

**Loudoun County
Citizen Participation Plan**

For the 2014-2018 Consolidated Plan



**Adopted by the Board of Supervisors
April 2, 2014**

**Department of Family Services
Loudoun County, Virginia**

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COUNTY OF LOUDOUN, VIRGINIA

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

For the Consolidated Plan

Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan

As an Urban County, Loudoun County, Virginia is eligible to receive an annual allocation of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

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

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

- Encourage citizen participation by providing citizens with adequate information concerning the amount of funds expected to be available for housing, community development and public service activities through federal and local funding sources, the proposed range of activities that may be undertaken with those funds, including the amount that will benefit very low and low income persons and the plans to minimize displacement and to assist any persons displaced, other important program requirements, and proposed and approved uses of funds;
- Provide for and encourage citizen participation from all sectors of the community, with particular emphasis on participation by low and moderate income residents in areas in which federal funds are used or are proposed to be used, and for the participation of minority and non-English speaking residents, as well as persons with mobility, visual, speech or hearing impairments;
- Provide citizens, public agencies, and all other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the County's Consolidated

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Plan, and the use of assistance provided by federal funding sources included in the Plan for the preceding five years;

- Provide technical assistance to groups representing very low and low income persons and to interested residents that request assistance in developing proposals under federal and local funding sources covered by the Consolidated Plan, with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the County;
- Conduct public hearings to obtain the views of citizens on housing, community development and public service needs, proposed activities, and program performance, which hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, with accommodation for persons with disabilities and non-English speaking residents;
- Gather community input through a variety of methods such as community meetings, focus groups, surveys, and other appropriate forums, regarding funding priorities;
- Prepare a summary of comments or views received from citizens in writing or orally through public hearings, focus groups, community meetings, and other methods when preparing the final Consolidated Plan, any amendments to the Plan, or the year end performance report and attach the summary to the final Plan or report. In addition, provide for a timely written answer to written complaints within fifteen working days, where practicable; and
- Provide criteria for determining what constitutes a substantial change in the planned or actual activities described in the approved Consolidated Plan that would require an amendment to the Plan.

Notice of Consolidated Plan Schedule

The Consolidated Plan schedule will be made available through mail and electronic distribution to neighborhoods, groups, associations, nonprofit, faith-based, business, and other community organizations and interested individuals that have been involved in past funding cycles. Any interested groups, neighborhoods, individuals, etc., will be added to the distribution list upon request to the Department of Family Services.

An advertisement of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be published in a newspaper(s) of general circulation and a copy of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be available to the public for review and comment at least 30 days prior to submission to HUD. The proposed Consolidated Plan will be available for review at 1) the Department of Family Services at 102 Heritage Way, NE, Leesburg, Virginia, 2) the information desk of the County Government Center at 1 Harrison Street, SE, Leesburg, Virginia, 3) the information desk of all branches of the Loudoun County Public Library system, and 4) on the County website. The final submission to HUD will be available at the Department of Family Services and on the County website.

Citizen Participation Process

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

Citizen input on housing, homelessness, community development, and public service needs to be provided by nonprofit and local government organizations will be received annually at a public hearing to be held before the Loudoun County Family Services Advisory Board. The Family Services Advisory Board is composed of members appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

The proposed Consolidated Plan will be prepared based on the comments received from citizens through the needs public hearing and other community input strategies from interested nonprofit, faith-based, business and other civic organizations, County agencies and local governments. The proposed Consolidated Plan will be submitted for review and comment to organizations and individuals on the mailing list. Comments received will be addressed by the Department of Family Services and included with the submission of the proposed Consolidated Plan to the Board of Supervisors.

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

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

Technical Assistance

County staff will conduct an annual pre-application workshop for interested non-profit, faith-based, business and other civic organizations, County agencies and local governments to answer questions concerning the requirements of federal and local funding sources included in the Consolidated Plan, such as available funding amounts, funding priorities, eligible activities, environmental review procedures, equal opportunity requirements, relocation provisions, citizen participation requirements and any other requirements. In cases where staff cannot answer questions pertaining to federal HUD funds, assistance will be requested from HUD.

County staff will provide technical assistance when requested to neighborhood groups, minority groups, community-based organizations, and other residents interested in

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participating in federal and local funding sources included in the Consolidated Plan. Any persons requiring assistance should contact the Department of Family Services at 703-777-0353 V/TTY.

Public Hearings

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

One public hearing will be held by the Loudoun County Family Services Advisory Board at the beginning of the Consolidated Plan process to solicit citizen comments on housing and community development needs, proposed activities and program performance. Testimony received at this hearing will be considered by the Department of Family Services in preparing the proposed Consolidated Plan. In addition, the Department of Family Services may gather community input through a variety of means, including meetings and surveys, in the development of funding priorities and criteria.

Prior to the submission of the Consolidated Plan to HUD, the Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on the proposed Consolidated Plan as recommended by the Loudoun County Family Services Advisory Board.

Public hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries of the programs to be funded. Public hearings will be held at the Department of Family Services at 102 Heritage Way, NE, Leesburg, Virginia or at the Board of Supervisors at 1 Harrison Street, SE, Leesburg, Virginia, or in other locations that are convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, and that are accessible to persons with disabilities. At public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents are expected to participate, Loudoun County will address their needs by providing an interpreter.

Notice of public hearings on the Consolidated Plan will be advertised in a newspaper(s) of general circulation at least 30 days prior to the date of the public hearing. The notice will include sufficient information about the purpose of the public hearing to permit informed comment from citizens.

The availability of the annual performance report will be advertised in a newspaper(s) of general circulation at least 15 days prior to the submission date to HUD.

Response to Citizen Comments

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

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Comments or complaints concerning the Consolidated Plan should be addressed to the Department of Family Services, 102 Heritage Way, NE, Leesburg, Virginia 20176.

Every effort will be made to respond in writing to written complaints within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint.

Substantial Amendment of the Consolidated Plan

The Consolidated Plan may be amended with the approval of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. The County will amend the approved Plan whenever it makes one of the following substantial changes:

- Changes in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another;
- Changes in the purpose, location or beneficiaries of an activity;
- Changes in allocation priorities or the distribution of funds.

Uncommitted funds under the CDBG allocation plan may be reallocated between categories and among eligible projects in response to unexpected contingencies required to meet the intent, public purpose and annual priorities established in the Consolidated Plan. At her discretion, the Director of Family Services is authorized to reallocate up to 25 percent of the total annual project funds in this manner.

HUD will be informed in writing of any budget allocation changes authorized under this policy.

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

Amendment of the Citizen Participation Plan

Proposed amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan will be publicly advertised at least 15 days prior to consideration of the amendments by the Board of Supervisors to allow time for public comment.

Expedited Application Review and Annual Action Plan Amendment Process in Declared Emergency Resulting from the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

During the declared emergency produced by COVID-19, it is important that Loudoun County be able to respond quickly to address critical local needs. During this declared emergency, the County shall utilize an expedited process to review and recommend funding allocations and to amend AAPs, as enabled by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

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The expedited process shall apply to the allocation of CDBG funds received by the County as a result of the CARES Act, and for the Board to amend approved AAPs for FYs 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in order to make one of the following substantial changes:

- Changes in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another;
- Changes in the purpose, location or beneficiaries of an activity; and
- Changes in allocation priorities or the distribution of funds.

County staff will determine the criteria necessary to address the critical needs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Eligible nonprofits, towns, and public agencies must be given an opportunity to submit an application to the County outlining projects that would meet the criteria. A Staff Review Committee will review the proposed projects, compare them to the eligibility criteria, and recommend projects that closely meet the eligible criteria to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. County staff will incorporate the recommended projects into the relevant proposed AAP, subject to approval by the Board.

The public comment period is reduced to not less than 5 days. Public hearings shall be carried out in accordance with the continuity of government ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 15, 2020, which follows guidelines in the CARES Act, except that the notice period is extended to no less than 5 days. Costs of eligible activities incurred for COVID-19 pandemic response may be reimbursed, regardless of the date.