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*As amended at Wednesday, November 2, 2011 and Wednesday, November 7, 2012 Citizens Advisory Board Meetings.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

Pierce County is required by law to have a detailed Citizen Participation Plan, which contains the County's policies and procedures for public involvement in the Consolidated Plan process and the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership (HOME), and Emergency Shelter/ Solutions Grant (ESG) funds. This Citizen Participation Plan must be available to the public.

A. PURPOSE

The law requires that our Citizen Participation Plan provides for and encourages public participation, emphasizing involvement by low- and moderate-income persons — especially those living in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) expects the County to take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation of minorities, persons who do not speak English, and persons with disabilities.

B. THE ROLE OF LOWER-INCOME PERSONS

The primary purpose of the programs covered by this Citizen Participation Plan is to improve communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

Since the amount of federal CDBG funds that the County receives each year from HUD is based upon the level of both poverty and substandard housing conditions in Pierce County, it is necessary that public participation genuinely involve lower-income residents who experience these conditions. Involvement by low- and moderate-income residents is encouraged at all stages of the process, including needs and activities determination and funding allocation.

C. THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN PROCESS

The policies and procedures in this Citizen Participation Plan relate to several stages of action mentioned in law or regulation. In general, these stages or events include the following:

- 1) Identification of housing and community development needs.
- 2) Preparation of a draft use of funds for the upcoming year called the proposed Annual Action Plan. Every five years, a proposed new Five-Year Strategic Plan will also be developed.
- 3) Formal approval by the County Executive of an Annual Action Plan and/or Five-Year Strategic Plan.
- 4) On occasion during the year, it might be necessary to change the use of the money already budgeted in an Annual Action Plan or to change the priorities established in the Five-Year Strategic Plan. In that case a formal Substantial Amendment will be proposed, considered, and acted upon as outlined in Section II. B. 3. of this document.
- 5) After a program year is complete, a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) must be drafted for public review and comment, after which it is sent to HUD.

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II. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

A. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Citizen Participation Plan is designed to facilitate and encourage public participation in the Consolidated Plan process. In particular, the Citizen Participation Plan seeks to encourage the involvement of low- and moderate-income persons.

According to the federal law regulating the expenditure of CDBG, ESG and HOME funds, jurisdictions must provide improved accountability to the public. Any change in the public participation process as outlined in this document will require an amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan, including; public notice, public review, a public hearing, and majority vote of the Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) for recommendation to the County Executive and/or the appointed representative.

Pierce County will use the following Public Participation Process (PPP):

- Pierce County will accept comments for a period of not less than 30 days beginning the day after the date of official publication of the amendment. Public notice will be published in the *Tacoma News Tribune*, the County's website, and in the Pierce County paper of record. During the public comment period the document will be available for review at the following locations:

Pierce County Community Connections Building, 1305 Tacoma Avenue South, Suite 104, Tacoma, WA 98402 (during regular business hours)

Pierce County website: <http://www.piercecountywa.org/cdbg>. Click on the link for "Information for Contractors & Providers" and then click on the link for "Program Plans."

- Paper copies of the document will be available to the public free of charge within five days of a request.
- A public hearing will be held before the Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) to take and consider public comment. A majority vote of the CAB is needed for formal recommendation to the County Executive and/or the appointed representative.

B. CONSOLIDATED PLAN AND ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year plan that identifies the needs of low- and moderate-income persons and areas of the county and sets forth a five-year strategy to address those needs. The Action Plan identifies the specific needs to be addressed each year based on the priorities established in the Consolidated Plan's five-year strategy. The following steps outline the opportunities for public involvement in the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan:

1. Preparation

The County must identify the needs of low- and moderate-income persons and areas of the county, and set priorities in order to decide which needs should get more attention and more resources than other needs. In order to solicit community input, which is essential to determining these needs and priorities, the County will:

- Consult with local public agencies that assist low- and moderate-income persons and areas, including County staff, state and federal agencies, regional agencies and members of the Pierce

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County Consortium including every city in Pierce County except for the cities of Auburn, Enumclaw, Pacific, Tacoma, Bonney Lake, and Lakewood.

- Consult with private agencies, including local nonprofit service providers and advocates such as the local public housing agency, health agencies, homeless service providers, nonprofit housing developers, social service agencies (including those focusing on services to children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, persons with substance abuse problems, etc).
- Publicly notice and conduct a public meeting to solicit input on needs and priorities.
- Community Connections will issue a NOFA in October and a reminder in November every two years beginning in the fall of 2011 for CDBG public service and ESG activities (for FY 2012 & FY 2013 funds). CDBG public facilities will stay at a one year funding cycle. The notice will identify the amount of assistance the jurisdiction expects to receive (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income. Technical assistance workshop(s) regarding the funding process will be provided to interested organizations.
- Develop an assessment of needs in Pierce County as well as a strategic plan to address those needs.
- Publicly notice a 30-day review and comment period where a complete draft of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan will be made available to the public.
- Conduct a public hearing before the Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) to accept public comment and finalize a recommendation to the County Executive and/or the appointed representative for signature enacting the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan.

2. Adoption

As noted above, the County will provide several opportunities for citizen involvement in the Consolidated Plan process prior to recommendation of the Consolidated Plan to the County Executive and/or the appointed representative. These opportunities include:

- Published notice of a public meeting in the local newspapers, the *Tacoma News Tribune* and the Pierce County paper of record, and on the County's website at least 14 days in advance of the meeting for the Tacoma News Tribune and 7 days in advance of the meeting for the paper of record.
- A public meeting on needs and priorities for the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan.
- A public notice announcing the 30-day comment period and public hearing for the Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Draft Annual Action Plan will be published in the *Tacoma News Tribune* and the Pierce County paper of record, and posted on the County's website at <http://www.piercecountywa.org/cdbg>. The notice will list the locations where the document(s) will be available for review, and the notice will be posted prior to the start of the comment period.
- The Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Draft Annual Action Plan will be available at the following locations in Pierce County:

Pierce County Community Connections Building, 1305 Tacoma Ave South, Suite 104, Tacoma, WA 98402
Pierce County website: <http://www.piercecountywa.org/cdbg>, click on "Plans and Reports"

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The Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Draft Annual Action Plan will be made accessible to persons with disabilities upon request (contact Stephanie Bray at 253-798-6917 or TDD/Voice 1-800-833-6388). In addition, a reasonable number of free copies will be provided to citizens or groups requesting copies of the document(s).

- At the end of the 30-day comment period, the Citizens' Advisory Board will hold a publicly noticed meeting and public hearing. A majority vote of the CAB is needed for formal recommendation to the County Executive and/or the appointed representative for signature enacting the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. In preparing the Final Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. The final documents will have a section that presents all comments and explains why any comments were not accepted.

3. Amendments

The Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan will be amended anytime there is a change in one of the priorities presented on the HUD-required Priority Table; a change in the use of money to an activity not mentioned in the final Annual Action Plan; or a change in the purpose, location, scope, or beneficiaries of an activity (described more fully later). Pierce County is responsible for providing citizens with reasonable notice in their local newspaper and an opportunity for citizens to comment when substantial amendments are made to the Plan, as indicated below;

Minor Changes

- A change in the amount of any single source of federal funds awarded to a project by 50% or less.
- Minor changes do not require a public notice or the citizen participation process.

Substantial Amendments

-
- Funding of an activity type not described in the Annual Action Plan.
- Changing the priorities contained in the Five-Year Strategic Plan of the Consolidated Plan.
- Increasing or reducing the amount allocated to an activity by more than 50%, except when the activity must be dropped due to circumstances beyond the County's control (e.g., a subrecipient elects not to do an activity).
- A change in the purpose, location, scope, or beneficiaries of an activity:

-The activity will no longer principally benefit the targeted population as identified in the Action Plan (e.g., senior citizens in certain areas, low- and moderate-income homeowners, residents of x neighborhood instead of y neighborhood).

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-The activity will no longer address the low- and moderate-income need identified in the Action Plan or the activity ceases to address the elimination of slums and blight as identified in the Action Plan.

-The activity location of an area-benefiting activity changes so that the completed activity will principally serve beneficiaries other than those originally intended.

-There must be reasonable notice of a proposed Substantial Amendment so that residents will have an opportunity to review it and comment on it. Notice will be made according to the procedures described earlier in this Citizen Participation Plan (see page 2, Public Participation Process (PPP)). In preparing a Final Substantial Amendment, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. The Final Substantial Amendment will have a section that presents all comments, plus explanations as to why any comments were not accepted.

C. CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT

Every year, Pierce County must submit to HUD a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) within 90 days of the close of the program year. In general, the CAPER must describe how funds were actually used and the extent to which these funds were used for activities that benefited low- and moderate-income people. The following steps outline the opportunities for public involvement in the CAPER:

- Public notice will be made according to the procedures described later in this Citizen Participation Plan. The public notice will identify a 15-day public review and comment period for the CAPER.
- During the 15-day public review period, the document will be available for review at the following locations:

Pierce County Community Connections Building, 1305 Tacoma Ave South, Suite 104 Tacoma, WA 98402 (during regular business hours)

Pierce County website: <http://www.piercecountywa.org/cdbg>Careful consideration will be given to all written comments submitted by the public. These comments will be addressed in the CAPER.

- A majority vote of the CAB is needed for formal recommendation to the County Executive and/or the appointed representative for signature enacting the CAPER and submitting the document to HUD.

III. PUBLIC NOTICE

A. PUBLIC NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

There shall be advance public notice once a federally required document is available, such as the proposed Annual Action Plan or Five-Year Consolidated Plan, any proposed Substantial Amendment to the Action Plan or Consolidated Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

In addition, there shall be advance public notice of all public hearings and all public meetings such as the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) and other County committee and commission meetings relating to the funds or planning process covered by this Citizen Participation Plan.

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B. "ADEQUATE" PUBLIC NOTICE

Adequate advance notice is "timely"; it is given with enough lead time for the public to take informed action. The amount of lead time can vary, depending on the event. The content of notices will give residents a clear understanding of the event being announced.

C. FORMS OF PUBLIC NOTICE

Pierce County Community Connections staff will ensure adequate advance notice of all Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) public meetings and hearings. Adequate noticing will include:

- Printing notices in the *Tacoma News Tribune* at least 14 days prior to the CAB public hearings and the Pierce County paper of record at least 7 days prior to the public and hearings.
- Posting notices at the Pierce County Department of Community Connections, 1305 Tacoma Ave South, Suite 104, Tacoma, WA 98402
- Posting notices on the Pierce County website: <http://www.piercecountywa.org/cdbg>, click on "Plans and Reports"

Citizens' Advisory Board meetings are usually held the first Wednesday of the month at 6 PM. The CAB calendar is posted on the Pierce County website: <http://www.piercecountywa.org/cdbg>.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings are required by law in order to obtain the public's views and to provide the public with the County's responses to public questions and proposals. The law requires public hearings at all stages of the process, including at least a hearing about community needs, a public hearing to review proposed uses of funds, and a public hearing to assess how funds were spent during the previous program year.

Public hearings will be held only after there has been adequate notice as described in the Public Notice part of this Citizen Participation Plan, including a legal advertisement in the *Tacoma News Tribune* 14 days prior to the public hearing and the Pierce County paper of record 7 days prior to the public hearings. Public hearings will usually be held in the evening at a time convenient to most residents, especially those who might benefit from the use of funds.

Public hearings may be held at County facility locations, neighborhood or Community centers, or local libraries, all of which are accessible by public transportation. Public hearings may be held at these locations; however, the final recommendation to the County Executive and/or the appointed representative, of the Annual Action Plan, Five-Year Strategic Plan, and CAPER will be conducted at the Pierce County Community Connections Building, 3602 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98418 in the Sound View Conference Room. All of these locations are accessible to people with disabilities, and accommodations will be made for people with disabilities when requests are made at least five working days prior to a hearing. Translators will also be provided for people who do not speak English when requests are made at least five working days prior to a hearing. To request accommodations and/or a translator contact Stephanie Bray at 253-798-6917 or TDD/Voice 1-800-833-6388.

V. PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As required by law, Pierce County will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the data or content of the Consolidated Plan, as well as the proposed, actual, and past use of funds covered by this Citizen Participation Plan. The County will also

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provide reasonable public access to records about any uses of these funds during the previous five years. Also, as required by law, the County will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to local meetings relating to the proposed or actual use of funds (such as Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) meetings and other County committee and commission meetings).

A. CONSOLIDATED PLAN DOCUMENTS

Consolidated Plan documents include the Annual Action Plans, the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), and the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, as well as substantial amendments to the Annual Action Plan or the Five-Year Strategic Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports, and the Citizen Participation Plan.

B. ADOPTION OF CONSOLIDATED PLAN DOCUMENTS

All finalized documents are recommended by the Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) with final approval by the Pierce County Executive, and/or the appointed representative.

B. AVAILABILITY OF CONSOLIDATED PLAN DOCUMENTS

In the spirit of encouraging public participation, copies of Consolidated Plan documents will be provided to the public at no cost and within one week of a request. These materials will be available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, when requested.

C. LOCATION OF DOCUMENTS

Consolidated Plan documents will also be available at the following locations during their respective review periods:

- Pierce County Community Connections Building, 1305 Tacoma Ave South, Suite 104, Tacoma, WA 98402
Pierce County website <http://www.piercecounty.wa/org/cdbg>, click on "Plans and Reports"

Copies of the final documents will be available at the Pierce County Community Connections Building, 1305 Tacoma Ave South, Suite 104, Tacoma, WA 98402.

VI. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

County staff will work with organizations and individuals representative of low- and moderate-income people who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding for an activity. All potential applicants for funding are encouraged to contact County staff for technical assistance before completing a proposal form. Specifically, Pierce County will provide up to 40 hours per year of technical assistance to organizations that represent low- and moderate-income persons. This technical assistance may include:

- Publishing instructions on how to fill out forms/applications.
- Conducting workshops to explain (1) the process for submitting proposals and (2) federal and local requirements.
- Providing technical assistance to agencies to help determine project eligibility. Listing all answers to inquiries regarding the NOFA on the Community Connections website for all interested parties.

The County may provide additional (beyond 40 hours) technical assistance if, in the opinion of the County Executive, staff time is available.

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VII. COMMENT AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Pierce County will provide a period of at least 30 days to receive comments on the draft Consolidated Plan and on any substantial amendments. The County must also provide public notice regarding the availability of documents and the dates of the 30-day comment period.

For performance reports, the County will provide at least 15 days to receive public comments.

The County will consider all comments received. The County will respond to all complaints, in writing, within 15 business days. All comments and responses will be attached to each document.

VIII. ACCOMMODATION OF PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will make accommodations for persons with special needs. Public hearings and the review of Consolidated Plan documents will be held at the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) meetings in the Sound View Conference Room in the Pierce County Community Connections Building (3602 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98418), which is accessible to people with disabilities. Additional accommodations will be made for people with disabilities when requests are made at least five working days prior to a hearing. Translators will also be provided for people who do not speak English when requests are made at least five working days prior to a hearing. To request accommodations and/or a translator contact Stephanie Bray at 253-798-6917 or TDD/Voice 1-800-833-6388.

IX. ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

If, as a result of a program activity, any residential displacement and relocation must occur, Pierce County ensures that it will develop an Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan in connection with that project in accordance with federal regulations. Specifically, the County will comply with the anti-displacement and relocation requirements of the Uniform Relocation Act and the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and implementing regulations of 24 CFR Part 42.

X. GLOSSARY

Annual Action Plan: This document allocates one year's funding (entitlement and program income) to specific projects and activities for the CDBG, ESG and HOME program. It is submitted to HUD 45 days prior to the start of the County's fiscal year or no later than May 15 and is developed in accordance with federal regulations (24 CFR Part 91).

Citizen Participation Plan: This plan is prepared to facilitate and encourage public participation and involvement in the Consolidated Plan process and the County's CDBG program, especially by low- and moderate-income persons. The plan identifies the public participation requirements as identified by federal regulations (24 CFR Part 91).

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program: This is a federal grants program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program

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allocates money to eligible cities and counties throughout the nation to assist low- and moderate-income households and neighborhoods. The grant program may be used for such activities as housing rehabilitation, affordable housing assistance, community services, and community development activities such as the construction or rehabilitation of community facilities and economic development.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG): This is a federal grants program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). ESG assists people to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness. The grant program may be used for street outreach and emergency shelter services, homeless prevention, housing relocation, and short- and medium-term rental assistance.

HOME: The **HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)** is a federal grants program administered by the the U.S. [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD) in order to provide decent and [affordable housing](#), particularly housing for low- and very low-income [Americans](#).

Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER): This document reports on the progress in carrying out the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. The report is prepared annually by the County in accordance with federal regulations (24 CFR Part 91). It is due to HUD no later than 90 days after the end of the County's fiscal year or September 30.

Consolidated Plan: This document serves as the County's application for CDBG, ESG and HOME funds and sets forth the priorities and strategies to address the needs of primarily low- and moderate-income persons and areas in the county. It typically covers a five- or three-year time period. It is submitted to HUD 45 days prior to the start of the County's fiscal year or no later than May 15 and is developed in accordance with federal regulations (24 CFR Part 91).

Consolidated Plan Documents: These include the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

Low- and Moderate-Income Households: These are households earning less than 80% of the area median income. They are broken down into the following income designations:

- **Extremely Low-Income:** households with incomes less than 30% of the area median family income, adjusted for household size
- **Low-Income:** households with incomes between 31 and 50% of the area median family income, adjusted for household size
- **Moderate-Income:** households with incomes between 51 and 80% of the area median family income, adjusted for household size

Low- and Moderate-Income Neighborhood: In general, this is defined a census tract(s) or block group(s) where a minimum of 51% of the residents have low or moderate incomes (i.e., not exceeding 80% of the area median family income).

Median Family Income (MFI): HUD surveys major metropolitan areas annually to develop an index of median family income by household size. Most CDBG-funded activities and programs must benefit primarily the lower- and moderate-income households.

Program Year: The "program year" chosen by Pierce County is July 1 through June 30, which is the same as the County's fiscal year.