**INTRODUCTION**

The 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan is a collaborative process through which the community identifies its housing, homeless and community development needs; and establishes a vision, goals and strategies for achieving these needs. The plan also pinpoints how the money received from *the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)* will be utilized over the upcoming program year—taking into account the regulations governing these programs—to meet locally recognized needs.

The City of Mansfield is required by law to have a detailed Citizen Participation Plan that contains the City’s policies and procedures for public involvement in the *Consolidated Plan process*, and the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) and any other community development need monies granted to the City by *HUD*. The Citizen Participation Plan must be available to the public.

Citizen participation is a vital part of the *Consolidated Plan* process. Citizens, non-profit organizations and other interested parties must be afforded adequate opportunity to participate in the planning process. This includes:

* Access to meetings
* Access to information
* Technical assistance as required
* Opportunity to comment on plans
* Public hearings to identify housing, community development needs and a review of proposed expenditures of funds, and
* Timely response to complaints and grievances.

The following describes the guiding principles for citizen participation by the *City of Mansfield* in the implementation of the *HUD Consolidated Plan*.

**Encouraging Public Participation**

The law requires that our *Citizen Participation Plan* both provide for and encourage public involvement, emphasize involvement by low to moderate-income people—especially those living in low to moderate-income neighborhoods, and provide the opportunity for involvement at each planning stage. Also, the *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)* anticipates that the City of Mansfield will take actions that are appropriate to encourage participation by minorities, non-English speaking individuals, and people with disabilities.

Copies of this *Citizen Participation Plan*, as well as summaries of basic information about *CDBG* and *HOME*, and the *Consolidated Planning* process may be made available in the languages of residents who comprise a significant portion of the low to moderate income population. Currently, the City of Mansfield has materials in English only. Residents needing resources in other languages are welcomed to contact City staff.

**The Purpose of Participation**

The primary purpose of the programs covered by this *Citizen Participation Plan* is to improve communities by providing:

* Decent Housing
* Suitable living environment
* Economic growth opportunities

Because of the amount of federal *CDBG* and *HOME* program monies the City of Mansfield receives each year is mostly based upon the severity of both *poverty* and *substandard housing conditions* in Mansfield; it is necessary that low to moderate-income residents who experience these conditions get involved with the planning process. Genuine involvement by these residents must take place at all stages of the process, including:

* Identifying needs
* Setting priorities among these needs, suggesting how much money should be allocated to each high-priority need, and suggesting the types of programs to meet high-priority needs
* Overseeing the way in which programs are carried out

**The Various Stages of the Consolidation Plan Process**

The policies and procedures in the *Citizen Participation Plan* relate to several stages of actions mentioned in law or regulation. In general, these stages or events include:

* Identification of housing and community development needs
* Preparation of a draft usage of funds for the upcoming year called the proposed “*Annual Action Plan”* or the development of a proposed new “*Consolidated Plan”*
* Formal approval by elected officials of a final *“Annual Action Plan”* or *“Consolidated Plan”*
* On occasion during the year, it might be essential to change the use of the money already budgeted in an “*Annual Action Plan*”, or to change the priorities established in the “*Consolidated Plan*”. In that case, a formal “*Substantial Amendment*” will be proposed, considered and acted upon.
* After a program year is complete, the *“Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)”* must be drafted for public review, commented and then sent to HUD

**The Programmed Year**

The Program year selected by the City of Mansfield is July 1st through June 30th.

**Mansfield Citizen Participation Activities**

The City of Mansfield Citizen Participation activities may include:

* Community Outreach
* Public Meetings
* Public Hearing
* Access to Information
* Technical Assistance
* Timely response to Complaints and Grievances

**Community Outreach**

In order to assure that all citizens have ample opportunity to participate in the planning process, the City of Mansfield will conduct a community outreach on the development of the strategic plan. The purposes for the outreach will be to:

* Obtain views of citizens, public agencies and other interested parties.
* When applicable, announce the availability of technical assistance and funds.
* Respond to proposals and comments at all stages of the Consolidated Plan submission process, including:
	+ - Identifying housing and community development needs
		- Reviewing proposed uses of funds
		- Reviewing program performance

**Public Meetings for the Annual Action Plan process will be held via zoom and in person.**

**Public Meetings/ Hearings**

The City of Mansfield will host two (2) public meetings each year. Typically, one of these meetings may consist of either: 1) a meeting to announce the availability of technical assistance and funding for current program year; 2) a meeting to review program performance; or 3) one of the city council meetings, where legislation regarding either the strategic plan or the annual action plan is read and/or considered for approval. Also, each year, a final public comment period will be held once the draft plan is complete, to solicit comments on the strategies and proposed use of funds. Public Meetings will be conveniently and located for people who will benefit from program funds, and will be accessible to persons with special needs.

One public hearing will be held during City Council, they may be held via zoom, and broadcast on the City of Mansfield’s Facebook page and website. Agencies with proposals may also attend City Council in person. City Council will also hold a Public Affairs Committee meeting during the planning process to discuss recommendations for use of funding, and the Action Plan. Citizens are able to comment during City Council, and to Community Development staff during the planning process.

**Access to Information**

Citizens, public agencies and other interested parties, including those most affected will have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on any proposed submission concerning any of the following documents:

* The proposed and final “*Annual Action plans*”
* The proposed and final “*Consolidated Plan*”
* Proposed and final Substantial Amendments to either an “*Annual Action Plan*” or the “*Consolidated Plan*”
* Annual Performance Reports
* The Citizen Participation Plan
* Analysis of Impediments / Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Interested parties may access these documents at no cost through the internet, at the *Community Development* section of the City of Mansfield’s website: <https://ci.mansfield.oh.us/community-development/> or by contacting staff. The city will make every attempt to provide these materials in a form that is accessible to persons with disabilities and individuals that are Non-English speaking, when requested.

Involved citizens will be provided a 15 day period to comment on the City’s CAPER, prior to HUD submittal around September 15th of each year depending on HUD’s requirements, and CAPER completion date.

**Technical Assistance**

City staff will work with organizations and individual representatives of low to moderate-income people who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding for an activity. All potential applicants for funding are encouraged to contact city staff for technical assistance. Additionally, city staff will work with individuals and organizations receiving “*Consolidated Plan*” monies to ensure that funds are being spent for their intended purpose and within the rules and regulations of the federal government.

**Timely Response to Complaints and Grievance**

City staff will provide timely, written response to written complaints and grievances within the fifteen (15) day period of receipt, where practical.

**Substantial Amendments**

Prior to the submission of any substantial change in the use of funds, citizens will have thirty (30) days to comment on the proposed amendment using the citizen participation methods outlined in this plan and/or other methods that result in effective notice and commenting. All changes in use of funds will be subject to Mansfield City Council approval.

A substantial amendment to the *Consolidated Plan* is when one of the following decisions is to be made:

* A change in the use of *CDBG* and *HOME*, money from one project\* to another, and a change to increase or decrease funding or cost of a project by more than $50,000. (This does not include projects that are completed under budget by more than $50,000, but the use of the unspent funds will require City Council Approval, with comment opportunity given to the public)
* The addition of a project not originally described in the *Consolidated* or *Annual Action Plan*.
* A change in the purpose of a project, such as a change in the type of activity or its ultimate objective- for example, a change in a construction project from housing to commercial.

 *(\*The term “project” refers to a budget line item—often called a “program”—as delineated in the yearly action plan.)*

For more information regarding the *2019-2023 Consolidated Plan* or to submit your comments, please contact Adrian Ackerman at aackerman@ci.mansfield.oh.us or call 419-755-9795, or write to City of Mansfield, Department of Community Development, 30 North Diamond St. Mansfield, Ohio 44902 or visit the City’s website at: <https://ci.mansfield.oh.us/community-development/> .

Amended- 7/19/22

Mansfield City Council Approval – 8/16/22

Public Comment Period- 8/22/22- 9/26/22