

**CITY OF WORCESTER
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT**

***NOTICE OF AMENDMENT TO:
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN***

DRAFT



April 22, 2020

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to recent US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidance, *The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act* (CARES Act) Public Law makes available a total of \$5 billion in supplemental Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to be allocated across federal entitlement communities in the United States for the prevention, preparation, and response to, coronavirus (CDBG-CV grants) and its impacts.

On or about the 4th week of April, 2020, the City of Worcester anticipates receiving the following entitlement fund grants, and respective allocation amounts:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): \$2,716,551
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG): \$1,327,821
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA): \$94,776

The CARES Act provides CDBG grantees with flexibilities that make it easier to use CDBG-CV grants and fiscal years 2019 and 2020 CDBG Grants for coronavirus response and authorizes HUD to grant waivers and alternative requirements, including streamlining the public comment period for public input related to Consolidated Plan Substantial Amendments.

Grantees, such as the City of Worcester, have been advised to amend or prepare their plans as soon as feasibly possible. The Department is also waiving 24 CFR 91.505 to facilitate the use of the CD BG-CV funds to the extent necessary to require submission of the substantial amendment to HUD for review in accordance with 24 CFR 91.500.

Therefore, given the need to expedite actions to respond to COVID-19, HUD has waived 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2) and (k), 91.115(c)(2) and (i) as specified below, in order to balance the need to respond quickly to the growing spread and effects of COVID-19 with the statutory requirement to provide reasonable notice and opportunity for citizens to comment on substantial amendments concerning the proposed uses of CDBG, HOME, HTF, HOPWA or ESG funds. Therefore, the 30-day minimum for the required public comment period is waived for substantial amendments, provided that no less than 5 days are provided for public comments on each substantial amendment.

To facilitate the above, the City of Worcester is proposing to amend, as detailed in the document contained herein, its Citizen Participation Plan.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The City of Worcester Proposes to amend **Item D: Amendments** in its existing Citizen Participation Plan content and narrative as follows:

Existing Language:

D. Amendments

In accordance the code of federal regulations (CFR 91.505), the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) will amend the City of Worcester Five-Year Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development whenever it makes one of the following changes: (1) to make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds; (2) to carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan (including program income), not previously described in the action plan; or (3) to change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

A substantial amendment to the City of Worcester Five-Year Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development will be submitted by EOED when required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). EOED will provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on said substantial amendments. EOED will post a draft substantial amendment on the City's website, hold a public hearing to discuss the proposed substantial amendment and provide not less than a 30 day comment period during which citizens can submit comments and suggestions with regard to the proposed substantial amendment. EOED agrees to provide technical assistance as may be needed, to persons or groups representing low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. EOED will document in writing all comments received with regard to the proposed substantial amendment and modifications that may be incorporated as a result of received comments and suggestions, prior to submission of the final substantial amendment to HUD.

Proposed New Language (proposed new language shown in ***bold***, ***italics***, and **underline** combined):

D. Amendments

In accordance the code of federal regulations (CFR 91.505), the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) will amend the City of Worcester Five-Year Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development whenever it makes one of the following changes: 1. To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds; 2. To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan (including program income), not previously described in the action plan; or 3. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity, ***or 4. To facilitate any of the objectives in numbers 1 to 3 above, as necessary and needed to accommodate any federal changes, amendments, or new guidance and regulations related to federal entitlement funding administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD),***

including, but not limited to: the need to invoke the use of special circumstance, stimulus, incentive, limited time, or special purpose entitlement grant funding for uses related to pressing or critical federal, local and community needs or purposes.

A substantial amendment to the City of Worcester Five-Year Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development will be submitted by EOED when required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). EOED will provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on said substantial amendments. EOED will post a draft substantial amendment on the City's website, hold a public hearing to discuss the proposed substantial amendment and provide not less than a 30 day comment period during which citizens can submit comments and suggestions with regard to the proposed substantial amendment. EOED agrees to provide technical assistance as may be needed, to persons or groups representing low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. EOED will document in writing all comments received with regard to the proposed substantial amendment and modifications that may be incorporated as a result of received comments and suggestions, prior to submission of the final substantial amendment to HUD.

Additionally, as needed and necessary given special circumstances as described in #4 of the first paragraph in Item D above, the City may invoke federal statutory waivers or permissions to condense and streamline the public notice and comment period. Such changes will occur to accommodate any federal changes, amendments or new guidance and regulations related to federal entitlement funding administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including, but not limited to: the need to invoke the use of special circumstance, stimulus, incentive, limited time, or special purpose entitlement grant funding for uses related to pressing or critical federal, local, and community needs or purposes. Such changes may include, but not be limited to, condensing and abbreviating the extent and variety of public notice methods normally utilized, as well as the timeframe for soliciting said public comments.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In accordance with HUD's waiver of 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2) and (k), 91.115(c)(2) and (i), the proposed amendment contained herein is being provided for public comment for no less than 5 days. The proposed amendment has been posted on April 22, 2020 at the following locations:

- The City of Worcester website- main page: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/>
- The City of Worcester's Community Development website, Policies & Procedures page: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/housing-neighborhood-development/community-development-block-grants/policies-procedures>

Public input, comments, and inquiries may be directed to the City of Worcester's Executive Office of Economic Development:

- By e-mail: Development@worcesterma.gov
- By phone: (508) 799-1400

Anyone wishing to provide comments should provide their full name and contact information. The final day for accepting public comments will be Monday, April 27, 2020.