

Hillsborough County

Citizen Participation Plan

Version 1.1	Date	Changes
	6/2/21	Original
	8/14/21	To include Coronavirus Funds
	5/10/24	Added Emergency State of Emergency Access to documents on the website of Affordable Housing.
	10/8/24	Waivers for public review and comment period added.
Version 1.2	2/20/25	1. Modified existing plan to comply with all current Disaster recovery activities. 2. Maintain a comprehensive website for CDBG AND CDBG-DR-DR. This site can be found at CDBG AND CDBG-DR DR Hillsborough 3. Updated “Public Notice and Public comment Period” with additional information on efforts to notify citizens and stakeholders of Action Plan Amendments, public comment periods, and public hearings. Update “Public Comment” section for clarity and consistency with other Citizen Participation Plans. Updated “Accessibility” section by separating information into an LEP plan for individuals with Limited English Proficiency and individuals with disabilities. The LEP plan is bounded in as a part of the Citizen Participation Plan. Added information

		on efforts Hillsborough County makes to ensure meaningful access to LEP and disabled individuals in compliance with the requirements at 24 CFR 91.115. 4. The County will create an online survey to engage citizens. 5. The plan was updated to include the geographical area of the City of Tampa. 6. The County will publish all meetings on this website 7. The County will provide a list of Frequently Asked Questions on its website to offer insight to some of the most common questions. 8. The County will provide written feedback to written responses, complaints, or inquiries within a 7 day period. 9. This document will be updated as needed to incorporate changes based on information obtained from attending CDBG AND CDBG-DR-DR and program-related training workshops, seminars, webinars, and other resources, including changes in federal and state laws, rules, regulations and program policies and procedures. In addition, information obtained at the training sessions and an overview of the training sessions
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		will be provided to all core staff supporting program operations. Updated guidelines specific to each program will also be posted on the CDBG AND CDBG-DR DR Hillsborough webpage.
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Citizen Participation

Introduction

Federal regulations require that Hillsborough County develop a system through which the community can participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of housing and community development programs. These regulations, which are found under 24 CFR § 91.105, provide opportunities for the general public, elected officials, and community stakeholders to actively plan and assess certain federally funded programs that have a direct impact on Hillsborough County's citizens.

The Citizen Participation Plan provides the County with vital guidance on development of the plans for Consolidated Plan, Action Plans, Substantial Amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Evaluation and Performance Report (CAPER). The County uses the Citizen Participation Plan on a regular basis throughout the year--it is a working document. Hillsborough County's Citizen Participation Plan was developed in accordance with federal regulations set forth in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and Part 91 of Title 24 (Housing and Urban Development) of the Code of Federal Regulations (24 CFR 91), in particular §91.100 and §91.105 and 24 CFR 5.158.

The Citizen Participation Plan brings together the planning, application, reporting and citizen participation components for all HUD funded programs. This narrative will explain the Citizen Participation Plan and its applicability to the applicable programs and the ongoing role of citizen involvement. Hillsborough County Affordable Housing Services (AHS) is responsible for administering the Citizen Participation Plan.

Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan

Hillsborough County is required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan that explains the County's policies and procedures for citizen participation in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, any subsequent amendments, the Assessment of Fair Housing, the Action Plans, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPER). [24 CFR 91 §91.105(a)(1)]

Although the Citizen Participation Plan is a Federal requirement, Hillsborough County is equally committed to ensure that the citizens of the County, particularly persons who may be under-

represented in the public process, as well as other interested parties and stakeholders, are provided opportunities to participate in the planning and preparation of the Consolidated Plan, subsequent amendments, the Assessment of Fair Housing, the Action Plans, and the CAPER. The main goal of this plan is to increase citizen participation, promote community partnerships, and receive input from residents regarding the projects and activities funded through the CDBG AND CDBG-DR, HOME and ESG Programs as well as actions taken to affirmatively further fair housing.

In particular, citizen participation is encouraged from persons with low and moderate incomes, persons living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG AND CDBG-DR funds are proposed to be used, residents of predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods, as well as persons with special needs, residents of public housing, persons who are homeless, members of minority groups, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities. The County provides outreach to these residents by contacting groups and agencies that represent or serve these populations.

Hillsborough County will also consult with public and private agencies addressing economic issues, housing, infrastructure, health, social services, victim services, employment or education needs of low-income individuals and families as well as homeless individuals and homeless families and other individuals with special needs. Additionally, Hillsborough County shall consult with local and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, and other organizations in the process of developing and implementing the AFH and the Consolidated Plan. [24 CFR 91

§91.100(a)(2)(ii)]

Relevant Areas and Programs: The Hillsborough County 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing covers the geographic area within the County limits of Hillsborough County, Florida. Specifically, the exact relevant geographic area includes the unincorporated County and the Cities of Temple Terrace, City of Tampa, and Plant City. The County is entitled to receive CDBG AND CDBG-DR, HOME and ESG program funding from HUD during the program years within the five year time period covered by the plan. Hillsborough County does not have officially designated areas of blight or Community Redevelopment Areas within its jurisdiction.

Regular Public Hearings

The County will conduct at least two public hearings every year, as follows:

1. One public hearing will be associated with the development and review of the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plans. The purpose will be to obtain citizen views on housing and community development issues, steps taken to affirmatively further fair housing, and to provide comments on proposed projects. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(e)(ii)]
2. The second public hearing will be held in association with the CAPER to obtain citizen views on program performance, as well as housing and community development issues.

Applicability and Adoption: This Citizen Participation plan sets forth the policies and procedures that Hillsborough County shall follow to encourage citizen participation in the above-mentioned federally funded programs and shall be used during the development and adoption of the County's Consolidated Plan, subsequent amendments, the Assessment of Fair Housing, the Action Plans, and CAPER. Hillsborough County shall follow this Citizen Participation Plan throughout all stages of the 2021-2025 Consolidated Planning process and for subsequent Assessments of Fair Housing. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(k)].

This Citizen Participation Plan was initially approved and adopted by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners on August 14, 2021, but has been modified to include disaster recovery efforts, changes to reflect online survey, changes with Limited English Proficiency, dedicated website, and response times.

HUD Regulations: Hillsborough County's Citizen Participation Plan was developed in accordance with federal regulations as set forth in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and Part 91 of Title 24 (Housing and Urban Development) of the Code of Federal Regulations (24 CFR 91), in particular §91.100 and §91.105 and 24 CFR 5.158.

Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing Process

The Development of the Consolidated Plan and the Assessment of Fair Housing and housing resiliency and mitigation requires the most citizen participation of any activity undertaken by AHS. Prior to adopting a Consolidated Plan or an Assessment of Fair Housing, Hillsborough County shall make available to citizens, public agencies, Continuums of Care and other interested parties information which includes the amount of assistance the County expects to receive (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount of funding that will benefit persons of low and moderate income. The County

shall also make available to the public, public agencies, and other interested parties at the start of its citizen participation process or as soon as possible thereafter, all data related to its Assessment of Fair Housing. The data will be made available on the AHS website by cross- referencing HUD data, maps, and other supplemental data to be used in the Assessment of Fair Housing. [24 CFR 91

§91.105(b)(1)

Public Meeting During the Development of the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing

Before the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing is developed, public meetings shall be held to determine the priorities and needs of the community and to solicit public input regarding the housing and community development needs including priority non-housing Community development needs, as well as on fair housing issues in the region. The meetings may be held anywhere within the County but should be concentrated in areas that may receive benefit from the programs described in the Consolidated Plan and actions prescribed in the Assessment of Fair Housing, as well as in blighted or areas designated for revitalization.

Reasonable and Timely Access

Hillsborough County shall provide its citizens with reasonable and timely access to all local and county-wide meetings regarding the Consolidated Plan and the Assessment of Fair Housing. [24 CFR 91 91.105(f)]

Location and Accessibility

The locations of these meetings shall be accessible to persons with disabilities. Special accommodations shall be arranged upon request with two business days advance notice. In addition to assessing the likelihood of attendance of non-English speaking persons at each public meeting location by reviewing census demographic characteristics and providing translation services at meetings deemed likely to require such services, translation services shall also be provided upon request with two business days advance notice. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(a)(4)]

Meetings will be held, to the greatest extent possible, in the geographic areas of the County most likely to receive benefit from the programs described in the Consolidated Plan and/or the Assessment of Fair Housing. Although it is not possible to meet in every low income area in Hillsborough County, every effort will be made to hold meetings in the major regions of the County.

The meetings will be held in convenient and accessible facilities. The time and location of the meetings will be published in the local newspaper(s) of county-wide circulation and will also be advertised on the County's website.

Encouragement of Citizen Participation

All citizens of Hillsborough County are encouraged to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and the Assessment of Fair Housing. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(a)(2)(i)] It is the policy and past practice of Hillsborough County to identify and offer various opportunities for citizens to participate in the Consolidated Planning and Assessment of Fair Housing processes.

The County shall undertake whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation of all its citizens, particularly persons with low and moderate incomes, persons living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG AND CDBG-DR funds are proposed to be used, residents of predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods, as well as persons with special needs, residents of public housing, persons who are homeless, members of minority groups, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities by contacting groups and agencies that represent or serve these populations.

[24 CFR 91§91.105(a)(2)(i)] Note: For the purposes of this Citizen Participation Plan, the definition of residents of predominately low- and moderate-income neighborhoods are those residents of low- and moderate-income census tracts as identified within the current Consolidated Plan.

The County shall also encourage participation of local and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, and other organizations such as businesses, developers, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, faith-based organizations and other community-based organizations in the process of developing and implementing the Assessment of Fair Housing and the Consolidated Plan.

[24 CFR 91 §91.105(a)(2)(ii)]

Public Housing Residents: Hillsborough County encourages, in conjunction with and in consultation with public housing authorities, the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments, in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and the Assessment of Fair Housing, along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which developments are located. Hillsborough County shall make an effort to provide information to the local public housing authorities regarding the AFH, AFFH strategy, and Consolidated Plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that said

housing authorities can make this information available at the annual public hearing required under their respective Comprehensive Grant programs. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(a)(2)(iii)]

Jurisdiction Responsibility: The requirements for citizen participation do not restrict the responsibility or authority of the County for the development and execution of its Consolidated Plan or its Assessment of Fair Housing. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(l)]

Consultations with Other Agencies

General

During development of the Consolidated Plan, the Assessment of Fair Housing and the Action Plans, Hillsborough County shall consult with public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services and social services, community-based and regionally based organizations that represent protected class members, and organizations that enforce fair housing laws. [24 CFR §91.100(a)(1)]

Consultation shall include individual and group meetings, and requests for data related to housing, health services, social services, children, HIV/AIDS, the elderly and persons with disabilities and their families, non-English speaking persons and homeless persons. [24 CFR 91.100(a)]

When preparing portions of the Consolidated Plan describing the County's homeless strategy and the resources available to address the needs of homeless persons, Hillsborough County will consult with the following individuals and agencies: the local Continuum of Care, public and private agencies that address housing, health, social services, victim services, employment, or education needs of homeless individuals and families, publicly funded institutions and systems of care that may discharge persons into homelessness and business or civic leaders. [24 CFR §91.100(a)(2)]

Hillsborough County shall consult also with adjacent municipalities and government agencies, including local government agencies with metropolitan-wide planning responsibilities where they exist, particularly for problems and solutions that extend beyond a single jurisdiction. [24 CFR 91 §91.100(a)(4)]

Mailing List

Hillsborough County shall develop and maintain a “Notify Me” mailing list to communicate with interested parties regarding the Consolidated Plan, subsequent amendments, the Assessment of Fair Housing, the Action Plans, and the CAPER.

The Mailing List shall be maintained as an open list. Private citizens, as well as public and private agencies representing Hillsborough County citizens, shall be added to or removed from the mailing list upon request.

The Mailing List shall include but not be limited to representatives of the State of Florida agencies (as may be relevant to the planning process), Hillsborough County, City of Tampa, City of Temple Terrace, and the City of Plant City. The list shall also include members of the Hillsborough County Affordable Housing Advisory Board (AHAB), the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, and the Public Housing Authorities within the County. Representatives from public housing resident councils, neighborhood associations representing low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, and public and private agencies that provide assisted

housing, health services and social services (including those focusing on services to children, elderly people, people with disabilities, homeless people and people with HIV/AIDS and their families) shall also be included on the list.

Any person or entity may request to be added or removed from the “Notify Me” emailing list by calling 813- 612-5397. The Department will request an individual's name, title, company/agency name, address, phone, and email address.

Public Housing

Hillsborough County staff shall consult with the Tampa Housing Authority and the Plant City Housing Authority (local public housing agencies participating in approved Comprehensive Grant programs) concerning public housing needs and planned Comprehensive Grant program activities to ensure that CDBG AND CDBG-DR activities are coordinated to help achieve comprehensive community development goals.

Additionally, in accordance with Assessment of Fair Housing requirements, Hillsborough County staff shall consult with the Tampa Housing Authority and the Plant City Housing Authority to solicit input on fair housing issues in the region, including the use of the Housing Choice Voucher program.

[24CFR 91 §91.100(c)(1)]

This consultation will also help ensure that activities with regard to local drug elimination, neighborhood improvement programs, and resident programs and services, funded under the public housing program and those funded under a program covered by the Consolidated Plan or actions prescribed to affirmatively further fair housing in the County's Assessment of Fair Housing, are fully coordinated to achieve comprehensive community development goals. [24CFR91 §91.100(c)(2)]

Hillsborough County shall make every effort to cooperate in providing activities with regard to local drug elimination, neighborhood improvement programs, and resident programs and services.

Continuum of Care

Hillsborough County shall consult with the local Continuum of Care to determine how to allocate its Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) for eligible activities as well as to consult with the development of performance standards and outcomes for projects and activities assisted with ESG funds. Hillsborough County will also consult with the Continuum of Care to develop funding, policies and procedures for the operation and administration of the HMIS. [24 CFR§91.100(d)] Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing.

Hillsborough County staff shall consult with community-based and regionally based organizations that represent protected class members, and organizations that enforce fair housing laws, including local fair housing enforcement agencies. The goal is for this consultation to inform the County's Assessment of Fair Housing, its certification to affirmatively further fair housing and inform the County's Consolidated Plan. [24 CFR 91§91.100(e)(1)]

The organizations consulted with shall have relevant knowledge or data to inform the Assessment of Fair Housing and represent an independent opinion for development of the Consolidated Plan, Assessment of Fair Housing and implementation of these plans. [24 CFR 91§91.100(e)(2)]

The organizations described above shall, at a minimum, be consulted with during the development of the County's Assessment of Fair Housing and its Consolidated Plan, but the County shall, at its discretion, consult with these organizations beyond the minimum as described in this paragraph.

[24 CFR 91 §91.100(e)(3)]

Priority Non-Housing Community Development Needs

Hillsborough County staff shall consult with adjacent municipalities, internal departments and government agencies concerning any non-housing needs identified during the development of the

Five-Year Consolidated Plan and the Action Plans. Such adjacent municipalities and government agencies shall include but shall not be limited to the City of Tampa, City of Temple Terrace, and Plant City. [24CFR 91 §91.100 (a)(4)]

Lead-Based Paint

Hillsborough County staff shall consult with local and State health and child welfare agencies and examine existing data related to lead-based paint hazards and poisonings, including health department data on the addresses of housing units in which children have been identified as lead poisoned. [24 CFR 91 §91.100(a)(3)]

Public Review and Comment Period

A public review and comment period of not less than 30 days shall be established for the receipt of comments from citizens on the proposed Consolidated Plan and the Assessment of Fair Housing. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(b)(4)]

Copies of Proposed Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing

Copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing shall be available on the internet, on the County's website, at libraries, government offices, public places and other locations throughout the County for examination by the general public. Upon request, the County shall also make free copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing available to citizens and groups. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(b)(2)] In the event of a Local State of Emergency, the proposed Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing will be available on Affordable Housing Services webpage.

Publication of Proposed Consolidated Plan Summary and Assessment of Fair Housing Summary

A summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing shall be published in the County's newspapers of general circulation. The published summary shall describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing and include locations where copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan/Assessment of Fair Housing may be examined by the public. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(b)(2)]

The summary shall encourage citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties to examine the contents of the proposed Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing and to submit comments. If available, the summary or a notice announcing the availability of the proposed

documents shall be published in a bi-lingual or multi-lingual newspaper to provide non- English-speaking persons the opportunity of notice.

Public Hearing for Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing

Hillsborough County shall hold at least one public hearing every Consolidated Program year to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions regarding the Consolidated Plan, to review actions undertaken to affirmatively further fair housing consistent with the County's Assessment of Fair Housing, and activities set forth within the Consolidated Plan. The County may hold additional public hearings as needed. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(e)(1)(i)]

Hillsborough County shall also hold at least one public hearing before the finalization of its Assessment of Fair Housing. The purpose of this meeting is to obtain the views of the community on the proposed Assessment of Fair Housing, publish and make available data related to the assessment, and publicize proposed actions to affirmatively further fair housing.

[24 CFR 91 §91.105(e)(1)(iii)]

Notice of Public Hearing

Notice of public hearings for both the Consolidated Plan and the Assessment of Fair Housing shall be published at least 14 days in advance of the hearings in the County's newspapers of general circulation, the County website, and minority and non-English language newspapers, where available. Notice of the public hearing shall include the time, date, place and procedures of these hearings as well as topics to be considered. Said notices shall encourage all interested parties to participate and solicit their comments and input on the proposed Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing. [24 CFR 91§91.105(e)(2)]

Copies of the public hearing notices shall be posted at County government offices and public places throughout the County. Said notices shall also be forwarded to those persons and agencies on the Consolidated Plan Mailing List and other mailing lists developed to solicit input regarding fair housing issues in the region. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(e)(2)]

Reasonable efforts shall be made in the form of press releases and possibly flyers to inform residents of these public hearings including the time, date, place and procedures of these hearings as well as topics to be considered. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(e)(2)]

Time and Location of Meetings

The public hearing shall be held at a time and location convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(e)(3)] In the event of a Local State of Emergency, public hearings will be held virtually or in a hybrid (virtual and in person) format.

Special Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

Should the need present itself, Hillsborough County staff make special arrangements for the attendance of persons with disabilities who notify the County at least two business days prior to the meeting or Public Hearing and request special accommodation. [24 CFR 91§91.105(e)(3)]

Non-English-Speaking Persons

Should the need present itself, a qualified translator shall be made available at all County meetings where a significant number of non-English speaking persons or interest groups notify the staff at least two business days prior to the meeting or Public Hearing and request said translation services. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(e)(4)]

Availability to the Public

The Consolidated Plan, consolidated plan substantial amendments, Assessment of Fair Housing, revisions to the AFH, and the CAPER shall be made available and accessible to the public. Public access includes the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. In addition, English Spanish bilingual staff shall be available to assist non-English speaking residents in assessing this information. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(g)]

Copies of the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing shall be made available for public inspection and review during regular business hours at the Hillsborough County AHS office located at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602.

Public Comments on the Proposed Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing

In preparing the final Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing, Hillsborough County shall consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at the public hearings. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons, therefore, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing. [24 CFR 91 §91.105(b)(5)]

Amendment Process

Substantial Amendment and Amendments to the Action Plan, the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing

Substantial Amendment Process for Consolidated Plan and Action Plan

Hillsborough County shall consider the following changes to be Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan subject to a citizen participation process, in accordance with this Citizen Participation Plan: [24 CFR 91 §91.105(c) (1) and §91.505(b)]. A substantial change is defined as:

1. A change in the use of any CPD program funding from one eligible activity to another. [24 CFR 91§91.105(c)(1)]
2. When any change exceeds 15 percent of the annual grant awarded to the County.
3. A change in the project location beyond a five mile radius of the original project location.
4. Changes to Priority Need Levels as identified in the Strategic Plan Priority Needs Summary Table.
5. An administrative decision to reallocate all funds allocated to an eligible activity in the Action Plan or other eligible activities or equal or lesser priority need level, unless the decision is a result of any of the following:
 - A. A federal government reduction of appropriated funds, or appropriations are so much less than anticipated that the County makes an administrative decision not to fund one or more activities.
 - B. The governor declares a state of emergency in the County and the County reallocates federal funds to address the emergency.
 - C. A unique affordable housing opportunity arises where the County administration asks that Federal grants be used to take advantage of the opportunity with the prior approval of HUD.

Changes in the use of CPD Program funds that do not meet the definition of a substantial change as defined above will be added to subsequent Substantial Amendments for the purpose of memorialization.

All other changes will be considered revisions (non-substantial) and will be accomplished administratively by HCAHS.

In order to streamline local citizen participation processes during a federal or state disaster, the Participating Jurisdiction will make disaster response and recovery a priority in its current Consolidated Plan and Action Plans. In addition, it will ensure that these plans are aligned with this Citizen Participation Plan. In this way Hillsborough County will be able to charge pre-award costs under 24 CFR 570.200(h), 24 CFR 92.212 and 2 CFR 200.458 for the response and recovery activities not covered in an approved action plan [CPD-17-06].

Criteria for Determining Revision Requirements to the Assessment of Fair Housing

Hillsborough County shall consider the following criteria when determining the need for revisions to its Assessment of Fair Housing: [24 CFR 91 §91.105(c)(ii)]

1. A material change in circumstances in the County that affects the information on which the Assessment of Fair Housing is based. [24 CFR §5.164]
2. A written notice from HUD specifying a material change that requires a revision.

Availability of the Substantial Amendment and Revision to the Assessment of Fair Housing – Public Notice

A notice advertising the availability of the proposed Substantial Amendment or Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions shall be published in the County's newspapers of general circulation and on the County's website, and shall establish a 30-day public review and comment period [24CFR 91 §91.105(c)(2)]

See below for greater detail, and the alternate conditions occurring during the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (Public Law 116-136) related waiver for public comment period.

The notice shall encourage all interested parties to participate and solicit their comments and input on the proposed Substantial Amendment and Revisions to the Assessment of Fair Housing. The notice shall also include locations where copies of the entire proposed Substantial Amendment or Revisions to the Assessment of Fair Housing may be examined by the public. Upon request, the County shall also make free copies of the proposed Substantial Amendment and Revisions to the Assessment of Fair Housing available to citizens and groups.

Publication of Substantial Amendment Summary

A summary of the proposed Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions shall be published in the County's newspapers of general circulation and on the County's website. The published summary shall describe the contents and purpose of the Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions and include locations where copies of the entire proposed Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions may be examined by the public.

The summary shall encourage citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties to examine the contents of the proposed Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions and to submit comments. If available, the summary or a notice announcing the availability of the proposed Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions shall be published in a bi-lingual or multi-lingual newspaper to provide non-English speaking persons the opportunity of notice.

Public Review and Comment Period

A public review and comment period of not less than 30 days shall be established for the receipt of comments from citizens and all interested parties on the proposed Substantial Amendment to the Annual Action and Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions.

[24CFR 91 §91.105(c)(2)]

Publication and Public Hearing Notice for the Substantial Amendment

Hillsborough County shall conduct a public hearing to consider the proposed Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions. This hearing shall follow the public review and comment period, noted above. Notice of this public hearing shall be published at least 14 days in advance of the hearing. If available, the notice shall be published in a bi-lingual or multi-lingual newspaper to afford non-English speaking persons the opportunity of notice.

Notice of these public hearings shall include the time, date, place and procedures of these hearings as well as topics to be considered. Said notice shall encourage all interested parties to participate and solicit their comments and input on the proposed Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions

Availability to the Public

The Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions shall be made available and accessible to the public. Public access includes the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. In addition, English Spanish bilingual staff shall be available to assist non- English-speaking residents in accessing this information.

The Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions shall be made available for public inspection and review during regular business hours at Hillsborough County AHS office located at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602. In the event of a Local State of Emergency, the proposed Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions shall be available on Affordable Housing Services webpage.

Public Comments on the Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions

Hillsborough County shall consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, electronically, or orally at the public hearings, in preparing the final Substantial Amendment and Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions. Questions (including requests to review supporting documentation) or written comments regarding the proposed Amendment and Revision shall be directed to Hillsborough County AHS. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons, therefore, shall be attached to the Substantial Amendment and the Assessment of Fair Housing Revisions. [24CFR 91 §91.105(c) (3)]

Changes in Federal Funding Level

A change in federal funding levels after the expiration of the Consolidated Plan's draft comment period and the resulting effect on the distribution of funds shall not be considered an Amendment or a Substantial Amendment.

Action Plan Process

Each year, Hillsborough County shall reassess the housing and community development needs in order to review and develop proposed activities for the upcoming program year through an Action Plan.

Consultations with Other Agencies and the Public

General

During development of the Action Plans, Hillsborough County shall consult with citizens, public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services and social services, as may be required.

Consultation shall include individual and group meetings, as needed, and requests for data related to housing, health services, social services, children, HIV/AIDS, the elderly and person with disabilities and their families, and homeless persons.

Hillsborough County shall consult, as needed, with adjacent municipalities and government agencies, including local government agencies with metropolitan-wide planning responsibilities where they exist, particularly for problems and solutions that extend beyond a single jurisdiction.

Availability of the Action Plan, and Environmental Reviews of Activities Listed in the Action Plan – Public Notice

A notice advertising the availability of the Action Plan shall be published in the County's newspapers of general circulation and the County's website and shall establish a 30 public review and comment period (see below). The Notice shall encourage all interested parties to participate and solicit their comments and input on the Action Plan. The notice shall also include locations where copies of the entire proposed Action Plan may be examined by the public. Upon request, the County shall also make free copies of the proposed Action Plan available to citizens and groups.

Environmental Reviews, conducted for activities listed in the Action Plan, will be made available for public review by the following means: Floodplain Notices following the 8 Step process will be published in the local newspaper specifying comment procedures. Notice of Request for Release of Funds and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be posted at the County library located near the project area, at the project location by way of free standing or existing signage, and at the office of grant recipient, if feasible; posting will provide scope of work and comment procedure.

Notice of Environmental Reviews will also be made available on Affordable Housing Services (AHS) website and a hard copy will be available at the AHS Departmental office.

Availability to the Public

The Action Plan shall be made available and accessible to the public. Public access includes the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. In addition, English Spanish bilingual staff shall be available to assist non-English speaking residents in accessing this information.

The Action Plan shall be made available for public inspection and review on the County's website and can be found during regular business hours at Hillsborough County AHS office located at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602.

Public Review and Comment Period

A public review and comment period of not less than 30 days shall be established for the receipt of comments from citizens and all interested parties on the proposed Action Plan.

Publication and Public Hearing for the Action Plan

Hillsborough County shall conduct a public hearing to consider the proposed Action Plan. This hearing shall follow the public review and comment period noted above. Notice of this public hearing shall be published at least 14 days in advance of the hearing. If available, the notice shall be published in a bi-lingual or multi-lingual newspaper to afford non-English speaking persons the opportunity of notice.

Public Comments on the Proposed Action Plan

Hillsborough County shall consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at the public hearing, in preparing the final Action Plan. A summary of these comments or views, and responses shall be attached to the final Action Plan.

Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) Process

Each year, Hillsborough County shall review and report, in a form prescribed by HUD, on the progress it has made in carrying out its Strategic Plan and Action Plan. This Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) must include a description of the resources made available, the investment of available resources, the geographic distribution and location of investments, the families and persons assisted (including the racial and ethnic status of persons assisted), actions taken to affirmatively further fair housing, and other actions indicated in the Strategic Plan and the Action Plan.

This CAPER report shall be submitted to HUD within 90 days after the close of the County's program year. [24CFR 91 §91.520(a)]

Availability of the CAPER – Public Notice

A notice advertising the availability of the CAPER shall be published in the County's newspapers of general circulation, and the county's website, and shall establish a 15-day public review and comment period (see below). The Notice shall encourage all interested parties to participate and solicit their comments and input on the CAPER. The notice shall also include locations where copies of the entire proposed CAPER may be examined by the public. Upon request, the County shall also make free copies of the proposed CAPER available to citizens and groups. [24CFR 91§91.105(d)(1)]. In the event of a Local State of Emergency, the proposed CAPER shall be posted to the Affordable Housing Services webpage.

Public Review and Comment Period

A public review and comment period of not less than 15 days shall be established for the receipt of comments from citizens and all interested parties on the proposed CAPER. [24CFR 1§91.105(d)(1)]

Public Hearing

At least one public hearing will be held to facilitate public comment on the CAPER.

Public Comments on the Proposed CAPER

Hillsborough County shall consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing in preparing the annual CAPER. A summary of these comments or views shall be attached to the annual CAPER. [24CFR 91 §91.105(d)(2)]

Availability to the Public

The CAPER shall be made available and accessible to the public. Public access includes the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. In addition, English Spanish bilingual staff shall be available to assist non-English speaking residents in accessing this information. [24CFR 91 §91.105(g)].

The CAPER shall be made available for public inspection and review during regular business hours at Hillsborough County AHS office located at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602.

Access to Records and Information

Hillsborough County shall provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to this Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, the AFH, and the County's use of assistance under all programs covered by the Consolidated Plan during the preceding five years. The public shall be provided with reasonable access to housing assistance records, subject to all local, state and Federal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, during the public comment periods. [24CFR 91 §91.105(h)]

Citizens, public and private agencies, and other interested parties, including those most affected, shall have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on any proposed submission concerning the amount of funds available, including the estimated amount proposed to benefit low, very low- and moderate-income level residents.

The Consolidated Plan, any amendment thereto, the AFH, revisions to the AFH, the Action Plans and the CAPER shall be made available for public inspection and review during regular business hours at Hillsborough County AHS office located at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida, 33602. In the event of a Local State of Emergency, the Proposed Consolidated Plan, any amendment thereto, the AFH, revisions to the AFH, the Action Plans and the CAPER shall be made available on the Affordable Housing Services webpage.

Technical Assistance and Application for Funds Process

Many organizations seek funding from CDBG AND CDBG-DR, HOME and ESG programs through AHS. Hillsborough County shall continue its policy of providing planning and technical assistance, prior to the release of a request for a proposal (RFP), to groups representing persons of low and moderate income such as lower income neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations, including resource deprived organizations, in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs or actions covered by the Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing. Hillsborough County staff shall provide technical assistance, to the greatest extent feasible, to all applicants or potential applicants and their constituents, provision of funds. [24CFR 91 §91.105(i)]

Such technical assistance shall include helping individuals or groups understand the program requirements, determination of eligible/ineligible activities and providing suggestions on structuring new programs. Technical assistance may include the authorization of studies and formal research to identify and develop fund matching opportunities to make the most of existing funding.

Assistance with completion of grant request applications and grant writing assistance in preparing proposals for the CDBG AND CDBG-DR.

Technical assistance is available by contacting:

Hillsborough County Affordable Housing Services
(813) 612-5397

Comments and Complaints Process

Comments

Hillsborough County shall consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, in preparing the final Consolidated Plan, an amended Consolidated Plan, AFH, AFH revisions, the Action Plan or the CAPER.

Complaints and Grievance

Hillsborough County shall provide a timely, substantive written response to all written complaints received concerning the Consolidated Plan, any amendment thereto, the AFH, AFH revisions, the Action Plan, or the CAPER within 15 working days, where practicable. [24CFR 91891.105(j)]

Comments or complaints regarding the Consolidated Plan process, an amended Consolidated Plan, the AFH, AFH revisions, the Action Plan or the CAPER must include:

1. A description of the objection with supporting facts and data
2. Name, address, telephone number and the date of the complaint

To facilitate a timely response, comments or complaints should be addressed and directed as follows: Consolidated Plan – Commentary

Department of Affordable Housing Services Hillsborough County
601 E. Kennedy Boulevard Tampa, Florida 33602

Complaint Review and Appeals Process

If unsatisfied with the County's response, a Complainant may request that a review of their complaint be conducted by the Complaint Review Committee.

The County shall set up a four-member Complaint Review Committee consisting of:

1. A staff member from the Department of Affordable Housing Services.
2. A member appointed by the Hillsborough County Administrator.
3. A member of the Board of County Commissioners – Affordable Housing Advisory Board (AHAB).
4. A member of the Hillsborough County Equal Opportunity Office.

After deliberations, the Complaint Review Committee shall submit a report upon its review of the complaint to the Complainant and the Director of AHS for resolution. Said report may include a validation of research and related data, a recommendation for funding during a current or future funding cycle, or a recommendation for non-funding and the reasons, therefore.

If still unsatisfied with the Department of AHS' complaint resolution process, the Complainant may further appeal to the Hillsborough County Administrator at 601 E. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33602 or to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – CPD, Jacksonville Field Office, Charles Bennett Federal Building, 400 West Bay Street, Suite 1015, Jacksonville, FL 32202-4410.

Comments and Availability of Citizen Participation Plan

Hillsborough County shall provide citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on this Citizen Participation Plan and on any substantial amendments thereto. This Citizen Participation Plan and any amendments thereto, shall be public documents and available to any member of the public. This Citizen Participation Plan shall be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and non- English-speaking persons, upon request. [24CFR 91 §91.105(a)(3)]

To solicit review and input on the proposed Citizen Participation Plan, prior to its adoption, Hillsborough County shall distribute the proposed Citizen Participation Plan, or any proposed subsequent amendments thereto, to various social service providers and groups that represent or serve persons with low and moderate incomes, persons living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG AND CDBG-DR funds are proposed to be used, persons with special needs, residents of public housing, persons who are homeless, members of minority groups, non- English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities. This review process may occur as part of the public comment period for the Consolidated Plan and the Assessment of Fair Housing.

Copies of this Citizen Participation Plan shall be kept on file at the offices of Hillsborough County AHS located at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602, and shall be made available for

public inspection and review during regular business hours. An electronic version will be made available on the official website.

Hillsborough County is a recipient of a Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds to support long-term recovery efforts following Hurricanes that occurred in 2023 or 2024. The Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2025 (Public Law 118-158) approved on December 21, 2024, makes available an allocation of CDBG-DR funds for applicable jurisdictions.

Hillsborough County Citizen Participation Plan

Updated February 2025, Page 22 requirements for CDBG-DR is the adoption of citizen participation standards to ensure all citizens of Hillsborough County are provided an opportunity to participate in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the CDBG-DR recovery program. This portion of the County's Citizen Participation Plan governs participation requirements specifically implemented for the County's CDBG-DR program. Unless otherwise specified, other components of the Citizen Participation Plan (e.g., provision of technical assistance; complaint and grievance procedures, etc.) apply to the CDBG-DR program as well as the County's Consolidated Plan programs.

a. CDBG-DR Action Planning Process

Hillsborough County is required to complete and submit an action plan detailing how the County will use all available CDBG-DR funding to support unmet needs. The CDBG-DR Action Plan lays out program details for each area of assistance along with projected timelines, performance metrics, and an expenditure schedule. As further described within this component of the Citizen Participation Plan, the CDBG-DR Action Plan will be made accessible to persons with disabilities and those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Before adopting the CDBG-DR Action Plan, the County will consult with a specified group of stakeholders and seek public input on CDBG-DR activities. The draft CDBG-DR Action Plan will be presented to the community for feedback through a public hearing, a public comment period, and other methods as described in this CPP.

b. Stakeholder Consultation

- Hillsborough County will consult via meeting, telephone, or email, with the following entities during the preparation of the CDBG-DR Action Plan:
 - Affected municipalities within the County;
 - Indian Tribes and any state offices with an interest in projects being carried out with CDBG-DR funds;

- Non-governmental organizations 2;1
- Public Housing Authorities;
- Local government and non-profit organizations that administer programs and projects funded through HUD (e.g., Continuum of Care, CDBG, HOME, ESG, etc.);
- Organizations that advocate on behalf of members of protected classes, vulnerable populations, and underserved communities impacted by the disaster, and State and local emergency management agencies have primary responsibility for the administration of FEMA funds.
- To the extent possible, Hillsborough County will also solicit input from residents of the affected areas. Such input can be collected by various means, which might include the following: community meetings, a public survey, comments cards, etc. Consultations will include a brief overview of CDBG-DR funding and planning processes and will attempt to gather input from stakeholders regarding key issues of local importance that may impact the County's planning and funding allocations for CDBG-DR funds.

c. Draft CDBG-DR Action Plan and Public Comments

Before the CDBG-DR Action Plan is considered for approval by the Board of County Commissioners and prior to submission to HUD, Hillsborough County will ensure that citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties are provided with a reasonable opportunity to examine the contents of the draft CDBG-DR Action Plan and to submit comments during the public comment period. The duration of this public comment period must not be less than thirty days. Hillsborough County will take reasonable actions to ensure that affected citizens, especially those who are members of protected classes, vulnerable populations, and individuals from underserved communities, are notified of CDBG-DR public hearings and public comment periods. Reasonable actions include, but may not be limited to the following:

- A public notice in a newspaper(s) of general circulation;
- Email distribution;
- Press releases;
- Statements by public officials;

- Media advertisements;
- Public service announcements; and/or
- Contacts with neighborhood organizations.

The County's CDBG-DR website will be used as the primary source of information related to CDBG-DR, public hearings, and public comment periods. A full copy of the proposed CDBG-DR Action Plan will be posted to the County's CDBG-DR website and physical copies will be made available for review at the Hillsborough County Public Library, and at the offices of the Hillsborough County Affordable Housing Services open to the public. Upon request, the County will also make a reasonable number of copies of the CDBG-DR Action Plan available to citizens and groups that request it, including copies to persons who are homebound. Locations and addresses of locations where the plan will be available are as follows:

Hillsborough County CDBG-DR Website

[CDBG-DR DR Hillsborough](#)

Hillsborough County Affordable Housing Services

601 E. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL 33602

Hillsborough County Community Impact

601 E. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL 33602

Hillsborough County Libraries

Any updates or changes made to the CDBG-DR Action Plan in response to public comments, to include oral and written comments, will be clearly identified in the CDBG-DR Action Plan. A summary of comments on the plan, and the County's response to each comment addressing the substance of the comment, must be included in the final version of the CDBG-DR Action Plan that is uploaded in DRGR.

d. CDBG-DR Public Hearings

Hillsborough County will hold at least one public hearing and a minimum of three community outreach meetings to gather input regarding the CDBG-DR Action Plan. The CDBG-DR public hearings must be held after the County's proposed CDBG-DR Action Plan has been published on its website for public comment and before submittal of the CDBG-DR Action Plan to HUD. If the County

chooses to hold multiple CDBG-DR public hearings, they will be convened in different locations within Hillsborough County to ensure maximum accessibility for impacted citizens and affected local governments. Hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries. All efforts will be made to accommodate participation for those who with disabilities and/or LEP with appropriate auxiliary aids and services offered to ensure effective communication.

- Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons: Hillsborough County will make a translator available at public hearings where LEP persons or interest groups contact County staff at least two (2) business days prior to the public hearing and request appropriate translation services.
- Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: Hillsborough County staff will make accommodations for the attendance of persons with disabilities who notify the County at least two (2) business days prior to the public meeting, and identify the accommodations needed, hearing, visual, or other. Arrangements for these services can be made by contacting the respective Department conducting the public meeting, and in the case of Community Impact's public meetings at 813 -675-3260.
- Other Accessibility Accommodations: Requests for additional accommodations should be made no less than two days prior to the public meeting. Upon receipt of the request, the County will make an effort to provide the following services: an interpreter and audio equipment for the hearing impaired; a reader to review printed materials with the sight impaired; and a foreign language interpreter for non-English speaking residents.
- Arrangements for language assistance and translation services can also be made in advance by contacting the respective Division conducting the public meeting, and in the case of Community Impact's Department public meetings at 813.675.3260.

The County may hold CDBG-DR public hearings in-person or virtually. In-person public hearings will be held in facilities that are physically accessible to persons with disabilities. If held virtually, the public hearing format must allow questions in real time, with answers from County staff and/or representatives provided to all hearing attendees. In public hearings, the County will provide the opportunity for citizens to submit comments orally or in writing. The County treats written and oral comments equally and incorporates both in the response document submitted to HUD with the CDBG-DR Action Plan and any substantial amendments. Materials presented at the CDBG-DR public hearings will be made available on the County's CDBG-DR website in the form of meeting minutes.

A recording of public hearings may be made available upon an advance request by sending an email to HillsboroughCDBG-DR@HCFL.Gov. Questions received and answers provided will be made available on the CDBG-DR website within a reasonable timeframe following the conclusion of the public hearings.

Below is the list of all CDBG-DR Public Comment Hearings:

District 1 – Cohen

Pierce Middle School - 5511 N. Hesperides St. Tampa 33614– June 4th, 2025, 6pm -8pm

District 2 – Hagan

Maureen B. Gauzza Library – 1121 Countryway Blvd Tampa 33626 - June 12th, 2025, 6pm-8pm

District 3 - Myers

Emanuel P. Johnson– 5855 S. 78th St. Tampa 33619 - June 10th, 2025, 6pm-8pm.

District 4- Miller

Lennard High School, 2342 E Shell Point Rd, Ruskin 33570 -June 13, 2025, 6-8 pm

Sayde Gibbs Martin Community Center, 302 S Maryland Ave, Plant City - June 18, 2025, 6-8 pm

The Public Comment period ends on July 7th, 2025.

e. Comprehensive CDBG-DR Website

Hillsborough County maintains a dedicated CDBG-DR content area within the County’s existing public website, which may be found at [CDBG DR](#). This CDBG-DR website permits individuals and entities awaiting disaster recovery assistance, and the general public, to see how all CDBG-DR funds are being used and administered. At a minimum, the website provides residents, affected local governments, and other interested parties the opportunity to review the following documents:

- CDBG-DR Action Plan created using the DRGR system;
- Any amendments to the CDBG-DR Action Plan;
- Citizen Participation Plan;
- Procurement policies and procedures;
- Vital documents that are critical for ensuring meaningful access by beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries generally and LEP persons specifically;
- All executed contracts, including subrecipient contracts, that will be paid with CDBG-DR funds as defined in 2 CFR 200.22 (contracts and procurement actions that do not exceed the

micro-purchase threshold, as defined in 2 CFR 200.1, are not required to be posted to the County's website;

- Summary description and the procurement status of all services or goods being procured by Hillsborough County and its subrecipients using CDBG-DR funds;
- and within three days of submission to HUD, a version of the performance report that omits personally identifiable information.

At all times, the County's CDBG-DR website will be navigable by all interested parties from Hillsborough County's homepage and the County's homepage will link to the CDBG-DR website. The CDBG-DR website will be updated at least quarterly.

f. Amendments to the CDBG-DR Action Plan

As programs and activities develop over time, Hillsborough County will amend its CDBG-DR Action Plan as often as necessary to best address our long-term recovery needs and goals. An amendment may not be triggered if the program or activity is consistent with the descriptions provided in the CDBG-DR Plan. All amendments, substantial or non-substantial amendments, will be noted in the Action Plan by an Amendment chart in the document and will be posted to Hillsborough County's CDBG-DR website.

A substantial amendment to the CDBG-DR Action Plan is defined as one of the following occurrences:

- A change in program benefit or eligibility criteria;
- The addition or deletion of an activity;
- A proposed reduction in the overall benefit requirement; or
- The allocation or re-allocation of more than 25 percent of the total allocation from HUD.

A non-substantial amendment or amendment to the CDBG-DR Action Plan is defined as follows:

- Technical corrections or clarifications;
- Budgetary changes that do not meet the monetary threshold for substantial amendments to the Action Plan.

Substantial amendments are subject to the citizen participation process and all citizen participation elements specified in this CPP for the original CDBG-DR Action Plan must be followed for a substantial amendment except for stakeholder consultation and public hearings. Therefore, a public

notice of the proposed substantial amendment will be issued and will allow for a thirty (30)- day public comment period. Notice of the amendments will be posted on the Hillsborough County CDBG-DR website and communicated through other means as described under the “Draft CDBG-DR Action Plan and Public Comments” heading above. Comments or views received orally or in writing will be considered in preparing the substantial amendment. A summary of the comments or views and Hillsborough County's responses will be included with the Final substantial amendment to the CDBG-DR Action Plan submitted in the DRGR system. For amendments considered to be non-substantial, the County will notify HUD but public comment is not required. Every amendment, substantial or not, will be numbered sequentially, and the amendment chart will be posted on the CDG-DR website.

V. ANTI-DISPLACEMENT AND RELOCATION

In implementing its Consolidated Plan and CDBG-DR activities, Hillsborough County will make every effort possible to avoid or minimize the effects of displacement of persons affected by any CDBG, HOME, ESG, and CDBG-DR funded activities. If an involuntary displacement should occur, the County will provide housing referral assistance and, if required, make relocation payments in accordance with local, state and federal law within the required timeframe.

VI. ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS, RECORDS, AND INFORMATION

Hillsborough County will provide citizens, public agencies or other interested parties, with a reasonable opportunity to comment on any of the consolidated planning documents produced by the Division, to include the Consolidated Plan, any amendments thereto, annual Action Plans, CAPERs, Citizen Participation Plan, and CDBG-DR Action Plan. These documents will be made available and accessible to the public, including various social service providers and groups that represent or serve persons with low and moderate-incomes, persons living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, persons with special needs, residents of public housing, persons who are homeless, members of minority groups, LEP persons, and persons with disabilities.

As provided in the text of this CPP and in the County's Language Access Plan, Hillsborough County is committed to taking reasonable steps to provide language assistance to ensure meaningful access to participation by non-English-speaking residents of the County. English-Spanish bilingual Division staff will be available to assist non-English speaking residents in accessing documents,

records and other program information associated with Consolidated Plan programs and/or CDBG-DR.

The documents will also be made available for public inspection and review during regular business hours at the Hillsborough County Community Impact, located at 601 E. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL and on the Hillsborough County's CDBG DR referrals made, and the final disposition. This record will be included with the final document submitted to HUD. Comments and/or complaints should be submitted to Hillsborough County Community Impact which administers federal funding from HUD for the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs, or other programs that may be administered on behalf of HUD from time to time as deemed necessary.

The applicable public comment periods for each of the documents and ways to provide comments to the Department staff will be advertised in the Tampa Bay Times or other newspaper of general circulation.

Hillsborough County will consider any comments or views of citizens received orally or in writing. A summary of these comments or views will be attached to the applicable document and submitted to HUD.

It should be noted that comments that are not related to the documents being reviewed, or comments that contain derogatory and prejudicial language, might not be included in the final documents. However, those comments will be made available to HUD and to the public, upon request.

VII. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS

In addition to the strategies proposed in this document, Hillsborough County will continue implementing other outreach tools to improve citizen participation. Concerning Public Notices, documents submitted for review may be summarized in the form of flyers or brochures and placed in public libraries and/or community centers in low-income areas for easy accessibility; these summaries will also be published on the County's website. Public Notices may be provided in languages other than English and Spanish, upon request. Furthermore, advertisement will also be done through Spanish radio channels, when necessary, to reach larger audiences and improve access to information for LEP populations. Email announcements will be shared with agencies and community leaders when documents become available for public review.

Hillsborough County will continue consultations with other local governments and jurisdictions in the region to discuss issues of regional importance, such as affordable housing and homelessness. In an effort to reach out to various groups within the County and to ensure these public participation tools are put into place, Hillsborough County staff will host topic-oriented stakeholder sessions and continue to participate in local housing and community events. To reduce language barriers and allow for better communication, staff who are Spanish speaking, or who speak other languages, such as Haitian Creole, may be available to assist the public upon request. Hillsborough County is committed to ensuring that all people, including those who speak a language other than English, have full and equal access to the County's programs and services.

As of the date of this plan. Finally, some of the Community Impact staff are fluent in Spanish often attends meetings of local Hispanic groups and make appearances at the radio and TV shows, as well as social media outlets catering to Spanish-speaking residents of Hillsborough County, to provide information about the programs and activities administered by the County, as well as the consolidated planning process.

VIII. COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Hillsborough County will provide a substantive written response to all complaints received in writing or orally at public hearings, if any, related to projects or activities proposed or implemented by the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, any amendment to these plans, the CAPER, or the CDBG-DR Action Plan. Responses will be provided via email within fifteen (15) working days, where practicable. A record of complaints received will include the nature of the complaint, Comments and/or complaints should be submitted in writing, by mail, or fax to:

Wesley Hughes, Office of Community Impact,
23rd Floor 601 E. Kennedy Blvd.
Phone: 813.675.3260
Fax: 813-301-7250 c/o OCI Staff

Complaints regarding fraud, waste, or abuse of government funds should be forwarded to the HUD Office of Inspector General Fraud Hotline (phone: 1-800-347-3735 or email: hotline@hudoig.gov).

To maintain accountability for the use of public funds, the Hillsborough County has established the County Audit Office (County Audit) to review allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse of County property and resources. Hillsborough County's citizens or County employees may contact the

County Audit Division's Fraud Hotline in instances where fraud, waste, or abuse of County assets or resources are suspected. Individuals are not required to provide their name.

Hillsborough County Fraud Hotline: (813) 635-8316.

Hillsborough County provides funding or assistance to all subrecipients and program beneficiaries following applicable federal, state and local regulations, in addition to the guidelines governing each program. All subrecipients and program beneficiaries must meet the established eligibility criteria to access funds or benefits. Subrecipients or individuals who are denied funds or benefits will be notified in writing and will be provided technical assistance upon request. When there is evidence or suspicion of fraud by a subrecipient or a program beneficiary, the Division sends a letter to the subrecipient or program beneficiary explaining the reason for the termination of a contract or denial of benefits. A subrecipient or a program beneficiary that has been terminated or denied benefits due to fraud, will not be allowed to participate in the Community Impact's Department federal, state or local funded programs.

Program beneficiaries are entitled to request an informal termination hearing to dispute the alleged fraud. A decision to reinstate the client or withhold the termination of benefits is made by a committee or a designated hearing officer. Additionally, Hillsborough County has Consumer Protection Office under the Veteran's Service Department to assist residents who are victims of fraudulent or unfair business practices. A Consumer Protection Investigator is available to assist residents subject to fraudulent transactions by contractors.

The Contact information for the Consumer Protection Office is:

Hillsborough County Consumer Protection
3602 US-301, Tampa, FL 33619
Email: consumers@hcfl.gov Phone: (813) 635-8316

IX. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN CONTACT

For more information about Hillsborough County's citizen participation efforts regarding Hillsborough County's Action Planning process for CDBG-DR, please contact us at 813.675.3260 or HillsboroughCDBG-DR@HCFL.GOV