

PART VIII – PUBLIC INPUT AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The State certifies that it has adopted and is following a Citizen Participation (CP) Plan. The CP Plan sets forth the State's policies and procedures for citizen participation. The Plan provides for and encourages citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, of any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and of the Consolidated Annual Performance Report.

Specific emphasis is placed on the participation of low and moderate income persons, including minorities, non-English speaking persons, persons with Limited English Language Proficiency (LEP), and persons with disabilities, and particularly on those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods.

The State is required to keep appropriate records, such as newspaper notices of hearings, minutes of those public hearings, and responses to inquiries, to demonstrate that the CP Plan is being followed. Specifically:

- The State will make its original written CP Plan and substantial amendments available for public review and will provide a reasonable opportunity to comment. This will be accomplished either by conducting a public hearing or by making the CP Plan available for review at locations convenient to local governments and citizens. Generally, a notification of the availability of the Citizen Participation Plan or an amendment will be published and local governments and citizens will be given 14 days from the date of notification of availability to provide comment. The CP Plan will be available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. ***The State is complying by including its Citizen Participation Plan in the 2011-2015 Consolidated Plan, which is available for public review and comment as described above.***
- Prior to the publication of the Consolidated Plan, the State will provide for local government and citizen participation in the determination of community development and housing needs and the Consolidated Plan for addressing these needs, through a variety of means including one or more public hearings and by making the proposed plan available for public review.
 - At the public hearing, the State will furnish citizens, local governments, public agencies, and other interested parties information on the following: amount of assistance the State expects to receive; the range of activities which may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit low and moderate income persons; and the plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced.
 - The State may also take advantage of technology, as appropriate, to provide greater accessibility and expand the ability of the public to obtain information about the proposed Consolidated Plan. This may include online forums, inclusion in electronic newsletters, etc.

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- Copies of plan will be made available for review by a variety of means, including hard copies available at each of the agencies administering the programs covered by the plan and electronic “e-versions” of the plan freely available for download and/or online review via the internet. Electronic copies of the plan will be freely available, and upon request, the State will provide a reasonable number of paper copies of the plan to citizens and groups free of charge, to ensure equal access for those unable to access the internet and/or receive and review electronic copies.
- The State will notify citizens about the dates of the Consolidated Plan public comment period in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the state and utilize additional means of notification, as appropriate and using technology that may be available, including fax or email notifications and internet/web posting of notices. The advertised public notice and any other notices will identify locations where hard copies of the Consolidated Plan will be made available, the means by which electronic copies can be obtained and reviewed, and email and physical addresses for submitting comments.
- The State will provide a 30-day period to receive comments from citizens and local governments on the proposed Consolidated Plan. The State will consider any comments received, whether submitted electronically, in writing, or orally at public hearings, in developing the final Consolidated Plan. A summary of these comments, whether used in the final plan or not, and the State’s response to these comments will be included in the final Consolidated Plan.
- The addition or deletion of programs, or a change in program allocation amounts of more than 25 percent, will be considered a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan, and in such event, the State will notify citizens and local governments, particularly those who might be affected, of the proposed change and solicit comment for a period of 30 days before the amendment is implemented. The State will consider any comments of citizens or local governments received electronically, in writing or orally in preparing the amendment to the Consolidated Plan.
- The State will provide for citizen input on its Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPERs). The public will be notified by newspaper of the availability of the CAPER prior to its submission to HUD and will be provided an opportunity to comment for a period of 15 days. Other means may also be employed as described above regarding public notification for the Consolidated Plan. A summary of all comments received will be included in the final CAPER.
- All notices of public hearings will be published one time in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the state, generally 14 days prior to any public hearing. Such notices will be prominently advertised in an appropriate section of the newspaper. Notices will not be placed in the legal notices or classified section. The notices will include a statement regarding the purpose of the hearing and the State’s policy of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation. Other media and/or the internet and technology may also be used to publicize hearings.
- In addition to notices in newspapers, the State will encourage participation by low and moderate income residents and the residents of slum and blighted areas. This may be accomplished through the assistance of the regional councils of governments in notifying local

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governments and local citizens of public hearings and other opportunities to provide input into the Consolidated Plan.

- All public meetings and/or forums concerning the Consolidated Plan will be held at times and locations convenient to local governments and citizens who are the potential or actual beneficiaries, with the use of online forums where appropriate employed to improve accessibility. The physical location of meetings will be accessible to persons who are disabled, and the announcement of such meetings will indicate that assistance will be provided to accommodate special needs, including the needs of persons with Limited English Language Proficiency.
- Technical assistance will be provided to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals for *CDBG* funding. As a condition of providing technical assistance, the State requires that the activities to be addressed in a proposal be consistent with identified community development and housing needs and funding program guidelines, and that funds be available for such activities as may be involved.
- The needs of non-English speaking and Limited English Language Proficiency (LEP) residents will be met in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking and/or LEP residents can be reasonably expected to participate. At such time, appropriate provisions will be determined and made, which may include translation of public hearing comments and documents into the native language of the majority of the non-English speaking or LEP residents affected.
- The State will provide for a timely, written response to all written complaints and grievances, within fifteen (15) working days (where practical). Written complaints regarding the Consolidated Plan should be submitted to the Planning Manager, Grants Administration Division, Department of Commerce, 1201 Main Street, Suite 1600, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. Telephone: Voice 803-734-0429/TDD 803-734-1046.
- Citizens, public agencies and other interested parties will be provided with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the State's Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, including the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, from the preceding five years upon request. The procedures for the review of State records are in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts.
- Records related to the Consolidated Plan or to the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds administered by the South Carolina Department of Commerce, Grants Administration Division are available for public review upon request at the offices of the Grants Administration Division, 1201 Main Street, Suite 1600, Columbia, South Carolina 29201 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Persons wishing to review such records or who would like additional information on the CDBG program should contact Department of Commerce, Grants Administration Division. Telephone: Voice (803) 734-0429/TDD (803) 734-1046.

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- Records related to the use of HOME Program funds administered by the State Housing Finance and Development Authority are available for public review upon request at 300-C Outlet Pointe Boulevard, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Telephone: Voice (803) 896-9001/TDD (803) 896-8831.
- Records related to the use of Emergency Shelter and or Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds administered by the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity are available for public review upon request at the Office of Economic Opportunity, 1205 Pendleton Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Telephone: (803) 734-0662.
- Records related to the use of Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) funds administered by the State Department of Health and Environmental Control, are available for public review upon request at DHEC, STD/HIV Division, 1751 Calhoun Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Telephone: (803) 898-0749.