

City of Meridian Citizen Participation Plan

The Consolidated Plan is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirement for a city to receive federal housing and community development block grant funding. Created in 1994, it “consolidates” the reporting requirements associated with these block grants.

The Consolidated Plan is typically completed every five years. It examines the housing and community development needs of a city and sets priorities for HUD grant monies to which a city is entitled. The Annual Action Plan specifies how a city intends to distribute block grant funds to meet its five-year priorities. The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), completed at the end of each program year, evaluates the city’s performance in meeting its five-year and annual goals. The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI), a five-year strategic document with action items incorporated into the Annual Action Plan, affirms the city’s commitment to reducing housing barriers.

Each Consolidated Plan is also required to have a strategy for citizen participation in the Consolidated Plan process. This Citizen Participation Plan satisfies that requirement.

Between September 2021 and June 2022, the City of Meridian is preparing a draft of its Five-Year Consolidated Plan covering program years 2022-2026, its 2022 Action Plan, and an updated AI. This document outlines the city’s process and plan for soliciting and receiving citizen input during the preparation review period of the draft Consolidated Plan, as well as in the event that amendments are made to the Plan. Included in this is the city’s approved Citizen Participation Plan for all aspects of the Consolidated Plan process including the Five-Year Strategic Plan, the Action Plan, amendments to the Consolidated Plan, the CAPER, and the AI. This plan will be effective upon approval during Program Year 2021.

Purpose of Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Meridian recognizes the importance of public participation in both defining and understanding current housing and community development needs and barriers, and prioritizing resources to address those needs. The city’s Citizen Participation Plan is designed to encourage citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, AI, CAPER, and any substantial amendments to the Plan. 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 Plan each year. This Citizen Participation Plan was written in accordance with Sections 91.100 and 91.105 of HUD’s Consolidated Plan regulations.

In order to ensure maximum participation in the Consolidated Plan process among all populations and needs groups, and in order to ensure that their issues and concerns are adequately addressed, the City of Meridian will follow the standards set forth in its adopted Citizen Participation Plan during development of its Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, CAPERs and AI, and for any substantial amendments.

Glossary of Relevant Terms

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.

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

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 Community Development Block Grant and related block grant funds, as received by the city.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). 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 program, which assists communities to address housing and community development needs, primarily for low and moderate income residents.

Consolidated Plan. A three to five year plan of a city's housing and community development needs, resources, priorities, and proposed activities to be undertaken for the CDBG programs (a.k.a., Housing and Community Development Plan).

Relevant Areas and Programs. The City of Meridian 2022-2026 Consolidated Plan covers the geographic area within the city limits of Meridian. The City of Meridian is entitled to receive CDBG funding from HUD during the program years between 2022 and 2026. These funds must benefit low and moderate income residents and/or neighborhoods within Meridian.

Public Participation and Comment

Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans

As required by Sections 91.100 and 91.105 of HUD's Consolidated Plan regulations, the city, at a minimum, will conduct two public hearings, at different stages during 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 consolidated plan is published for comment.

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

In developing applications for each Annual Action Plan cycle, the city will offer technical assistance, as requested, in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs 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 Boise City Ada County Housing Authority (BCACHA) will be notified about Consolidated Plan activities related to its developments and resident communities, to allow this information to be available at the public hearings required for its plan.

Prior to the adoption of a Consolidated Plan and Annual 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 the Annual 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 and the date, time, and location of the public hearing as well as a notice of opportunity to provide written or oral comment.

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 of the local newspapers will be published no less than five (5) days prior to the end of the public comment period.

The draft Consolidated Plan will contain the amount of assistance the city expects to receive through the HUD CDBG grants and the top-level strategic goals that will guide funding over the five planning periods. The annual Action Plan will show detail of the projects and possible grantees to whom 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. Hard copies will be available for review at city offices and will be provided to the public at a specific 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 its regular or a special public meeting, review the proposed Consolidated Plan or annual Action Plan, and the summaries regarding the incorporation of citizen comments or views provided, and shall vote on a resolution to adopt the final Consolidated Plan or annual Action Plan.

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.

Comments received on the draft plans will be summarized in the final plans 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 also include alternative public involvement techniques—e.g., using 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 also 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 via email. Hard copies will be available for review at city offices and will be provided to the public at a specific request.

Translations and reasonable accommodations

This citizen participation plan, the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and the AI will be made available in formats accessible to persons with disabilities and in languages other than English pursuant to the city’s Language Assistance Plan (LAP) upon request.

Consultation with Organizations and City Agencies

When preparing the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans and the AI, the city will actively consult with public and private agencies that provide housing, health, and social services in order 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 Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, and AI, where applicable.

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 two weeks in advance of the end of the public comment period.

After the notice is published, citizens will have a period of not less than 15 days to comment on the CAPER. The city will accept all comments received during the public comment period and provide a summary of these comments with the CAPER.

Substantial Amendments

Occasionally, public comments or a change in circumstances warrant an amendment to the Consolidated Plan and/or an annual Action Plan. The criteria for whether to amend are referred to by HUD as Substantial Amendment Criteria. Any change in the described method of distributing program funds are considered to be Substantial Amendment Criteria. Methods of distribution are:

- 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 or activity.
- Carrying out a project using CDBG funds or program income not previously described in the action plan or the consolidated plan.

Citizen participation in the event of a substantial amendment

In the event of a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan or annual Action Plan, 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 in advance of the public hearing on the proposed substantial amendment. The Council shall at its regular or a special public meeting, review the proposed substantial amendment and the summaries regarding the incorporation of citizen comments or views provided, and shall 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 shall submit a copy of each substantial amendment to HUD as such occurs.

Consideration of public comments on the substantially amended plan

In the event of substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan, the 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. Also included in the final Plan will be a summary of all comments not accepted and their reasons for dismissal.

Changes in federal funding level

Any changes in federal funding levels after the draft Consolidated Plan or Action Plan's comment period has expired and the resulting effect on the distribution of funds will not be considered an amendment or a substantial amendment.

Public access to records

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

All materials, announcements, and notices of the hearing will include information about how persons with disabilities and non-English speaking persons may request accommodations in order 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 prior to the public hearing or within 48 hours of a request; and/or oral interpretation at the public hearing.

Use of available waivers from HUD

The City of Meridian, when provided the authority from 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 disaster and/or emergency declaration, though waivers may be available at other HUD specified times.

Disaster/Emergency Events

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 (such as COVID-19/coronavirus)
- 5) National Emergency

If waivers or other authorities are available from HUD to assist in expediting available additional resources and/or any plan modifications, City of Meridian staff may take full advantage of offered exceptions to standard Citizen Participation requirements outlined in other sections of this plan.

All public hearings may be virtual, if allowed by HUD, to meet recommended social distancing and/or emergency response guidelines.

Reasonable notice and opportunity for public response or comment will be considered as the minimums outlined in any provided waivers.

Resolution

Will be added when complete.