

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Community Development Program

PURPOSE

In order for the Community Development Program to operate effectively and to address the needs of the citizens of Oconto County, the entire population must be kept informed. The decision-making process must be open and consistent with state and federal regulations. To accomplish this, the following plan will be followed:

PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

1. The Oconto County Board of Supervisors, or its appointed designee, administers the Community Development Program and the Citizen Participation Program.
2. To insure responsiveness to the needs of its citizens, the County's Administrative Coordinator shall provide for and encourage citizen participation. Particular emphasis shall be given to participation by persons of low and moderate income (LMI) who are residents of blighted areas and/or target neighborhoods in which a Community Development Program will be concentrated.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

Official notice of hearings will be by public notice in the official newspaper two (2) weeks preceding the hearing. In addition, the public notice shall be posted at the Oconto County Courthouse. These notices will include time, place, and date of meeting, as well as a brief agenda. Notices printed in the newspaper in small print are not acceptable; instead they shall be in the format of an ad.

REQUIRED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings shall be held to obtain citizen views and to enable residents to respond to proposals at all stages of the Community Development Program, including the development of needs, the review of proposed activities, and the review of program performance. Hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries and with accommodations for the handicapped and, if needed, for non-English speaking persons.

1. The first hearing will receive citizen views and provide an explanation of Community Development needs including discussion of housing, public facilities, and economic development needs. Community goals and strategies should be reviewed including timetables, possible displacement, eligible activities and citizen views. A summary of proposed activities shall be included in the minutes of the hearing. Emphasis must be given to the point that activities other than the proposed activity are eligible and may be applied for in place of the proposed activity or at a later date.

2. The second public hearing will receive citizen views and provide a review of program performance.
3. The first public hearing shall be held during the development of a pre or final application for funds. The second public hearing shall be held during the implementation of the program.

PROGRAM INFORMATION/FILES/ASSISTANCE

1. To the degree that time and staff allow, technical assistance will be provided to any citizen who requests information about program requirements.
2. The responsible party will maintain, in the official office of local government, a record of all citizen participation efforts including minutes of meetings, newspaper clippings, and copies of notices and brochures.
3. Citizens will be invited to make proposals regarding the application. Every effort will be made to respond to all proposals prior to the final action on that subject.
4. Citizens may petition, or request in writing, assistance for developing application proposals or changes to proposals. The responsible party will respond to all such requests to the degree that time and staff allows.

COMPLAINTS

The responsible party will handle citizen complaints about the program in a timely manner. The responsible party will respond in writing to all written letters of complaint within 15 days where practicable. The first contact for complaints should be made to the responsible party at the official office of local government and then to the chief elected official.

In addition to the above procedure, any citizen may submit a written complaint directly to the following address:

**Department of Commerce
Division of Community Development
Bureau of Community Finance
P.O. Box 7970
Madison, WI 53707**

OTHER SPECIAL PROVISIONS

The responsible party will make special efforts to assure equal opportunity in the citizen participation process for non-English speaking persons and handicapped persons.