

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
FOR THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN

**Adopted by the Board of Supervisors
December 8, 1997**

Most Recently Amended by the Board of Supervisors on May 12, 2020

Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan

As an Urban County, Fairfax County, Virginia is eligible to apply for funds under the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) which are provided to the County through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Federal regulations were revised in 1994 to provide for the consolidated submission of documents (the Consolidated Plan) which cover the planning and application aspects of the CDBG, ESG, HOME, and HOPWA programs (federal funding sources).

Beginning Fiscal Year (FY) 2000, the Consolidated Plan will also include local funding sources and federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds appropriated by the Board of Supervisors. In addition, the Consolidated Plan includes a description of the Continuum of Care for homeless services and programs, and may include federal funding for these programs at such time as these funds are made available through the federal funding allocation process for the Consolidated Plan.

The Fairfax County Citizen Participation Plan provides a guide for public input and participation in the Consolidated Plan process. The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to encourage citizen participation in the definition of housing, community development and public services needs; services to be provided by community-based organizations; the funding priorities for programs and target populations to be served through resources available in the Consolidated Plan, and in any amendments, as well as to the Consolidated Plan and the annual performance report as may be required by HUD.

The Citizen Participation Plan includes the following objectives and describes how each will be met to ensure compliance with federal regulations. The objectives of the Citizen Participation Plan are to:

- Encourage citizen participation by providing citizens with adequate information concerning the amount of funds expected to be available for community development housing activities, public services and services to be provided by community-based organizations through federal and local funding sources, the proposed range of activities that may be undertaken with those funds, including the amount that will benefit very low and low income persons and the plans to minimize displacement and to assist any persons displaced, other important program requirements, and proposed and approved uses of funds;
- Provide for and encourage citizen participation from all sectors of the community, with particular emphasis on participation by persons below the federal poverty line, low and moderate income residents of blighted areas and of areas in which federal funds under federal funding sources are used or are proposed to be used; and for the participation of minority and non-English speaking residents, as well as persons with mobility, visual, speech or hearing impairments;
- Provide citizens, public agencies, and all other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the County's Consolidated Plan, and the use of assistance provided by federal funding sources included in the Plan for the preceding five (5) years;
- Provide technical assistance to groups representing very low and low income persons and to interested residents that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under federal and local funding sources covered by the Consolidated Plan, with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the County;
- Conduct public hearings to obtain the views of citizens on housing, community development and public services needs, and needs for services to be provided by community-based organizations, proposed activities, and program performance, which hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, with accommodation for persons with disabilities and non-English speaking residents;
- Gather community input, through a variety of methods such as, community meetings, focus groups, surveys and other appropriate forums, regarding funding priorities for services provided by community-based organizations;
- Prepare a summary of comments or views received from citizens in writing or orally through public hearings, focus groups, community meetings and other methods when preparing the final Consolidated Plan, and any amendments to the Plan or the performance report and attach the summary to the final Plan or report. In addition, provide for a timely written answer to written complaints and grievances within fifteen (15) working days, where practicable; and

- Provide criteria for determining what constitutes a substantial change in the planned or actual activities described in the approved Consolidated Plan which would require an amendment to the Plan.

Notice of Consolidated Plan Schedule

The County will encourage citizen participation by providing citizens with adequate information concerning the amount of funds expected to be available for community development and housing activities, public services, and services to be provided by community-based organizations through federal and local funding sources, the proposed range of activities that may be undertaken with those funds, including the amount that will benefit very low and low income persons and the plans to minimize displacement and to assist any persons displaced, other important program requirements, and proposed and approved uses of funds.

The annual Consolidated Plan schedule will be mailed to neighborhoods, groups, associations, nonprofit, ecumenical, business and other community organizations and other interested individuals which have been involved in past funding cycles for each program. Other neighborhoods, groups, associations, organizations, and individuals will be added to the list upon request to the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Information which will be available will include the amount of funding expected to be available under all the federal funding sources and programs in the Consolidated Plan, including estimated program income, program and application requirements, the proposed activities which will benefit very low and low income persons, plans for minimizing displacement caused by proposed activities and assistance opportunities for persons displaced, opportunities for citizen input, submission of project proposals, and schedules for proposed and final applications. This information may be obtained from the Department of Housing and Community Development.

An advertisement of the Proposed Consolidated Plan will be published in a newspaper(s) of general circulation and a copy of the Proposed Consolidated Plan will be available to the public for review and comment at least 30 days prior to submission to HUD. The proposed Consolidated Plan will be available for review 1) at the Department of Housing and Community Development, 2) at the information desk of the County Government Center at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035; and 3) at the information desk of all branches of the Fairfax County Public Library system. The final submission to HUD will also be distributed to these locations.

Citizen Participation Process

The County will provide for and encourage citizen participation from all sectors of the community, with particular emphasis on participation by persons below the federal poverty line, low and moderate income residents of blighted areas and of areas in which federal funds are used or are proposed to be used; and for the participation of minority and non-English speaking residents, as well as persons with mobility, visual, speech or hearing impairments.

The County will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the County's Consolidated Plan, and the use of assistance provided by federal funding sources included in the Plan for the preceding five (5) years.

Citizens will have an opportunity to comment on housing, community development, public service needs, and population and program priority needs identified to be addressed by community-based organizations and the proposed Consolidated Plan prior to its submission to HUD at public hearings, meetings, or by directly contacting the appropriate County agency. Information on the Consolidated Plan schedule will be disseminated to local agencies and nonprofit organizations working with minority, non-English speaking, and physically impaired residents to afford as many people as possible the opportunity for full citizen participation.

The County will work closely with the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) to encourage the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments in the development and implementation of the Consolidated Plan. The County will apprise the FCRHA of housing and community development activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so the FCRHA can make such information available at the annual public hearing on the Comprehensive Grant program.

Citizen input on housing, community development, and needs for services to be provided by community-based organizations will be received annually at one or more public hearings to be held before the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee. The Committee is composed of one representative each from the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA), Human Services Council (HSC), Community Action Advisory Board, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, Homeless Oversight Committee, Fairfax-Falls Church United Way, Commission on Aging, Advisory Social Services Board, Fairfax Area Disabilities Services Board, Health Care Advisory Board, Fairfax County Alliance for Human Services, representatives from the business community, schools community, faith community, children younger than school age community, and youth needs and services community. Membership may include representation from human services provider groups, consumer and community organizations and Boards, Authorities and Commissions, which relate to the Human Services Community, as appropriate. Members shall be appointed by the County Executive and shall serve for a term of three years. The role and responsibilities of the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee will be to:

- Solicit community input
- Advise the Board of Supervisors on the development and implementation of the federally required Consolidated Plan
- Advise the Board of Supervisors on issues relating to the coordinated funding process:
 - Policy considerations
 - Funding priorities
 - Selection criteria
 - Performance measures
- Coordinate with the Community Action Advisory Board in implementation of the CSBG process

- Implement the combined solicitation process and, if deemed appropriate, make comments on Selection Advisory Committee recommendations forwarded by the County Executive to the Board of Supervisors
- Monitor the Consolidated Plan process and report to the Board of Supervisors on its effectiveness relative to defined goals
- Consider and evaluate the potential for including other County and community processes in the Consolidated Plan process.

Based on the comments received from citizens through needs hearing(s) and other community input strategies from interested Nonprofit, ecumenical, business and other civic organizations and County agencies, the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee will prepare a Proposed Consolidated Plan. The Proposed Consolidated Plan will be submitted for review and comment to organizations and individuals on the mailing list.

Comments received will be addressed by the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee and included with the submission of the Proposed Consolidated Plan to the Board of Supervisors.

A public hearing will be held by the Board of Supervisors on the Proposed Consolidated Plan. Final approval of program priorities and funding recommendations included in the Consolidated Plan will be made by the Board of Supervisors.

Reasonable and timely access will be given to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties to information and records relating to previous funding applications and allocations for the programs included in the Consolidated Plan for the preceding five (5) years.

Technical Assistance

The County will provide technical assistance to groups representing very low and low income persons, as well as to community-based organizations and interested residents that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of federal or local funding sources covered by the Consolidated Plan, with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the County.

This technical assistance could include activities such as training on grant writing, small/minority business support offered through the Purchasing and Supply Management agency, Internet information links, pamphlets and brochures/information packets on resources available in the community.

County staff will be available upon request to answer any questions concerning the requirements of federal and local funding sources included in the Consolidated Plan, such as available funding amounts, funding priorities, eligible activities, environmental review procedures, equal opportunity requirements, relocation provisions, citizen participation requirements and any other requirements of federal and local funding sources. In cases where staff can not answer questions pertaining to federal HUD funds, assistance will be requested from HUD.

As part of the on-going citizen participation effort, County staff will meet with citizen groups in Fairfax County which represent very low, and low and moderate income residents such as neighborhood conservation and redevelopment areas, and with citizen groups in other areas of the County which express interest in participating in federal and/or local funding sources included in the Consolidated Plan, to explain program and application procedures. These meetings will be held in facilities convenient to the neighborhood or groups requesting the meetings.

County staff will provide technical assistance when requested to neighborhood groups, minority groups, community-based organizations, and other residents interested in participating in federal and local funding sources included in the Consolidated Plan. All such groups, including the disabled and elderly, and those serving non-English speaking ethnic/minority populations, will be encouraged and assisted as requested in submitting their views and proposals. County staff will be available to provide assistance in the development and submission of program funding requests and other input. Any persons requiring assistance should contact the Division of Real Estate Finance and Grants Management at HCD at 246-5170 or the TTY number 385-3578.

Public Hearings

The County will conduct public hearings to obtain the views of citizens on housing, community development and public services needs, and needs for services to be provided by community-based organizations, proposed activities, and program performance, which hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, with accommodation for persons with disabilities and non-English speaking residents.

A minimum of two public hearings will be held prior to the submission of the Consolidated Plan to HUD.

One or more public hearings will be held by the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee at the beginning of the Consolidated Plan process to solicit citizen comments on housing and community development needs, needs for services to be provided by community-based organizations, proposed activities, and program performance. Testimony received at this hearing will be considered by the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee in preparing the Proposed Consolidated Plan. In addition, the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee may gather community input through a variety of means, such as forums and focus groups, in the development of funding priorities and criteria.

Prior to the submission of the Consolidated Plan to HUD, the Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on the Proposed Consolidated Plan as recommended by the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee.

Public hearings will be held at times convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries of the programs to be funded. Public hearings will be held in the Fairfax County Government Center Board Auditorium located at 12000 Government Center Parkway, or in other locations which are convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, and which are accessible to persons with

disabilities. At public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents are expected to participate, Fairfax County will address their needs by providing an interpreter.

Notice of public hearings on the Consolidated Plan will be advertised in a newspaper(s) of general circulation and at least one minority and non-English speaking publication 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing. The notice will include sufficient information about the purpose of the public hearing to permit informed comment from citizens.

Notice of public hearings on the Consolidated Plan will also be advertised in all branches of the County Library system and press releases issued by the Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs.

Response to Citizen Comments

The County will prepare a summary of comments or views received from citizens in writing or orally through public hearings, focus groups, community meetings and other methods when preparing the final Consolidated Plan, and any amendments to the Plan or the performance report and attach the summary to the final Plan or report. In addition, provide for a timely written answer to written complaints and grievances within fifteen (15) working days, where practicable.

Written or oral comments received from citizens as a result of public hearings or other activities to gather community input held on the Consolidated Plan will be given serious consideration in the preparation of the final Plan document, amendments to the Plan, or the performance report. A summary of the comments received from citizens, both accepted and not accepted, will be attached to the final Consolidated Plan, Plan amendments, or performance report.

Comments, complaints, or grievances concerning the Consolidated Plan should be addressed to the Division of Real Estate Finance and Grants Management, Department of Housing and Community Development, 3700 Pender Drive, Suite 300, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

Every effort will be made to respond in writing to written complaints within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. If additional time is required, written notice will be provided.

Amendment of the Consolidated Plan

The County will provide criteria for determining what constitutes a substantial change in the planned or actual activities described in the approved Consolidated Plan which would require an amendment to the Plan.

The Consolidated Plan may be amended with the approval of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The County will amend the approved Plan whenever it makes one of the following decisions representing a substantial change or adjustment:

- 1) To carry out a project, using funds from any of the four federal HUD programs covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income) not previously described in the action plan; or

- 2) To eliminate a project from any of the four federal programs covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income) for which funds were previously approved by the Board of Supervisors.

In general, any substantial change or adjustment to a Consolidated Plan project budget will be treated as an amendment subject to public notice, review, and comment through the County's quarterly budget review process. Adjustments required to Consolidated Plan project budgets will be included in the third quarter and carryover budget reviews, and will be subject to public comment during the public hearing process held on each of these reviews.

In some circumstances, Consolidated Plan program objectives may be addressed through the appropriation of funds outside of the quarterly budget review process for an activity not previously approved in the Consolidated Plan. In such cases, public notice will be given before the Board of Supervisors is scheduled to take action on such an appropriation.

Substantive amendments to the Consolidated Plan will be publicly advertised at least 30 days prior to consideration of the amendments by the Board of Supervisors to allow time for public comment.

Adoption and Amendment of the Citizen Participation Plan

Proposed changes to the Citizen Participation Plan will be publicly advertised at least 30 days prior to the adoption or amendment of the Citizen Participation Plan by the Board of Supervisors to allow time for public comment.

The proposed revisions to the Fairfax County Citizen Participation Plan for the Consolidated Plan will become effective upon the date of the Board of Supervisors' approval for the planning and implementation process of the Consolidated Plan.

Expedited Procedures to Draft, Propose, or Amend the Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (Public Law No. 116-136)), passed into law on March 27, 2020, provides HUD with the ability to grant regulatory waivers and alternative requirements to jurisdictions, including the ability to establish expedited procedures in the Citizen Participation Plan to draft, propose, or amend the Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan in order to prevent, prepare for and respond to coronavirus.

Under such expedited procedures and in the interest of public safety, in-person public hearings would not be held. Fairfax County may meet federal public hearing requirements with virtual public hearings if: 1) national/local health authorities recommend social distancing and limiting public gatherings for public health reasons; and 2) virtual hearings provide reasonable notification and access for citizens in accordance with the grantee's certifications, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues, and public access to all questions and responses.

Additionally, under these expedited procedures, the notice and reasonable opportunity to comment will be no less than 5 days. This 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the Action Plan amendments and amended Citizen Participation Plan.

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