



CITY OF BATON ROUGE
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

U.S. HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

April 3, 2025

PREPARED BY



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

The City-Parish of East Baton Rouge (EBR) is committed to fostering an inclusive and transparent planning process that encourages meaningful community participation in the development of the 2025 - 2029 Consolidated Plan. To accomplish this, EBR has composed this Citizen Participation Plan which outlines the framework for engaging residents in the development and implementation of programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

This plan ensures that community members, particularly low- and moderate-income residents, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to decisions regarding the use of federal funds for housing, community development, and economic initiatives.

By encouraging active citizen participation, this plan strengthens EBR's ability to address local needs, improve neighborhood conditions, and enhance the quality of life for all residents. Through outreach efforts, public meetings, and accessible communication channels, EBR strives to ensure that all voices, especially those of traditionally underserved populations, are heard in the decision-making process.

Applicability and Adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan

This Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) has been designed in accordance with the requirements of **24 CFR 91.105** to ensure that all residents, particularly low- and moderate-income individuals, can contribute to the planning and decision-making processes for federally funded housing and community development programs. EBR receives funding from HUD through the following programs:

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** The CDBG program provides funding to support decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities for low- to moderate-income residents. For the purposes of this plan, low- to moderate-income (LMI) refers to individuals and households earning less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), as defined by HUD, or those living in predominantly LMI neighborhoods where at least 51 percent of households fall below this income threshold.
- **HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)** The purpose of the HOME program is to expand the supply of safe, decent, and affordable housing for low-income households through activities such as construction, rehabilitation, and rental assistance.

- **Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)** The purpose of the ESG program is to help individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness.
- **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)** The purpose of the HOPWA program is to provide housing assistance and supportive services for low to moderate-income individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

As a recipient of these funds, EBR is required to develop and adopt this CPP to encourage and facilitate citizen engagement in planning and prioritizing local community development programs.

Encouragement of Citizen Participation

1. EBR encourages residents to take part in the development of the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPER). Special efforts will be made to engage low- and moderate-income individuals, especially those living in areas where entitlement funds are expected to be used. EBR also seeks participation from all members of the community, including minorities, non-English speaking persons, and individuals with disabilities. Anyone needing reasonable accommodations, or translated public documents, or public notices should formally request these items from the Office of Community Development during normal business hours.

City of Baton Rouge-East Baton Rouge Parish Government
Office of Community Development
222 St. Louis Street 7th Floor
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
225-389-3039
ocd@brla.gov

2. EBR encourages the participation of local and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, and other key stakeholders throughout the development and implementation of the Consolidated Plan. This includes engaging businesses, educators, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic groups, and community- and faith-based organizations to ensure a collaborative and informed planning process that reflects the community's needs and priorities.
3. EBR will encourage, in coordination with local public housing agencies (PHAs), the participation of residents living in public and assisted housing developments. This may include engagement with resident advisory boards, resident councils, and resident management corporations. EBR will also make efforts to share information

with PHAs about the Consolidated Plan and activities related to affirmatively furthering fair housing, so that this information can be presented during the PHAs' annual public hearings and made accessible to residents.

4. EBR will use tools such as focus groups and online surveys while also exploring other alternative public involvement techniques and measurable ways to track participation. These efforts are designed to encourage residents to take part in shaping a shared vision for change in their communities and to provide feedback on program performance.

Citizen Comment on the CPP and Amendments

1. The CPP will be made publicly available through the Consolidated Plan website, the official EBR website, and by mail upon request. Copies will also be provided to public locations, including the Office of Community Development. Upon request, the CPP can be made available in accessible formats for individuals with disabilities. EBR will provide residents with a reasonable opportunity (no fewer than 15 days) to comment on this CPP and any substantial amendments.
2. EBR will assess the language needs of the community and determine whether translation of notices and other vital documents is necessary. EBR will take reasonable steps to provide language assistance to ensure meaningful access for non-English-speaking residents.

Development of the Consolidated Plan

1. EBR will make HUD-provided data, along with any supplemental information intended for inclusion in the Consolidated Plan, publicly available as early as feasible in the public participation process. This information will be accessible to residents, public agencies, and other interested parties through the Consolidated Plan website and the official EBR website.
2. Prior to the adoption of the Consolidated Plan, EBR will make available information on the amount of assistance it expects to receive, including grant funds and program income, as well as the range of activities that may be undertaken. This will include estimates of the amount of funding expected to benefit low- and moderate-income residents.
3. EBR is committed to minimizing the displacement of residents as a result of activities funded through the Consolidated Plan. Informational resources—such as Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs), land trust strategies, and other tools, will

be used to help prevent displacement and will be available at community workshops and on the EBR website. In the event displacement does occur, EBR will provide or require the provision of assistance to affected individuals. This may include relocation assistance, advisory services, and financial support in accordance with applicable regulations. These protections and resources will be in place even if no displacement is anticipated.

4. EBR will publish a draft of the proposed Consolidated Plan to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to review its content and submit comments before the plan is formally adopted. EBR will consider any comments from citizens received in writing or digital format during the preparation of the Consolidated Plan.
5. To support public review, EBR will publish a summary of the draft Consolidated Plan in a local newspaper of general circulation. The summary will describe the plan's purpose and key contents, and it will include information on where the full draft can be accessed, such as the EBR website and local libraries. A reasonable number of free hard copies will also be made available upon request to individuals and groups. In addition, printed copies will be distributed to public locations such as libraries, community centers, and other local government agencies.
6. During the development of the Consolidated Plan, EBR will hold at least one public hearing to gather input from residents. In addition, a public comment period of no fewer than 30 calendar days will be provided to allow community members to review and comment on the draft plan. EBR will consider all comments received in writing or shared verbally at the public hearing prior to finalizing the plan. A summary of all comments or views, including those not accepted and the reasons why, will be attached to the final Consolidated Plan.

Consolidated Plan Amendments

A substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan refers to any significant change in the approved use of funds. This may include the introduction of a new activity not previously described, a major change in the scope, purpose, location, or beneficiaries of an existing activity, or the reallocation of funds from one activity to another in a way that significantly changes the plan's priorities or impact. EBR will clearly identify what constitutes a substantial amendment in each Annual Action Plan.

A substantial amendment will require the following procedures:

1. If a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan is proposed, EBR will provide the public with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment before the amendment is submitted to HUD. A notice describing the proposed changes will be published in a local newspaper of general circulation and will include information on where the full text of the amendment can be viewed, such as the EBR website or other public locations. EBR will allow no fewer than 30 calendar days for community members to submit written comments. All comments received will be considered before the amendment is finalized.
2. EBR will consider all comments received during the public comment period on any proposed substantial amendment. This includes comments submitted in writing and those shared verbally at a public hearing, if one is held. All comments will be reviewed before the amendment is finalized and submitted to HUD. A summary of the comments received, including any that were not accepted and the reasons why, will be included with the submitted amendment.

Performance Reports

1. EBR will provide residents with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on its annual performance report before it is submitted to HUD. A public notice will be published in at least one local newspaper of general circulation, and the report will be made available for review in locations such as the EBR website and other designated public access points. The comment period will remain open for no fewer than 15 calendar days.
2. All comments received in writing or shared verbally at a public hearing, if one is held, will be considered in preparing the final performance report. A summary of the comments received, including those not accepted and the reasons why, will be included in the report submitted to HUD.

Public Hearings

1. Public Hearings
 - a. Consolidated plan

EBR will provide two public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions. In-person hearings will be prioritized, with options for virtual/online streaming when appropriate. These hearings will address:

- housing and community development needs
 - development of proposed activities
 - proposed strategies and actions for affirmatively furthering fair housing
-

- a review of program performance

b. Minimum number of hearings

At least one public hearing will be held prior to the adoption of the Consolidated Plan to obtain views of the residents on:

- housing and community development needs
 - priority non-housing community development needs
 - affirmatively furthering fair housing
2. EBR will provide public notice of each hearing at least 15 days in advance by publishing announcements in a local newspaper of general circulation. Additional notice will be provided through the EBR website and social media platforms. Each notice will include the date, time, location, and purpose of the hearing, along with information on how residents can access relevant materials to support informed public comment.
 3. Public hearings will be scheduled at times and locations that are convenient for residents, including those who are likely to benefit from HUD-funded programs. EBR will make reasonable accommodations to ensure participation by individuals with disabilities and will provide language assistance at hearings where a significant number of non-English-speaking residents are expected to attend.
 4. Residents in need of accommodations or language assistance are encouraged to contact the Office of Community Development at 225-389-3039 or by email at ocd@brla.gov.

Meetings

EBR will provide residents of the community with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, consistent with accessibility and reasonable accommodation requirements, in accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the regulations at 24 CFR part 8; and the Americans with Disabilities Act and the regulations at 28 CFR parts 35 and 36, as applicable.

Availability to the public

EBR will make the following documents publicly available: the adopted Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the plan, and annual performance reports. Digital copies of these materials will be posted on the EBR website. Hard copies will be available at designated agency offices, local libraries, and by request from the

Baton Rouge Office of Community Development (BROCD). Upon request, materials will also be provided in accessible formats for individuals with disabilities.

Addresses of availability:

Office of Community Development

222 St. Louis Street 7th Floor

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Carver Library

720 Terrace Avenue

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Scotlandville Library

7373 Scenic Highway

Baton Rouge, LA 70807

Access to records

EBR will maintain records related to the Consolidated Plan and the use of HUD program funds for a period of at least five years. Residents, public agencies, and other interested parties will be provided with reasonable and timely access to these records upon request.

Technical assistance

EBR will provide technical assistance to groups that represent low- and moderate-income residents upon request. This assistance is intended to help in developing proposals for funding under programs covered by the Consolidated Plan. The type and level of assistance will be determined by EBR based on the needs of the group and available resources. While assistance may include guidance and support, it does not include the provision of funds.

Complaints

EBR will accept and respond to complaints from residents related to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, substantial amendments, and performance reports. Residents are encouraged to submit written complaints using the attached complaint form, or by email to ocd@brla.gov. EBR will provide a timely and

substantive written response to each written complaint within 15 working days, where practicable.

Use of citizen participation plan

EBR will follow the procedures outlined in this Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) as required. Questions or comments regarding the CPP may be directed to:

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222 St. Louis Street 7th Floor
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
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ocd@brla.gov

Contingency Plan

In the event of a disaster or a declaration of emergency, EBR's requirement under this plan will be streamlined in accordance with any/all applicable HUD waivers, to include, but not limited to:

- A. A 5-day public display and comment period
- B. Applicable meetings, including public hearings, will be facilitated by the most feasible means at the time (ex. virtual or call-in meetings in lieu of public gatherings).

Citizen Comment/Complaint Form

City of Baton Rouge-East Baton Rouge Parish Government
CDBG, HOME, ESG, HOPWA Programs

Date: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Nature of Comment/Complaint

Signature: _____

For Office Use Only:

Date Form Received: _____ Employee Name & Title: _____

Date Written Response Sent: _____

Action Taken:
