

# STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The State certifies that it has adopted and is following this Citizen Participation (CP) Plan, which sets forth the State's policies and procedures for citizen participation. This Plan provides for and encourages citizens to participate in the development of the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), any revision to the AFH, the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and 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. In addition, the State encourages participation of Statewide and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, businesses developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith based organizations that are involved with or affected by the programs or activities covered by the Consolidated Plan in the process of developing and implementing the AFH and the Consolidated Plan.

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.

Elements of the State CP Plan include:

### **Consolidated Plan, Action Plans and Assessment of Fair Housing (SFH)**

- The State will make substantial amendments to this CP Plan available for public review and will provide a reasonable opportunity to comment. This will be accomplished by making the CP Plan available online for review and comment by local governments and citizens. Generally, a notification of the availability of an amendment will be published and local governments and citizens will be given 14 days from the date of notification to provide written comments. The CP Plan will be available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and/or persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), upon request.
- Whenever possible, the State will use technology that may be available to involve the public, public agencies, and other interested parties in the development of the AFH, any revision to the AFH, the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and annual performance reports. This may include fax or email notifications, internet/web postings, online meetings or forums, inclusion of information in electronic or paper newsletters, or any other technological means of communication that may become available and which may be reasonably used to enhance the reach and effectiveness of public notifications. This will be in addition to making draft documents available at Consolidated Plan partner agency locations and other physical locations as may be appropriate.
- The State will make reasonable efforts to provide language assistance to ensure meaningful access to participation by non-English speaking persons.
- As soon as possible in the development of the AFH, the State will make available any data that is to be analyzed and incorporated into the final AFH. Data may include HUD-provided data, if available

and will be provided to the public, public agencies, and other interested parties using technology that may be available, including fax or email notifications, internet/web postings, and provision of links to HUD-provided data as it becomes available. Data available through the HUD AFH Assessment Tool is located at <http://egis.hud.gov/affht/> as of February 2016, and information about the Assessment Tool can be found here:

[https://www.huduser.gov/portal/affht\\_pt.html#affhassess-tab](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/affht_pt.html#affhassess-tab)

- Note that while HUD has currently provided data for local governments, HUD is not expected to provide data for states until late 2017 or early 2018. Any State AFH developed in advance of HUD data being available will necessarily use other data, and that data will be identified and made available to the public. Once data becomes available from HUD, a revision to the State AFH will be undertaken to incorporate HUD data.
- Prior to publication of the draft AFH, the State will publish the document online and notify the public, public agencies and other interested parties as to its availability, so as to provide the opportunity for public examination of the document's contents and to enable the public to comment on the draft document.
- 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.
- Copies of the AFH and Consolidated 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 Consolidated Plan and electronic "e-versions" of the plan freely available for download and/or online review via the internet. Electronic copies of the plans will be freely available, and upon request, the State will provide a reasonable number of paper copies of each plan, as applicable, 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 AFH and/or Consolidated Plan public comment periods, as applicable, 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 AFH and Consolidated Plan, as applicable, 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 AFH and Consolidated Plan, as applicable. The State will consider any comments received, whether submitted electronically, in writing, or orally at public hearings, in developing the final AFH and Consolidated Plan, as applicable. A summary of these comments, whether used in the final document or not, and the State's response to these comments will be included in the final version.

- Changes and Amendments:
  - Substantial Amendment to the 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 such an amendment to the Consolidated Plan.
  - Revision to the AFH: If a material change occurs which requires the State's previously accepted AFH to be revised, the notice and comment process will mirror the process outlined above for substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan. A material change is one that is significant enough to alter the information upon which the original AFH was based (i.e. a natural disaster, civil rights findings, court orders). Such a change would significantly impact AFFH contributing factors, meaningful steps, priorities and goals. Upon written notification, HUD could also require a revision to the AFH.

**Performance Reports**

- The State will provide for citizen input on its Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPERs) and any performance reports required for the AFH. The public will be notified by newspaper of the availability of the CAPER or AFR performance report, as applicable, prior to 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 AFH and Consolidated Plan. A summary of all comments received will be included in the final CAPER or AFH performance report.

**Public Notices & Meetings/Hearings**

- 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 governments and local citizens of public hearings and other opportunities to provide input into the AFH and Consolidated Plan.
- All public meetings and/or forums concerning the AFH and Consolidated Plan, as applicable, 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 and Records**

- 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.
- Technical assistance is provided to any member of the public that requests such assistance in developing proposals for HOME funding. Technical assistance is limited as HOME funding is competitive. There is an annual HOME Application Workshop prior to the competitive cycle. Information about HOME and its workshops can be found here: [http://www.schousing.com/Housing\\_Partners/HOME\\_Investment\\_Partnerships\\_Program](http://www.schousing.com/Housing_Partners/HOME_Investment_Partnerships_Program).
- 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 Grants Administration Division, Department of Commerce, 1201 Main Street, Suite 1600, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. Telephone: Voice 803-734-0429/TDD 803-734-1046. Written complaints regarding the AFH should be submitted to the Development Director, SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority, 300 C Outlet Pointe Blvd., Columbia, SC 29210. Telephone: Voice (803) 896-9001/TDD (803) 896-8831.
- 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 the Department of Commerce, Grants Administration Division. Telephone: (803) 734-0429/TDD (803) 734-1046.
- 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.