

# **Thurston County and City of Olympia**

## **Public Participation Plan**

Thurston County and the City of Olympia are required to adopt a citizen participation plan, hereafter referred to as a “Public Participation Plan”, that sets forth the jurisdiction’s policies and procedures for public participation.

Residents and other stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the development of the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) and the planning and evaluation of the three federal grant programs addressed in the Consolidated Plan:

1. Urban County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, which includes Thurston County, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Rainier, Bucoda, and Tenino;
2. Thurston County Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), which includes Thurston County, Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Rainier, Bucoda, and Tenino; and
3. City of Olympia CDBG Program, which is only for Olympia.

The City of Olympia and Thurston County have developed a joint Public Participation Plan. This plan describes how to access information about the programs, examine the draft plans and report documents, review and comment on proposed activities, and provide comments on performance evaluations of approved activities. The public is also encouraged to participate in program implementation and monitoring activities.

As a joint plan, some elements of this plan will apply broadly to the AFH and all three programs. Other sections are more specific to a certain federal program or jurisdiction, as noted.

### **Purpose of the Public Participation Plan**

The Housing & Community Development Act of 1987 requires recipients of the federal grant program funds to develop a Public Participation Plan outlining the public planning process for the five-year Consolidated Plan, the annual Action Plans, and the AFH. The Public Participation Plan provides key information to help the public and other stakeholders understand how the proposed use of HOME and CDBG funds may impact them. This information includes:

1. An assessment of needs;
2. An outline of strategies;
3. An identification of specific activities to be funded;
4. Links each proposed activity to a federal CDBG national objective;
5. An identification of intended beneficiaries;
6. A clear identification of the benefit to low and moderate-income persons; and
7. An identification of all anticipated resources.

The general intent of these plans is to provide clear information to allow the public and other stakeholders to understand how the City and County will invest these federal HOME and CDBG funds, and in particular to provide sufficient details to allow the public and other stakeholders to understand how these programs might affect them.

### **Anti-Displacement and Anti-Relocation Plan**

As part of the Citizen Participation Plan, the public will be advised about the County and City plans to limit the displacement of persons through the CDBG and HOME program activities, and the ways the jurisdictions will assist any persons who may be displaced. The Anti-Displacement and Anti-Relocation Plan is included in the Consolidated Plan.

### **How the Public Can Participate**

The following table provides an overview of how the public can participate in the HOME and CDBG Programs and during the development of the AFH.

<b>Activity/Document</b>	<b>When Activity Begins</b>	<b>Public Comment Period</b>	<b>How to Participate and Access Documents</b>
<b>Consolidated Plan</b> (Five-Year Strategic Plan)	Starts six months preceding the coming Consolidated Plan Public Comment period	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two public hearings: 1) an early public hearing on housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and proposed strategies and actions for affirmatively furthering fair housing; and 2) public hearing on the draft Consolidated Plan and First Year Action Plan.</li><li>• Public community partner meetings</li><li>• Summary of plan published in the newspaper of record (per 24 CFR Part 91.105(b)(2))</li><li>• Documents online at <a href="http://www.co.thurston.wa.us">www.co.thurston.wa.us</a> or <a href="http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us">www.ci.olympia.wa.us</a></li><li>• Documents available at Thurston County Public Health and Social Services and Olympia City Hall</li></ul>
<b>Substantial Amendments to Consolidated Plan</b> (Changes to the Consolidated Plan)	At any point during the Consolidated Plan period	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public hearing</li><li>• Public community partner meetings</li><li>• Documents online at <a href="http://www.co.thurston.wa.us">www.co.thurston.wa.us</a> or <a href="http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us">www.ci.olympia.wa.us</a></li><li>• Documents available at Thurston County Public Health and Social Services and Olympia City Hall</li></ul>
<b>Annual Action Plan</b> (Program Year Activity Overview)	Starts six months preceding the program year	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public hearing</li><li>• Public community partner meetings</li><li>• Documents online at <a href="http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us">www.ci.olympia.wa.us</a> or <a href="http://www.co.thurston.wa.us">www.co.thurston.wa.us</a></li></ul>

Activity/Document	When Activity Begins	Public Comment Period	How to Participate and Access Documents
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents available at Thurston County Public Health and Social Services and Olympia City Hall</li> </ul>
<b>Substantial Amendments to Annual Action Plan</b> (Changes to an Annual Action Plan)	At any point during the Annual Action Plan period	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public hearing</li> <li>Public community partner meetings</li> <li>Documents online at <a href="http://www.co.thurston.wa.us">www.co.thurston.wa.us</a> or <a href="http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us">www.ci.olympia.wa.us</a></li> <li>Documents available at Thurston County Public Health and Social Services and Olympia City Hall</li> </ul>
<b>CAPER</b> (Annual Report on all CDBG and HOME-funded activities)	November of each program year	15 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public hearing</li> <li>Public community partner meetings</li> <li>Documents online at <a href="http://www.co.thurston.wa.us">www.co.thurston.wa.us</a> or <a href="http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us">www.ci.olympia.wa.us</a></li> <li>Documents available at Thurston County Public Health and Social Services and Olympia City Hall</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment of Fair Housing</b> (Five-year assessment)	Approximately 12 months before the start of the Consolidated Planning process	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public hearing</li> <li>Public community partner meetings</li> <li>Summary of plan published in the newspaper of record (per 24 CFR Part 91.105(b)(2))</li> <li>Documents online at: <a href="http://www.co.thurston.wa.us">www.co.thurston.wa.us</a>, <a href="http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us">www.ci.olympia.wa.us</a>, <a href="http://www.hatc.org">www.hatc.org</a></li> <li>Documents available at Thurston County Public Health and Social Services and Olympia City Hall</li> </ul>

\* Thurston County and City of Olympia currently offer public hearings in a “hybrid” format, allowing the public to participate in the public hearings remotely. This opportunity for remote hearings is anticipated to continue in the future and/or whenever a public health emergency exists.

### **Public Participation Requirements**

The Public Participation Plan is a required element of the Consolidated Plan for the CDBG Program, the HOME Program, and the AFH as specified by federal regulations that can be found at 24 CFR Part 91.105. These regulations define how Thurston County and Olympia will ensure and coordinate public access and public participation in the decision-making process for the CDBG and HOME programs. The process includes providing opportunities for developing, reviewing and commenting on the draft Consolidated

Plan, annual Action Plan, AFH, Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report, and Public Participation Plan.

Additional regulations on the CDBG Program can be found at 24CFR Part 570, and regulations for the HOME Program can be found at 24 CFR Part 92.

The joint Public Participation Plan for Thurston County, the County HOME Consortium and the City of Olympia contains the following elements:

### **Public Participation**

Thurston County and the City of Olympia encourages all residents, public agencies, and other stakeholders, specifically low- and moderate-income residents and residents of publicly-assisted housing developments, to become involved and participate in the Consolidated Planning Process. Additionally, other stakeholders such local and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, and other organizations (including businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations) are encouraged to participate.

### **Access to Meetings**

The County and the City will provide adequate and timely notification of public meetings and provide assistance to persons with disabilities and/or who are in need of special accommodations (see Public Hearing and Notices on the next page). A translator will be made available at all public meetings when a significant number of non-English speaking persons or interest groups notify the County or City at least seven days prior to a public hearing meeting.

### **Access to Information and Records**

The public, public agencies, and other stakeholders will have reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Urban County's use of CDBG funding, the Home Consortium's use of HOME funds, and the City of Olympia's use of CDBG funds covered under the Consolidated Plan. HUD-provided data and supplemental information that Thurston County plans to incorporate into the AFH will be made available at the start of the public participation process, or as soon as feasible thereafter. The following documents are available for public review:

- HOME Federal Rules, Regulations, and Guidelines (24 CFR Part 92);
- CDBG Federal Rules, Regulations and Guidelines (24 CFR Part 570);
- *Prior* Olympia CDBG Consolidated Plans (2018-2022); *Prior* Thurston County Regional Consolidated Plan (2018-2022);
- Annual Action Plans for both County and City prior program years;
- Agencies request for proposals submitted for HOME and CDBG funding;
- Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Reports (CAPER) for both the County and the City of Olympia; and
- Public hearing records for both the County and the City of Olympia.
- Draft Assessment of Fair Housing.

The public will have the opportunity to provide verbal and written comments regarding program policies, proposed annual budget allotments, and funding priorities.

### **Thurston County Documents**

Copies of the Consolidated Plan (and amendments), Public Participation Plan, annual Action Plan (and amendments), AFH (and amendments), and the annual CAPER are available at the following locations:

- Thurston County offices at the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services;
- Thurston County website at [www.co.thurston.wa.us](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us);
- Housing Authority of Thurston County (AFH Only).

### **City of Olympia Documents**

Copies of the Consolidated Plan (and amendments), Public Participation Plan, annual Action Plan, AFH, and the annual CAPER are available at the following locations:

- City of Olympia Housing Program at Olympia City Hall;
- City of Olympia's website at: [www.ci.olympia.wa.us](http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us);
- Housing Authority of Thurston County (AFH Only)

### **Technical Assistance**

Upon request, technical assistance will be made available to groups representing low- and moderate-income persons to assist them in understanding the requirements for developing proposals under the Consolidated Plan or to comment on the AFH.

### **Public Education**

Thurston County will actively strive to educate and publicly inform the public on low-income housing and community development issues through the periodic promotion and sponsorship of public housing forums on affordable and homeless housing issues. The County and City will also utilize the following resources to keep the public informed:

- Community partner and other public meetings;
- Public access television announcements;
- Website updates;
- Direct emailed copies of documents and notices;
- Direct email to the County and City's Housing Programs' list of concerned persons, organizations and other stakeholders; and
- Presentations at local meetings of related organizations including, but not limited to, the HOME Consortium and the Thurston County Housing Task Force.

### **Public Hearings/Public Notices**

The purpose of public hearings is to encourage and provide opportunities for public comment on all phases of the planning process, which include identifying housing and community needs, strategies, and priorities; determining program funding levels; and evaluating program performance.

During these public hearings, both the County and City will collect verbal and written comments on the draft Consolidated Plan, Substantial Amendments, Annual Action Plan, AFH and the CAPER.. Hearings will provide reasonable notification and access for the public in accordance with Thurston County and/or Olympia's certifications, timely responses from local officials to all public questions and issues, and public access to all public questions and responses. Public hearings will be accessible to people with disabilities. Public hearing notices will be published in the newspaper of record and will encourage the participation of non-English speaking persons, the disabled, and minorities. Where reasonable, and when requested seven days in advance, translation services for non-English speaking persons and

assistive listening devices will be available. Persons needing special accommodations should contact the Thurston County or City of Olympia officials seven days prior to the hearing using the following contact information:

Thurston County Clerk of the Board Telephone number (360) 786-5440  
TDD number (360) 754-2933

City of Olympia Housing Program Telephone (360)753-8183  
TTY (360) 753-8270 (during normal business hours to be connected via a text telephone machine)  
or use the Washington State Relay Service by dialing 711, or 1 (800) 833-6384.

#### Number of Public Hearings

The County and the City will each hold a minimum of two public hearings during each program year, with additional public hearings for the Consolidated Plan and AFH held, as required. Additional public hearings pertaining to amendments may be held, as required.

#### Assessment of Fair Housing

Prior to the Consolidated Plan process, the County and the City will hold at least one public hearing on the AFH before the AFH is published for comment. This public hearing will solicit input from the community on AFH-related data and affirmatively furthering fair housing in the County's community development programs.

#### Plans – Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan Hearing

Every five years, the County and City must update the Consolidated Plan. When a Consolidated Plan is updated, there will be two hearings before action.

- The first public hearing will be held prior to the start of the Consolidated Plan period before the Consolidated Plan is published for comment. This hearing will also provide an opportunity to comment on priority needs and goals, the AFH, and the development of proposed activities for the first year of the Consolidated Plan period, which is the first annual Action Plan for that Consolidated Plan period. This hearing will be held in early spring to allow for preparation of the Consolidated Plan and the first annual Action Plan.
- The second public hearing will be held to allow for timely submission of the Consolidated Plan and/or the annual Action Plan 45 days prior to the start of the coming program year, which occurs on or before July 15.

For the four years following the Consolidated Plan update (Years 2-5), the County and City must submit Annual Action Plans to HUD. During these years, one public hearing will be held 45 days prior to the start of the coming program year, which occurs on or before July 15.

#### Annual Report – CAPER Public Hearing

The second public hearing will occur during the month of November, timed to allow for the submission of the annual CAPER report 45 days following the completion of the program year on or before November 15<sup>th</sup>. This public hearing will discuss the performance of the program, year-end fiscal and narrative summaries of activity, and will provide information on housing and community development needs .

#### Record of Public Comments

A summary of the public comments along with the County's and City's responses will be incorporated

into the Consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan, AFH, and CAPER, whichever is appropriate. The public comment period for the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, AFH, and CAPER will be thirty days, and may run concurrent with the public notice date. Notices of public hearings will be published in the Olympian Newspaper and will include an opportunity for public comment for at least thirty days. All proposed substantial amendment changes to the Consolidated Plan and/or annual Action Plan will adhere to the same public notice and public hearing requirements.

### **Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, or the AFH**

The County and the City can amend the Consolidated Plan, the annual Action Plan, and the AFH after adoption by following the process in their published Public Participation Plan for making changes. If a change is *not* considered a substantial amendment, the County and the City can follow the public process for the annual Action Plan to allow for review and approval of changes that will then be reported in that program year's annual report, the CAPER.

The following will not be considered substantial amendments:

- Adjustments of allocations of program income to reflect actual (rather than anticipated) income;
- Pursuit of contingency projects identified in the Annual Action Plan;
- Adjustments in project funding, provided no new projects are proposed without a substantial amendment process, and provided that the change in federal funds awarded to a project is not increased more than 30 percent or \$50,000, whichever is greater;
- Allocation of funds which meet the Urgent Need test of HUD (e.g. existing conditions pose serious and immediate threat to health/welfare of community).

If the change is determined to have a more significant impact, the County and the City must follow the public process for a substantial amendment. Changes to the Consolidated Plan, the annual Action Plan, or the AFH are considered a substantial amendment if the proposed change in the use of either HOME or CDBG funds meets the following criteria:

- A change in allocation priorities, which is considered a change of federal funds awarded to a project of greater than 30 percent or \$50,000, whichever is greater;
- A change in the general location of activities;
- A major change in the scope of a project;
- The addition of a specific project which is not included as a contingency in the annual Action Plan or considered an Urgent Action; or
- A material change that affects the information on which the AFH is based to the extent that the analysis, the fair housing contributing factors, or the priorities and goals of the AFH no longer reflect actual circumstances.

All substantial amendments will be subject to the same public participation requirements as outlined above.

### **Distribution of Funds**

The distribution of HOME and CDBG funds and implementation of program activities will be performed by subrecipient/contractor organizations selected through a competitive and open request for proposal process. The Urban County CDBG program, the Thurston County HOME Program and the Olympia CDBG will strategically target funds to meet prioritized needs consistent with the goals and strategies identified in the Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plan. Proposals will be solicited annually, based

upon the County's and City's anticipated receipt of its annual allocations from HUD. Funding decisions and awards will be determined through an open and evaluative assessment of the organization's experience, costs, and the administrative and organizational capacity for delivering services.

The County and City may refine their public request for proposals process during the Consolidated Plan period. All changes to the schedule, format or other aspects of the request for proposals process will be subject to the open meetings act and/or public notice.

### **Public Participation Advisory Group**

Section 104(a)(3) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 requires that residents have an advisory role in planning, implementing and assessment of community development programs. An advisory group (which may be an existing community organization) will convene at least once a year to provide input in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Urban County CDBG, the HOME Program and the City of Olympia CDBG Program.

### **Public Complaints/Grievances**

A complaint pertaining to the Consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan, AFH, any plan amendments, and/or the annual CAPER report may be submitted to:

Thurston County Public Health and Social Services  
412 Lilly Road NE, Olympia, WA, 98506.

City of Olympia Housing Program  
Olympia City Hall, 601 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, Olympia, WA 98501

Complaints may also be submitted to [HousingThurston@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:HousingThurston@co.thurston.wa.us). Staff will review the complaint and will provide a response within a period of 15 working days of receipt of the complaint.