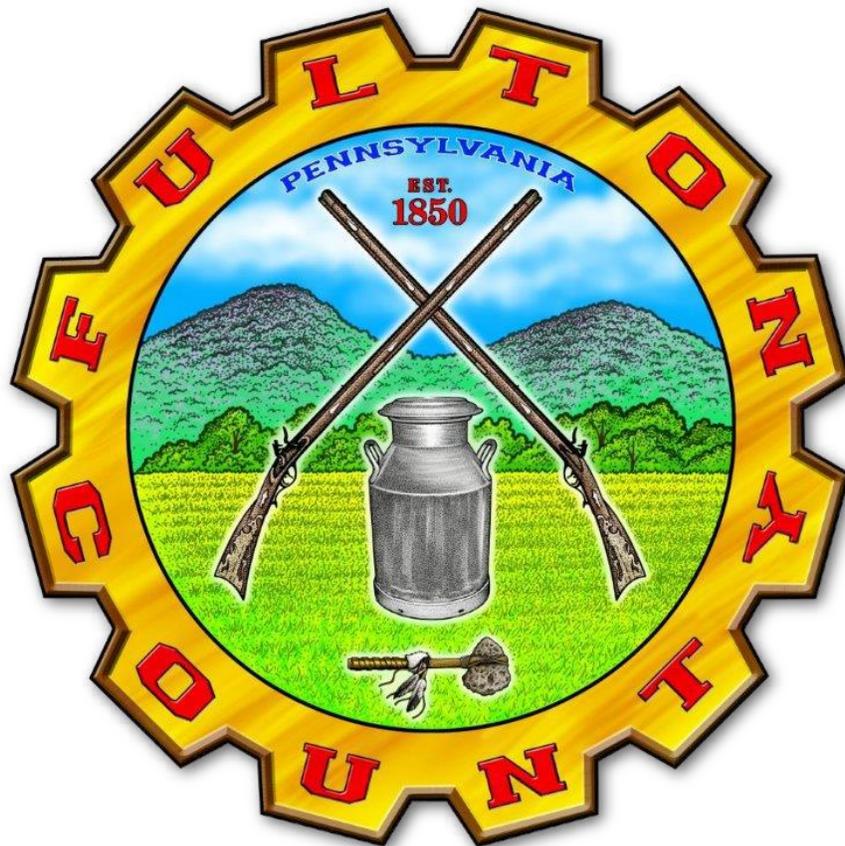




# CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

## COUNTY OF FULTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM



Updated June 16, 2020



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as amended, provides a comprehensive program for the orderly development of urban communities throughout the United States, by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment by expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income.

The major element relating to citizen involvement in a Community Development Program is the Citizen Participation Plan. This written document is a requirement of the Act and is intended to provide citizens with an opportunity to offer their views at all phases of the community development process.

In keeping with the goal of obtaining citizen views at critical decision making points in its community development programs, the County of Fulton has developed this Citizen Participation Plan, hereafter known as "the Plan".

## **DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION**

In each fiscal year that the County of Fulton submits an application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), it will provide its citizens with adequate information concerning (1) an approximate amount of funds that the County expects to be available for community development and housing activities; (2) the range of activities that may be undertaken; and (3) other pertinent and important program requirements such as Davis-Bacon Fair Labor Standards, Environmental Policies, Equal Opportunity and Fair Housing requirements, and acquisition and relocation activities.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS/ CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANNUAL APPLICATION**

For each program year, the County will schedule the initial hearing as early as is reasonable and will provide notice of such hearings by the public posting of the dates on the County website ([www.co.fulton.pa.us](http://www.co.fulton.pa.us)) and a notice will be posted at the Fulton County Commissioners Office and Fulton County Courthouse. The hearing will serve the purpose of disseminating program information, including funding and eligible activities and will provide a forum for citizen to articulate needs and express preferences regarding proposed community development and housing activities. Citizens will be encouraged to participate in the development of Fulton County's needs and the Three (3) Year Community Development Plan for the County's CDBG Program.

The public notice shall contain:

1. The amount of CDBG funds available
2. The range of activities that may be undertaken with CDBG funds
3. The amount of CDBG funds proposed to benefit low and moderate income persons
4. The projected use of CDBG funds in sufficient detail so as to allow for citizen awareness and comment on the proposed use of funds



5. An identification of proposed activities that could result in displacement and the applicant's plans for minimizing such displacement. the types and levels of assistance the County plans to make available to persons displaced by CDBG funded activities even if no displacement is expected to occur, with be provided at the public hearing
6. A statement that citizen may also comment on the Count'/s prior use of funds

The County of Fulton will hold a general meeting, which all citizens will be invited to attend prior to the submission of an application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Public announcement will be made as to the time and location of this meeting through publication in the newspaper at least five (5) days prior to the hearing date. At this meeting, the County will review the highlights of the initial public hearing, indicating those significant needs and preferences expressed which it believes should be incorporated in its application for the Community Development Block Grant. The County will also present an outline of the draft of a proposed application for discussion. Opportunity will then be given for comments and recommendations including additions and deletions. Also, any citizen may provide their recommendations or contribute thoughts concerning any element of the community development and housing program by submitting them in writing to the Fulton County CDBG Administrator at 116 West Market Street in McConnellsburg, PA. For each program year, such a meeting will be held prior to formalizing any application for approval by the Fulton County Commissioners.

The County may, if it feels necessary or desirable, conduct additional meetings on the outline of the draft of the application. Following the public hearing, the County will consider all comments and views received and, if appropriate, modify its proposed use of funds.

Thereafter, the County will prepare the formal community development application that will be presented to the Fulton County Commissioners for approval. The County will public once in the newspaper of general circulation, a notice of its intended use of CDBG funds. This notice will inform the public of the date and time that the County Commissioners will meet to consider approval of the application and invite public response prior to a specified deadline, which precedes approval by the County Commissioners. This public notice will allow for a reasonable number of days prior to the deadline established for public response. The application will be made available for public inspections.

After approval is received from the County Commissioners, the application is sent to DCED. Objections to the application can be registered with DCED. DCED will consider only those objections which:

1. Demonstrate that the County's description of needs and objectives is plainly inconsistent with available facts and data
2. Show that the activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the County.



3. Establish that the application does not comply with the requirement of the federal regulations regarding the application or other applicable law
4. Show that the proposed activities in the pre-application or application are otherwise ineligible under the federal regulations. Copies of the federal regulations referred to above can be obtained by the request from the County of Fulton.

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPANTS**

The County of Fulton will provide technical assistance citizen participants developing proposals for use of CDBG funds. This technical assistance should enable them to understand program requirements, such as Davis-Bacon Fair Labor Standards, environmental policies, equal opportunity requirements, fair housing requirements, relocation provisions, and the like. The County may elect to use third party contractors if the assistance requested is such that additional expertise may be necessary. Such assistance will be made available upon request to interested citizens or organizations to the County of Fulton CDBG Administrator. In addition, the County, through its hearing with citizens in the pre-application phase, will review such program requirements and will have available for interested parties handout material dealing with technical program requirements.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO APPLICATIONS/CONTRACT AGREEMENTS**

If the County of Fulton decides to amend significantly its application after it has become approved or reallocates funds or changes its general location for expenditures of funds, it will hold one public hearing on the proposed amendment. In addition, the County will make the proposed amendment available for review by the public in the office of the County Commissioners at least five (5) days prior to the meeting of the Commissioners at which such amendment is to be considered. Notice of such proposed amendment shall be published in the official newspaper of the County.

Upon approval of the modification/amendment by the County Commissioners, the County will make the information public for public inspection.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS AND MEETINGS**

The Fulton County Commissioners or their designee shall have the responsibility for calling meetings and hearings with citizens likely to be affected by the Community Development program and any other interested citizens. The format of the meeting and the moderating of such meetings shall also be the responsibility of the Chair of the Commissioners or the designee.

#### **CITIZEN COMPLAINTS**

Individual and group complaints which are not adequately responded to at public meetings or hearings may be formally presented in writing by the individual or organization. The Fulton County



Commissioners or their designee shall answer such complaints in a timely and responsive manner, usually within ten (10) working days.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT AND PARTICIPATION**

Certain projects within a Community Development Program may have a localized impact on a particular neighborhood. Generally, such projects will be comprehensive neighborhood revitalization programs. When such programs are proposed, the County of Fulton will hold public meetings to received suggestions, explain proposals, and generally involve the citizens in the decision making process. If possible, these meetings will be held in the impacted neighborhood.

### **PROGRAM PERFORMANCE**

Citizens shall have the opportunity to review and comment on the County of Fulton's performance in carrying out its Community Development Plans. The County will discuss the Performance Report at the yearly public hearing.

The County of Fulton will maintain citizen participation files which contain documentation that demonstrates compliance with all requirements contained in this Citizen Participation Plan.

### **PROGRAM DOCUMENT FOR CITIZEN REVIEW**

The County of Fulton shall make available to all interested citizens copies of any program documents prepared in conjunction with the County's Community Development Block Grant projects. These shall include:

1. Mailings and promotion material
2. Records of public hearings
3. Prior applications
4. Letters of approval
5. Grant agreements
6. Copies of the Citizen Participation Plan
7. Performance reports
8. Evaluations reports
9. Other reports required by DCED
10. The proposed and approved application for the current year
11. Copies of the regulations concerning the program
12. Documents regarding other important requirements (i.e. contracting procedures, etc.)
13. Environmental policies and review records
14. Fair housing and equal opportunity requirements
15. Relocation provisions
16. Intergovernmental review process

**Amendment – 4-2020 - CARES ACT Authorization:**

**Emergency Declaration Citizen Participation and Expedited Modification Process:**



Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) allows for a grantee to adopt and use expedited procedures to prepare, propose, modify, or amend its statement of activities to the FY 2019 and FY 2020 grant and new CARES funding related to the use of funding to address emerging COVID-19 response.

As long as national or local health authorities recommend social distancing and limiting public gatherings for public health reasons, Grantees do not need to hold in-person public hearings but “shall provide citizens with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment of no less than 5 calendar days. A “grantee may create virtual public hearings to fulfill applicable hearing requirements for all grants from funds made available under this law”. Any virtual hearing “shall provide reasonable notification and access for citizens in accordance with the grantee’s certifications, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues, and public access to all questions and responses”.

**ADOPTED**

Adopted by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners at the regular meeting of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

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**ATTEST**

**FULTON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stuart L. Ulsh, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Mellott-McConahy, Chief Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Randy H. Bunch

SEAL

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Paula J. Shives