Citizen Participation Plan

CITY OF BREMERTON AND KITSAP COUNTY
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Introduction

Kitsap County and its consortium cities of Port Orchard, Poulsbo and Bainbridge Island receives both Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership (HOME) funds. The City of Bremerton receives Community Development Block Grant funds as its own entitlement, and HOME funds through its membership in a Consortium with Kitsap County. Both the City of Bremerton and Kitsap County are committed to assuring opportunities for citizen involvement in decisions concerning activities taking place within their communities.

Each year the City of Bremerton and Kitsap County are eligible to receive CDBG and HOME funds. There are specific rules and regulations governing the allocation and use of the funds, including provisions for citizen involvement in decision making. In order to facilitate citizen involvement, both jurisdictions adopt a Citizen Participation Plan.

Beginning with the application cycle for 2012 funding, Kitsap County and the City of Bremerton Block Grant Programs have joined with the Homeless Housing Grant Program and Affordable Housing Grant Program to develop a combined funding & application process. The combined process will include a single application for funds, a single Grant Recommendation Committee (GRC) process and funding recommendation. Funding recommendations will continue to be approved by the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council (KRCC) for County CDBG/HOME funds and by the Bremerton City Council for City CDBG/HOME funds. This Citizen Participation Plan reflects the changes that have been made to the annual application process.

Purpose

The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to provide an on-going mechanism to ensure widespread citizen participation whereby all citizens have an opportunity to fully express their needs and wishes for community improvement. Special efforts will be made to encourage participation by:

- Low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas.
- Residents of predominately low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.
- Minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.

This plan provides opportunities for representation of all of the citizens of Kitsap County and the City of Bremerton by allowing them to have a voice in the decision-making process and giving them greater power and control over activities taking place within their communities.

Annual Allocation Process / Action Plan Submission

Together the entitlement jurisdictions conduct a competitive annual process to determine allocation of CDBG and HOME funds. The public is encouraged to participate in the process and its end product—the submission of an annual Action Plan to HUD.

A. Notice of Funding Availability & Application

In April of each year a notice will be published in the newspaper of record to announce funding availability and provide details about the Application. This notice will begin a 30-day

comment period on the Draft Application and include the date and time of public hearings to take citizen comments. Notifications will also be sent to any agency or organization who requests to be placed on our mailing lists.

Upon approval of the Application by the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council and Bremerton City Council, the Application will be available from:

Kitsap County Block Grant Division
345 6th Street, Suite 400, Bremerton, WA 98337-1873.
Applications are also available in PDF format on the Kitsap County website:
http://www.kitsapgov.com/hr/block_grant_program/block_grant_program.htm

and

City of Bremerton, Community Development Block Grant
345 6th Street, Suite 600, Bremerton, WA 98337-1873
Applications can be obtained online at: http://www.ci.bremerton.wa.us/display.php?id=864.

Applications will be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities upon request. Application submittal instructions and due date are included in the Application packet. Applications must be mailed or hand delivered by the due date, electronic submission is not available and postmarks are not accepted.

B. Technical Assistance

At least one madatory technical assistance session will be held for those interested in applying for funding. During the session, staff will provide information to citizens concerning who can apply for funds, funds expected to be available, the range of activities that may be undertaken, priorities for funding, application submission requirements, the application deadline, and how decisions concerning funding will be made. The date and time of the technical assistance session(s) will be published in the Application, included in the schedule posted on the web site and emailed to all interested parties on the current mailing list.

In addition to the mandatory Technical Assistance described above, Application Pre-Submittal assistance, to have an application reviewed for completeness, is available by appointment with staff. City and County Block Grant staff is also available by appointment for one-on-one Technical Assistance to provide guidance to citizens and organizations regarding specific project considerations.

At any time, any citizen may contact the City or County Block Grant Divisions for technical assistance or general information in relation to programs described in this Plan. The Department will help citizens understand CDBG and HOME funded programs, the procedures for submitting proposals, the Citizen Participation Plan and other program requirements so they can effectively participate in CDBG and/or HOME programs and the funding process.

C. Application Review & Grant Recommendation Committee Process

Applications will be reviewed by Block Grant Staff to determine compliance with technical requirements including eligibility for CDBG and/or HOME funds. Eligible applications will be given a score rating the organizational and financial capacity of the organization submitting the application. Eligible applications will be provided to a Grant Recommendation Committee (GRC) for consideration.

The GRC will review all proposals, interview applicants and develop recommendations for funding based how they address needs & objectives identified in the 2011-2015 Consolidated Plan and/or Homeless Housing Plan, organizational and financial capacity of the organization to carry out the program/project, project feasibility, and funding availability.

There are two GRCs. The Public Service GRC reviews applications for supportive services or public services. The Capital GRC reviews housing, capital improvements, and operations & maintenance applications. Both GRCs play an integral role in the allocation of CDBG and HOME federal funds according to the needs of the community.

While all GRC members must be well-versed in the needs of the community and be willing to participate in all the activities relevant to the GRCs, each individual GRC requires that members demonstrate specific skills and qualifications:

- The Public Service GRC requires that its members have experience in one or more of the following capacities: background working with non-profit community service providers as an employee, volunteer, board member or consumer; background with homeless programs; grant experience, project management, compliance monitoring and/or practical experience with HUD regulations.

- The Capital GRC requires that its members have experience in one or more of the following areas: affordable housing; construction or project management; mortgage lending; housing development; economic development; real estate; or architecture.

Each GRC will be comprised of 8 members as follows:

- Two members representing the City of Bremerton and approved by the Bremerton City Council
- Four members representing Kitsap County and approved by the KRCC
- Two members representing the Continum of Care and approved by the KRCC

Applicant interviews will be conducted with the GRC. Applicants will have the opportunity to present their project and the GRC will an opportunity to ask questions. At the conclusion of interviews the GRC will formulate a funding recommendation for approval by the KRCC and the Bremerton City Council.

GRC members serve two terms, terms are staggered so each year there are at least four returning members. Applications for GRC members are solicited each Spring. Applications are reviewed by staff and individuals who meet the above requirements are recommended to the KRCC and City Council for approval. Citizens interested in serving on either the Public Service or Capital GRC are encouraged to contact:

- Kitsap County Block Grant Program Manager, Bonnie Tufts at 360-337-4606 or by email at btufts@co.kitsap.wa.us; or
- City of Bremerton Block Grant Program Administrator, Marie Vila at 360-473-5375 or by email at Marie.Vila@ci.bremerton.wa.us

D. Funding Recommendations & Action Plan

Organizations submitting applications will be notified whether or not the GRC has recommended their proposal for funding. The notification will include the date, time and place of the public hearings, during which the recommendations will be considered by the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council and the Bremerton City Council.

All projects approved for funding will be included in each jurisdiction's Action Plan. A summary of each action plan will be published in the newspaper of record and on the City's and County's websites. The summaries will describe the contents and purpose of the Action Plans, and include a list of locations where copies of the entire proposed plans may be examined. Citizens will be provided a period of at least 30 days to review and comment on the plans. Comments or views of citizens will be considered at the public hearings, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be attached to the final Action Plan which will be submitted to HUD.

The City of Bremerton and Kitsap County Block Grant staff will submit their Action Plans, including the projects proposed to be funded, to HUD no later than November 15th of each calendar year.

Five Year Consolidated Plan

The Consolidated Plan is the result of a process set forth by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide a planning and application process for the CDBG and HOME programs within a single document. The Kitsap County HOME Consortium is required to submit the Consolidated Plan for the HOME participating jurisdiction (which consists of Kitsap County and the City of Bremerton). The Consolidated Plan is available online at:

- http://www.kitsapgov.com/hr/block_grant_program/block_grant_program.htm (scroll down for a link to the documents)
- http://www.ci.bremerton.wa.us/display.php?id=790 (scroll down for a link to the documents)
- A printed copy may be requested from the Kitsap County or City of Bremerton Block Grant Divisions

There are a number of specific elements in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan, including:

- **Needs Assessment:** an assessment of housing needs (primarily of low and moderate income people) and needs of homeless people;
- **Housing Market Analysis:** an analysis of the City of Bremerton's and Kitsap County's housing market;
- **Strategic Plan:** a discussion of the City of Bremerton's and Kitsap County's priority needs to establish goals and objectives for implementing strategies which address housing and community development activities;
- **Citizen Participation Plan**
- **Annual Action Plan:** describes the activities that will be undertaken to address priority needs utilizing HOME and CDBG grant funds during the upcoming program year; and
- **Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER):** describes how funds were used in activities that provided benefits to low and moderate income individuals and families during the previous program year.

Governments, service providers, citizens, and non-profit/for-profit agencies are encouraged to identify needs and priorities, assist in the development of strategies, and to participate in the annual allocation process. The following are specific opportunities for citizens to participate in the development of the information to be incorporated in the Consolidated Plan, which is updated every five years:

1. At least one community meeting will be held to obtain the views of citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties concerning housing and community development needs,

including non-housing community development needs and priorities during development of the plan.

2. The City of Bremerton and Kitsap County Block Grant staff will specifically consult with appropriate social service agencies regarding the housing and community development needs and priorities of children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, homeless persons and other persons served by such agencies.

3. The City of Bremerton and Kitsap County Block Grant staff will coordinate with the Bremerton Housing Authority (BHA) and Housing Kitsap to encourage participation of residents of public and assisted housing and other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas, in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan.

4. Agencies working with low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and residents of predominately low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities will be contacted to encourage participation in the development of the Consolidated Plan.

Amendments to the Annual Action Plan

Citizens will be notified and have an opportunity to comment on any substantial amendments proposed to the Annual Action Plan.

Substantial Amendments will be published in the City's and County's newspaper of record and be subject to a 30-day public comment period to allow for comment prior to implementation of the proposed amendment. Substantial Amendments may be forwarded for review by the appropriate GRC prior to submission to the KRCC or the Bremerton City Council for final approval. Comments or views of citizens will be considered at the public hearing, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be attached to the substantial amendment of the final Action Plan which will be submitted to HUD. Substantial amendments include:

- Changes in the use of CDBG or HOME funds from one eligible activity to another
- Canceling an approved activity or adding a new one
- A substantial change to the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of the project as defined in the application for funds and approved by the GRC.

CDBG or HOME activities awarded funds which have a substantial change in the purpose, scope, beneficiaries, location or budget will be evaluated by Block Grant Staff and may be required to submit a new application for funding in the next application cycle.

Projects not expending their full CDBG or HOME award will not trigger a substantial amendment. These funds will be re-obligated to new projects during the following year's regular application cycle.

Minor Changes: Any request for a change in the amount to be expended on a program or project budget line item, or a minor change to the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of the project as defined in the application for funds, shall not be considered a Substantial Change requiring citizen notification and Annual Action Plan amendment; however, prior written approval of these changes must be obtained from the appropriate Block Grant Administrator.

Minor project changes may need to be formalized as an amendment to the sub-recipient Agency's contract with the City or County. The Agency will submit a written request for change to the Block Grant Administrator stating the specific reasons for the requested increase or decrease in funding, or change in purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries. All requests will be reviewed, and approved or denied by the Block Grant Administrator.

Performance Reports

1. Both the Kitsap County Block Grant Division and City of Bremerton Block Grant Division will prepare and submit a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to HUD no later than March 31st of each year for the previous calendar year.

2. The CAPER will be made available for public review. Notice of Availability will be published in the newspaper of record and copies will be available on the County's and City's websites:

   - Kitsap County: http://www.kitsapgov.com/hr/block_grant_program/block_grant_program.htm; scroll down to the year and CAPER file desired. Copies are also available at the Kitsap County Block Grant Program Office, 345 6th Street, Suite 400, Bremerton, Washington.

   - City of Bremerton: http://www.ci.bremerton.wa.us/display.php?id=788: scroll down to the year and CAPER file desired.

3. Citizens will be provided a period of at least 15 days to review and comment on the CAPER. Comments or views of citizens will be considered in the report, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be attached to the CAPER and submitted to HUD.

Public Hearings

By law, public hearings are required in order to obtain the public's view and to provide the public with the City's and County's responses to public questions and proposals. A public hearing is held in May for the adoption of the next year's Application and Policy for the Use of CDBG and HOME Funds. A second hearing is held in November to review the proposed use of funds and adopt the Annual Action Plan.

Notification of the public hearings and of 30-day comment periods will be published in the newspaper of record and will afford citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine the proposed plans and to submit comments.

Kitsap County public hearings will be held during the regular meeting of the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council in the meeting chambers of the Norm Dicks Government Center. KRCC meeting times and agendas can be obtained at http://www.kitsapregionalcouncil.org/krcc_board.html.

City of Bremerton public hearings will be held during Bremerton City Council meetings, which are held every first and third Wednesday of the month, at 5:30 pm in the meeting chambers of the Norm Dicks Government Center. Bremerton City Council agenda may be obtained at http://www.ci.bremerton.wa.us/display.php?id=580.

Public Comments

Interested persons may submit comments in writing during the public comment periods, or orally at the public hearings. Written comments should be directed to:

Kitsap County Block Grant Program
345 6th Street, Suite 400
Bremerton, WA 98337

City of Bremerton
345 6th Street, Suite 600
Bremerton, WA 98337

Complaints

All written citizen complaints will be referred to the appropriate person(s) or agencies for action. Under normal circumstances, the Block Grant Division will respond to the person making the complaint within 15 days. All complaints and responses will be kept on file.

Resources

Newspaper of Record: Notification will be placed in the following newspaper under Legal Notices at least ten days before a public meeting is held concerning a program described in this plan:

Kitsap County Block Grant – The Kitsap Newspaper Group
City of Bremerton Block Grant – The Kitsap Sun

Notices may also be published on City and County websites, as follows:

Kitsap County Block Grant Division:
http://www.kitsapgov.com/hr/block_grant_program/block_grant_program.htm (scroll down to "ANNUAL APPLICATION PROCESS").

City of Bremerton Block Grant Program:
http://www.ci.bremerton.wa.us/display.php?id=788

The notice will indicate when and where the public meeting will be held. Meetings are often held at the following location:

Norm Dicks Government Center, 1st Floor Meeting Chambers
345 6th Street
Bremerton, WA 98337