

# BEST PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Alicia M. Zoeller, JD

Administrator

City of Holyoke Office for Community Development

Holyoke, Massachusetts



# HOLYOKE AT A GLANCE

	Holyoke	Massachusetts
Population	40,362	6,902,149
Median Household Income	\$37,954	\$74,167
Persons in Poverty (%)	28.6%	10.5%
In Civilian Labor Force 16yrs+	57.2%	67%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	40.6%	62.4%
Median Gross Rent	\$795	\$1173
Language other than English	47.1%	23.1%
Hispanic or Latino	51.2%	11.9%
Households with Internet sub.	83.0%	68.3%
CDBG Allocation FY2018	\$1,256,415	
HOME Allocation FY2018	\$695,562	
CDBG Low/Mod Block Groups	68%	

## *The Paper City:*

*Incorporated 1850*

*A former mill town with a peak population of 62,300, one of the first American industrial planned cities, now designated a Gateway City in western Massachusetts, along the Connecticut River with a dam and a series of canals used to generate power, an urban core along the river, its western border the spine of the Mt. Tom Range featuring open spaces, reservoirs, agricultural uses, and rare plants and animals, with a diverse human population of French, Irish and Puerto Rican settlers....*

# WHO AND WHAT IS *YOUR* COMMUNITY?



- ▶ Languages spoken
- ▶ Educational attainment
- ▶ Abilities
- ▶ Demographics
- ▶ Neighborhoods
- ▶ Age and type of housing stock- LBP, condition
- ▶ Length of residency of residents
- ▶ Transportation opportunities
- ▶ Social and recreational hubs
- ▶ Business hubs
- ▶ Social service and faith-based hubs
- ▶ Housing hubs
- ▶ Education hubs
- ▶ Poverty level
- ▶ Social, community and physical needs
- ▶ Access to computer and Internet
- ▶ Level of and access to civic engagement
- ▶ Power players/Trusted leaders
- ▶ Sources of community information
- ▶ Renters or owner-occupants
- ▶ Community challenges

# WHY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

- Regulatory **requirement**
- Improve lives and the community
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of funding
- Ensure long term viability of programs
- It's our business

How often *do* you think about community engagement?

How often *should* you think about community engagement?

365

*Every interaction is a community engagement opportunity!*



# How to engage the community....

## Traditional Method

- ▶ Post a public meeting
- ▶ With a notice in six point font in a newspaper
- ▶ To be held at an inconvenient time
- ▶ In an intimidating hard- to- get to place
- ▶ With no obvious incentive to attend
- ▶ In a language that many do not speak
- ▶ With a bureaucratic legalese description of the meeting's purpose

## Enhanced Method

- ▶ Keep the traditional method *and*

Engage  
the community  
in a place  
at a time  
for a purpose  
with methods that meet  
their needs  
using every opportunity

# PLACE- ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN THE COMMUNITY

## Residents

- ▶ Neighborhood meetings
- ▶ Senior centers
- ▶ Youth groups/organizations
- ▶ Libraries
- ▶ School events
- ▶ Community celebrations
- ▶ Veterans' offices
- ▶ Health centers
- ▶ Day treatment locations
- ▶ Shelters
- ▶ Language classes
- ▶ Career centers
- ▶ Community sites
- ▶ Online and social media
- ▶ Homeowner associations
- ▶ Tenant associations
- ▶ Public Services organizations- food pantries

## Advocates/Providers

- ▶ Boards of Directors meetings
  - ▶ Chamber of Commerce
  - ▶ Non-profits
  - ▶ Continuums of Care
  - ▶ Housing authorities
  - ▶ Fair housing organizations
  - ▶ Disabled advocacy groups
- ▶ Team/committee meetings
  - ▶ Street outreach workers
- ▶ Municipal departments
- ▶ CDBG application prep meetings
- ▶ CDBG compliance trainings
- ▶ Elected officials
- ▶ Local planning agencies
- ▶ Other agencies' surveys or assessments
- ▶ Local landlord organizations

# ENGAGING WITH DELIBERATE TIME, PURPOSE AND METHODS

## ▶ Time

- ▶ What is the optimal time of day and day of week to engage the target audience?

## ▶ Purpose

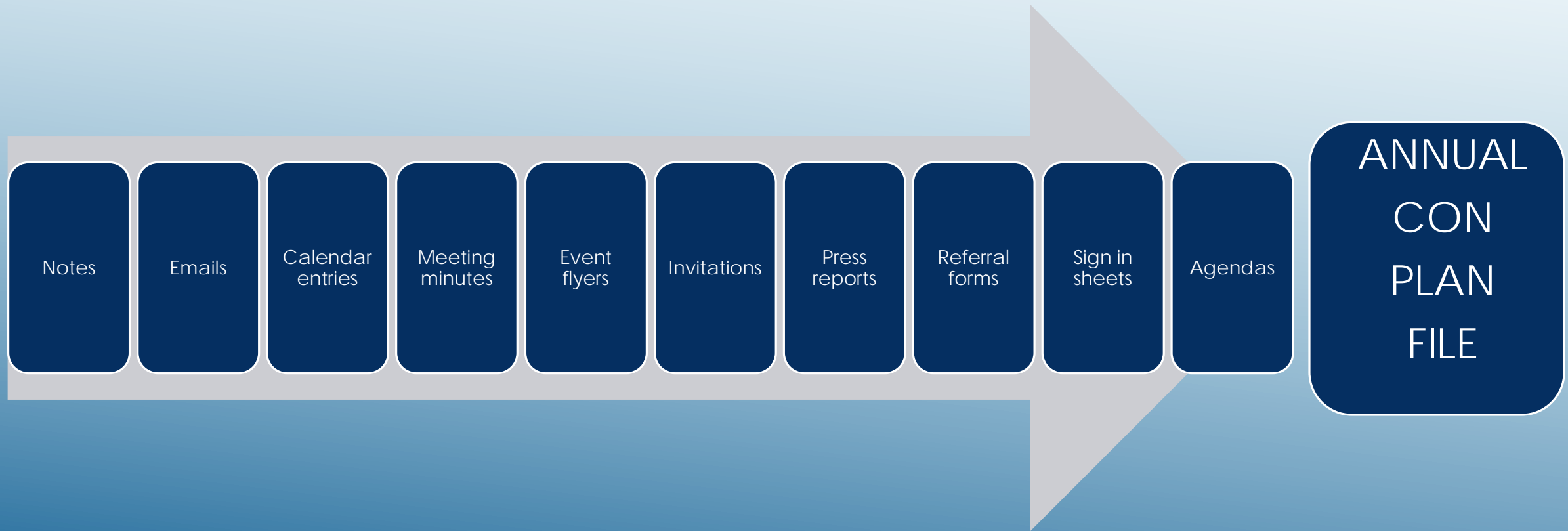
- ▶ What is in it for the audience?
  - ▶ Make your work relevant to their lives
- ▶ Create incentives or enticements for engagement
  - ▶ Lunch with the Mayor
  - ▶ Raffles
  - ▶ Refreshments
  - ▶ Child care
  - ▶ Transportation
  - ▶ \$ Incentives
  - ▶ For non-CDBG eligible expenses- find a partner

## ▶ Methods

- ▶ CD organized meetings
- ▶ Community based meetings
- ▶ Surveys
  - ▶ Paper
  - ▶ On-line
- ▶ Language and ability access
  - ▶ Translated materials
  - ▶ Translation services
- ▶ Written engagement
- ▶ Social media
- ▶ Capture data on a day-to-day basis
- ▶ Listen to the community
- ▶ See Click Fix or 311 Hotline Reports



# EVERY INTERACTION IS A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT! DOCUMENT THEM!



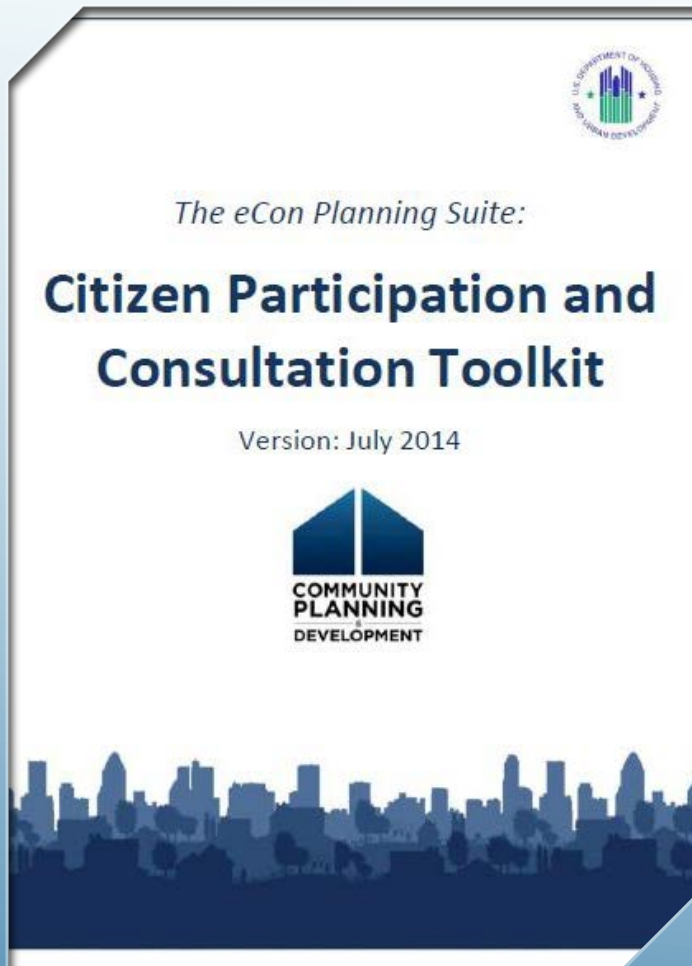
# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXAMPLES

- ▶ CDBG Application Brown Bag Workshops
- ▶ CDBG Sub-Recipient Mandatory Trainings
- ▶ CDBG Annual Announcement Reception
- ▶ CDBG Sub-Recipient Summer Youth Fair
- ▶ ConPlan Annual Schedule posted early
- ▶ Municipal department head meetings
- ▶ Moved public meetings to CDBG-funded public facilities
- ▶ Offered day and evening meeting times
- ▶ Utilize relevant mass email lists
- ▶ Piggy-back on other meetings:
  - ▶ Street MH outreach team
  - ▶ PVPC Regional Housing Committee
  - ▶ Hampden County CoC meetings
  - ▶ Vacant Building Team meetings

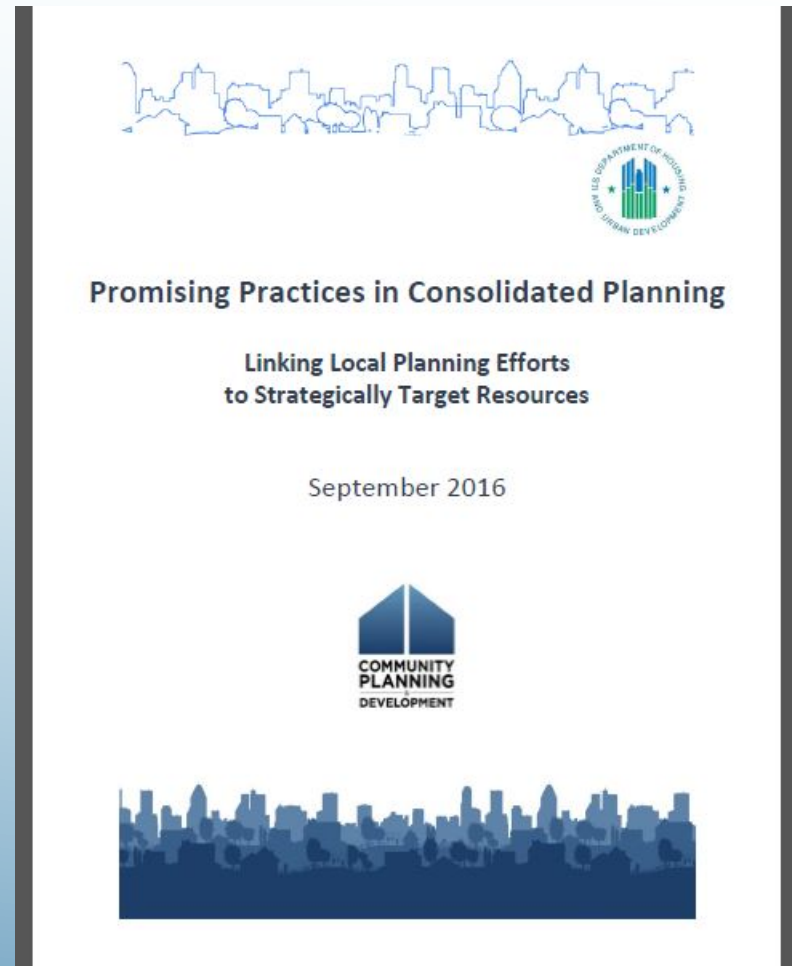
# REGULATORY RESPONSIBILITY

## 24 CFR SUBPART B – CONSULT AND PARTICIPATE

- ▶ 24 CFR 91.100 Consultation; local governments
  - ▶ *" the jurisdiction shall consult with other public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social services (including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, homeless persons), community-based and regionally-based organizations that represent protected class members, and organizations that enforce fair housing laws. When preparing the consolidated plan, the jurisdiction shall also consult with public and private organizations. Commencing with consolidated plans submitted on or after January 1, 2018, such consultations shall include broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, agencies whose primary responsibilities include the management of flood prone areas, public land or water resources, and emergency management agencies. "*
  - ▶ *" the jurisdiction must consult with":* CoC's, agencies with knowledge of homeless, housing, social service, health, employment, education and lead based paint hazards; adjacent units of local government; regional planning agencies; publicly funded institutions and systems of care; etc
- ▶ 24 CFR 91.105 Citizens participation plan; local governments
  - ▶ *" to encourage participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those persons living in areas designated by the jurisdiction as a revitalization area or in a slum and blighted area and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, as defined by the jurisdiction."*



## RESOURCES



- <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3817/econ-planning-suite-citizen-participation-and-consultation-toolkit/>

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Promising-Practices-in-Consolidated-Planning-Guide.pdf>

ALICIA M. ZOELLER, JD  
ADMINISTRATOR  
CITY OF HOLYOKE OFFICE FOR COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
CITY HALL ANNEX ROOM 400  
HOLYOKE MA 01040

413-322-5610

[zoellera@Holyoke.org](mailto:zoellera@Holyoke.org)