

# City of Meridian Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Meridian is an entitlement community for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As a recipient of these funds, the City is required to have a strategy for citizen participation.

This document outlines the City's process and plans for soliciting and receiving citizen input during the lifecycle of Meridian's CDBG Program. Included in this is the Consolidated Plan (Con Plan), Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI), or amendments to any of these documents. This plan will be effective upon approval.

The City of Meridian recognizes the importance of public participation in understanding current housing and community development needs and barriers and prioritizing resources to address those needs. The Citizen Participation Plan is intended to encourage citizens of all ages, genders, economic levels, races, ethnicities, cultures, and special needs equal access to become involved in the CDBG planning process each year. This Citizen Participation Plan was written per Sections 91.100 and 91.105 of HUD's Consolidated Plan regulations.

Any complaints related to the Con Plan, Action Plan, CAPER, AI, amendments, or the CDBG program, in general, should be directed to Meridian's CDBG Program Administrator. Staff will respond within five (5) business days.

## Translations and Reasonable Accommodations

The Citizen Participation Plan, Con Plan, Action Plan, and AI will be made available in formats accessible to persons with disabilities and in languages other than English upon request. All materials, announcements, and notices of the hearing will include information about how persons with disabilities and non-English speaking persons may request accommodations to review the proposed plan and provide written or oral comments. Upon request, or in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate, the City will provide both written interpretation(s) of the proposed consolidated or action plan one (1) week before the public hearing or within 48 hours of a request; and/or oral interpretation at the public hearing.

## Consultation with Organizations and City Agencies

When preparing the Con Plan, Action Plans, and the AI, the City will actively consult with public and private agencies that provide housing, health, and social services to ensure that the interests and needs of all groups are being adequately identified. These may include the regional Continuum of Care, private businesses/employers, residential developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations, including those that provide services to special needs populations. This consultation will occur through interviews conducted with such organizations, stakeholder meetings, and incorporation of data and reports produced by such organizations into the Con Plan, Action Plans, and AI, where applicable.

## Glossary of Relevant Terms

**Action Plan.** The yearly portion of the Consolidated Plan identifies the specific activities and projects to be undertaken by the City with CDBG funds during that program year.

**Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI).** This document reviews housing challenges and fair housing issues in the City and broader region. It results in goals and action steps to address and mitigate barriers.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).** Established under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as amended, Public Law 93-383, and the funding received under such programs, assists communities in addressing housing and community development needs, primarily for low- and moderate-income residents.

**Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).** The CAPER reports the City's completion of projects and activities as outlined within the Action and Consolidated Plans and the expenditure of CDBG and related block grant funds, as received by the City.

**Consolidated Plan.** A five-year plan of a City's housing and community development needs, resources, priorities, and proposed activities to be undertaken for the CDBG programs.

**Relevant Areas and Programs.** The City of Meridian's 2022-2026 Consolidated Plan covers the geographic area within the city limits of Meridian. CDBG funds must benefit low- and moderate-income residents and/or neighborhoods within Meridian.

## Public Participation and Comment

### Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans

The City will conduct at least two public hearings at different stages of the annual planning process to obtain citizens' views on housing and community development needs, program performance, funding priorities, and to respond to questions. At least one of these hearings will be held before the proposed plan is published for comment.

The City may elect to collect citizen input through alternative public involvement techniques (e.g. focus groups, surveys, and social media) with the intent of developing a shared vision for investment in communities and neighborhoods.

Upon request, the City will offer technical assistance to groups that represent low- and moderate-income persons, in developing funding proposals under any of the goals covered by the Consolidated Plan. The level and type of assistance will be determined annually by the City depending on need, as evidenced in past applications and expressed by residents, stakeholders, and past grantees. The assistance need not include the provision of funds to the groups receiving technical assistance.

The citizen input techniques will be designed to encourage participation by low- and moderate-income residents, residents living in neighborhoods with revitalization needs, residents benefitting from public housing assistance, and residents with special needs. The Ada County Housing Authority (ACHA) will be notified about Consolidated Plan activities related to developments and resident communities to allow this information to be available at public hearings required for its plan.

Before the adoption of the Con Plan and Action Plans, the City will make available to interested parties the draft Plan for a comment period of no less than 30 days and will conduct a public hearing during or at the end of the 30-day comment period.

The 30-day comment period and the public hearing for the Consolidated Plan and Action Plans will be noticed in the City of Meridian's newspaper of record and by posting the notice on the City's website and social media sites. The public notice shall be published at least two weeks in advance of the public hearing and shall include information regarding the subject of the hearing, the date, time, and location of the public hearing, and a notice of opportunity to provide written or oral comment. Public hearings will follow the format set forth by the City for regular Council meetings and may include alternative formats such as a virtual platform.

In the event of an emergency, HUD may grant a waiver to the number of days required for a public comment period to ensure funding can get into the community as quickly as possible. Under these circumstances, Action Plans, substantial amendments, and the Citizen Participation Plan will only require a five (5) day public comment period. The legal notice for at least one local newspaper will be published no less than five (5) days before the end of the public comment period.

The draft Con Plan will contain the amount of assistance the City expects to receive through the HUD CDBG grants and the strategic goals that will guide funding over the five planning periods. The Action Plans will detail the projects to which the City may allocate funds for that particular program year.

Electronic copies of the draft plans will be available on the City's website and circulated to residents and stakeholders who have expressed interest in receiving the document via email. Hardcopies will be available at City offices upon request.

The Council will consider any comments or views of individuals or groups received in writing or orally during the Plan process and at the public hearing to be held during, or immediately following, the 30-day public comment period. The Council shall, at a regular or special public meeting, review the proposed Plan and the summaries regarding the incorporation of citizen comments or views provided, and vote on a resolution to adopt the final Consolidated Plan or Action Plan.

Comments received on the draft plans will be summarized in the final plan submitted to HUD. Copies of letters and emails received may be appended to the plans if requested and permitted by commenters. All comments received during the planning process and public comment period will be accepted and a summary attached to each plan.

### [Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice](#)

The citizen participation process for the AI will include alternative public involvement techniques (e.g. focus groups, surveys, and social media) with a focus on reaching residents who are most vulnerable to fair housing challenges and are historically underrepresented in community engagement processes. The AI will be available for public review during a 30-day comment period. Electronic copies of the draft AI will be available on the City's website and circulated to residents and stakeholders who have expressed interest in receiving the document. Hard copies will be available for review at City offices upon request.

## CAPER

A public notice of the CAPER availability with the date, time, and process for public comment will be published in the City of Meridian's newspaper of record at least 15 days in advance of the end of the public comment period. The City will accept all comments received during the public comment period and provide a summary of these comments with the CAPER.

## Substantial Amendments

Public comments or a change in circumstances may warrant an amendment to the Con Plan and/or Action Plan. Minor changes require notice to HUD while major changes require a substantial amendment. The following criteria define adjustments that require a substantial amendment:

- A change in the expected federal allocation of the block grant of 20 percent or more.
- A change in the City's allocation plan that would redirect more than 20 percent of annual funding to a different project goal.
- Carrying out a project using CDBG funds or program income not previously described in the Con Plan or Action Plan.

In the event of a substantial amendment, the City will publish a notice of the recommended changes and the date, time, and location of the public hearing in the City of Meridian's newspaper of record at least two weeks in advance of the public hearing. The City will provide a 30-day public comment period with a public hearing during or at the end of the 30-day comment period. The Council shall, at a regular or special public meeting, review the proposed substantial amendment and the summaries regarding the incorporation of citizen comments or views provided, and vote on a resolution to adopt the substantial amendment. Following the Council's passage of the resolution adopting the substantial amendment, the City will notify HUD of the amendment and submit a copy of each substantial amendment to HUD as it occurs.

City Council will consider any comments on the substantially amended Plan from individuals or groups. Comments must be received in writing or orally at public hearings. Virtual meetings and oral comments from the public are allowable if the City chooses to utilize this platform. A summary of the written and public hearing comments on the substantial amendments will be included in the final Plan.

## Public access to records

The City will provide all interested parties with access to information and records related to the City's Con Plan, Action Plans, CAPER, and the City's use of funds under all programs covered by the Con Plan during the preceding five years.

## Use of available waivers from HUD

The City of Meridian, when provided the authority from the Housing and Urban Development Department, may utilize any flexibilities or statutory waivers provided by HUD as they relate to the Community Development Block Grant Program. Waivers are typically provided in the event of a disaster and/or emergency declaration, though waivers may be available at other HUD-specified times.

A declared disaster or emergency may include, but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Man-Made Disasters
- 2) Natural Disasters
- 3) Terrorism
- 4) Infectious Disease or Pandemic
- 5) National Emergency

If waivers or other authorities are available from HUD to assist in expediting available additional resources and/or any plan modifications, the City may take full advantage of offered exceptions to standard Citizen Participation requirements outlined in other sections of this plan. Reasonable notice and opportunity for public response or comment will be considered as the minimum outlined in any provided waivers.

## Resolution

Will be added when complete.