

Citizen Participation Plan

I. Purpose

As a recipient of US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds, Horry County is required to formally outline and document measures to promote the active participation of Horry County residents in the planning process regarding the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Citizen participation includes actively encouraging citizens, particularly the low and moderate income population, to participate in the planning process for the five-year Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plans, the submission of substantial amendments and the development of the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). These measures are summarized in this Community Development Citizen Participation Plan and conducted as required by *HUD 24 CFR Part 91, Subpart B*. In partnership with the Cities of Myrtle Beach and Conway, Horry County coordinates the planning and administration of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the unincorporated areas of Horry County and the areas within the Cities of Myrtle Beach and Conway. The County's Finance Department's CDBG Program Manager administers and shapes programs and services that address the needs and benefit low to moderate income households. In order to meet local capacity, the CDBG Program frequently partners with non-profits, Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), Community-Based Development Organizations (CBDOs), Community Development Corporations (CDC), contractors, lenders, and charities.

II. Access to Information and Records

Horry County's Citizen Participation Plan is available for public review on the County's web site at www.horrycounty.org. The Plan is also available at the offices of the Horry County Finance Department at 1301 Second Street, Conway, SC 29526. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with the exception of designated holidays. Copies of the Plan can also be requested by mail or phone. Residents can call the Finance Accounting Manager at 843.915.7031 or mail a written request to the above address Attn: Finance Accounting Manager. Copies of the Consolidated Plan will be available on the website along with the Annual Action Plan and CAPER Report. Information and records open to the public are located in the Horry County Government Finance Department, Second Floor, 1301 Second Street, Conway, SC 29526. Confidential materials, such as those materials that include a citizen's personal identity information, are not available for public review.

III. Public Meetings and Hearings

All notices of public meetings will be published in *The Sun Newspaper* (*Metro* section or *Neighbors* section) at least fourteen (14) days prior to the public

meeting. In addition, notices may be published in other local newspapers. Notices will also be posted electronically on the Horry County website at www.horrycounty.org.

Additional notices will be provided through neighborhood-based forums to include: community centers; contact with local civic leaders; and posting of notices in commercial establishments, neighborhood businesses, churches and post offices.

All public meetings will be held at times and in locations convenient to residents, particularly those who are potential or actual beneficiaries. Meetings will not be held before 5:30 p.m. on weekdays. Meetings will not be scheduled on Sundays. Persons requiring special accommodations must notify the Finance Department at least two (2) business days prior to the public meeting in order to give the County staff adequate time to provide the needed accommodations.

IV. Needs Assessment Public Meeting

Prior to the development of the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan, the community development needs will be assessed in detail, particularly those of low and moderate income residents. The assessment process will be conducted through a Community Development Needs Assessment Public Meeting. Horry County will hold no less than one (1) needs assessment public meeting as part of the planning process for the five-year Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan. Ongoing citizen participation is encouraged to determine community needs and priorities. Comments and suggestions will be considered at Needs Assessment Public Hearings. The public meeting will be held consistent with guidelines contained in this document.

The Needs Assessment Public Meeting will address the amount of available funding for CDBG and any other related federal or state funding. The hearing will also address the range of activities that may be undertaken with such funds, particularly in relation to identified community needs.

V. Public Comment Period

A public comment period is required prior to submitting the five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, the CAPER and any substantial change to the Consolidated Plan or the Annual Action Plan. The public will have 30 days after publication to provide written comments to Horry County regarding the 5-year Consolidated Plan. The public will have 15 days after publication to provide written comments regarding the Annual Action Plan, the CAPER, and any substantial change to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. The publication in *The Sun* Newspaper shall include a summary of the contents and purpose of the Action/Consolidated Plan, and shall include a list of the locations

where copies of the entire proposed plan may be examined. The County will respond to all written correspondence received.

IV. Final Public Meeting

Prior to the submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, the CAPER and any substantial change to the Consolidated Plan or the Annual Action Plan, a public meeting will be held to receive any additional public comment on the published document. The public hearing will be held consistent with guidelines contained in this document.

VI. Amendments/Changes

Prior to making any substantial change to the Consolidated Plan (including the Annual Action Plan), Horry County will hold at least one public hearing to inform citizens, particularly those who might be affected by the proposed change, and to solicit public comment. Examples of a substantial change would be a 50% decrease in the number of proposed beneficiaries, any increase or decrease of more than 50% in the budget, and/or any addition or deletion of proposed activities.

VII. Program Performance

Horry County will conduct one public hearing annually to review program performance and accomplishments for the CAPER. This public hearing will address and outline the various activities that have been accomplished or are underway.

VIII. Technical Assistance

Horry County will provide technical assistance to individuals and representatives of groups of low and moderate income persons who request such assistance. Technical assistance may include information on housing, demographics, and explanation of the Community Development programs and services. County staff members will work closely with neighborhood associations to foster community pride and empowerment. The County routinely issues Request for Proposals (RFP) for services that support its community development goals and programs.

IX. Grievances

Complaints and grievances are handled in a timely and professional manner. All complaints are reviewed by the Community Development Manager and the County Administrator. Written grievances should be addressed to the Horry County Government, 1301 Second Street, Conway, South Carolina 29526.

Written responses to complaints regarding the Community Development Block Grant Program and other general grievances will be made within fifteen (15) days after receipt of the complaint. A response to the complaint will be prepared by the County Administrator. Persons who wish to appeal the County Administrator's response may do so in writing to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Planning and Development Division, 1845 Assembly Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29204.

X. Non-English Speaking Population

Horry County will accommodate the needs of non-English speaking residents. Census figures for Horry County indicate that less than 10% of the County population is non-English speaking and there are no significant concentrations of non-English speaking residents within the County as determined by the most currently available Census data. If 10% or more of the potential or actual beneficiaries of a Community Development project are determined to be non-English speaking, provisions will be made at the appropriate public hearings for translation of comments and documents into the native language of the majority of the non-English speaking residents affected.

XI. Anti-Displacement

It is the policy of Horry County to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that activities undertaken with CDBG program funds will not cause unnecessary displacement of residents. The County will continue to administer the CDBG Program in such a manner that careful consideration is given during the planning phase to avoid displacement. Displacement of any nature shall be reserved as a last resort action necessitated only when no other alternative is available and when the activity is determined necessary in order to carry out a specific goal or objective that is of public benefit. If the displacement is precipitated by activities that require the acquisition (either in whole or in part) or rehabilitation of real property directly by Horry County or its agent, all appropriate benefits will be assigned as required by the *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies' Act of 1970* and amendments. The *Uniform Act* or the *Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan* under *Section 104(d)* shall be provided to the displaced person or persons. Information about these programs will be provided to all residents who may potentially be displaced in the form of informational brochures on these programs and explained in detail by the County's Community Development staff.