

Town Of Portland, Connecticut

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Citizen Participation Plan



Adopted: 04/27/2020

Amended: 06/17/2020

Town of Portland
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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Community Development goals of the Town of Portland include improving the way of life for its citizens. This shall be accomplished through a coordinated program of community development projects which include, but are not limited to: providing adequate housing, community facilities, available and safe utilities, sound economic development, elimination of slum and blight and comprehensive human services. These activities shall be designed so that all citizens, including those who are of low or moderate income and/or who live in slum and blighted areas can benefit from the funding which supports these activities. In order to insure this comprehensive public benefit, the Board of Selectmen believes that it is required and essential that all citizens have an opportunity to participate in the community development process. In order to insure this practice, the Town will follow this plan for citizen participation which addresses the needs of the Town along with 1974, (Title I), Section 104 (a) and (b) and Section 508 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987.

The following plan will demonstrate the processes and resources which the Town will employ to accomplish this goal of community development.

Susan Bransfield: First Selectwoman

Date

Section I: Available Resources

The Office of the First Selectwoman is located at Town Hall, 33 East Main St, Portland, CT 06480.

All documents/files related to State and Federal programs are available at the First Selectwoman's office during normal working hours, Monday thru Friday. These files are subject to the State Freedom of Information regulations with the exception of personal data on individuals' income. The Office of the First Selectwoman contains a clearly marked filing system which includes grant applications, contracts, correspondence, studies, state and federal documents and all related statistics. In addition, records of all public hearings are available upon request.

Section II: Procedures

The Town of Portland believes that an effective method of citizen participation is an essential part of involving their direct input into community development programs. The following procedures demonstrate this process:

Public Hearing/Public Information Meetings

The Town will advertise public hearings/meetings related to all community development programs in a newspaper of local circulation twice, the first time being a minimum of two weeks prior to the public hearing. This will insure that a majority of Portland residents will be aware of their opportunity to participate. This policy applies to all formal submissions or alterations to existing programs including Program Amendments. **Please note amendment at the end of this document that will address citizen participation for the purpose of a special CDBG grant opportunity related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The amendment will address the Town's effort to give Portland citizens an opportunity to participate and provide comments within social distance guidelines.**

In addition to these hearings, the First Selectwoman's Office will hold special periodic public meetings to review progress of all grant programs. These meetings will be held yearly.

All public meetings/hearings will be accessible to the handicapped.

Special Populations

Residents who are low or moderate income or those who live in slums or blighted areas, or residents which are physically unable to become aware of upcoming public hearings will receive a special outreach effort by the First Selectwoman. Letters and/or Notices informing Special Populations of upcoming public hearings/meetings will be sent to local, regional, civic and all appropriate groups or agencies.

Public Participation and Input Into Community Development Projects Outside of Public Hearings and Meetings

All residents unable to attend advertised public hearings/meetings will have the

opportunity to give their input or opinion concerning a project. All written communication will be filed and available for public review as part of the Citizen Participation file for each grant year. All correspondence or input, both positive and negative, will be filed and accepted as an important part of citizen participation.

Grievance and Specific Requests

All grievances and specific requests will be addressed directly to the complainant in a timely written manner; within 15 working days of a public notice where practicable.

The First Selectwoman's Office will serve as a grievance or complaint board and will make the direct response.

Technical Assistance

All local groups and individuals requesting technical assistance will be provided this assistance through the Office of the First Selectwoman. The First Selectwoman's Office will provide this technical assistance to individuals of low or moderate income that request such assistance. This includes the input of these individuals in the process of community development planning.

Non-English Speaking Residents

All non-English speaking residents in Portland who request information regarding their needs should contact the First Selectwoman's office 7 days prior to the advertised public hearing. This will insure adequate preparation and consideration in addressing those citizens' needs. Contact concerning public hearings/meetings for non-English speaking residents will be made through outreach with local organizations.

AMENDMENT TO PORTLAND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Town of Portland is amending its Citizen Participation Plan, to promote and support “social distancing” while continuing to offer the public an opportunity to provide valuable citizen input and insight into the policies, and procedures of the Town of Portland, particularly as it relates to the administration and implementation of its federal programs. The following process will be used to solicit citizen participation and input into any programmatic amendments necessary to quickly and effectively administer federal funding made available either directly or indirectly as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Effective April 2, 2020, consistent with the Mega-waiver issued by HUD on March 31, 2020, and for a period ending June 30, 2021, community input prior to drafting a substantial amendment to any plan will be waived, including but not limited to an approved consolidated plan or annual action plan concerning the proposed uses of CDBG, HOME, NHTF, ESG and HOPWA funds.
- The Town of Portland expects to apply for CDBG funds under Round One and potentially Round Two of the special CDBG Covid-19 program funds. These funds are eligible to prevent, prepare and/or respond to COVID challenges in eligible CDBG activities that benefit low and moderate income people. These activities include but are not limited to Housing, Public Services and Technical Assistance. The State of CT will provide these funds on a competitive basis.
- Notice of the availability of the Amendment will be posted on Town of Portland website, <https://www.portlandct.org/>. The Notice will include the opportunity to provide electronic comment for a period of not less than five days and information on participation in a “virtual public hearing”. Town of Portland will provide information on how citizens who have special needs may obtain the Amendment in a form which is accessible to them. Please contact the Office of the First Selectwoman for more information at 860-342-6715.
- Such Notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation, and will include at least one (1) minority publication through the Department of Administrative Services web site.
- Copies of the Notice will be emailed to all interested parties within the Towns list of local non-profit and other civic organizations.
- Any comments received, either at the virtual public hearing or during the public comment period will be considered by the Town of Portland before the final amended action plan is submitted to the CT Department of Housing. A summary of the comments and the agency's responses will be an attachment to the final amended action plan.
- The procedures and actions discussed above will constitute the Town of Portland citizen participation plan for any substantial amendments, which may need to be made in the course of the program year. A "substantial amendment" to the plan is one which implements a change the use and/or method of distributing those funds.
- This amended citizen participation plan will itself be made available to the public for a five day public comment period prior to implementation, and any interest groups may review and comment.