



City of Las Cruces, New Mexico
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Planning and Neighborhood Services
Community Development Department
City of Las Cruces
P.O. Box 2000, Las Cruces, NM 88004

700 N Main St.

Las Cruces, NM 88001

(575) 528-3043 Main

www.las-cruces.org/departments/community-development/housing-and-family-services

FAX 575-528-3101

TTY 575-528-3157

This document is being provided in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and/or persons with limited English proficiency upon request.

The City of Las Cruces prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, ancestry, familial status, serious medical condition, national origin, age or disability, spousal affiliation, in city employment, city operated programs, services or facilities.



City of Las Cruces

Citizen Participation Plan, 2016-2020

The City of Las Cruces (City), as an entitlement community, is eligible to receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This Citizen Participation Plan (Plan) provides for and encourages citizen participation in the CDBG and HOME programs. This Plan is an essential element of the City's community development process and has been developed to comply with the regulations of the CDBG and HOME programs as administered by HUD.

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 funding. The Consolidated Plan report examines the housing and community development needs of a city, sets priorities for HUD grant monies to which a city is entitled, identifies the city's performance in meeting its goals, and establishes a strategic plan for meeting current and future needs. Each Consolidated Plan is also required to have a strategy for citizen participation in the Consolidated Planning process.

The City of Las Cruces is in the process of preparing its Five-Year Consolidated Plan covering the program years 2016 through 2020. This document constitutes the Citizen Participation Plan for the City of Las Cruces Consolidated Plan. The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) describes how citizens will participate in four programmatic areas:

1. Development of the Consolidated Plan,
2. Substantial amendments made to the Consolidated Plan,
3. Development of the Annual Action Plan, and
4. Development of the annual performance report (CAPER).

Purpose of Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Las Cruces recognizes the importance of public participation in both defining and understanding current housing and community development needs, and prioritizing resources to address those needs. The City's Citizen Participation Plan is designed to provide citizens of all ages, genders, economic levels, races, ethnicities, and special needs equal access to become involved each year. This document serves as the City's Citizen Participation Plan for the 2016 Consolidated Plan program year, and all subsequent program years through 2020. This Citizen Participation Plan was drafted in accordance with 24 CFR Sections 91.100 and 91.105 of HUD's Consolidated Plan regulations. In order to ensure maximum participation in the Consolidated Planning process among all populations and needs groups, and in order to ensure that their issues and concerns are adequately addressed, the City of Las Cruces will follow the standards set forth in its adopted Citizen Participation Plan during development of its Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance, Evaluation Report (CAPER), and substantial amendments. The participation process will be developed and monitored by the City of Las Cruces Community Development Department. The primary objectives of the City's Five-Year Citizen Participation Plan are to:

- Encourage citizen participation in the development of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance, Evaluation Report, and substantial amendments with emphasis on participation from individuals and households identified as low to moderate income, residents of slum and blighted areas, minorities, those with limited English proficiency, the disabled and those residing in areas where funding will be utilized.
- Provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to meetings, information and records relating to the City's plan for utilizing funding in addition to allowing reasonable opportunity to comment on the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, the Action Plan, the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, and substantial amendments.
- Provide technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low to moderate income and of minority populations that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding. As a condition of providing technical assistance, the City requires that the activities to be addressed in a proposal be consistent with identified community development and housing needs and funding program guidelines, and that funds be available for such activities as may be involved.
- Provide public hearings to obtain citizen views and to provide the City's responses to proposals and questions at all stages of the community development program year. Public hearings provide for citizen input on community needs, review of proposed uses of funds, and to assess how funds were spent during previous program year.
- Provide substantive written response to every written citizen complaint within fifteen (15) working days of receiving statement (where practicable).
- Endeavor to meet the needs of non-English speaking and Limited Language Proficiency (LEP) residents in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking and/or LEP residents can be reasonably expected to participate. When requested no later than 72 hours prior to a public hearing, appropriate provisions will be determined and made that may include translation of public hearing comments and documents into the language of the majority of the non-English speaking or LEP residents affected. Spanish translation is available at all community meetings.
- Provide public hearings at locations accessible to persons with disabilities, and make provisions for persons with disabilities when requests are made at least 72 hours business days prior to the hearing.

Citizen Participation Plan Development Process and Adoption

The Consolidated Plan process begins with the preparation of the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) which describes the Plan Development Process. The CPP informs the public about processes and procedures for public access and influence on the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, and the proposed scheduling for development and submission of the plan.

Copies of the CPP are made available at least 2 weeks prior to a public hearing at the City of Las Cruces City Hall and on the City of Las Cruces website, at www.las-cruces.org/departments/community-development/housing-and-family-services. The CPP is also

made available during the review of the Consolidated Plan. A public hearing to review the draft Citizen Participation Plan will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 16 2015, at the Munson Senior Center, 975 S. Mesquite, Las Cruces.

Prior to the adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan, implementation of the following public comment, review, and adoption procedures ensure that all citizens have a chance to participate in development of the Plan.

- i. The City will provide a notice of the 15-day public review period for the Citizen Participation Plan in local newspapers.
- ii. The proposed Citizen Participation Plan will be available for public review at the City of Las Cruces Community Development Department, the City Clerk's office, Branigan Library and on the City's website.
- iii. Upon request, the Plan will be made accessible to any person with disabilities. The City will provide a reasonable number of free copies of the Citizen Participation Plan to citizens and groups that request copies.
- iv. Comments or views of citizens received in writing during the public review period will be solicited by the City of Las Cruces staff. Comments can be sent in writing to the attention of Vera Zamora, Community Development Department, P.O. Box 2000, Las Cruces, NM 88004. They can also be made by calling (575) 528-3194 or emailing vzamora@las-cruces.org.
- iii. The Final Plan will include a summary of public comments and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefore, all of which will be attached to the final Citizen Participation Plan.

Amendment of the Citizen Participation Plan

The City will amend its approved Citizen Participation Plan whenever a change in the public participation process, as outlined in this plan, is proposed. An amendment to the approved Citizen Participation Plan will be reviewed and approved by the City of Las Cruces City Council. Notice of any amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan will be published in the Las Cruces Sun News and/or The Las Cruces Bulletin no less than 15 days prior to the review and adoption to allow the public the opportunity to review and comment on the amendment. Notice will also be given to key housing and community development organizations in the City before the 15 day comment period begins. The Citizen Participation Plan will be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities upon request. Appeals concerning the amendment should follow the Appeal procedures outlined in this document.

Glossary of Relevant Terms

CAPER: The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, as required by HUD regulations, 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 (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds at the end of the program year.

Consolidated Plan: A three to five year plan of the City's Housing and Community Development needs, resources, priorities, and proposed activities to be undertaken for both the CDBG and HOME programs.

Action Plan: The yearly portion of the Consolidated Plan that identifies the specific activities and projects to be undertaken with CDBG and HOME during that funding/program year by the City.

CDBG: The Community Development Block Grant Program, as established under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Public Law 93-383, and the funding received under such program assists communities to address housing and community development needs, primarily for low- and moderate-income residents.

HOME: The HOME Investment Partnerships Program, as established by the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Act of 1990, is designed to provide communities with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the creation of affordable housing opportunities through partnerships with other organizations.

Median Family Income (MFI): HUD surveys major metropolitan areas annually to develop an index of median family income by household size.

Low- and Moderate-Income Households - Pursuant to HUD regulations, the primary beneficiaries of the CDBG and HOME programs should be low- and moderate-income households, defined by HUD as follows:

- Extremely Low-Income*** - 0-30% Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Median family income (MFI) adjusted for household size.
- Low-Income*** - 31-50% Las Cruces MSA MFI adjusted for household size.
- Moderate-Income*** - 51-80% Las Cruces MSA MFI adjusted for household size.

Low- and Moderate-Income Neighborhood - Generally defined as a census tract(s) or block group(s) in which a minimum of 51 percent of the residents have an income not exceeding 80 percent of the area median family income.

Relevant Areas and Programs

The City of Las Cruces 2016–2020 Consolidated Plan covers the geographic area within the City limits of Las Cruces. The City is entitled to receive CDBG and HOME funding from HUD during the 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 program years. Each program year coincides with the City's fiscal year of July 1st to June 30th.

Consolidated Plan Development Public Process

The CPP includes efforts to notify the Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority and other governmental and partnering agencies as well as the affected public about the Plan Development Process and to provide ample opportunity for citizen input at all stages.

Plan Development Schedule

PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE*

EVENT	DATE
Issuance of Citizen Participation Plan with Notice of Hearing	December
Public Meetings to Solicit Input on Needs and Priorities	January
Publication of proposed Consolidated Plan and Action Plan	March - April
Public Hearing on proposed Action Plan & Budget	April
Finalization of Consolidated Plan and Action Plan	April
CSI Submits final Proposed Consolidated Plan to the City Council for Approval	May
Submission of Action Plan application to HUD	May

*Specific dates and locations are provided in published notices, through direct mailings, in publicly-accessible locations and on the City of Las Cruces website.

Citizen Involvement

The 2016 Consolidated Planning processes will offer many opportunities for citizen participation. While the Citizen Participation Plan will aim to ensure the participation of all residents, special assurances will be made to ensure the participation of the following groups:

- extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income persons;
- persons living in areas where CDBG and HOME funds are proposed to be used;
- residents of publicly assisted housing;
- low-income residents of target neighborhoods;
- minorities and persons of color;
- non-English speaking persons;
- persons who are homeless; and
- persons with physical disabilities.

Participation will be solicited and encouraged through the following activities.

Citizen participation hearings

Three public hearings will be held after the publication of the draft Consolidated Plan, with a presentation of the completed Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan to the City Council. Notification of the public hearings will be provided through local newspapers and on the City of Las Cruces website at www.las-cruces.org/departments/community-development/housing-and-family-services.

Community meetings

Three Consolidated Plan community meetings (also known as public forums) will be held to gather public input about the housing and community development needs of citizens and their neighborhoods. The community meetings will also provide an opportunity for citizens and interested parties to obtain information about the City’s housing and community development

programs and eligibility requirements. City staff will be available at the meetings to provide technical assistance for developing funding proposals for the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan.

Two community meetings will be held in early evenings to accommodate work schedules and persons who rely on public transportation and/or are not comfortable driving at night. The locations will be held in low and moderate income areas of the city.

Community residents will be informed of the community meetings using many methods, including distribution of brochures, personal contact with agencies and advocates, and media releases. All sites selected for the meetings are accessible to the physically disabled. Auxiliary aids and services available to community residents may be, but are not limited to, a qualified sign language interpreter, large print materials, audio tape, a note taker, open or closed captioning, assistive listening devices, Brailled materials, web site access, etc. This request should be made to the City's ADA Coordinator in writing, or by phone at (575)528-3227, at least 72 hours prior to the event where that accommodation is needed. A Spanish translator will be available at all of the community meetings. The City will also develop flyers and/or pamphlets for distribution through regular mail to all residents living within existing, designated low-income areas and neighborhoods throughout the City to inform residents about the community meetings as an effort to increase public participation.

Announcements/invitations

Multiple processes will be used to inform citizens, local government officials, advocates, housing and community development officials and providers, organizations serving minority residents, homeless residents, special needs residents, and low income residents, and others about the public hearings and community meetings. Citizens will be given advance notice of the public, postings on the City website, press releases, emails, and formal publications in citywide newspapers two weeks prior to public hearings. Email notifications of the meetings will also be sent to various non-profit and partner agencies that work throughout Dona Ana County on the City's e-mail listing and through an interagency listserv.

Public Comment

Prior to the adoption of a Consolidated Plan, the City will make available to interested parties the Draft Consolidated Plan and Executive Summary for a comment period of no less than 30 days.

The Draft Consolidated Plan will contain the amount of assistance the City expects to receive through the HUD CDBG, CoC, and HOME grants and the activities that are planned for the 2016-2020 Consolidated Planning period. The Draft Plan will also include the City's policies related to displacement of low- and moderate-income individuals, reducing poverty, removal of lead-based paint hazards, preventing and mitigating homelessness and removing barriers to fair housing choice. The entire proposed Consolidated Plan will be available for viewing at the City of Las Cruces Community Development Planning and Neighborhood Services offices, located at 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001 during the full public comment period. The proposed Consolidated Plan will also be available for viewing on the City's website, <http://www.las-cruces.org/cd/>.

Hard copies of the Executive Summary will be available to the public upon request. Upon request, the Plan will be made accessible to any person with disabilities. Citizens or groups that have attended any of the community meetings or public hearings will be notified by mail or email of the

Consolidated Plan's availability for comment. The City will openly consider any comments of individuals or groups received in writing during the Consolidated Planning process or at public hearings. A summary of the written and public hearing comments will be included in the Final Consolidated Plan, along with the City's response to the comments.

The City will provide a substantive written response to all written citizen comments and complaints related to the Consolidated Plan, amendments, and the CAPER within 15 working days of receiving the comments and complaints. Copies of the complaints, along with the City's response will be sent to HUD if they occur outside of the Consolidated Planning process and, as such, do not appear in the Consolidated Plan.

Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Citizen participation

Hard copies of the Draft CAPER will be located at the library, City Clerk's Office, Community Development Department Offices, and on the City's website at <http://www.las-cruces.org/cd/>.

Citizen Comments

Before the City submits a Consolidated Plan Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to HUD, the City will make available to interested parties the proposed CAPER for a comment period of no less than 15 days. Citizens will be notified of the CAPER's availability through newspaper notification. The notification will appear in at least one newspaper that is circulated throughout the City. The notification may be made as part of the City's notification of the public comment period for the CAPER and will be published two weeks before the CAPER comment period begins.

Each CAPER will be available for review and viewing at the City of Las Cruces Community Development Department, Planning and Neighborhood Services offices, located at 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001 during the full public comment period.

Yearly Action Plans to the Consolidated Plan (2017 through 2020)

Excluding 2016 and any year in which a new Consolidated Plan is adopted by the City, the yearly Action Plan will be adopted through a Citizen Participation Process in which at least four public hearings are held. The public hearings will be conducted on the following basis:

Initial overview meetings

There will be two meetings held at the beginning of the Action Plan process. The meetings will occur in late fall and/or early winter, generally between November and February each year, and are intended to present the public with an overview of the adopted strategies and priorities of the Consolidated Plan. This will include an overview of allowed activities under the CDBG and HOME programs, as well as an overview of the previous year's Action Plan activities and projects for the City. The meetings will be held at two different locations throughout the City, and each will be held in public buildings located in areas that are close to or within the designated low and moderate-

income areas of the City. Additionally, the meetings will be held in buildings that are accessible to all members of the public.

Final Action Plan public hearings

There will be two public hearings held to gather direct input from the public on the overall proposed activities and programs to be completed as part of that year's Action Plan. The hearings will occur during the 30-day public comment period, generally in late winter or early spring around mid-March to mid-April, prior to consideration of the Action Plan by the City Council. The hearings will be held at two different locations throughout the City, with one occurring at a different location from the initial meetings and at least one on the City's East Mesa. The hearings will be held in public buildings located in areas that are close to or within the designated low- and moderate-income areas of the City. Additionally, the hearings will be held in buildings that are accessible to all members of the public. Citizens will be given advance notice of the public hearings through notifications in late March, postings on City agency websites, press releases, emails, and publications in citywide newspapers. Email notifications of the meetings will also be sent to various non-profit and partner agencies on the City's e-mail listing and through an interagency listserv to numerous non-profit agencies that work throughout Doña Ana County.

Citizen Comments

Before the City submits an Annual Action Plan to HUD, the City will make available to interested parties the proposed Annual Action Plan for a comment period of no less than 30 days. Citizens will be notified of the Annual Action Plan's availability through newspaper notification. The notification will appear in at least one newspaper that is circulated throughout the City. The notification may be made as part of the City's notification of the public comment period for the Annual Action Plan and will be published between two and three weeks before the CAPER comment period begins.

Each Annual Action Plan will be available for review available for viewing at the City of Las Cruces Community Development Department, Planning and Neighborhood Services offices, located at 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001 during the full public comment period, and on the City website, www.las-cruces.org/departments/community-development/housing-and-family-services.

Substantial Amendments

Substantial amendments are funding adjustments or reallocations that involve adding, deleting or shifting 20% or more of the approved funds from one eligible activity to another. An eligible activity is defined in 24 CFR Parts 201 through 206. Substantial amendments will be subject to a 30-day comment period following publication of the proposed amendment in a newspaper of general circulation and posting on the City web site. A summary of comments or views, and a summary of comments and views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be attached to the substantial amendment.

All other minor changes to activities will be considered informal programmatic amendments and will be so noted in the program file. A copy will be sent to HUD CPD for their information.

The substantially amended sections of the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan will be available for review for viewing at the City of Las Cruces Housing and Neighborhood Services offices, located at 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001 during the full public comment period. In addition, the substantially amended sections of the Consolidated Plan will be made available on the City's website, <http://www.las-cruces.org/cd/>, for the full duration of the public comment period.

Changes in federal funding level

Any changes in federal funding level after the Draft Consolidated Plan or Annual 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.

Consultation with Organizations and City Agencies

When preparing the Consolidated Plan, the City will actively consult with public and private agencies that provide housing, health, homeless and social services in order to ensure that the interests and needs of all groups are being adequately addressed. The City will also make the Consolidated Plan available to surrounding units of local government and its PHA. This consultation will occur through the community meetings, interviews conducted with such organizations including those that provide services to special needs populations and incorporation of data and reports produced by such organizations into the Consolidated Plan.

Public access to records

The City will provide all interested parties with access to information and records related to the City's Consolidated Plan, Citizen Participation Plan, Annual Action Plan and CAPER, and the City's use of assistance under all programs covered by the Consolidated Plan during the preceding five years. The public will be provided with reasonable access to housing assistance records according to the City of Las Cruces Public Records Requests procedures. Persons who would like access to records should contact the City Clerk's Office in person, by mail, e-mail or fax. All written requests are responded to pursuant to the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act. Records requests must be on the Records Request Form, and contain the name, address, and telephone number of the person seeking access to public records and identify the records sought with reasonable particularity. The office is located at 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001. Mail requests can be sent to P.O. Box 20000, Las Cruces, NM 88004. Emails may be sent to cityclerk@las-cruces.org, faxes sent to (575) 541-2117, and calls made to (575) 541-2115. Reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities will be made upon request. Documents may also be downloaded from the City of Las Cruces Community Development Department, Planning and Neighborhood Services website.

Complaints and Grievances

The City of Las Cruces will provide written responses to written complaints and grievances received regarding any aspect of the annual Consolidated Plan federal entitlement grant program within 15 working days, where practicable, of receiving the complaint or grievance. Comments, complaints, and grievances concerning the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, or CAPER should be addressed to the Community Development Director.

Technical Assistance

Upon request, staff will provide technical assistance to groups representing extremely-low, low- and moderate-income persons to develop funding requests for CDBG and HOME eligible activities. Technical assistance will be provided as follows:

- Answer, in writing or verbally, all inquiries received from citizens or representative groups relating to funding requests.
- Meet with groups or individuals as appropriate, to assist in identifying specific needs and to assist in preparing request/application for assistance.
- Provide bi-lingual translation on as needed basis.

Public comments and responses (after public comment period)

DRAFT