

## **Citizen Participation Plan**

The following process will be used to solicit citizen input and make the state's consolidated plan and subsequent action plan priorities available for public review.

- Periodically throughout any given year, DOH staff will meet with major interest groups to discuss a variety of issues including, HOME, Small Cities, HOPWA and ESG programs. These groups include, but are not limited to: Connecticut Community Development Association, which is composed of local community development professionals; Conn-NAHRO, made up of local housing authority directors; The Connecticut Housing Coalition, an association of nonprofit housing developers and advocates; Interagency Council on Affordable Housing; AIDS Connecticut (ACT), a group representing advocates for persons with AIDS; and emergency shelter service providers.
- These meetings will be part of continuous input into the departments' planning and policy development activities as they relate to annual action plans.
- The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority will be invited to participate in the drafting of the annual plan. Also, DOH will consult with the Department of Public Health concerning plans to remove lead based paint hazards. Local health and child welfare agencies will also be contacted for their input on lead based paint hazards and poisoning.
- During the planning process, the chief elected officials of any non-entitlement communities will be invited to discuss with and provide input to DOH as it prepares the portion of the annual plan relating to the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program.
- Prior to the development of any annual action plan, the state will hold at least two public hearings on housing and community development needs in various locations. These hearings will be held at times and places convenient to citizens. Notices of these needs hearings will be published approximately 2 weeks in advance of the hearings, in at least 2 newspapers serving all regions of the state, as well as the state's minority communities. In addition, notices of the hearings will be emailed to the above referenced major interest groups, and/or other state agencies as well as all interested residents of Connecticut who have expressed an interest in receiving information on all activities of the Department, known as the "Community Partners" list.
- Staff will prepare a draft annual action plan, taking into consideration the input received from the above listed organizations, state agencies and interested parties. The action plan will include a discussion of the amount of assistance the state expects to receive, the range of activities it will undertake with this assistance, and, to the extent possible, the benefit to low and moderate income people of these proposed activities.

- A notice summarizing the main elements of the plan, its availability and locations where it can be obtained, the dates and times of at least two public hearings on the draft plan will be published in at least 2 newspapers serving all regions of the state, as well as the state's minority communities. The draft action plan will be made available to anyone requesting a copy, either in print or on disk, during the 30-day comment period. Copies will be available at the DOH office. In addition, access to the draft will be available by visiting the DOH Home Page on the Internet at [www.ct.gov/doh](http://www.ct.gov/doh). Copies will be mailed to the above referenced major interest groups. As part of the notice, the state will tell citizens who have special needs how they can obtain the draft plan in a form which is accessible to them. Non-English speaking and hearing impaired citizens will be given a phone number to call so that special arrangements can be made to accommodate them at the public hearings. Public hearings will be held at convenient locations and times across the state.
- Any comments received, either at the public hearings or during the public comment period will be considered by the agency before the final action plan is prepared. A summary of the comments and the agency's responses will be one of the attachments to the final action plan.
- The procedures and actions discussed above will constitute the state's citizen participation plan for annual action plan submissions and any substantial amendments, which may need to be made in the course of the program year. A "substantial amendment" to the plan is one which implements a change the use and/or method of distributing those funds.
- This citizen participation plan will itself be made available to the public and any interest groups for review and comment as part of the annual action plan review.