



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN OF FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK, EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANTS , AND HOME INVESTMENT
PARTNERSHIPS GRANTS PROGRAMS**

Prepared by the Fulton County Department of Community Development

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INTRODUCTION

The Fulton County Department of Community Development (DCD) has amended its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) to promote and support “social distancing” while continuing to offer the public an opportunity to provide valuable citizen input and insight into the policies, and procedures, particularly as it relates to the administration and implementation of its federal programs.

The CPP provide for and encourage citizen participation along with establishing a citizen participation standard in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), and other Federal funded programs. Citizen participation is an integral part of the Fulton County’s consolidated planning process. The primary goal of the Citizen Participation Plan is to provide citizens with adequate opportunities to participate in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the County’s federal programs. The Plan identifies policies and procedures which are designed to maximize the opportunity for citizen participation in the community development process and minimize the displacement of persons. The essential elements of the plan include the following:

- Encouragement of Citizen Participation and Information to be provided
- Access to Meetings
- Access to Information
- Technical Assistance
- Public Hearings
- Comments and Complaints
- Criteria for Amendments
- Criteria for Environmental Review

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Citizen Participation Plan will become effective upon the signature of the Director of the Department of Community Development. The CPP may be periodically amended.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Fulton County’s Department of Community Development (DCD) to encourage public participation in the planning and implementation of the federal formula programs: CDBG, ESG, HOME, and the Recovery Programs. Funds for the formula programs are provided on an annual basis by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

COVERED FEDERAL PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK PROGRAM (CDBG)

Fulton County’s CDBG program assists citizens within the municipalities, non-profits and for-profits entities. The assistance involved improving the living conditions and economic development opportunities of low- to moderate-income residents. CDBG ensures decent affordable housing, provide services to communities, and create jobs by the expansion and retention of businesses. All activities meet one of the following national objectives: benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevention or elimination of slums and blight, or address community development needs having a particular urgency due to existing conditions that pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community for which other funding is not available. The program is a source for a broad range of community development activities. Therefore, Fulton County’s priorities determine the type of projects receiving CDBG assistance. The priorities are determined from citizen input of needs based on the Consolidated Planning process, whereas Annual Action Plan activities can vary from year to year, and is approved by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners.



Fulton County offers the following types of CDBG funded programs and activities, which provide direct assistance to individuals as well as financing for non-profit agencies, local governments, and other entities according to CDBG federal regulations. For example:

1. Public Infrastructure Improvement – Community improvements that may include parks, water and sewer lines, street and drainage, sidewalks, athletic fields, nature trails, handicapped accessibility, and parking accessibility and other related activities.
2. Housing - Housing Rehabilitation – assistance for low- and moderate-income residents for emergency home improvements for the correction of health, safety or code violations in the form of Emergency Assistance Grants (EAG's). These grants are forgiven and prioritized for senior citizens to enhance their quality of life.
3. Public Services – Community programs that support seniors, youth and adults by the provisions of adult day care, child care, after school activities, recreation, health services, and special needs/physically challenged, computer literacy, transportation, tutoring, and provide support, household stability, etc.
4. Economic Development – provides job counseling, placement and on-the-job training, financial support to small businesses in retaining staff and services, acquisition, expansion of economic development, and increasing employment opportunities. Public Facilities – Community improvements to enhance, stabilize and expand senior centers, youth centers, neighborhood facilities, child care facilities, parks and recreational facilities, health facilities, parking facilities, and historic preservation. Projects include ADA equipped bathrooms, acquisition of rental and transitional housing and improvement facilities.

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM (ESG)

HUD awards Emergency Solutions Grants that provide homeless assistance services in the community. Expanded under the HEARTH Act to include homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing components, the purpose of the ESG program is to assist individuals and families to regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness.

ESG funds may be used for five program components: street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention rapid re-housing assistance, and HMIS; as well as administrative activities (up to 7.5% of a recipient's allocation can be used for administrative activities)

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (HOME)

The HOME program is designed to strengthen public-private partnerships to provide more affordable housing. Generally, the HOME program has three main purposes:

- (1) To expand the supply of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing with primary attention to rental housing for extremely low and low income Americans;
- (2) To mobilize and strengthen the abilities of states and units of general local government throughout the United States to design and implement strategies to achieve an adequate supply of decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing; and,
- (3) To provide participating jurisdictions, on a coordinated basis, with various forms of federal housing assistance, including capital investment, mortgage investment, rental assistance, and other needed federal assistance.



The HOME program's impact on the local community increases the local tax base, increases economic development, preserves existing housing stock, decrease cases of homelessness and over-crowded households, as well as bolsters the local community's investment in their citizen's quality of life. Fulton County's HOME program operates four programs: Single Family Housing Rehabilitation, which assist low to moderate income with home improvements for the correction of health, safety code violations by deferred payment loans (DPL); Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), which is operated by a contract with the Housing Authority of Fulton County (HAFC); Home Ownership Program (HOP), which provides down payment assistance and the Multi-Family Housing and Rehabilitation Program, which supports the development of multi-family housing by providing loans and grants for construction and rehabilitation of housing units that support the low and moderate income residents of our community.

RECOVERY PROGRAMS

The Recovery Act included \$13.61 billion for projects and programs administered by HUD.

These investments were intended to help communities and families that have experienced the brunt of the economic downturn. Resources are being used to stabilize and revive local neighborhoods and housing markets with heavy concentrations of foreclosed properties. Fulton County DCD continues to operate the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The program was designed to mitigate the impact of foreclosures through the purchase and rehabilitation of either blighted, foreclosed, vacant single family or multifamily properties.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR GRANT PROGRAMS

Fulton County's CDBG and HOME programs are designed to serve Fulton County Citizens outside the City limits of Atlanta, John Creeks, Roswell, and Sandy Springs including the underserved, children and youth, economically disadvantaged, elderly, seniors, female headed households, homeless, those threaten with homelessness, all ethnicities, minorities, and special needs populations.

The ESG program provides services to all Fulton County's jurisdictions with the exception of the City of Atlanta.

CDBG

Fulton County CDBG operates a two year funding cycle for suitable projects that meet identified needs. The two year funding cycle allows non-profit agencies and municipalities to receive funding commitments for one to two years. The implementation of a two-year funding cycle enhances the program in the following ways:

- a. Non-profit agencies are able to make the most efficient use of their time by planning their budgets and fund raising activities based on a two year funding decision.
- b. Municipal and non-profit agencies applying for public facility project funds are able to obtain a two year commitment of funds which allows them to proceed with large projects rather than breaking activities into smaller phases.
- c. With the absence of an annual application cycle, staff is available to provide more technical assistance to its sub-recipients and agencies interested in applying for CDBG funding.

The amount of funding awarded to an applicant from each program year is partially based on the implementation schedule provided for the project and on the ability of applicants to expend funds within each program fiscal year, which runs from January 1st thru December 31st of each year.

Prior to the availability of fiscal years CDBG funds through DCD's annual competitive grant process, the process is advertised through Fulton County Communications Department and or published in the local print media. During the application period, the DCD sponsors Application Preparation/Technical Assistance Workshops and virtual workshops, as necessary, to assist potential applicants in completing applications and to answer questions about the CDBG Program. Staff strongly encourages each potential applicant to attend one technical assistance workshop to assist them with the preparation of their application and to review program revisions that may have occurred since the previous application cycle. A CDBG Application is also provided.

In each application, potential applicants may provide their comments on the application form, or submit written comments via email. According to the CDBG Application and the technical assistance provided during the application process. The comments will help staff to continue to improve our application process.

Staff then reviews the submitted applications to ensure that the proposed projects and services to be funded with CDBG meet HUD national objectives and eligibility requirements. Internal department staff scores each public service application. The results are compiled for review by the Citizen Review Panel, who consider staff recommendations on projects and services that may be funded for the CDBG program years. The Citizen Review Panel, after considering staff recommendations, makes the final recommendation to the Board of Commissioners concerning which projects should receive funds for the upcoming years. The Board of Commissioners in turn considers the recommendations by the panel and makes the final determination as to which projects and services will be funded. Staff then submits the Board's decision to HUD in November of each year. These projects and services represent the County's annual action plan for the respective CDBG program year as required by HUD.

The Citizen Review panel consists of two (2) Panel members appointed by each member of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners for a two (2) year period. These appointments are intended to provide equal representation in the decision-making for the applications submitted by entities that are not under a Cooperation Agreement with Fulton County.

As applicable, the CDBG Program may piggyback an existing County executed application process to acquire the same or similar commodities for eligible CDBG services and activities.

ESG

The program utilizes two application processes:

1. Limited Application Process

- This approach is similar to the formal application process, but the application is not as detailed.

2. Solicitation of Applications from Qualified Organizations

- Grantees identify potential qualified applicants through an informal process or through a general Request for Qualifications (RFQ).

Fulton County must consult with the Fulton County GA 502 Continuum of Care in determining how to allocate ESG funds.



HOME

The County's HOME program serves a variety of activities such as rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing assistance, home buyer assistance, tenant-based rental assistance, and rental housing development assistance under three programs. These programs have different application processes in place.

Fulton County's Home Ownership Program (HOP) was designed to assist eligible first-time home buyers, who are seeking to purchase a home in Fulton County, outside the city limits of Atlanta, Roswell, Sandy Springs, and Johns Creek. The program assists approved homebuyers in the form of a deferred payment soft second mortgage loan. HOP is administered through a network of participating lenders. These lenders are lending institutions that are required to comply with the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). The participating lenders are responsible for originating, underwriting, closing, and funding Program Loans. Applications are reviewed following standard insuring underwriting criteria, Fulton County compliance guidelines based on HOME regulations found at 24 CFR Part 92 and funded on a first-come, first-served basis and funding availability.

Fulton County's Single Family Housing Rehabilitation Program assists low to moderate income eligible Fulton County residents make needed home improvements for the correction of health, and safety code violations through deferred payment loans (DPL). The DPL is awarded to bring the property into compliance with standard housing code. The loans are forgiven twenty percent each year (starting in year 2) that the borrower occupies the residence. Applicants submit a program application and required documentation to HOP program staff who determines eligibility based on program requirements and HUD regulations.

Fulton County operates the Tenant-based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA) through an annual contract with the Housing Authority of Fulton County (HAFC). The HAFC acts as a sub recipient of the County in its administration of the program. HAFC administers the program as outlined in its annual contract with the county commencing January 1 of each year and ending December 31. Below are the key steps involved in processing assistance for participation in the program:

- i) HAFC selects households for the program from one of the three categories: participants in its Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Housing Choice Voucher waiting list or from those HAFC tenants who may be involuntarily displaced from units due to demolition or rehabilitation. In addition, constituents needing emergency rental assistance may be received from the Department of Community Development and/or Human Services Departments.
- ii) Applicants submit a program application and required documentation to HAFC staff who determines their eligibility for the program.
- iii) HAFC notifies the applicants they are eligible for assistance and they are issued a HOME Housing Voucher that states the terms and conditions of participation. This voucher expires after 60 days.
- iv) The program participant then must identify a rental unit in an eligible area of the County. These areas include all of unincorporated Fulton County and in all cities in Fulton County except City of Atlanta, Sandy Springs, Johns Creek, and East Point.
- v) Once an applicant locates a property to rent, they submit a Request for Lease Approval to HAFC.
- vi) HAFC executes a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with the owner of the property and calculates the rent to be paid by the tenant.
- vii) Upon receipt, the Program specialist managing the program reviews the information to ensure that the program eligibility determination is correct.



Additionally, HUD regulations mandate that a minimum of 15% of Fulton County’s HOME funds are to be reserved to fund housing projects proposed by organizations that meet the CHDO definition. A Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) is a nonprofit housing, community-based service development organization whose primary purpose is to provide and develop decent, affordable housing for the community it serves and that has obtained or intends to obtain the staff with the capacity to develop this decent and affordable housing as outlined in Section 92.2 of the Final HOME Rule. The program issues a notice of funding availability to advertise available CHDO funds in a program year. Qualified applications with project ready projects will be selected, certified and awarded funds through a competitive application process.

PROGRAM YEAR SCHEDULE

At various times of the program year, DCD staff prepares several planning, reporting and policy documents related to the County’s three federal formula programs. The division has adopted a coordinated approach to obtain citizen comments and adheres to the following schedule for preparation of these documents:

Document	Milestone Date
Consolidated Plan	Due every 3 or 5 years The jurisdiction must state the period of time covered by the plan, which may be either a 3 year or 5 year plan. Each jurisdiction is required to submit its consolidated plan to HUD at least 45 days before the start of its first program year of the specified 3 or 5 year period (unless waived or extended by HUD).
Annual Action Plan	November 15th This report is required to be submitted to HUD within 45 days before the start of the jurisdiction's program year (unless waived or extended by HUD).
CAPER	March 30 th This performance report is required to be submitted to HUD within 90 days after the close of the jurisdiction's program year (unless waived or extended by HUD).
Cooperation Agreement	Urban County Qualification as required by HUD with Cities within Fulton County’s jurisdiction that do not have HUD Entitlement status Due every 3 years.
Environmental Review Process	Various times during the program year- On going
Substantial Amendments	Various times during the program year
Start of the Program Year	January 1st
Program Year ending	December 31st

During each of the above activities, Fulton County DCD provides an opportunity for citizens to provide their comments and/or feedback. The definitions for these various time frames, reports, and/or documents are listed in the definition section.

ADOPTION OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES

To enable and assure involvement of citizens in the development of the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, Substantial Amendments and in the planning and implementation of the three federal formula and recovery programs, the Department of Community Development has adopted the following general principles:

1. §91.105 (1) (2) Encouragement of Citizen Participation and Information to be provided.

Fulton County has taken specific actions to provide for and encourage increased participation in its community development programs, particularly by persons of low- and moderate-incomes, minorities, limited English proficiency persons and those who are disabled. These actions include:

- (a) Identification of geographic areas in the County with concentrations of low- and moderate-income persons and concentration of minorities;
- (b) Preparation of project proposal application forms and the Annual Action Plans in a manner so as to afford low- and moderate-income persons and other affected citizens the opportunity to examine its contents and make comments to Fulton County.
- (c) Informing the citizens through social media (Fulton County's Facebook and Twitter accounts), newspapers, articles and advertisements, radio, public service announcements, local contact persons, public hearings, cable television announcements, etc., concerning the long and short term objectives to be utilized, the anticipated amount of Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant funds available for proposed activities, the potential activities to be funded, the actual projects chosen for funding, the annual progress in project implementation, and the availability of the Proposed Annual Action Plan for public review and comments;
- (d) Solicit participation from populations least likely to have awareness of federal programs Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Solutions Grants and HOME Investment Partnerships funding availability through increased media efforts.
- (e) Review of all citizen comments and incorporation of such comments into the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report as applicable;
- (f) Analysis of the impact of Consolidated Plan program activities on neighborhood residents, particularly those of very low, low- and moderate-incomes;



- (g) Conducting a Needs Assessments Survey as a means to stay informed of the needs of the low- and moderate-income residents of the County with federal funding before submission of the Proposed Consolidated Plan, Draft Annual Action Plan and Substantial Amendments. The Needs Assessment Survey allows the department to:
- Gather information about citizen attitudes and opinions regarding precisely defined issues, problems or opportunities.
 - Determine how citizens rank issues in order of importance and urgency.
 - Give citizens a voice in determining goals and priorities.
 - Determine citizen support for initiatives.
 - Evaluate current programs, services, activities and policies.
 - End speculation about "what people is thinking" or "what people really want."
- (h) Meetings with neighborhoods and groups to apprise them of the Consolidated Planning process, project eligibility, project selection, funding and implementation methods;
- (j) Enforcement of Section 3 regulations and guidelines. The designated Section 3 Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of all compliance activities under Fulton County's Voluntary Compliance Agreement, whereby Federal program contracts are equal or greater than \$100,000. Program staff will attend all pre-bid meetings and inform potential contractors of Section 3 requirements and sanctions for non-compliance. As applicable, the County will ensure that its subrecipients, contractors, and subcontractors have met the minimum numerical goals for employment and contracting in regards to the Section 3 program requirements.
- (k) Continue to provide a forum for open communication with its citizens, particularly very low, low- and moderate-income persons concerning its HUD funded programs, and the ways these individuals might benefit from these programs. The county will continue to utilize various public notification techniques, including but not limited to: attendance at church and neighborhood meetings, civic associations, public hearings, newspaper articles and advertisement, press releases, radio and television announcements, feature stories, individual personal contacts, virtual meetings and conference calls. Fulton County will strive to continuously increase citizen participation in its d community development programs, particularly for persons of the targeted income groups;
- (l) Make special efforts to provide timely and accurate information about Community Development program participation to all the participating municipalities under a Cooperation Agreement with Fulton County. Many of the heaviest concentrations of low- and moderate-income persons reside within the boundaries of these municipalities— particularly City of South Fulton, College Park, East Point, and some sections of Fairburn, Hapeville, Union City and Palmetto. Active participation in the Fulton County Community Development programs is a means to insure that all low- and moderate-income county residents and partnering nonprofits can participate fully in these HUD-assisted activities.
- (m) Using mailing lists to notify Homeless Housing and Service providers, Non-Profit and Community Organizations, Developers, recipients of DCD federal funds, Neighborhood Associations, Past Attendees, Disability Advocates, Other local Government or Quasi-Government Agencies and other interested parties;



- (n) Conducting Housing Information sessions in each district throughout the County. These sessions address raising awareness about critical housing topics such as predatory lending practices, fair lending and fair housing requirements, finding units accessible to persons with disabilities, avoiding foreclosure, how to purchase a home, or resolving a financial crisis. These sessions show that Fulton County has taken an active role in ensuring that our citizens are educated on issues related to their rights and responsibilities on many issues including housing. These types of sessions are targeted for protected classes and the general public.
- (o) DCD partners with the Center of Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS). The agency will serve as an information and referral agency to target the Asian and Pacific Islander American communities.
- (p) DCD partners with the Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC), one of the leading charities for people with disabilities. The agency will serve as information and referral agency.

2. 24 CFR Part §58. Criteria for Environmental Review

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and "other Federal laws and authorities" require that an environmental review be conducted for all federally assisted actions (except those exempted under 24 CFR Part 58). The reviews are used to determine (1) whether its proposed actions will have an impact on the environment, or (2) whether the environment will have an impact on the proposed action.

DCD will follow the following steps to conduct an environmental review:

1. The Environmental Officer determines what level of review is required:
 - Exempt
 - Categorical Exclusions Not Subject to §58.5
 - Categorical exclusions
 - Categorical exclusions converted to exempt
 - Environmental assessment
 - Environmental Impact Statement
2. Initiate contacts with outside sources, e.g. State Historic Preservation Officer.
3. Collect data.
4. Complete applicable review format, i.e. Statutory Checklist or Environmental Assessment.
5. Make environmental determination, i.e. compliance with Federal laws and authorities, or finding of no significant impact, or finding of significant impact.
6. The certifying officer certifies the document.
7. Publish or disseminate public notices (may use a combined notice Combined/Concurrent Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds (NOI/RROF) when applicable. Notices include a comment period and objection protocol to the request, describe the project and each of the activities comprising the project
8. Submit Request for Release of Funds and Certification form to HUD (or the state) no sooner than 16 days after publishing the combined/concurrent notice.
9. Wait for receipt of Authority to Use Grant Funds form from HUD (or the state). HUD must hold the Release of Funds for a 15-day period to allow for public comment. If no comments are received during this time, HUD will send back a signed Release of Funds and the project may proceed.
10. Start project - commit funds.



3. §91.105 (7) Criteria for Consolidated Plan and/or Any Substantial Amendments

The Fulton County policy regarding amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, or any substantial amendment requires that any changes in eligible activities and distribution of funds or in the substantive language of the Plan require public hearings, as described in §91.105 (5) above, and official approval by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners.

(a) The Citizen Participation Plan and Public Comment Process

Any comments on the Fulton County Citizen Participation Plan should be provided to the County with other comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan. The citizen participation plan can be made available to citizens in formats appropriate for persons with disabilities. Fulton County will continue to make every possible effort to comply with all HUD requirements and provide for and encourage increased citizen participation in its HUD-assisted programs, with continued emphasis given to the encouragement of persons of very low, low- and moderate-income, minorities and those who are disabled to participate.

For further information concerning these HUD programs administered by Fulton County, interested citizens should contact:

Director
Fulton County Health and Human Services
Department of Community Development
137 Peachtree Street, S.W., Suite 300 Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone: (404) 612-1243

4. §91.105 (5) Public Hearings.

COVID-19, State of Emergency and other National Disasters as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Effective May 13, 2020, consistent with the Mega-waiver issued by HUD on March 31, 2020, the public meetings input process is waived, including but not limited to an approved consolidated plan or annual action plan concerning the proposed uses of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME). The amended public notice process will include an opportunity for citizens to provide public comments for not less than five (5) days by written participation by submission through a designated email address, website, by mail and or participation by a “virtual public hearing.”



Post COVID-19 Public Hearings

Fulton County will continue to hold public hearings to obtain citizen comments and concerns and to respond to proposals and questions at various stages of program operation, as necessary. Public hearings may be held in-person and/or virtually. A minimum of one (1) Needs Assessment Public Hearing will be conducted annually, as required by HUD regulations, to determine the nature of assistance needed. At least one (1) proposed Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan Public Hearing will be held to permit citizen comments on all proposed objectives, priorities and proposed projects. All activities proposed for funding with HUD CDBG, HOME, ESG and other funds will be carefully reviewed and appropriate recommendations will be made to the Fulton County Board of Commissioners by the Fulton County Citizens Review Panel and/or County staff. The Department of Community Development staff will assist with the review panel in the preparation of its recommendations to the Board. Notices of public hearings will be published in the local newspaper of general circulation prior to the hearing(s). The hearing(s) will be held at a location(s) and time(s) convenient for potential or actual program beneficiaries. The public hearing(s) may be held virtually or at a site(s) which has ADA required accessibility and parking facilities. All public hearings will be properly documented and will include a sign-in sheet in both English and Spanish that lists the attendees, public comments, available funds, proposed objectives and projects and a description of the actual use of previous year funds. The sign-in sheet request the following general information: name, address, gender, ethnicity, contact information (email and telephone number), and the household type (female head of household and disability status). Written minutes/comments of the public hearing(s) will be maintained on file in the department and will be available to the public for review during the normal business hours or at other times, which may be arranged by special request.

The public hearings will be held at two (2) stages of the program year. The needs assessment public hearing(s) are held at the initiation of the planning cycle at which time citizens, agencies and other interested parties are invited to share with Fulton County their views on community development, affordable housing and social service's needs. Fulton County also uses this set of public hearings to report to the citizens on prior year performance for its HUD-assisted programs.

The second set of public hearings are held following an open application cycle, which is publicized by newspaper advertisement and other forms of written communication to interested citizens and agencies. The intent of these hearings is to present to the community all the projects submitted for funding. The second set of public hearings will also be utilized to present to the public all the proposed priority housing and non-housing needs, proposed long and short-term objectives and potential resources available to develop a Proposed Consolidated Plan or an update to its existing Consolidated Plan, which will be advertised for public review and comment.

(a) Provisions for Residents in need of Reasonable Accommodations and Communication.

All Fulton County meeting facilities meet ADA accessibility requirements. Citizens in need of reasonable accommodations due to a disability including communication in an alternative format, in order to participate in any County-sponsored program or meeting, please contact Gwen Hunter, Disability Compliance Liaison in the Fulton County Health and Human Services Department of Community Development, 137 Peachtree Street, S.W., Suite 300 Atlanta, Georgia 30303, at (404) 613-3647. For Georgia Relay Access, dial 711.

Citizens seeking reasonable accommodations and communication should contact the Department of Community Development at least ten (10) working days prior to the public hearing date. This process will allow the department to provide arrangements of services available for the public hearing(s) in question.



5. §91.105 (3) Access to Records, Local Meetings and Information.

All Fulton County meeting facilities meet ADA accessibility requirements. Fulton County provides reasonable and timely access to all public hearings. All information and records relating to DCD's activities are available to the public for review and comments as required by Federal, State and local laws and regulations.

Copies of public hearing notices, descriptive information concerning the HUD-assisted programs, the Interim Consolidated Plan, any Substantial Amendments, IDIS Financial Reports and other information available for public review and comment is maintained by DCD. Including information informing readers of assistance opportunities provided to citizens to insure that all meetings, records, documents and related information are and will be made readily accessible to the citizens of Fulton County.

Prior to Fulton County's DCD adopting a Consolidated Plan, its associated performance reports or Substantial Amendment, information will be made available to citizens, public agencies and other interested parties that include the amount of financial assistance the County expects to receive from HUD, and the range of activities which the County expects to undertake, including the amount that will benefit persons of very low- and low-income. The county will also make known any information concerning plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced. [24 CFR 91.105(b) (2) (i)]

Before Fulton County's DCD adopts a Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan or Substantial Amendment, a summary of the document will be published in a local newspaper of general circulation, and copies of the proposed plan/documents will be made available at libraries, government offices and other public places. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan, its associated performance reports or amendments and will list locations where copies of the entire plan or amendments can be examined. [24CFR 91.1.5(b) (2) (ii)]

Fulton County will notify citizens and all participating municipalities of the availability of the Consolidated Plan as adopted, any amendments and/or its associated performance reports (Annual Action Plan & CAPER), as these documents are developed, to afford citizens a reasonable opportunity to examine their content. [24 CFR 91.105(b) (2) (IV)]. Successful notifications are shared with various community organizations.

Fulton County will provide a period of not less than thirty (30) calendar days to receive comments from citizens and units of general purpose local government on the Consolidated Plan, any associated performance reports that require Amendments and Amendments that are to be provided to HUD prior to the submission deadline. [24 CFR 91.105(b) (2) (IV)]. The stand- alone CAPER will be the required 15 days. NOTE: The County may opt to shorten the time period for citizen participation as deemed necessary and approved by HUD.

The Fulton County Department of Community Development provides technical assistance to Fulton County citizens, particularly to very low, low- and moderate-income persons, who request such assistance in developing project proposals or who request other information (compliance requirements, program performance, funding information, etc.) covered by the Consolidated Plan. Project proposal forms are available and are provided at no cost to requesters.

Meeting(s) can be arranged for individuals or groups as necessary to explain project eligibility, application and approval processes or implementation requirements for all funding programs administered by the county.



Staff of the Fulton County Department of Community Development will attend neighborhood meetings, meet with non-profit organizations, individuals and others to provide additional technical assistance related to housing and community development programs as requested and as needed.

6. §91.105 (6) Comments and Complaints.

Fulton County will consider any comments or views of citizens, agencies or other interested parties received in writing or orally at public hearings in preparing the final Consolidated Plan, amendment to the plan or any performance report. A summary of these comments, or views not accepted, and the reasons for no acceptance will be attached to the final Consolidated Plan, plan amendment or performance report.

(a) Non-Discrimination Policy/Complaint Review Process.

As a recipient of federal funds, Fulton County must adhere to all federal requirements imposed by or pursuant to Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts, as amended; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; the Fair Housing Act, as amended; and other applicable Acts which prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, disability or familial status. No person shall be excluded from participating in, denied the benefit of or be subjected to discrimination in the receipt or administration of the federal funds covered by this Consolidated Plan. In addition to these federal acts, Fulton County maintains an affirmative action policy of inclusion and does not discriminate based upon race, age, gender, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. Persons who feel that they have been discriminated against or have a complaint pertaining to the Fulton County Consolidated Plan, plan amendments or performance report may file a complaint in writing to:

Director
Fulton County Health and Human Services
Department of Community Development
137 Peachtree Street, S.W., Suite 300 Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone: (404) 612-1243

The complaint must contain the following information:

- (1) Name and address of the Complainant [person(s)] filing the complaint;
- (2) A description of the act or acts considered to be in violation;
- (3) Other available pertinent information, which will assist in the investigation of the complaint.



Complaints should be filed within sixty (60) calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act. A written response as to the disposition of the complaint will be issued by the DCD Director no later than fifteen (15) working days after the receipt of the complaint. The response will include information concerning the right-of-appeal, should the complaint disagree in whole or in part with the resolution. A constituent who is dissatisfied with the response to a complaint, or if the response is delayed more than fifteen (15) working days, may appeal in writing to:

Chairman
Fulton County Board of Commissioners
Fulton County Government Center
141 Pryor Street, S.W., Suite 10001 Atlanta, Georgia 30303

A written response as to the disposition of the complaint will be issued by the Chairman, Fulton County Board of Commissioners not later than thirty (30) working days after the receipt of the appeal. If the constituent is dissatisfied with the response of the Chairman, Fulton County Board of Commissioners, he/she may submit the complaint, in writing, to:

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Fair Housing and Equal Employment Opportunity
40 Marietta Street, 15th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

No person shall intimidate, threaten, coerce or discriminate against any person because he/she has made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any matter in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to a complaint.

The identity of constituent(s) shall be kept confidential, except to the extent necessary to carry out or conduct investigations, hearings or judicial proceedings arising out of the complaint.

DEFINITIONS

Annual Action Plan - The document outlines the proposed activities to be carried out by the County in each fiscal year of the Con Plan with the annual award of Federal funds. It is submitted to HUD annual which specifically describes the allocation of federal funds to activities to be conducted in support of the priorities, objectives and the investment of resources to meet these goals outlined in the Consolidated Plan.

Application Process- Determined by previously referenced programs i.e., ESG, CDBG, and HOME.

CAPER- Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. This performance report is required as part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Consolidated Planning process, and is outlined specifically in 24 CFR 91.520. The document reports the actual accomplishments that were proposed during the fiscal year with the annual award of Federal funds. It is submitted to HUD annual which specifically describes the actions took with the allocation of federal funds to activities in support of the priorities, objectives and goals outlined in the Consolidated Plan.

Certifying Officer: The responsible entity must designate a Certifying Officer -- the "responsible Federal official" -- to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Federal laws and authorities cited at section 58.5 has been achieved. This person is the chief elected official, chief executive official, or other official designated by formal resolution of the governing body. The certifying officer must have the authority to assume legal responsibility for certifying that all environmental requirements have been followed.

CDBG - Community Development Block Grant Program.

Consolidated Plan – The document is submitted to HUD and serves as the comprehensive housing affordability strategy, community development plan, and submissions for funding under any of the Community Planning and Development formula grant programs (e.g., CDBG, ESG, and HOME). The Consolidated Plan must be updated every five years or minimally at three years and serves as the strategic foundation for subsequent one-year Action Plans.

Cooperative Agreement- A Cooperation Agreement allows an urban county to carry out eligible activities in participating Units of General Local Government (UGLG) where it cannot undertake essential community development and housing assistance activities.

Environmental assessment- A concise public document required under the National Environmental Policy Act regulations, for which a Federal agency (or an entity authorized to assume HUD's environmental review responsibilities) is responsible that provides sufficient evidence and analysis to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The assessment is made in accordance with §58.40. It must examine existing conditions of the site and surrounding area; identify, analyze and evaluate all impacts; recommend feasible ways to mitigate or eliminate adverse environmental impacts; examine alternatives to the project (including the alternative of no action); and complete a compliance determination of applicable authorities cited in §§58.5 and 58.6. An Environmental Assessment format is used to document the conclusions of an environmental assessment.

Environmental Review Process - The completion of all procedural steps of an environmental review. This includes conducting and documenting an environmental review, making an environmental determination, publishing required public notices, submission of a Request for Release of Funds and Certification form, and receipt of an Authority to Use Grant Funds form from HUD (or the state).

Environmental review - The appropriate level of environmental analysis for a project or activity. This may include a Compliance Determination, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement.

ESG - Emergency Solutions Grant Program

DCD- Department of Community Development Division

HOME - HOME Investment Partnership Program.

Participating jurisdiction (PJ) - A unit of general local government (UGLG) or state designated by HUD to receive federal grants and responsible for ensuring that federal assistance is expended in accordance with program regulations.

Program year ending- Fulton County DCD operates a calendar year schedule, which begins Jan 1st each year and ends December 31st.

Project - "An activity, or a group of integrally related activities, site or sites, inclusive of any buildings that are under common ownership, management, and financing that will be assisted with HOME funds as a single undertaking (§92.2). , designed by the recipient [participating jurisdiction] to accomplish, in whole or in part, a specific objective.

Reasonable Accommodation – A reasonable accommodation is a change, modification, alteration, or adaptation in a policy, procedure, practice, program, facility or unit that provides a person with a disability the opportunity to participate in, or benefit from, a program (housing or non-housing), service or activity

Release of Funds (ROF) - The issuance of the "Authority to Use Funds" form or equivalent letter by HUD or the state for activities which require the participating jurisdiction to submit a Request for Release of Funds and Certification form to HUD or the state. This action completes the environmental clearance process.

Start of the Program Year - Fulton County DCD operates a calendar year schedule, which begins Jan 1st each year and ends December 31st.

Substantial Amendment- Fulton County DCD defines it as the following:

1. Changes to any of the goals, policies, or procedures identified in the Consolidated Plan.
2. Changes in the purpose, scope, beneficiaries, or location of the project;
3. Cancellation of an existing project or adding a new project.
4. To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds; or
5. To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan (including program income), not previously described in the action plan.

CERTIFICATION

Fulton County Department of Community Development considers citizen participation to be critical to the development of successful planning and community revitalization efforts. The authorized official hereby certifies that the Citizen Participation Plan is in full compliance and follows a detailed citizen participation plan that satisfies the requirements of 24 CFR 91.105 under programs Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and other Federal funded Recovery Programs.

By: Dr. Pamela Roshell, Interim Director, Department of Community Development & Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Printed Name of Authorized Official



Signature/ Authorized Official

6/16/2020

Date

