

Horry County & Horry County HOME Consortium Citizen Participation Plan

Updated April 2020

I. Purpose

As a recipient of U.S. 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 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds. 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 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Plan (AFFH), the submission of substantial amendments, and the development of the Consolidated Annual Performance and 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 CDBG funds for the unincorporated areas of Horry County and the areas within the Cities of Myrtle Beach and Conway. The County's Community Development Director administers and shapes programs and services that benefit and address the needs of low to moderate income households. Additionally, Horry County serves as the Participating Jurisdiction for administration of HOME funds for the Horry County HOME Consortium. In order to meet local capacity, Horry County frequently partners with non-profits, Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), Community-Based Development Organizations (CBDOs), Community Development Corporations (CDC), contractors, lenders, and charities.

II. Horry County HOME Consortium

In addition to the role of administrator of the Horry County CDBG and ESG program, Horry County serves as the Participating Jurisdiction (PJ) for the administration of HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds for the Horry County HOME Consortium. The Horry County HOME Consortium membership consists of Horry, Georgetown, and Williamsburg Counties, as well as the municipalities of Andrews, Atlantic Beach, Aynor, Conway, Georgetown, Greeleyville, Hemingway, Kingstree, Lane, Loris, Myrtle Beach, and Stuckey. All provisions of the Citizen Participation Plan identified herein, are applicable to the Horry County HOME Consortium for matters relating to HOME Investment Partnership Program administration requirements.

Additional outreach efforts will be made in order to serve the jurisdictions within the HOME program jurisdictional area. This includes the addition of at least one (1) Needs Assessment Public Hearing held in each participating County for the Annual Action Plan

and Consolidated Plan development process. Additionally, at least one (1) public meeting will be held in each impacted county to allow for public comment on a proposed Assessment of Fair Housing Plan, Annual Action Plan, Consolidated Plan, and substantial amendments to the AFH, Annual Action Plan, or Consolidated Plan for the HOME Program. Notices of public meetings will be published in local newspapers in each member county (i.e. *The Sun News*, *Georgetown Times*, *Kingstree News*, or equivalent) at least ten (10) days prior to the public meeting. Notices will also be posted electronically on the Horry County website at www.horrycounty.org.

III. 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 Horry County Community Development Office, located at 1515 Fourth Avenue, Conway, SC 29526. Hours of operation 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 contact the Community Development Director at 843.915.7033 or mail a written request to the above address Attn: Community Development Director. Copies of the Consolidated Plan will be available on the website along with the Annual Action Plan, CAPER, and AFFH Plan. Information and records open to the public are located in the Horry County Government Community Development Office, 1515 Fourth Avenue, Conway, SC 29526. Confidential materials, such as those materials that include a citizen's personal identity information, are not available for public review.

IV. Public Meetings and Hearings

All notices of public meetings will be published in local newspapers (i.e. *The Sun News*, or equivalent) at least five (5) days prior to the public meeting. Notices will also be posted electronically on the Horry County website at www.horrycounty.org.

All public meetings will be held at times and in locations convenient to residents, particularly those who are potential or actual beneficiaries. Meetings will be held at a variety of times to provide maximum flexibility for an array of citizen schedules. Attention will be given to ensure meeting times increase the probability of maximum citizen participation. Meetings will not be scheduled on Sundays. In the event of a federal, state or local emergency, and government offices are closed the County may opt to coordinate a public hearing via teleconference (virtual public hearing) in order to accept public comment.

V. Needs Assessment Public Meeting

Prior to the development of the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan, 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.

The Needs Assessment Public Meeting will address the amount of available funding for CDBG, ESG, 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.

VI. Public Comment Period

A public comment period is required prior to submitting the five-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Plan (AFFH), CAPER, and any substantial change to the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, or AFFH plan.

1. The public will have 30 days after publication to provide written comments to Horry County regarding the 5- year Consolidated Plan.
2. The public will have 15 days after publication to provide written comments regarding the Annual Action Plan, CAPER, AFFH plan, and any substantial change to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan or AFFH.

The publication in local newspapers 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.

VII. Amendments/Changes

Prior to making any substantial change to the Consolidated Plan (including the Annual Action Plan), Horry County will hold at least one (1) 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 any increase or decrease of more than 50% in the annual budget and/or any addition or deletion of a proposed project. Reallocation of funds from one eligible activity to another would be considered a minor amendment. For the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Plan, a substantial amendment would be defined as any changes made to section six (6) of the plan.

VIII. Program Performance

Horry County will conduct one (1) 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.

IX. 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.

X. Grievances

Complaints and grievances are handled in a timely and professional manner. All complaints are reviewed by the Community Development Director and the Assistant County Administrator. Written grievances should be addressed to Horry County Government, 1515 Fourth Avenue, 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 Assistant County Administrator. Persons who wish to appeal the 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

XI. Waivers

The Citizen Participation Plan may be altered at any time without a formal amendment to meet any waiver requirements as indicated or provided by HUD.

XII. Accommodate Individuals with Disabilities and Non-English Speaking Population

Horry County will accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities including hearing impairment as well as non-English speaking residents, as required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Individuals with specific requirements may make requests at least twenty-four hours in advance, in order to fully participate in public meetings.

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.

XIII. Anti-Displacement

It is the policy of Horry County to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that activities undertaken with CDBG, ESG, or HOME 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.