

ST. TAMMANY PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION COUNCIL SERIES NO. C-2552

COUNCIL SPONSOR: BINDER/DAVIS

PROVIDED BY: FINANCE

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN AND THE CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FOR THE STATE OF LOUISIANA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (LCDBG) DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, St. Tammany Parish Government has been afforded the opportunity to participate in the LCDBG Disaster Recovery Program administered by the Division of Administration.

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana requires Grantees to establish procedures to ensure adequate citizen participation with the program;

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana requires Grantees to establish procedures to deal with citizen inquiries and complaints;

THE PARISH OF ST. TAMMANY HEREBY RESOLVES that the attached policy entitled "Citizen Participation Plan and Citizen Complaint Procedure" dated December 17, 2008 is hereby adopted.

THIS RESOLUTION HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO A VOTE, THE VOTE THEREON WAS AS FOLLOWS:

MOVED FOR ADOPTION BY \_\_\_\_\_, SECONDED BY \_\_\_\_\_

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

THIS RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED ADOPTED ON THE \_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2009 AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL, A QUORUM OF THE MEMBERS BEING PRESENT AND VOTING.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JERRY BINDER, COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
THERESA FORD, COUNCIL CLERK

**ST. TAMMANY PARISH**

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN AND  
CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

St. Tammany Parish Government ("Parish") has adopted the following Citizen Participation Plan to meet the citizen participation requirements of Section 508 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. The Parish is committed, through adoption of this plan, to full and total involvement of all residents of the community in the composition, implementation and assessment of its Louisiana Community Development Block Grant (LCDBG) Program. Attempts will be made to reach all citizens, with particular emphasis on participation by persons of low and moderate income, residents of slum and blighted areas and of areas in which funds are proposed to be used. A copy of this plan will be made available to the public upon request.

As part of the citizen participation requirements and to maximize citizen interaction, the Parish shall:

- 1) Provide for and encourage citizen participation with particular emphasis on participation by persons of low and moderate income who are residents of slum and blighted areas and of areas in which funds are proposed to be used;
- 2) Provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information and records relating to the State's proposed method of distribution, as required by the Secretary, and relating to the actual use of funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended;
- 3) Provide for technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals;
- 4) Provide for public hearings to obtain views and respond to proposals and questions at all stages of the community development program. These hearings will consist of the development of needs, the review of proposed activities, and review of program performance. These hearings will be held after adequate notice of a minimum of five calendar days at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries with accommodations for persons with disabilities;
- 5) Provide for a formal written procedure which will accommodate a timely written response, within fifteen (15) days where practicable, to written complaints and grievances
- 6) Where applicable, identify how the needs of non-English speaking residents will be met in the case of public hearings; and
- 7) Written minutes of the hearings and an attendance roster will be maintained by the Parish.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Notices informing citizens of any public hearings will appear in the official journal of the Parish a minimum of five (5) calendar days prior to the hearing. In addition, notices will also be posted in the Parish Courthouse; and the hearing will be publicized through local community organizations, i.e., churches, clubs, etc., and/or dissemination of leaflets in the target

area. Hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries with accommodation for individuals with disabilities and non-English speaking persons. Whenever possible these hearings will be held within or near the target areas, at times affording participation by the most affected residents.

## I. APPLICATION

### First Notice/Public Hearing

- 1) The public hearing to address LCDBG application submittal will be held approximately seven (7) calendar days prior to the scheduled submission of the application. The Citizen Participation Plan will be available at the hearing. The public notice for this hearing will state that the following will be discussed:
  - a) The amount of funds available for proposed community development;
  - b) The range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount proposed to be used for activities that will benefit persons of low and moderate income;
  - c) The plans of the Parish for minimizing displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with such funds and the benefits to be provided by the Parish to persons actually displaced as a result of such activities; and
  - d) The Parish's prior performance of LCDBG programs funded by the State of Louisiana.

In addition, the notice shall state that all citizens, particularly low and moderate income residents of slum and blighted areas, are encouraged to submit their views and proposals regarding community development and housing needs. Those citizens unable to attend this hearing may submit their views and proposals to:

Office of the President  
St. Tammany Parish Government  
P. O. Box 628  
Covington, LA 70434

The notice will also state that accommodations will be made for disabled and non-English speaking individuals provided a five (5) day notice is received by the Parish President.

### Second Notice

- 1) Seven (7) calendar days, at a minimum, prior to the schedule for submittal of the application, a second notice shall appear in the official journal informing the citizens of the following:
  - a) Proposed submittal date of the application;
  - b) Proposed objectives;
  - c) Proposed activities;
  - d) Location of proposed activities;
  - e) Dollar amount of proposed activities; and
  - f) Location and hours available for application review.

In addition, the notice shall state "all citizens, particularly those affected by the proposed project, are encouraged to review the proposed application and submit any written comments on the application to:

Office of the President  
St. Tammany Parish Government  
P. O. Box 628  
Covington, LA 70434"

Negative comments received will be forwarded immediately to the State's Office of Community Development, Division of Administration or the application will be withdrawn if necessary.

## II. AMENDMENTS

Program amendments, which substantially alter the LCDBG project from that approved in the original application, shall not be submitted to the State without holding one (1) public hearing in accordance with the procedures outlined within this Citizen Participation Plan. Minutes of the hearing will be submitted with the request for the amendment. All interested citizens, particularly the low and moderate income, elderly, disabled, and residents of the project area, shall be made aware of and have the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments and/or submit alternative measures.

## III. GRANTEE PERFORMANCE

The Parish will hold one performance hearing to solicit the public's opinion of the effectiveness of the LCDBG Program. The manner of notification will be the same as previously described for all public hearings. Notification will be made in the official journal approximately seven (7) calendar days prior to the anticipated submittal of close-out documents to the State, and will indicate the date, time, and place of the performance hearing, and invite comments and opinions on the LCDBG activities implemented under the Parish's LCDBG Program being closed out. The notice will also state that accommodations will be made for disabled and non-English speaking persons provided a five (5) day notice is received by the Parish President.

The hearing will be held no sooner than five (5) calendar days from the publication date of said notice.

## CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTION TO APPLICATION

Persons wishing to object to approval of an application by the State may make such objection known to:

Office of Community Development  
Disaster Recovery Unit  
Division of Administration  
P.O. Box 94095  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095

The State will consider objections made only on the following grounds:

- 1) The application description of needs and objectives is plainly inconsistent with available facts and data;
- 2) The activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the applicant; and
- 3) The application does not comply with the requirements set forth in the Final Statement or other applicable laws.

Such objections should include both an identification of the requirements not met and, in the case of objections relative to (1) above, the complainant must supply the data upon which he/she relied upon to support his/her objection.

### **BILINGUAL**

Whenever a significant number of persons and/or residents of blighted neighborhoods communicate with a primary language other than English attend public hearings, the Parish will provide an interpreter for dissemination of information to them providing the Parish President is given sufficient notification of five (5) days.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Technical assistance may be provided directly by the Parish to any citizen, particularly to low and moderate income persons, residents of blighted neighborhoods and minorities, who request assistance in the development of proposals and statement of views concerning the LCDBG Program. The local officials, administrator and engineer will conduct informational meetings with the residents of the low to moderate income areas if a written request is received by the Parish with at least a one week notification. The persons who conduct the technical assistance meetings will disseminate information on the program and answer all pertinent questions.

### **TIMELY ACCESS AND ADEQUATE INFORMATION**

The Parish shall provide timely disclosure of records, information and documents related to the LCDBG program activities. Documents will be made available for copying upon request at the President's office, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Such documents may include the following:

- 1) All meeting and promotional material.
- 2) Records of hearings and meetings.
- 3) All key documents, including prior applications, letters, grant agreements, citizen participation plans, and proposed applications.
- 4) Copies of the regulations (final statements) concerning the program.
- 5) Documents regarding other important requirements, such as Procurement Procedures, Fair Housing, Equal Employment Opportunity, Uniform Act, Labor Provisions and Environmental Procedures.

## **CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

### **SECTION 1**

It is the policy of the Parish to review all complaints received by the Parish.

### **SECTION 2**

The following procedures will be followed on all complaints received by the Parish.

- 1) The complainant shall notify the President's Secretary of the complaint. The initial complaint may be expressed orally or by written correspondence.
- 2) The President's Secretary will notify the President or designated representative of the complaint within five (5) working days.

- 3) The President or designated representative will investigate the complaint and will report the findings to the appropriate St. Tammany Parish Council ("Council") committee within five (5) working days.
- 4) The President's Secretary will notify the complainant of the findings of the President or designated representative in writing or by telephone within fifteen (15) working days.
- 5) If the complainant is aggrieved by the decision, he must forward the complaint in writing (if previously submitted orally) to the President's Secretary who will forward the complaint and all actions taken by the President or designated representative to the appropriate Council committee for their review. This will be accomplished within five (5) working days of receipt of the written complaint.
- 6) The reviewing Council committee will have fifteen (15) working days to review the complaint and forward their decision to the complainant in writing.
- 7) If the complainant is aggrieved with the decision of the Council committee, he must notify the Council's Secretary in writing that he desires to be afforded a hearing by the Council. The complainant will be placed on the next regularly scheduled council meeting agenda. The Council's Secretary will notify the complainant in writing of the date of the hearing.
- 8) The complainant must bring all relevant data, witnesses, etc. to the hearing. The Council, at the hearing, will review the complaint and forward within fifteen (15) days a certified copy of the minutes of the meeting at which the hearing was conducted and a decision was rendered to the complainant. If a decision is not reached at the hearing, the Council will inform complainant of an appropriate date to expect a response. Within ten (10) working days of reaching a decision, the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision.

Complaints concerning the general administration of the LCDBG Program may be submitted in writing directly to the:

Office of Community Development  
 Disaster Recovery Unit  
 Division of Administration  
 P.O. Box 94095  
 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095

**SECTION 3**

All citizen complaints relative to Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity violations alleging discrimination shall be forwarded for disposition to the:

Louisiana Department of Justice  
 Public Protection Division  
 P. O. Box 94095  
 Baton Rouge, LA 70804

The complainant will be notified in writing within 10 days that, due to the nature of the complaint, it has been forwarded to the Louisiana Department of Justice.

or

Complainant may contact the Louisiana Department of Justice Public Protection Division directly at the toll free telephone number 800-273-5718 or 225-326-6438.

**SECTION 4**

The President's Secretary will maintain a file for the purpose of keeping reports of complaints.

**SECTION 5**

This policy does not invalidate nor supersede the personnel or other policies of the Parish which are currently adopted, but is intended to service as a guide for complaints.

**SECTION 6**

This policy may be amended by a majority vote at any of the Parish regularly scheduled meetings.

**ADOPTION**

This Citizen Participation Plan and Citizen Complaint Procedure is hereby adopted by the St. Tammany Parish Council in regular session on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin C. Davis - President  
St. Tammany Parish Government

PARISH SEAL