

Appendix A

Citizen Participation Plan (Updated April 2020)

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 Kitsap County receives a formula allocation of CDBG and HOME funds from HUD. In some years Kitsap County may receive a special allocation of funds through HUD in response to a presidentially declared disaster or special congressional appropriation. There are specific federal rules and regulations governing the allocation and use of funds, including provisions for citizen involvement in decision making. In order to facilitate citizen involvement Kitsap County has adopted a Citizen Participation Plan. The County annually publishes a policy plan which outlines the federal requirements and local policies for CDBG and HOME funds.

The County conducts a competitive funding cycle each year for CDBG and HOME funds. A Coordinated Grant Application Schedule is published on the County's web site in the spring and the County sends electronic notification to all subscribers. The schedule contains dates for the written comment periods, times and dates for public hearings, and other important dates. This Citizen Participation Plan outlines in detail the funding allocation process including Action Plan approval, amendments to the Action Plan and Consolidated Plan, and opportunity for citizen involvement. This plan also includes specific details regarding additional funding Kitsap County may receive from HUD in 2020 including CDBG-CV funds received under the CARES Act.

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.

This plan provides opportunities for representation of all citizens of Kitsap County including low- and moderate-income persons, 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.

Special 2020 CARES Act Funding

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (Public Law 116-136) makes available supplemental Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV grants). Funding allocated to Kitsap County under this provision will not be allocated through the normal competitive grant application cycle. The County's plan for the use of these funds will be included in an amendment to its already approved 2019 Action Plan. It will be subject to a 5-day public comment period. A Legal Ad will be published in the newspaper of record to open the 5-day written comment period. Information will be posted to the County's web site at <https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/CDBG--LANDING.aspx>

Electronic Notification will be available to any agency or organization who signs up on the Kitsap County Block Grant web site to receive notices. To sign up go to: <https://www.kitsapgov.com/> and scroll to the bottom of the page and click on NEWS SIGN UP. This link will take you to the Kitsap County Electronic Notification System where you can sign up to receive text or email updates.

Written comments can be submitted by email or mail to:

Kitsap County Block Grant Program
345 6th Street, Suite 400, Bremerton, WA 98337
Bonnie Tufts, btufts@co.kitsap.wa.us, 360-337-4606
Shannon Bauman, sbauman@co.kitsap.wa.us, 360-337-7272

Annual Allocation Process / Action Plan Submission

Kitsap County conducts a competitive annual process to determine its allocation of CDBG and HOME Consortium funds. The public is encouraged to participate in the process and its end product—the submission of an annual Action Plan to HUD. The City of Bremerton conducts its own separate process for allocating CDBG funds.

A. Policy Plan and Request for Proposals

In the spring of each year a notice will be published in the newspaper of record, and posted to the County's web site, to provide an opportunity for comment on the CDBG/HOME Policy Plan. This notice will begin a 15-day comment period on the Policy Plan (including the Citizen Participation Plan) and include the date and time of public hearings to take citizen comments. Separate Requests for Proposals (RFP's) will be posted to the County's web site and electronic notification sent to subscribers. The RFP's will include the application schedule, applicant eligibility, estimated funds available, application access and deadlines for submission, application review and rating process, and information on funding awards and contracting.

Notifications will be available to any agency or organization who signs up on the Kitsap County Block Grant web site to receive notices. To sign up go to: <https://www.kitsapgov.com/> and scroll to the bottom of the page and click on NEWS SIGN UP. This link will take you to the Kitsap County Electronic Notification System where you can sign up to receive text or email updates.

Upon approval of the Policy Plan by the Board of County Commissioners, information about the application and technical assistance will be available from:

Kitsap County Block Grant Program
345 6th Street, Suite 400, Bremerton, WA 98337-1873.
<https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/HH-Coordinated-Grant-Application-Process.aspx>
or by contacting staff.
Bonnie Tufts, btufts@co.kitsap.wa.us, 360-337-4606
Shannon Bauman, sbauman@co.kitsap.wa.us, 360-337-7272

Applications will be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

Application submittal instructions and due dates are included in the Request for Proposals (RFP) and Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). New CDBG/HOME applicants must contact Block Grant Program staff to make an appointment to discuss their project in order to be eligible for submission of an application. Applications must be submitted online and require access to the internet.

B. Technical Assistance

New applicants, who have never received an award of CDBG or HOME funds in the past, are required to meet with Block Grant staff. This meeting is **required** in order to be considered eligible. Even if your organization is not certain they will apply in this funding round, you are encouraged to meet with staff to discuss your project proposal.

In addition to the Technical Assistance described above 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 County Block Grant Program 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 and Rating Process

Applications will go through a two-stage review process:

- Stage 1 includes a risk assessment utilizing specific criteria to determine if the applicant and proposed projects are eligible. If an application is found not eligible the applicant will be notified via email that their project is not eligible and the reason why.
- Stage 2 includes review and scoring, interviews, and determination of funding awards by the citizen review committee (Grant Recommendation Committee), and final approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

The review process for each stage is detailed below.

Stage 1: Risk Assessment and Project Review

1. Applications are first reviewed by staff for eligibility using the following criteria:
 - a. Applicant organization and proposed program or project is eligible for at least one source of funds (CDBG, HOME,);
 - b. Organizational Capacity & Management
 - c. Financial Stability
 - d. Project meets a priority or strategy identified in:
 - The Kitsap County and City of Bremerton Consolidated Plan 2021 – 2025 (for CDBG and HOME funds) and,
 - e. Applicant can demonstrate a positive history of performance with prior grant funds and is not out of compliance with current grant awards.

Stage 2: Interviews and Funding Awards

The funding recommendations go through a multi-step process, prior to finalizing the award amount.

1. **Application Review and Scoring**

Applications are reviewed and scored by Grant Recommendation Committee (GRC) members based on the following criteria related to the following:

- a. Timeline & Developer Capacity
- b. Property Management Experience
- c. Target Population & Outreach
- d. Project Financial Information

2. Interviews

The GRC will hold interviews for all competitive categories; interviews are optional for non-competitive funding sources. Interview length will depend on application type:

- CDBG Services, Economic Development Microenterprise, and CHDO Operating applications will have interviews consisting of the following:
 - 20 minutes in length which includes 10-minute agency presentation and 10-minute question/answer.
- Housing (including CHDO Projects) and Capital Economic Development applications will have interviews consisting of the following:
 - 35 minutes in length which includes 15-minute agency presentation and 20-minute question/answer.
- The GRC will use the finalized score of applications to assist in making funding recommendations and contingencies. At the conclusion of the interviews the GRC will assign a priority ranking and recommend funding awards.

2. **Kitsap County Board of Commissioners (BOCC)** – The BOCC receives the recommendations from the Grant Recommendation Committees, holds a public comment period and a public hearing, and approves final awards and contingencies.
3. **Federal CDBG and HOME Funds** – Applications awarded CDBG and HOME funds must be included in an Action Plan associated with the Consolidated Plan and submitted to HUD for approval. The Action Plan cannot be finalized until Kitsap County receives the federal award amounts from HUD.
4. **Final Awards** – Funding awards are made based on estimated funds. Once the actual amounts are known for each fund type (CDBG, HOME,), awards will be adjusted based on the contingency set by the GRCs and approved by the BOCC and Bremerton City Council for City HOME funds.

D. Grant Recommendation Committee

There are two Grant Recommendation Committees (GRCs):

- The Services GRC reviews CDBG Services applications for public services. This same committee also reviews applications for the Homeless Housing Grant Program (HHGP), Affordable Housing Grant Program (AHGP) and Consolidated Homeless Grant Program.
- The Capital GRC reviews Affordable Housing and Economic Development applications which include housing, economic development capital or microenterprise assistance, and CHDO operating assistance.

Both GRCs play an integral role in the allocation of CDBG and HOME federal funds and HHGP, AHGP, and CHG 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 seeks members who demonstrate specific skills and experience.

- The Services GRC seeks members who 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 seeks members who 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 up to 8 members as follows:

- Four members appointed by Kitsap County Commissioners including members representing North Kitsap, Central Kitsap, South Kitsap, and an at-large position.
- Four members, one each appointed by the cities of Bremerton, Bainbridge Island, Port Orchard, and Poulsbo.

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

Appointments for GRC members are made annually by each jurisdiction. GRC members are appointed to serve a two year term and can be re-appointed to serve successive terms and/or additional terms.

E. Conflict of Interest

- a. No member of the GRC shall be beneficially interested, directly or indirectly, in any grant applications which may be made by, through, or under the recommendation of the GRC, in whole or in part, or which may be made for the benefit of his or her office, or accept, directly or indirectly, any compensation, gratuity or reward in connection with such contract from any other person beneficially interested therein (from RCW 42.23.030)
- b. No member of the GRC shall engage in any activity, including participation in the selection, award, or administration of a grant award or contract if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, exists.
- c. Additional information on Remote Interest and Potential Bias by Prior Association can be found in the full Conflict of Interest Policy.

F. 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 Board of County Commissioners and the Bremerton City Council (for city HOME funded projects).

All applications approved for funding will be included in the County's Action Plan and include contingencies for increases or decreases in actual award amounts from HUD. A summary of the Action Plan will be published in the newspaper of record and on the County's website. The summaries will describe the contents and purpose of the Action Plan, and include a list of locations where copies of the entire proposed plan may be examined. Citizens will be provided a period of at least 30 days to review and comment on the plan. 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.

Kitsap County Block Grant staff will submit the Action Plan, including the projects proposed to be funded, to HUD by November 15th of each calendar year, except in years where the federal budget has been delayed and actual funding awards are not known. In these years the Action Plan will be submitted after the County has been notified of its actual award amounts.

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. Kitsap County worked with the City of Bremerton in development of the 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan. This plan will guide funding for the 5-year period. The Kitsap County and City of Bremerton Consolidated Plan, including each year's Action Plan is available online at:

- <https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/CDBG---Consolidated-Planning.aspx>
- A printed copy may be requested from the Kitsap County or City of Bremerton Block Grant Programs.

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;
- **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.

Citizens are encouraged to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action 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 are changes made to an already approved Action Plan. *Please note FY 2019 and FY 2020 Action Plan Substantial amendments will be subject to a 5-day written comment period as included in the CARES Act waivers provided by HUD.*

Substantial Amendments will be published in the 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 to the appropriate GRC for review prior to submission to the BOCC for final approval. Written comments or views of citizens will be considered 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
- Adding a new activity, not previously included in an Action Plan
- 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 during the following year’s regular application cycle.

Programs generating program income, as identified in a written agreement, must return the program income to Kitsap County and may receive the funds in a new written agreement to assist additional individuals. This use of the program income will not trigger a substantial amendment

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 as defined in the application for funds, shall not be considered a Substantial Amendment 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 changes may need to be formalized as an amendment to the Contract with the 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. Kitsap County Block Grant Program 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 program 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 website:
 - Kitsap County: <https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/CDBG-CAPER-Performance-Reports.aspx>. Copies are also available at the Kitsap County Block Grant Program Office, 345 6th Street, Suite 400, Bremerton, Washington.

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

Public hearings are held 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 spring for the approval of the next year's Policy Plan. A second hearing is held in the fall to review the proposed use of funds and adopt the Annual Action Plan.

Notification of the public hearings and comment periods will be published in the newspaper of record, and on the County's web site, 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 Board of County Commissioners in the commissioner chambers of the Kitsap County Administrative Building. BOCC meeting times and agendas can be obtained at: <http://www.kitsapgov.com> click on Commissioner Meeting Agendas

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Kitsap County may hold virtual public hearings in place of in-person meetings. Citizens may participate by logging into Zoom through a computer with internet connection or by phone. Notice of these meetings and a link to participate will be posted on the Commissioner Agenda page at <https://sp.kitsapgov.com/sites/comm/SitePages/agendasearch.aspx>

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

Complaints

All written citizen complaints will be referred to the appropriate person(s) or agencies for action. Under normal circumstances, the Block Grant Program 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:

The Kitsap Sun

Notices may also be published on the County website, as follows:

Kitsap County Block Grant Program

<https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/CDBG--LANDING.aspx>

The notice will indicate when and where the public hearing will be held. Public hearings will be held at the following location:

Kitsap County Administrative Building, Commissioners Chambers
614 Division Street
Port Orchard, WA 98366

Kitsap County Block Grant Program utilizes Kitsap County's electronic notification system. Interested parties may sign up to receive email and text message updates on Block Grant Program activities. Go to www.kitsapgov.com scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the button NEW SIGN UP.