CHAPTER VII. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

**Introduction**

Citizen participation is an important component of the Idaho Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) Program. The involvement and support of the community both at the application and construction stage is essential for a successful project. Local government leaders have a responsibility to provide information about a potential ICDBG project and provide the opportunity for all citizen to provide comment about the project.

Public hearings provide a vehicle for local governments to provide information about a ICDBG project and affects it may have on residents. The hearing also gives the citizens an opportunity to better understand, question, and participate in decisions affecting the project and subsequently their community. Issues such as increases in property taxes, increases in water and sewer fees or environmental concerns need to be addressed. In addition to the public hearing process, many communities find it beneficial to inform its residents of proposed or current activities through local media sources.

The public hearing process and the complaint procedure are outlined in the Grantee’s Citizen Participation Plan. This plan is available in the ICDBG Application Handbook Chapter V.

**This procedure includes the following elements:**

1. Each unit of general local government is required to develop, adopt, and implement a citizen participation process that provides for and encourages community involvement, particularly by low and moderate income persons who reside in and are affected by ICDBG funds. This includes the availability of information to persons with disabilities. ICDBG applicants are required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan as a funding threshold requirement.
2. A minimum of two formal public hearings must be held during different phases of the project; one at the time of application (discussed in the ICDBG Application Manual) and the second between 50% and 70% of project construction completion. The Notice of Hearing must be publicly advertised in a local newspaper no less than **seven (7) twenty-four (24) hour days prior to the meeting**. If there is no local newspaper, contact Commerce staff. (A third public hearing may need to be held if there are significant changes to the project).
3. Public hearings shall be conducted in a manner to meet the needs of residents where a significant number (5% or more that speak English less than very well) of non-English speaking residents can reasonably be expected to participate.
4. The formal complaint procedure, if needed, must be followed. This procedure is identified in the Citizen Participation Plan adopted for the ICDBG application.
5. Grantees must keep complete and current records of all citizen participation activities to evaluate local performance.

**The Public Hearing Requirements**

**Public hearings must be held prior to ICDBG application submittal and after 50% to 70% of construction completion.** The public hearing held during construction will give residents an opportunity to raise questions or issues once the project has already started and will also give local officials an opportunity to inform citizens of the status of the project, dollars spent, and any changes in the schedule. This second public hearing must cover the following:

1. A discussion of the current status of the project, accomplishments to date, a general description of remaining work, and a description of substantial changes made to the ICDBG scope of work, budget, schedule, location or beneficiaries.
2. A review of the budget, including match that has been expended for the project and the purpose of the expenditures.
3. Requests for citizens’ input, either verbal or written, concerning the status of the project.

As with the first public hearing, grantees must have a record of attendees and the hearing minutes. The minutes must reflect any issues or questions expressed by citizens and how they were responded to and/or resolved.

**Send Your Commerce Specialist the Following Items:**

1. A newspaper copy of the public notice showing the date and name of the newspaper or an Affidavit of Publication. An affidavit or tear sheet should always be kept in the local file. A sample of the public hearing notice is on page VII-3.
2. A sign-in sheet and a copy of the minutes. The minutes must reflect the discussion of those items listed in “A” through “C” under **Public Hearing Requirements**.

**Notice of Public Hearing on the Status of Funded Activities**

The city/county of (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) received an Idaho Community Development Block Grant in the amount of $(\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) from the Idaho Department of Commerce. This funding is allocated to the State of Idaho from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These funds are currently being used to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The hearing will include a review of project activities and accomplishments to date, a summary of all expenditures to date, a general description of remaining work and any changes made to the scope of work, budget, schedule, location or beneficiaries.

The hearing has been scheduled for (month, date, year, time, location). Project information will be available for review at (location) . Verbal and written comments will be accepted up to and at the hearing.

Information provided at the public hearing will be available, upon request, five days prior to the hearing. Special accommodation or alternative formats for non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities will be available, upon request, with minimum of five (5) days’ notice prior to the hearing. The hearing will be held in a facility that is accessible to persons with disabilities. For more information, contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_at\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

This Notice can be provided in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and/or persons with limited English proficiency upon request.

Se le puede proveer esta notificación en un formato accesible para las personas discapacidades y/o personas con conocimientos limitados del inglés a pedido.

 Name and Title of Chief Elected Official

 Street Address and P.O. Box

 City/State/Zip