

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN 2019

Introduction

This is the Citizen Participation Plan for use with the Consolidated Plan for the State of New Hampshire (Consolidated Plan). This plan has been prepared and approved by the Housing and Community Development Planning Council (see below). Federal regulations require the adoption and utilization of a Citizen Participation Plan in the Consolidated Plan development process to ensure adequate opportunities for citizen participation.

The Consolidated Plan must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order for the State to obtain four different grants available to states. These grant programs are: the Community Development Block Grant, administered by the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA); the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and Housing Trust Fund, administered by the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (New Hampshire Housing or NHHFA); and the Emergency Solutions Grant, administered by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Housing Supports (BHS).

The public is invited to comment on this plan at any time. This plan is considered an integral part of the Consolidated Plan. It provides the opportunity for significant involvement of organizations, agencies and citizens in the development of the state's Consolidated Plan and ensures access to information during the planning and implementation of programs utilizing federal resources covered by the Consolidated Plan.

Notification of Public Hearings and Meetings

Citizens will be given notice of the availability of all Consolidated Plan documents and of public hearings and meetings pertaining to the Consolidated Plan Process through several avenues.

- Email lists of stakeholders have been developed by the Bureau of Housing Supports, New Hampshire Housing, and the Community Development Finance Authority consisting of homeless, housing and community development interests in New Hampshire. The list includes state agencies, nonprofit shelter, housing and service providers, program and resource administrators, local and regional planners, community development organizations, community action agencies, public housing authorities, the banking sector, CDBG entitlement communities, HOME Participating Jurisdictions, for-profit developers, organizations representing special needs populations, and the legal assistance network. These

groups will receive information directly via email or mail from BHS, NHHFA, or CDFA requesting that they invite their clients, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders to participate in public hearings, submit information on housing, community development and homeless needs and comment on the draft plan. Additionally, notices will be posted on the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority internet web page at www.nhhfa.org, the Community Development Finance Authority web page at www.nhcdfa.org, and the Bureau of Housing Supports web page at <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bhhs/index.htm>

- The use of social media, both to inform partners and engage the general public has begun, and is expected to develop further as staff expertise grows. Early social media use has included Twitter, Facebook, and a blog.
- Documents relating to the Consolidated Plan will be posted on the internet web site <http://www.nhhfa.org/consolidated-plan>
- In addition to emailing notices to stakeholders and potential stakeholders, information about Public Hearings, Public Comment Periods, and Draft Consolidated Plan documents will be published no less than 10 days in advance not including the date of publication and the date of the hearing for a minimum of three days in the statewide edition of the Union Leader, with additional newspapers to be utilized as is needed.
- Notices about all public hearings shall describe the time, location and purpose of the meeting and indicate a name and phone number of a hearing coordinator to whom requests for special accommodations can be made. Public Hearing notices will be emailed to all interested parties, partners and other stakeholders that are on the CDFA, NHHFA, and BHS mailing lists for Consolidated Plan information. Emailings shall occur no less than 10 days before hearing dates.

Location and Format of Public Meetings and Hearings

- The above-listed interests and the public will be invited to attend several public meetings and hearings to provide input to the development process and to react to the draft Consolidated Plan. For the populations that are eligible for Emergency Shelter Grant funds, the State's Continuums of Care including the meetings of the "sub-continuums" operating in different regions of the state will serve as the primary means for citizen input. Early in the process of developing a new Consolidated Plan, public meetings and forums will be held throughout the state with the following objectives: to inform the public about the proposed schedule and process for development and submission of the Consolidated Plan; to solicit information about housing and community development related needs; and to gather information about current programs and program delivery processes. In addition to participating by providing verbal or written testimony at a hearing,

citizens and interested parties will be encouraged to submit written (printed or electronic format) comments. Additional mechanisms such as online surveys and/or blogs may be used to gain additional input on the public's perceptions of priority needs that can be addressed with Consolidated Plan resources.

- Once a Consolidated Plan is drafted, a public hearing will be held during a 30 day public comment period to hear reactions from the public about the draft Plan prior to submission and publication. All public hearings will be held during afternoon hours, generally 2pm to 4pm. All public hearings will be recorded and written summaries of the comments and suggestions presented as well as staff responses will be included in the final Consolidated Plan.
- All hearing sites shall be accessible and the hearing coordinator, generally a staff person of the NHHFA, shall be responsible for accommodating the special needs of hearing participants to the greatest extent possible.
- In the event that a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be expected to attend, interpreter services will be arranged and provided.
- All meetings and public hearings will be interactive to the greatest extent possible. Typically the meetings and hearings will include presentations of data and information by the administrative agencies in order to assist in soliciting reactions and input from attendees.
- Public hearings pertaining to the establishment or modification of administrative rules governing the activities of a state agency will be conducted in accordance with applicable state law and rules.

Availability of Documents and Access to Records

- To the greatest extent possible any citizen will be provided with any information they request pertaining to the Consolidated Plan process within 15 days.
- Notice of the availability of the draft version of a Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, performance reports or substantial amendment(s) and related documents will be mailed or emailed to key nonprofit and community groups. Notice of availability of these documents and generally the documents themselves will be available on the internet at.
- Minutes to hearings will be prepared and made available to the public. Input provided in writing or at the meetings and hearings will be reviewed and considered in the drafting of a final Consolidated Plan.

- Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties will be provided reasonable and timely access to information and records pertaining to the State's Consolidated Plan.

Housing and Community Development Planning Council

- The Housing and Community Development Planning Council (see Appendix A) was established by Executive Order 97-3.
- The Council is charged with the preparation of the State's Consolidated Plan which governs various federal programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) such as the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships, and Emergency Solutions Grant programs. These are important tools by which the state and local governments act to address the housing and community development needs of low income individuals and families.
- The Executive Director of the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority is the chairperson of the Housing and Community Development Planning Council and provides staff support for the Council to coordinate and facilitate various aspects of the development of the Plan and related performance reports.
- The Council's Steering Committee is made up of representatives of New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, The Community Development Finance Authority, the Bureau of Housing Supports, and the Office of the Governor
- Council membership includes representatives from state agencies representing the housing needs of specific populations (including children, elderly persons, disabled persons, and persons with HIV/AIDS), and economic and community development related issues; local housing authorities; community development agencies; nonprofit housing, economic and community development organizations; local governments; regional planning agencies; nonprofit and forprofit lenders to housing, economic and community development projects; homeless and social service providers for specific populations.
- Any member of the public can gain access to the Consolidated Planning process through members of the Housing and Community Development Planning Council or the staffs of the organizations that they represent. A current list of HCDPC members is always available by contacting any of the three administering agencies.

Citizen Participation Opportunities

- Development of the Citizen Participation Plan
 - Every year the HCDPC will evaluate its Citizen Participation Plan and submit any changes to it with the annual Action Plan.
 - The Citizen Participation Plan is available continuously for general comment.
 - This Citizen Participation Plan will be published as part of the final Consolidated Plan.

- Needs Assessment
 - During the development of the Consolidated Plan meetings will be attended by administering agency staff at locations throughout the state in order to solicit input on state needs.
 - Input on housing, homeless, and community development needs will also be solicited online in the form of an invitation to comment via letter or email, and through use of online survey instruments.
 - Each year public hearings will be held to receive comments on the draft Action Plan.
 - A series of meetings are held annually by the Housing and Community Development Planning Council to discuss and reassess state needs.
 - Administering agency staff are available and welcome opportunities to speak to community and regional groups on the Consolidated Plan.

- Draft of Consolidated Plan or Action Plan
 - An estimate of the funds expected to be received in the upcoming year will be published in the Action Plan section of the Draft Consolidated Plan.
 - A description of the types of activities that can be funded will also be published.
 - At least 30 days before the final Plan is submitted for approval to the Governor's Office, citizens will be notified that a Draft of the

Consolidated Plan or Action Plan is available for download at <http://www.nhhfa.org/consolidated-plan> Printed copies will be available by request to those without internet access. This will give citizens a reasonable amount of time to review and comment on the Draft Plan.

- The Draft Plan will contain all sections required by HUD, including the Priorities Table, and an account of all proposed uses of the expected funds. The Draft Plan will be provided to the public for free. A copy of the Consolidated Plan, or parts thereof, including this Citizen Participation Plan shall be available for download at <http://www.nhhfa.org/consolidated-plan> and provided in print to individuals lacking internet access upon request of the Office of Planning, Policy, and Communications of the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. The Performance Report (CAPER, below) will be available on the same terms. Copies of the final Consolidated Plan shall generally not be published and made available until the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has issued an approval. Until that time, the Draft Consolidated Plan for Public Comment will be made available.
 - Copies of the Consolidated Plan will be available for public review at the NHHFA offices in Bedford, at the State Library, and at other convenient locations throughout the state.
 - Information about the availability and federal approval of the final Consolidated Plan and Performance Report shall be made available to all interested parties.
 - Written suggestions are encouraged from citizens. All written suggestions are to be sent to the addresses below.
 - Any comments or views expressed by citizens or units of general government pertaining to the draft Consolidated Plan shall be considered in the writing of the final Consolidated Plan. A summary of comments and views expressed by citizens and units of local government and resulting actions taken shall be included in the Final Plan.
- The Final Consolidated Plan or Action Plan
 - Copies of the Final Plan and its summary will be available to citizens free of charge.
 - Amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan

- Any of the following changes shall result in an amendment to the consolidated plan: 1) a change in the allocation priorities; 2) a change in the method of distribution of funds; 3) a change in activities to be carried out using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan not previously described in the action plan or 4) a change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.
- As determined necessary and approved by all three organizations (CDFA, BHS, NHHFA) minor changes can be made to the plan and submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development without public review and comment. Minor changes are defined as those changes which do not alter planned funding use under each federal resource by more than 20%, that do not add or delete exclusive targeting to one or more high priority groups, that do not change distribution methods, or that do not otherwise significantly alter the priority need groups identified or funding distributions. Any other changes shall be considered major and made only with consultation by the public. Notification of major changes shall be made by email to housing and community development interests, and an advertisement or legal notice in a statewide publication. Notifications will be made no later than the first day of a 30 day public comment period. The public shall be invited to provide comments (written or oral) to a lead agency representative. A summary of all comments together with a summary of actions taken in response shall be incorporated in the amended version of the plan.
- Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)
 - The CAPER must be submitted to HUD not later than 90 days after the end of the program year (December 31st).
 - Draft copies of the CAPER will be available at <http://www.nhhfa.org/consolidated-plan> and in print as stated above no less than 15 days prior to submission to HUD.
 - A public hearing will be held to discuss the CAPER with the public and receive input.
- Citizen Participation Requirements for Local Governments
 - Per RSA 162 L:14, prior to filing an application for Community Development Block Grant funding, a municipality is required to hold at least one public hearing to obtain the views of citizens on community development, to furnish the citizens with information concerning the

amount of funds available and the range of community development activities that may be undertaken under this subdivision and to give affected citizens an opportunity to examine a proposed statement to the projected use of such funds to be applied for. A notice of the hearing shall specify the grounds for the hearing as well as the date, time, and place. This notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality, and a legal notice shall also be posted in at least 3 public places within such municipality at least 10 days prior to the hearing. The 10 days shall not include the day of publication or the day of posting, whichever is later, nor the day of the hearing, but shall include any Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays within the period. This hearing shall be held before the municipality's governing body takes any final action regarding the filing of the application.

- Availability of Technical Assistance
 - Technical assistance on how to gain access to the funds covered by the Consolidated Plan will be available upon request to organizations and individuals serving low and moderate-income people through any of the three administrative agencies (New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, the Community Development Finance Authority, and the Bureau of Housing Supports). Such assistance shall be in the form of program summaries and detailed application information packets, training sessions, and/or assistance through the application process tailored to the individual needs of the applicant. Each agency agrees to make program and project records available to the public in accordance with federal and state laws.
 - The Community Development Finance Authority and the Bureau of Housing Supports offer periodic workshops for applicants. New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority provides technical assistance to applicants as needed or requested.
 - All application packages include the application rating factors and criteria used to evaluate proposals.

Responses to Written Complaints and Concerns

- All written complaints, concerns and suggestions should be sent to any of the following:

- William S. Ray, Managing Director of Planning, Policy and Communications
New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority
32 Constitution Drive Bedford,
New Hampshire 03110
bray@nhhfa.org

- Katy Easterly Martey, Executive Director
New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority
14 Dixon Avenue
Concord, New Hampshire 03301
keasterly@nhcdfa.org

- Melissa Hatfield, Bureau Administrator
Bureau of Housing Supports
Division of Human Services
State Office Park South
105 Pleasant Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301
Melissa.Hatfield@dhhs.nh.gov

- Written complaints will receive a written response within 15 working days. The public may obtain information about the progress of the plan, its targeted development date and public hearings at any time by contacting the NHHFA at (603) 472-8623 or 1-800-640-7239, the hearing impaired may access TDD at (603) 472-2089.