated grants and programs without displacement. In the event displacement is unavoidable, the Town and/or other responsible party(s) will comply with the regulations of the Uniform Relocation Act and Section 104(d).

Access to Records –

Program information and records are available upon request at Town Hall during normal business hours. Such documents include the following:

- All mailing and promotional materials;
- Records of public meetings;
- All key documents, including prior applications, letters of approval, grant agreements, the citizen participation plan, performance reports, evaluation reports, other reports required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the proposed and approved application for the current year;
- Copies of the regulations and issuances governing the program; and
- Documents regarding other important program requirements, such as contracting procedures, environmental policies, fair housing and other equal opportunity requirements, and relocation provisions.

For more information or to submit comments about the programs:

Mail: Corporation of Shepherdstown - ATTN: Grant Committee

P.O. 248
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Email: clerk@shepherdstown.us

Phone: (304) 876-2312

TDD:

FAX:

Declaration of an Emergency –

When a Declaration of an Emergency has been ordered by the President of the United States, or the Governor of West Virginia, Shepherdstown will follow the following process concerning public hearings and public display of plans.

- If the Town is unable to hold open public hearings in person, the Town will be allowed to instead hold virtual public hearings through conference calls or an online video conference call platforms as long as the public is able to provide public comments during the virtual public hearing.
- If the Town is not able to publicly place the plans on public display at the locations referenced in the Citizen Participation Plan, the Town will put the plans on the City's website (www.shepherdstown.us) and will also email copies of the plans to any person who will request a copy of the plans via email upon request.
- If the Town is unable to conduct an open public forum type meeting, the Town then can approve the plans at a Town Council meeting through an on-line virtual Town Council meeting, if an in-person Council meetings are not happening because of the Emergency.