

Citizen Participation Plan

for the

Houston-Galveston Area Council Regional Priority Projects Applications for Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Regional Mitigation Program Funding

prepared by

Houston-Galveston Area Council

A. Introduction

The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to establish means by which residents within the proposed project areas, public agencies, and other interested parties can actively participate in the development of and substantial changes to the selection of projects and Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation applications (CDBG-MIT Applications) H-GAC intends to make as part of its allocation for regional priority projects under the Method of Distribution (MOD) for Regional Mitigation Program funding for the Houston-Galveston Region.

H-GAC has developed this Citizen Participation Plan to meet federal and state requirements for public participation in reviewing and providing feedback on the substantially complete CDBG-MIT Applications.

B. Outreach Efforts

H-GAC will use the following outreach methods to provide residents the opportunity to share public input on the grant application process.

- Establish a location on the H-GAC website dedicated to posting project-specific information, including the substantially complete applications and other related information, including methods by which public comment can be received.
- Establish a form on the H-GAC website dedicated to receiving public comments online.
- Establish an email address dedicated to the project to receive public comments through email.
- Provide a toll-free phone number to allow residents to leave public comments on a voicemail line.
- Provide a post office box mailing address to receive public comments through the mail.
- Promote a 14-day public comment period via:
 - a news release hosted on H-GAC's website and submitted to area media outlets;
 - information and a flyer posted to the project website and sent via email to elected officials and stakeholders; and
 - outreach on H-GAC's social media platforms.

C. Access to Records

H-GAC is committed to providing access to information about the CDBG-MIT Applications it intends to file with the Texas General Land Office. H-GAC will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records related to H-GAC's CDBG-MIT Applications.

D. Technical Assistance

When requested, H-GAC shall provide technical assistance to groups representative of low- and moderate-income persons in providing feedback on H-GAC's CDBG Applications. The level and type of assistance shall be determined based upon the specific needs of the community's residents.

E. Citizen Complaints

Complaints and grievances from the public related to the CDBG-MIT Applications or outreach process will be answered in writing, within five (5) business days of the receipt of the complaint.

Citizens may file a complaint in writing and submit them to:

Houston-Galveston Area Council
C/O Justin Bower
P.O. Box 22777
Houston, TX 77227
Email: CDBGMitigation@h-gac.com
Business Hours: Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Complaints will be researched and investigated by H-GAC staff and responded to accordingly.

Complaints regarding fraud, waste, or abuse of government funds will be forwarded to the HUD OIG Fraud Hotline (phone: 800-347-3735 or email: hotline@hudoig.gov).

Documentation for complaints will be maintained digitally. Each file will include contact information for the complainant, the initial complaint, the property address, any communications to and from the complainant, results of the investigation, together with any notes, letters or other investigative documentation, the date of the complaint or appeal was closed, and any other actions taken.

F. Post-Funding Citizen Participation

In the event that the projects identified in the CDBG-MIT Applications are approved to expend allocated funding, the following citizen participation requirements will be met.

- H-GAC will hold a public hearing any time a substantial change in use of CDBG-MIT funds from one eligible activity to another is proposed.

- H-GAC will hold a public hearing and review its program performance, including the actual use of CDBG-MIT funds.
- H-GAC will retain documentation of all hearing notice(s), attendance lists, minutes of the hearing(s), and any other records concerning the actual use of funds. H-GAC's Record Retention Policy will comply with this statement:

“HUD regulations generally require your community to retain all its grant-related documentation for 3 years from the date HUD closes its related grant to the state of Texas. As the state grant remains open, the GLO will notify your office once it has closed.”