

RESOLUTION # R-04-2021

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA ADOPTING A POLICY RELATING TO CITIZENS PARTICIPATION IN THE CITY'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM; DEFINING AN ACTION PLAN; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Green Cove Springs desires to establish a plan supporting citizen's participation in the City's Community Development Block grants, and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Green Cove Springs recognize the need to adopt an action plan to implement such goals;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM CITIZENS PARTICIPATION PLAN

In keeping with the provisions of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as amended, 24 CFR 570.431 and Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Rule 73C-23, the City of Green Cove Springs, Florida hereby establishes a Citizen Participation Plan.

I. OVERALL GOAL

The purpose of this plan is to provide the citizens of the City of Green Cove Springs with an adequate opportunity for meaningful involvement on a continuing basis and for participation in the planning, development, implementation, and assessment of the City of Green Cove Springs's Community Development Block Grant Program.

II. OBJECTIVES

- A. To increase interchange of information between CDBG Staff and the local citizens concerning community development and related concerns.
- B. To heighten public awareness as to the purpose and function of the CDBG Program and the types of assistance available, especially among low/moderate income residents of CDBG target areas.
- C. To increase community participation in program planning and implementation and thereby create local support for CDBG goals.
- D. To allow affected or potentially affected citizens to directly assist in shaping and guiding the program's impact upon their neighborhood as well as the community at large.

III. CONSISTENCY

This Citizen Participation Plan is consistent with the requirements Section 508 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987 which amends Section

104(a) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, 24 CFR 570.4312 and DEO Rule 73C-23. This Plan supersedes all other Citizen Participation Plans utilized by the City of Green Cove Springs, Florida. This Plan sets forth the procedures for Citizen Participation that shall be utilized during each stage of the Community Development Block Grant process and upon its adoption by the City of Green Cove Springs City Council shall remain in effect until otherwise amended.

IV. OVERVIEW

- A. Citizen participation is a vital element in the preparation of a method by which community involvement will be solicited and maintained throughout the entire Community Development Block Grant process. The City of Green Cove Springs, Florida shall strive to ensure such participation by utilizing the public hearing process and by appointing a Citizens Advisory Committee.
- B. It shall be the policy of the City of Green Cove Springs that the effectiveness of citizen participation in the planning, development, implementation, and assessment of the Community Development Block Grant process be analyzed during the public hearings and other called meetings and amendments to the Plan made when necessary.

V. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Since the purpose of this plan is to provide the citizens of the City of Green Cove Springs, Florida with an adequate opportunity for meaningful involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the City's Community Development Block Grant process, it shall be the City's policy to solicit, and respond in a timely manner to, the views and proposals of all citizens, particularly low and moderate income persons, members of minority groups, and residents of blighted areas where the potential exists for the undertaking of CDBG eligible activities. Upon adoption of this Plan, the following technical requirements shall govern this process:

- A. Public Hearings
 - 1. To ensure adequate notice of public hearings, all notices shall be printed in the non-legal section of the (local newspaper) no less than five (5) days and no more than twenty (20) days prior to each public hearing held at any stage of the Community Development Block Grant process.
 - 2. When deemed appropriate, the City may also post notices of such hearings in not less than two public places. The posting of notices may only supplement publication of public hearing notices. A news article located in a conspicuous place in the newspaper may be considered as sufficient printed notice to fulfill this requirement. The City may also utilize additional means (personal contact, radio, etc.) to the maximum extent possible to reach target groups identified above when this is necessary. A minimum of two public hearings will be held before the City of Green Cove Springs City Council to provide the greatest access for citizen participation in developing CDBG applications.

3. Because of the size of the City, and the centrality of the City Hall, this requirement will generally be satisfied by holding the hearings at the City of Green Cove Springs City Hall.
4. If it is determined the City of Green Cove Springs has a known concentration of non-English speaking residents; the services of a translator will be obtained in the event a significant number of residents of a target area do not speak English and request such services. Notices shall include information concerning the handicapped.

A. Citizens Advisory Task Force

1. The City may establish a Citizens Advisory Task Force for all CDBG projects other than economic development projects, which shall consist of no less than five (5), not more than seven (7) members appointed by the City of Green Cove Springs City Council in a manner, which will ensure substantial representation of low- and moderate-income persons and minorities. Committee members shall serve two (2) year terms.
2. The Citizens Advisory Task Force shall serve as a focal point or liaison between the City and its constituents in regard to CDBG project development and implementation. The Committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities:
 - a. Disseminate information concerning eligible activities, proposed projects, and the status of current projects.
 - b. Coordinate various groups which choose to participate in the implementation of community development activities.
 - c. Review written comments assessing the implementation of the CDBG program.
 - d. Monitor the overall implementation of the CDBG program and review program status with administrative personnel on a quarterly basis or more frequently if deemed necessary.
 - e. Monitor the overall implementation of the CDBG program and review program status with administrative personnel on a quarterly basis or more frequently if deemed necessary.
 - f. Monitor the citizen participation process and propose such amendments as may be necessary to this Participation Plan.

3. The Citizen Advisory Task Force shall be a tool through which program progress can be analyzed and proposed amendments discussed, if applicable.

C. Access to Records

1. The City of Green Cove Springs shall maintain a complete project file on its Community Development Block Grant program(s) which shall be available for public inspection during regular office hours in the City Clerk's office. This file shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Citizens Participation Plan
 - b. Community Development Plan
 - c. Community Development Block Grant Application
 - d. Program Amendments
 - e. Environmental Review Record
 - f. Financial Status
 - g. Fair Housing Ordinance
 - h. Equal Opportunity Requirements
 - i. Policies and Procedures Governing Beneficiary Eligibility
 - j. Performance Assessment Report
 - k. Written Comments and City's Response
2. Generally, the project file is available for review by any citizen or group; however, in no case will disclosure be made of any program participant's financial status.

D. Technical Assistance

The program staff shall provide technical assistance to citizens' committees and groups and interested persons in the citizen participation process. This technical assistance shall focus on increasing public access to participating in the Community Development Block Grant decision making process through the Citizens Advisory Committee and ensuring that this participation is meaningful. Technical assistance will also be utilized to foster an understanding of program requirements; i.e., equal opportunity, relocation, environmental policies, beneficiary eligibility, etc.

E. Grievances

1. All grievances regarding individual decisions made as a part of the implementation of the Community Development Block Grant program shall be submitted, in writing to the Program Administrator. If a person feels that his/her complaint has not been sufficiently addressed by the Program Administrator's response, an appeal may be made to the Citizens Advisory Task Force.
2. If a response satisfactorily to the aggrieved is not issued by the

Committee, an appeal may be made to the City of Green Cove Springs City Council. At any point, the aggrieved may register a written complaint with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, 107 East Madison Street, MSC-400 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-6508. All written complaints registered at the local level shall have a written response from the Administrator, Committee, or the City Council within fifteen (15) days of the lodging of said complaint. A file of all grievances and responses shall be maintained and available for public inspection. In the event the aggrieved has exhausted all appeals without a decision satisfactory to himself/herself, he/she may pursue other legal channels in an attempt to achieve satisfaction.

F. Amendment

The amendment of this Plan shall follow all citizen participation requirements delineated in the Section Post Approval Requirements and applicable technical provisions. Such amendments shall require adoption by the City of Green Cove Springs City Council prior to becoming effective.

G. Authority

No part of this participation Plan shall be construed to restrict the responsibility and authority of the elected officials of the City of Green Cove Springs, Florida, in the development and implementation of any Community Development Block Grant program. Rather it is a vehicle through which the elected officials of the City of Green Cove Springs can assure citizen input prior to their decision-making process.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN EACH STAGE OF THE CDBG PROGRAM

I. APPLICATION STAGE

The objective of citizen participation at this stage is to provide meaningful community-wide citizen input into the decision-making process during the consideration of priorities and of options associated with the development and submission of the application. The following requirements will be met during the application stage and certified to in the body of the application:

A. Review of the Citizen Participation Plan

B. Presentation of the City's Community Development Plan.

Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as revised, has as its primary objective, the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing, suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate incomes. Consistent with these objectives, the City of Green Cove Springs will develop

a Community Development Plan that identifies the community development and housing needs and specifies both short- and long-term community development objectives to meet the established needs.

C. Public Hearings

A minimum of two (2) public hearings will be held before the City of Green Cove Springs City Council during this stage. The purpose of the first public hearing is to assess community needs and problems in an effort to determine the most pressing needs of the community and to solicit citizen input as to the ranking of said needs. The purpose of the second hearing is to present for public comment and review the program of activities that the City has selected for the application as best suited to meet these needs. The City may determine that more than two (2) public hearings during the application stage are desirable and thus hold extra hearings. All such hearings shall be governed by the requirements as set forth herein. The following information will be presented to the public at each public hearing during this stage:

1. The range of activities that may be undertaken with CDBG funds, the kinds of activities previously funded; if any, and the progress made with respect to those activities.
2. An overview of the CDBG program to include analysis of DEO rating process and discussion of applicable grant ceilings.
3. Discussion of the competitive nature of the CDBG process and the likelihood that more applications will be submitted to DEO than can be funded.
4. The process to be followed in soliciting and responding to the views and proposals of citizens in a timely manner.
5. Discussion of the role of the Citizen Advisory Task Force.

II. POST APPROVAL STAGE

- A. The City shall assure continuing citizen participation throughout the life of the Community Development Block Grant program, particularly when considering amendments to the program. The City shall conduct at least one (1) public hearing, in accordance with the requirements of such hearings, during the grant amendment process.
- B. The involvement of citizens in the amendment process is felt to be essential. To ensure adequate citizen participation during the conduct of the program, the following requirements for amendments will be met:
 1. A minimum of one (1) public hearing will be held prior to the submission of any amendment that involves the reduction of

beneficiaries and require formal approval by DEO according to the provisions of this Plan.

2. Citizens will be involved in amendments not requiring formal DEO approval, budget revisions, and local changes in the CDBG Program. Such changes will be presented for review to the Citizen's Advisory Committee in a meeting of such Committee which shall be open to the public.
3. The City shall attempt to involve citizens residing in the target area(s) affected by any amendment or revision in the development of such amendment or revision. This shall be accomplished through the dissemination of information on such program changes to the affected residents.

III. ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

Citizens of the City of Green Cove Springs will be provided opportunities to comment on the implementation of the City's CDBG program and to assess the performance of the City in meeting its community development goals and objectives. Continual community assessment of the effectiveness of the program is considered essential to the success of a CDBG program. To ensure this involvement, the City will utilize the following approaches:

- A. The Citizen Advisory Task Force, established in accordance with this Plan, will function as the focal point of the evaluation and assessment process. This group will continually provide the City and its staff with feedback on the effectiveness of the program and suggest changes, if applicable.
- B. The public hearing process will be used to ensure community-wide participation in the evaluation of the program.
- C. Written comments on the program will be received at any time during the life of the program. All written comments will be presented to the Citizen Advisory Task Force for their review and responses by the appropriate party within fifteen (15) days.

IV. CITIZEN COMMENT TO DEO

Persons may comment to DEO at any time concerning the City of Green Cove Springs's failure to comply with the citizen participation requirements as set forth in this Plan.

DONE AND RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, IN REGULAR SESSION THIS 1ST DAY OF JUNE 2021.

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

Edward Gaw, Mayor

ATTEST:

Erin West, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM ONLY:

L. J. Arnold, III, City Attorney