

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA CONSOLIDATED PLAN  
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**  
*Amended June 8, 2020*

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has consolidated the planning, application, reporting and citizen participation processes of formula grant programs: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Home Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) and Housing Trust Fund (HTF). The Consolidated Plan is designed to help states and local jurisdictions to assess their affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions. The consolidated planning process serves as the framework for a community-wide dialogue to identify housing and community development priorities that align and focus funding from the formula block grant programs.

The State of North Carolina, in compliance with the requirements of 24 CFR, Part 91, et al., Consolidated Submissions for Community Planning and Development Programs, which sets forth the final rule providing for a consolidated plan and a single consolidated performance report for all U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development community planning and development formula grant programs, has established the following policies and procedures for citizen participation (referred to as the Citizen Participation Plan) and will abide by this Plan.

The Citizen Participation Plan will be distributed at in-person public hearing(s) on housing and community development needs in addition to being available on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website [www.nccommerce.com](http://www.nccommerce.com). For virtual public hearings, the public will be directed to the NC Commerce website to review the plan. Citizens and units of general local government will be advised at this time of the opportunity to comment on the Citizen Participation Plan and on any substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan. The State will consider any comments or views received in writing or expressed orally at the public hearing on the original Citizen Participation Plan or amended Citizen Participation Plan.

For those unable to attend the public hearing(s), views and comments may be submitted to the address shown below or by email to [Valerie.Moore@nccommerce.com](mailto:Valerie.Moore@nccommerce.com). The Citizen Participation Plan will be made accessible to persons with disabilities upon request by telephone or written request to the following address:

Rural Economic Development Division  
North Carolina Department of Commerce  
301 N. Wilmington Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
4346 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, N. C. 27699-4346  
Telephone: (919) 814-4600  
Fax: (919) 715-0567  
TDD: 1 (800) 735-2962

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**Purpose:** The State of North Carolina encourages citizens to participate in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the Consolidated Plan for HUD Community Planning and Development programs. This plan describes how this participation will be encouraged.

**General:** Citizens may make comments or request information regarding the Consolidated Plan by telephone, mail, email, or facsimile transmission to the Consolidated Planning Coordinator, State CDBG Program, 4346 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4346, Tel. (919) 814-4600 (office), TDD 1-800-735-2962, Fax (919) 715-0567 or by email to Valerie.Moore@nccommerce.com. The State will respond in the Consolidated Plan or performance report, as appropriate, to written comments received.

**Meetings and Public Hearings:** During the development of the plan, during the development of any substantial amendments, and prior to submission of the annual performance report to HUD, the State will solicit the views and proposals of citizens and interested groups and agencies at meetings and public hearings.

Notices for meetings and public hearing shall include:

1. The subject of the meeting;
2. Amount of funds anticipated to be available and range of eligible activities;
3. Estimated benefit to low and moderate-income persons;
4. Information needed by citizens to make informed comments, or in the case where extensive information will be the subject of comment, where the information is available for inspection;
5. Time and location of the meeting;
6. The address and telephone number where special populations (persons with disabilities or non-English speaking persons) may request auxiliary aids or assistance;
7. The address where written comments may be submitted, and the time frame of the comment period for the subject of the meeting;
8. The telephone number where persons may request additional information.
9. A telephone number for constituents to call in to the public meeting if they are unable to travel.

*Notices:* Adequate advance notice of meetings will be given. Notices will be published in newspapers of general circulation no less than ten days and no more than twenty-five days prior to the beginning of any series of hearings or meetings. Notices will be posted on the websites of the NC Department of Commerce ([www.nccommerce.com](http://www.nccommerce.com)), State CDBG Program and the NC Housing Finance Agency ([www.nchfa.com](http://www.nchfa.com)). Notices will also be mailed and or emailed to local governments, advocacy groups, nonprofit housing organizations, housing-related service providers, for-profit developers, professional organizations, other known constituency groups, and citizens who have requested notification.

*Format:* Meetings will be designed to allow the most opportunity and encouragement for citizens to express their views. At least one meeting *whether in person or virtual* will follow the format of a formal public hearing, while the State is identifying its housing and community development needs prior to writing the consolidated plan.

*Accessibility:* Meetings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries. All meeting places will be handicapped accessible. Auxiliary aids, such as interpreters, will be provided upon request.

**Development of the Consolidated Plan:** The State will develop a complete consolidated plan submission, including needs assessment, strategic plan, action plan, and certifications every five years. The State will hold a series of meetings to solicit citizen views and proposals on housing and community development needs before the proposed consolidated plan is published for comment. The State will publicize and conduct these meetings as described above in the section “**Meetings and Public Hearings.**”

The State will publish its proposed consolidated plan for comment prior to submitting it to HUD. A summary of the proposed plan will be published in newspapers of general circulation, along with a list of places where the entire proposed plan may be examined. The summary will also be mailed to local governments, advocacy groups, nonprofit housing organizations, housing-related service providers, for-profit developers, professional organizations, other known constituency groups, and citizens who have requested notification. The entire plan will be available on the websites of the Rural Development Division and the NC Housing Finance Agency. A copy of the plan, in reasonable numbers, will also be provided to citizens or groups that request it. The proposed plan will contain information including the amount of assistance the State expects to receive and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income and the plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced. At least one meeting or hearing will be held on the draft, publicized and conducted as described above in the section “**Meetings and Public Hearings.**”

The State will receive comments from citizens and units of general local government on the proposed consolidated plan for a period of not less than 30 days. The comment period will be publicized in the notices published in the newspaper and mailed to interested parties. Any comments received in writing or orally at the public hearings will be considered in preparing the final consolidated plan. The final consolidated plan will include a summary of these comments or views and the reasons for not accepting any comments received.

**Action Plan:** The State will develop an action plan annually for the use of its funds and submit this plan with certifications. In the years in which the action plan is directed by the five-year needs assessment and strategic plan, the State will hold hearings or meetings, publicized and conducted as described above in the “Meetings and Public Hearings” section. The State will receive comments from citizens and units of general local government on the proposed action plan for a period of not less than 30 days from the date when the draft is available to the public. The comment period will be publicized in the notices published in the newspaper and mailed to interested parties. Any comments received in writing or orally

at the public hearings will be considered in preparing the final submission. The final action plan will include a summary of these comments or views and the reasons for not accepting any comments received.

**Amendments:** The State will amend its consolidated plan prior to making any of the following decisions:

1. To change the method of distributing funds or the priorities for allocation;
2. To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan (including program income), not previously described in the action plan;
3. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity from what was proposed in the original plan; or
4. To change the amount of funds reserved for a particular funding category or activity, unless the change is made in accordance with conditions and procedures specified in the original consolidated plan.

The State will receive comments from citizens and units of general local government on the proposed substantial amendment for a period of not less than 30 days, unless waived by HUD during disasters, public health emergencies, or other federally designated emergencies. The opportunity to comment will be publicized and posted on the NC Commerce website and emailed to interested parties. The notice will include a summary of the proposed changes and information on how to request a copy of the entire proposed amendment. Any comments received in writing will be considered in preparing the substantial amendment. The final substantial amendment will be submitted with a summary of these comments or views and the reasons for not accepting any comments received.

**Waivers to Citizen Participation Consolidated Plan Requirements Due to Spread of COVID-19:** In accordance with 24 CFR 5.110, HUD may, upon a determination of good cause and subject to statutory limitations, waive regulatory provisions. Additional regulatory waiver authority is provided in 24 CFR 91.600. In December 2019, a new coronavirus known as COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan, People's Republic of China, causing outbreaks of the coronavirus disease that has now spread globally. In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic and President Trump declared the outbreak a national emergency. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) makes available \$5 billion in supplemental CDBG funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV grants). A memorandum dated April 9, 2020, from John Gibbs, Acting Assistant Secretary for HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD), provides that grantees may amend citizen participation plans to incorporate certain waivers that establish expedited procedures to draft, propose, or amend consolidated plans and annual action plans with respect to CDBG-CV grants and FY 2019 and 2020 grants. Specifically, the waivers authorize an accelerated **public notice and comment period of five days**; further, the five-day period for comments on consolidated plans and amended citizen participation plans may run concurrently. The

following waivers to Consolidated Plan and Action Plan requirements for CDBG-CV grants and FY 2019 and 2020 grants have been authorized by HUD to expedite CDBG response to the coronavirus pandemic:

1. **Citizen Participation Public Comment Period** - Given the need to expedite actions to respond to COVID-19, HUD has waived 24 CFR 91.115(c)(2) and (i) in order to balance the need to respond quickly to the growing spread of COVID-19 with the statutory requirement to provide reasonable notice and opportunity for citizens to comment on new consolidated plans, annual action plans, and/or substantial amendments. The standard 30-day minimum notice and comment period is waived, provided that no less than 5 days are allowed for public comments on each consolidated plan, action plan, or substantial amendment. This waiver is available through the end of the State's 2020 program year.

2. **Citizen Participation Reasonable Notice and Opportunity to Comment** – In recognition that efforts to contain COVID-19 require limiting public gatherings, such as those often used to obtain citizen participation, HUD further waives 24 CFR 91.115(c)(2) and (i) to allow grantees to determine what constitutes reasonable notice and opportunity to comment given their circumstances. This authority is in effect through the end of the State's 2020 program year. Aside from the expedited 5-day public comment period, procedures for substantial amendments will also be modified. Citizens and units of general local government will be provided with notice and an opportunity to comment on proposed substantial amendments by way of the City/County Manager ListServ, email distribution lists, and posting on the NC Commerce website. A summary of each proposed substantial amendment will be included in the public notice. The State will identify a deadline for the submittal of written comments on the proposed substantial amendment; that timeframe will allow no less than five calendar days. Written comments may be submitted via email to [Valerie.Moore@nccommerce.com](mailto:Valerie.Moore@nccommerce.com). A summary of all comments received will be attached to the substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan.

**Performance Reports:** The State will publish its annual performance report for public comment and will conduct at least one hearing on the proposed report. The hearing or meetings will be publicized and held as described in the above section “**Meetings and Public Hearings.**” The published notice will include a summary of the report, along with a list of places where the entire proposed plan may be examined. The summary will also be mailed to local governments, advocacy groups, nonprofit housing organizations, housing-related service providers, for-profit developers, professional organizations, other known constituency groups, and citizens who have requested notification. The entire report will be available for inspection at the regional offices of the Rural Economic Development Division and of the Division of Business and Industry and at the main branches of public libraries. A copy of the report, in reasonable numbers, will also be provided to citizens or groups that request it.

The State will receive comments from citizens and units of general local government on the proposed consolidated plan for a period of not less than 15 days. The comment period will be publicized in the notices published in the newspaper and mailed to interested parties. Any comments received in writing or orally at the public hearings will be considered in

preparing the final report. The final report will include a summary of these comments or views.

**Citizen Participation Requirements for Local Governments:** Units of general local government that receive Community Development Block Grant Funds under the North Carolina Small Cities program must follow the citizen participation requirements of the *North Carolina Community Development Block Grant Regulations, 4 NCAC 19L.1002.*

**Availability and Access:** The consolidated plan, as adopted, any substantial amendments, and the performance report will be available to the public. Availability for the general public is described in the above sections of this plan dealing with each document.

**Non-English Speaking and Handicapped Residents Public Hearing/Meeting Accommodation:** All public meetings, workshops, and hearings are held in facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities. Upon reasonable request, State will provide translators at public hearings and meetings. Furthermore, meeting notices will be sent to organizations representing non-English speaking residents of the State. The information will be made available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities upon request to the Consolidated Planning Coordinator, State CDGB Program, 4313 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4313, Tel. (919) 814-4600, TDD 1-800-735-2962, Fax (919) 715-0567.

Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties will have reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the consolidated plan. These records include the State's use of assistance under the programs covered during the preceding five years. All records that are public under G.S. 132 will be made accessible to interested individuals and groups during normal working hours.

**Complaints:** At any time, citizens may submit complaints related to the consolidated plan, any amendments, and the performance report by writing the Consolidated Planning Coordinator, State CDBG Program, 4313 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4313, Tel. (919) 814-4600, TDD 1-800-735-2962, Fax (919) 715-0567. The State will provide a written response to every written citizen complaint that relates to the consolidated plan, action plan or substantial amendments within 15 working days.



George Sherrill, Chief of Staff  
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Date