



# Citizen Participation Plan

2026-2030



Prepared By  
Florida Housing Coalition

Collier County

## Table of Contents

|                                                        |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction .....                                     | 3  |
| Purpose of Citizen Participation Plan.....             | 4  |
| Encouraging Citizen Participation .....                | 4  |
| Consultation .....                                     | 4  |
| Encouraging Participation by Special Populations ..... | 5  |
| Alternative Methods of Outreach and Engagement.....    | 6  |
| Language Access Strategy .....                         | 7  |
| Development of the Consolidated Plan .....             | 8  |
| Availability of HUD Data.....                          | 8  |
| Access to Program Information .....                    | 8  |
| Anti-Displacement.....                                 | 8  |
| Solicitation Process .....                             | 9  |
| Public Participation Process.....                      | 10 |
| Public Hearings / Meetings .....                       | 14 |
| Public Comment.....                                    | 14 |
| Notification Procedures .....                          | 15 |
| Plan Availability to the Public.....                   | 16 |
| Substantial Amendments.....                            | 16 |
| Annual Performance Report .....                        | 17 |
| Access to Records .....                                | 17 |
| Technical Assistance .....                             | 18 |
| Disaster or Declaration of Emergency .....             | 18 |
| Complaint Procedure .....                              | 18 |
| Use of the Citizen Participation Plan.....             | 19 |

## Introduction

Collier County is an entitlement jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and receives annual funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs. As a recipient of these federal funds, the County is required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) that provides residents, stakeholders, and community organizations with opportunities to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of housing, community development, and homelessness assistance programs. This Plan outlines the County's process for public involvement and ensures compliance with HUD's citizen participation requirements. The County's grant program year is from October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Collier County Community and Human Services Division has prepared this CPP in accordance with 24 CFR Section 91.105, to provide for and encourage citizen participation in the process of preparing and implementing plans and activities related to programs funded by HUD. The Plan outlines the minimum participation requirements and processes as required by federal regulation.

The CPP will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, at least once every five years in conjunction with the development of each new Consolidated Plan. The review will ensure that the CPP remains consistent with current HUD regulations, community engagement practices, and local needs, while continuing to provide meaningful opportunities for public participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of HUD-funded programs.

As a requirement of the above-named entitlement grants, the County must prepare the following documents:

- Consolidated Plan: The Consolidated Plan serves as the planning document and application for HUD formula grant programs and consists of a housing needs assessment, a housing market analysis, a five-year strategic plan, and the first-year Annual Action Plan. The five-year Consolidated Plan identifies local housing and community development needs and sets forth a funding strategy for addressing those needs. The Consolidated Plan is required to be submitted to HUD by the Collier County Community and Human Services Division no later than 45 calendar days prior to the start of the program year, which is October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Annual Action Plan: An Annual Action Plan summarizes the activities that will be undertaken during one program year to address the needs outlined in the Consolidated Plan. The Annual Action Plan is required to be submitted to HUD by the Collier County Community and Human Services Division no later than 45 calendar days prior to the start of the program year, which is October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER): A Performance Report that evaluates the progress during the program year in carrying out the activities outlined in the Annual Action Plan. The CAPER is required to be submitted to HUD by the Collier County

Community and Human Services Division no later than 90 calendar days after the close of the program year, which is September 30<sup>th</sup>.

- Fair Housing Plan: The county is obligated to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH) as a recipient of HUD funds and has the option to comply with this requirement through the preparation of a fair housing plan. The County may prepare and maintain fair housing planning documents, including but not limited to an Analysis of Impediments (AI), Fair Housing Plan, Equity Plan, or other HUD-required fair housing planning document, as applicable. If the County chooses to prepare a fair housing plan it will identify local and regional fair housing issues and set goals for improving access to equitable housing particularly for members of protected class groups.

### **Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan**

The CPP is intended to promote a community-wide dialogue to identify housing and community development priorities to be incorporated into the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan and to provide transparency about program performance and impact. The CPP provides a guide for citizens and organizations to participate in an advisory role in assisting with the development of the HUD regulatory plans and reports mentioned above. The CPP sets forth policies and procedures for citizen participation, which are designed to maximize the opportunity for engagement in the community development process. The CPP describes herein the process the County will use to collect public input and involve the public in the preparation of the required HUD regulatory plans.

### **Encouraging Citizen Participation**

In the preparation of the Consolidated Plan and other HUD regulatory documents, the County will consult with the applicable populations and organizations necessary to complete the plans. The public and stakeholders will be invited to participate in all aspects of plan development, however the County may consult stakeholders at different stages of development and ask for participation in specific components of the plans.

### **Consultation**

Special emphasis has been placed on encouraging participation by:

#### General Public

- persons of low and moderate incomes
- residents of blighted neighborhoods and areas where housing and community development funds are utilized
- residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods identified by Collier County
- minority populations
- non-English speaking persons
- individuals with disabilities

- residents of public housing
- homeless or at risk of homelessness

#### Agencies and Organizations

- local and regional institutions
- Continuums of Care
- businesses
- developers
- nonprofit organizations
- philanthropic organizations
- community-based and faith-based organizations
- broadband internet service providers
- emergency management organizations
- fair housing organizations

#### Public Housing Authority

- residents of public and assisted housing developments
- resident advisory boards
- resident councils
- resident management corporations
- other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located.

### **Encouraging Participation by Special Populations**

#### Low- and Moderate-Income Persons

The public participation process outlined herein is designed to promote participation by low- and moderate-income citizens, as well as residents of blighted neighborhoods and CDBG, HOME, or ESG project areas. The County may take additional steps to further promote participation by such groups, or to target program information to these persons should officials feel that such persons may otherwise be excluded or should additional action be deemed necessary. Activities to promote additional participation may include posting of notices in blighted neighborhoods and in places frequented by low- and moderate-income persons and holding public hearings in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods or areas of existing or proposed CDBG, HOME, or ESG project activities.

#### Individuals with Disabilities

Persons with special needs who require assistance to participate in public hearings or meetings or anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication addressed in the Americans with Disabilities Act, or other reasonable accommodations in order to participate in a proceeding, should contact the Collier County Facilities Management Division, located at 3335 Tamiami Trail E., Suite 101,

Naples, Florida 34112, or (239) 252-8380, as soon as possible, but no later than five (5) business days prior to the scheduled event or public meeting. Such reasonable accommodations will be provided at no cost to the individual.

The County will consult with local disability advocacy groups to identify the most effective ways to reach persons with different types of disabilities, and if willing, use their communication networks to provide notice of upcoming events of interest to the disability community. The County will also make efforts to utilize tools like the Online Suite for Effectively Engaging Individuals with Disabilities in Consolidated Planning (hosted by Florida Housing Coalition), a platform that provides tools for Entitlement Communities to increase participation by the disability community in the Consolidated Plan process.

The locations of all public hearings as described herein shall be made accessible to individuals with disabilities. The County shall provide a sign language interpreter with advanced notification through the proper channels that one or more hearing impaired individuals will be in attendance. The County shall provide reasonable accommodation whenever notified in advance, through the process stated above, that one or more hearing or visually impaired persons will attend a meeting. Additionally, the County shall provide reasonable accommodations when advance notification is provided that one or more persons with mobility, or developmental disabilities will be in attendance.

#### Stakeholders

Federal regulations require Collier County to consult with public and private agencies when developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan. Collier County will encourage the participation of local and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations, and fair housing organizations in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and/or Fair Housing Plan.

#### Public Housing Agencies

Collier County will encourage, in conjunction with consultation with public housing agencies, the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments (including any resident advisory boards, resident councils, and resident management corporations) in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and/or Fair Housing Plan, along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located. The County will provide information to the Collier County Housing Authority (CCHA) about Consolidated Plan, Fair Housing Plan, and AFFH activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the housing authority can make this information available at the annual public hearing(s) required for the PHA Plan.

#### **Alternative Methods of Outreach and Engagement**

When possible, Collier County will explore alternative public involvement techniques and quantitative ways to measure efforts that encourage citizen participation in a shared vision for change in communities and neighborhoods, and the review of program performance. Engagement efforts will include traditional methods including notices in local news circulations and on the County's official website, but the County

will make concerted efforts to also provide non-traditional methods of outreach and engagement. These methods may include a hybrid approach of in person and/or virtual public hearings and meetings and the use of online tools such as social media and/or virtual engagement web pages for the distribution of public notices and to solicit participation by the public and stakeholders. The County may also use the latest technology or tools to increase participation by underserved and marginalized populations.

Alternative efforts may include:

#### Outreach Efforts

- Social media
- Local media outlets
- Listservs
- Utility inserts
- Flyers

#### Engagement Efforts

- Surveys
- Virtual engagement experiences
- Polls
- Questionnaires
- Interviews

#### **Language Access Strategy**

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the County will take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to benefits, services, information, and other important aspects of the programs covered by the HUD regulatory plans and related documents for individuals with Limited English Proficiency. The County will periodically conduct a Four-Factor Analysis that considers: (1) the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered; (2) the frequency of contact with LEP persons; (3) the nature and importance of the program, activity, or service; and (4) the resources available and costs associated with language assistance measures. Based on the results of the analysis, the County may provide translated notices, translated vital documents, oral interpretation services, multilingual outreach materials, language assistance statements, and other reasonable accommodations necessary to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons. Language assistance services will be provided free of charge. The County will make reasonable efforts to engage LEP populations through outreach to community organizations, service providers, and other entities serving linguistically diverse populations.

With advanced notice to the Collier County Community and Human Services Division, the County will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate non-English speaking citizens expected to participate in a public hearing or meeting. Printed notices of such meetings will be prepared in the language of the non-English speaking citizens and the County will employ the services of an interpreter to assist in translating the event for the benefit of the non-English speaking citizens.

## **Development of the Consolidated Plan**

The Consolidated Plan establishes Collier County's long-range strategy and five-year investment plan for housing, community development, economic development, and homeless services. The Consolidated Plan allocates federal resources from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).

Collier County will meet the following minimum requirements when developing the Consolidated Plan:

### **Availability of HUD Data**

As soon as feasible after the start of the public participation process Collier County will make the HUD-provided data and any other supplemental information the jurisdiction plans to incorporate into its consolidated plan available to its residents, public agencies, and other interested parties. Collier County may make the HUD-provided data available to the public by cross-referencing to the data on HUD's website.

### **Access to Program Information**

During the annual planning process the County shall make program information available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties. Through a public notice or engagement meetings, the County will provide information on anticipated receipt of grant funds, including an estimate of the amount of CDBG, HOME, ESG, program income, and prior year funding expected to be available in the program year along with a description of the range and types of activities that can be funded with these resources. The County will provide an estimated percentage of funds that will benefit low- and moderate-income people, with not less than 70% of funds being allocated to benefit low-and moderate-income people, in accordance with federal regulation. This transfer of program information may align with Annual Action Plan community engagement meetings or with the County's Request for Applications process for public service funding.

### **Anti-Displacement**

The County seeks to minimize, to the greatest extent feasible, the involuntary displacement, whether permanently or temporarily, of persons (families, individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations, or farms) from projects funded with CDBG, HOME, or ESG involving single or multi-family rehabilitation, acquisition, commercial rehabilitation, demolition, economic development, or capital improvement activities.

When carrying out assisted activities under the CDBG and HOME programs, the County will take appropriate steps to minimize displacement of families and individuals from their homes and neighborhoods. The County will consider taking the following steps to minimize the direct and indirect displacement of persons:

1. Assess proposed projects to determine potential displacement and consider any alternatives that may minimize displacement. This assessment may include:

- a. Give priority to rehabilitation of housing as opposed to demolition
  - b. Demolish or convert units that are vacant and not able to be occupied
  - c. Limit the undertaking of projects that minimize benefit due to excessive displacement
2. Phase the proposed rehabilitation projects to allow displaced persons in multi-family housing to remain in the building during and after rehabilitation.
3. Assist in identifying temporary relocation housing facilities for persons displaced short-term.
4. Evaluate each project closely to ensure that established owners and tenants do not incur excessive financial burden to meet local housing codes.
5. Require a displacement mitigation or relocation plan for CDBG, HOME, and ESG applications proposing displacement and relocation activities.
6. Require the project's developer to assist displaced persons to remain in the neighborhood by:
  - a. Establishing on-site counseling centers to provide information on benefits available
  - b. Providing Section 8 vouchers to low/mod families who would otherwise be unable to afford new housing
  - c. Coordinating with area Section 8 cooperating landlords, media, Chamber of Commerce, and local realtors to locate vacancies for persons facing displacement
  - d. Giving priority to displaced persons to return on-site

If displacement is precipitated by activities that require the acquisition (whole or in part) or rehabilitation of real property directly by Collier County, all appropriate benefits as required by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments, the "Uniform Act", or the County's 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 persons who may potentially be displaced in the form of informational brochures on these programs and detailed explanations by County staff.

### **Solicitation Process**

There are several approaches approved by HUD that Collier County may use to select projects to be included in the Annual Action Plan for funding.

Basic Models: Depending on the situation and circumstance of the project or the needs of the community, the staff may choose any one of the following models or variations of those approaches to assist in the solicitation process of sub-recipients. The basic models are as follows:

1. Formal Application Process (RFA - Request For Applications or RFP Request For Proposals): Requires the submission of a formal application, typically undertaken once a year in conjunction with the grantees

planning process. Applications are evaluated based on explicit selection criteria. This process works best for projects with:

- a. numerous or complex activities;
- b. numerous potential applicants with varying degrees of experience;
- c. limited funding and increasing competition

2. Limited Application/Pre-Application Process: This approach is similar to the formal application process, but the application is not detailed, allowing the Staff to review the applications and narrow the number of applications before requesting additional detailed information prior to making the final selections. This process is useful for grantees interested in encouraging additional participation of potential sub-recipients unfamiliar with the process or when the grantee is providing matching dollars for a larger project.

3. Request for Qualifications (RFQ): The Staff will identify potential qualified sub- recipients through an informal process or through a general RFQ. From the identified group, the staff will identify organizations qualified to carry out specific activities and will approach the organization about their interest in doing so. This process is proactive and is focused on qualified organizations that have the experience and capacity to present new and innovative approaches to solve approved objectives.

4. “Open Door” or Unsolicited Application Process: Allows application requests to be accepted and considered any time during the program year until funds are no longer available. The unsolicited application shall meet the same requirements of the solicitation process already in place for the identified funding source, and the application shall be evaluated based on the criteria used during the regular application process with selections to be made by staff.

**Selection of Subrecipients, Contractors, and Developers:** Collier County will select from applicants who are requesting funding using criteria established by the County.

### **Public Participation Process**

In the development of the County’s HUD regulatory plans and implementation of HUD programs, the County will conduct an intentional and inclusive public participation process focused on promoting equity and universal access in programs and increasing participation by underrepresented and marginalized populations. The County will follow the public participation guidelines below in preparing the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fair Housing Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, and any related Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. The number of public hearings required depends on the type of plan, amendment process, or performance report considered, but the County intends to engage citizens at the onset of the project’s planning process.

The table below summarizes the public hearing, meeting, notification, comment period, and submittal requirements by type of plan, amendment process or performance report considered:

| Public Participation Table       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TYPE OF SUBMITTAL:               | Consolidated Plan (including Year 1 Annual Action Plan)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Annual Action Plan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Fair Housing Plan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Substantial Amendments                                                                                                                                     | Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Description</i>               | Once every five (5) years, Collier County must develop a Consolidated Plan that identifies goals and strategies for providing affordable and decent housing, a safe and suitable living environment and adequate economic opportunities for program-eligible populations. The Consolidated Plan includes the Year 1 Annual Action Plan. | Each program year, Collier County must develop an Annual Action Plan that identifies sources of funding and projects to be completed during the program year to implement the Consolidated Plan. The Year 1 Annual Action Plan is included in the Consolidated Plan process. The remaining Year 2 through Year 5 Annual Action Plans are developed subsequently. | Collier County is obligated as part of the Consolidated Plan to certify to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH). An option for complying with this certification is to develop a Fair Housing Plan to identify fair housing issues in the jurisdiction and region. The Fair Housing Plan sets goals to overcome fair housing issues and informs subsequent housing and community development planning processes. | A substantial change in the proposed use of program funds requires that amendments to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan be submitted to HUD. | Each program year, Collier County will issue a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) showing how the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan were implemented. The CAPER includes a description of the resources available and investment of those resources in terms of geographic distribution and populations assisted. |
| <i>Public Hearings/ Meetings</i> | Minimum of two (2) public hearings/meetings to encourage citizen participation, the first to be held early in the planning process and prior to publishing the plan for public comment and the second to be held after the draft plan                                                                                                   | Minimum of one (1) public hearing after the draft plan has been published for comment but prior to submitting to HUD.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Public Hearings are currently not required by HUD regulation for the preparation of a Fair Housing Plan. At the county's discretion, a minimum of one (1) public hearing to adopt the plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Consolidated Plan/Fair Housing Plan Amendments: Same as for the Consolidated Plan<br><br>Action Plan Amendments: Same as for the Annual Action Plan.       | Minimum of one (1) public hearing after the draft plan has been published for comment but prior to submitting to HUD.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| Public Participation Table                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                |                                |                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TYPE OF SUBMITTAL:                                              | Consolidated Plan<br>(including Year 1 Annual Action Plan)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Annual Action Plan             | Fair Housing Plan              | Substantial Amendments         | Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                 | has been published for comment but prior to submitting to HUD.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                |                                |                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Published Notice of Plan Availability for Review/Comment</i> | Minimum of one (1) notice of plan availability for public review and comment, including a summary of the plans and locations and hours of availability; published in a newspaper of general circulation and any smaller publications serving program-eligible populations; and published at the start of the 30-day comment period. | Same as for Consolidated Plan. | Same as for Consolidated Plan. | Same as for Consolidated Plan. | Minimum of one (1) notice of CAPER availability for public review and comment; including a summary of the CAPER; locations and hours of availability; published in a newspaper of general circulation and published at the start of the 15-day comment period. |
| <i>Comment Period</i>                                           | Collier County will make draft plans available for public comment for 30 calendar days. Copies of the draft plans will be made available for review at the Community and Human Services Division offices and public libraries serving                                                                                               | Same as for Consolidated Plan. | Same as for Consolidated Plan. | Same as for Consolidated Plan. | Collier County will make a draft of the CAPER available for public comment for 15 calendar days. Copies of the draft CAPER will be made available for review at the Community and Human Services Division offices, and public                                  |

| Public Participation Table    |                                                                                                                                                                             |                                |                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TYPE OF SUBMITTAL:            | Consolidated Plan<br>(including Year 1 Annual Action Plan)                                                                                                                  | Annual Action Plan             | Fair Housing Plan                                                                      | Substantial Amendments                                                                                                                           | Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)                                                                                                                      |
|                               | program-eligible populations. The plans will also be posted to the County's website and a reasonable number of additional copies will be provided to citizens upon request. |                                |                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  | libraries serving program-eligible populations. The CAPER will also be posted to the County's website and a reasonable number of copies will be provided to citizens upon request. |
| <i>Submission of the Plan</i> | Submitted to HUD no later than 45 calendar days prior to the start of the program year, including all HUD-required forms and certifications.                                | Same as for Consolidated Plan. | Currently not required by HUD regulation to submit the Fair Housing Plan for approval. | Consolidated Plan/Action Plan Substantial amendments may submit a copy of each amendment to HUD as it occurs, or at the end of the program year. | Submitted to HUD within 90 calendar days of the close of the program year. Collier County's program year begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th.                         |

## **Public Hearings/Meetings**

In accordance with 24 CFR 91.105 and 24 CFR 570.486, the County will hold at least two public hearings each year to obtain views of citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties on housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and review of program performance.

The public hearings/meetings are conducted at a minimum of two different stages of the program year. The County will hold at least one of these hearings/meetings before the proposed Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan is published for public comment.

The County will also hold a minimum of two public meetings during the development of the Consolidated Plan. To maximize participation, the County will implement a hybrid engagement approach for public meetings. Meetings may be held in person in the target neighborhoods as identified in the Consolidated Plan and Action Plans or virtually using ZOOM, WEBEX or an available public access application.

These meetings will focus on topics of special interest to the neighborhood, the public or the agency, and may be held to obtain feedback about ideas prior to the publication of plans or documents. Public meetings will be open to residents, housing and homeless partners, nonprofit organizations, service providers, businesses and other groups, and individuals to make sure there is on-going communication and transparency in the transfer of information.

The purposes of the public hearings and public meetings are to:

- Receive comments from citizens, public agencies, community members and other interested parties;
- Respond to proposals and comments at all stages of the submittal process;
- Identify housing and community development needs;
- Review the proposed use of funds;
- Review program amendments; and
- Review program performance.

In person public hearings and meetings will be held in buildings accessible to all persons, and all public hearings and meetings will be held at times and locations convenient to stakeholders and potential beneficiaries of each federally funded program. These public hearings and meetings will address the needs of the community, particularly those of program-eligible populations.

## **Public Comment**

The County will post draft plans for no less than 30 calendar days for the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fair Housing Plan, and any substantial amendments, and no less than 15 calendar days for the CAPER, so that all interested residents will have a sufficient opportunity to review and comment.

All residents, particularly those low- and moderate-income residents of neighborhoods targeted for the use of CDBG, HOME, and ESG will be afforded opportunities to participate in discussions on these

programs. Residents can make comments by (1) communicating directly with the Community and Human Services Division; (2) attending public meetings; and (3) attending public hearings with the County Commission when such items are being considered. Any citizen or citizen's group desiring to comment or object to any phase of the planning, development or approval of the application for CDBG, HOME, or ESG funds, to the implementation of any CDBG, HOME, or ESG program, performance reports, or to any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Fair Housing Plan should submit comments electronically by email, in writing by mail, or by telephone.

Citizen comments are received during regular office hours, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, of the County and can be submitted by emailing [Tracey.Smith@collier.gov](mailto:Tracey.Smith@collier.gov), calling Community and Human Services at (239) 252-1428, or by mail addressed to:

Collier County, Community and Human Services Division  
2671 Airport Road S Suite 305  
Naples, FL 34112

The County will consider any comments or views of residents of the community received in writing or verbally at public hearings and during the comment period. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons why, shall be attached to the final plans.

All meetings of the Board of County Commissioners are open to the public in compliance with the Florida Government-in-the-Sunshine Law. The County ensures that all parties are afforded adequate opportunities to review and comment on plans, programs, activities, and draft reports. This includes providing reasonable accommodations for people with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities.

### **Notification Procedures**

Collier County will give adequate notice of public hearings, meetings, or plan availability related to federal programs. As required by HUD, documentation of these notices must be submitted with the respective application for federal funds. To reach the broadest audience possible, the County places meeting notices in various media outlets and in a variety of languages, when applicable.

Residents may be notified of public hearings, meetings, and plan availability in the following manner:

- Public Notice published in local newspapers of general circulation
- Public Notice or notification materials may be published on the Community and Human Services webpage at <https://www.collier.gov/Resident-Resources/Community-and-Human-Services-Division/Housing-Programs/Public-Notices> and/or <https://www.colliercountyhousing.com/public-notices/>
- Public Notice or notification materials may be published on the County's official social media outlets and/or Collier County Clerk of Courts legal notices page.

The County may employ additional methods of notification for public hearings or meetings including distribution of flyers or handouts, announcements on the radio or television, virtual campaigns, or blast emails to stakeholders. Notifications of the availability of federal funds may be made in a like manner.

Notice of all public hearings will be published in the local newspaper of general circulation at least 14 days in advance of the event. Notice of public meetings will be published in a like manner.

Information about public hearings and meetings can also be accessed by calling Community and Human Services (239) 252-4228.

### **Plan Availability to the Public**

The Consolidated Plan and its contents will be made available to the public by making copies of the document available on the internet, on the jurisdiction's official government website, and as well at libraries, government offices, and public places. All printed documents incorporate a statement which serves to inform interested participants that it can be made available in alternate format. Additionally, each public notice includes language which informs the reader of the availability of special arrangements for persons with disabilities. These provisions will be made available with a minimum of five (5) working days' notice in advance, on the part of the participant in need. In addition, Collier County will provide a reasonable number of free copies of the plan to residents and groups that request it.

### **Substantial Amendments**

The Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan can be amended to provide for changes in the purpose, location, scope or beneficiaries of an activity. Substantial amendments are triggered by the following actions:

- The addition or elimination of an activity differing from the ones originally described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.
- Budget changes to the total CDBG, HOME, or ESG funding portion of more than \$150,000 or fifty percent (50%) of the project budget, whichever is greater.
- Any major programmatic changes in the scope of the project whereby the intended beneficiaries are reduced by more than fifty percent (50%).

A substantial amendment does not apply for the correction of an inadvertent omission of any data or funding details that were available for public comment and subsequently approved by the Collier County Board of County Commissioners or for minor amendments. Documents may be amended to correct such oversights without implementing the Substantial Amendment Process.

Budget amendments as part of the Annual Action Plan, such as budget balances de-obligated from cancelled activities or activities that have been successfully completed under budget, can be rolled forward into the next Annual Action Plan and CDBG, HOME, and ESG funding round. Because citizen participation for a substantial amendment follows the same requirement as the proposed Annual Action Plan, no additional public participation is needed for this type of amendment.

A change in federal funding levels after the expiration of the Consolidated Plan's draft comment period and the resulting effect on the distribution of funds shall not be considered an Amendment or a Substantial Amendment.

Citizens will be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. Public notice and public comment requirements will be implemented in accordance with the public participation process described above (also refer to the public participation process table).

Those changes described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan that do not meet the threshold of a Substantial Amendment will be processed administratively, in accordance with 24 CFR 91.505. Only Substantial Amendments are subject to the citizen participation process outlined within the Citizen Participation Plan. All other amendments are deemed administrative and shall be submitted to HUD as it occurs, or at the end of the program year in accordance with 24 CFR 91.505 (c).

### **Annual Performance Report**

Every year, the County must submit to HUD the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), within 90 calendar days of the close of the program year. In general, the CAPER describes how funds were actually spent and the extent to which these funds were used for activities that benefited low- and moderate-income people. The Annual Performance Report shall be made available for review and comment. Public notice and comment requirements will be implemented in accordance with the procedures described in the Public Participation Process sections of this CPP and the related table.

### **Access to Records**

Full access to the Community and Human Services program information, documents, and schedules of meeting times and publication dates will be provided to the public. Program records and information, consistent with state and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, are available for citizen review at the Community and Human Services Division, 2671 Airport Road S Suite 305 Naples, FL 34112. The Community and Human Services Division office may be reached by telephone at (239) 252-4228 during normal business hours of 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Upon request, Collier County will provide copies of standard documents at no charge to the general public.

Key documents of the Community and Human Services Division are placed on file for public inspection in its offices. All documents which are reviewed by the County Commission are also on file in the offices of the Clerk of Circuit Court & Comptroller. Key documents include, but are not limited to:

- The Consolidated Plan;
- The Annual Action Plan;
- The Fair Housing Plan;
- The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER); and

- Other HUD Reports, as applicable.

Other information and records relating to the County's use of various federal and state program funds may be reviewed by the public in the offices of Community and Human Services in compliance with the Florida Public Records Law and applicable HUD regulations.

### **Technical Assistance**

Upon request, Community and Human Services will provide technical assistance to groups representing the needs of program-eligible populations, especially those groups representative of persons of low or moderate income, as may be required to adequately provide for citizen participation in the planning, implementation and assessment of the CDBG, HOME, and ESG funded programs.

Such technical assistance is intended to increase citizen participation in the community development decision making process and to ensure that such participation is meaningful. Technical assistance shall also be utilized to foster public understanding of federal program requirements.

Technical assistance shall be provided on request and may include, but not necessarily be limited to: interpreting the CDBG, HOME, and ESG program rules, regulations, procedures and/or requirements; providing information and/or materials concerning the CDBG, HOME, or ESG programs; and, assisting low and moderate income citizens, and residents of blighted neighborhoods to develop statements of views, identify their needs, and to develop activities and proposals for projects which, when implemented, will resolve those needs.

Technical assistance for developing proposals will be limited to guidance in completing applications for funding, providing information on deadlines and project eligibility, and providing technical assistance concerning HUD regulations. County staff members will neither prepare applications, nor appear as advocates for or against specific project proposals.

### **Disaster or Declaration of Emergency**

In the event of a disaster or a declaration of emergency, public participation activities may be altered at the direction of HUD to expedite grantee response to affected communities. Additionally, public participation activities will be facilitated by the most feasible means available at the time (i.e. call-in or virtual meetings in lieu of public meetings). Information to those with vision and hearing impairments, as well as non-English speakers will be provided to the extent feasible.

### **Complaint Procedure**

Collier County will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally, at public hearings and meetings. A summary of all comments or views, as well as how they were addressed in the relevant document, will be included in the final Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fair Housing Plan, substantial amendments to the plans, or performance reports.

Collier County will provide citizens with timely responses to grievances or complaints. Citizens may submit a written grievance or complaint to:

Collier County Community and Human Services Division  
Attn: Kristi Sonntag, Director  
2671 Airport Rd S Suite 305, Naples, Florida 34112-5361

The County will make reasonable effort to issue a written response to every written grievance or complaint within 15 working days of receipt. When this is not possible the County shall, within 15 working days of receipt, issue a letter indicating the status of the response and approximate anticipated date of a final determination.

No person shall intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any person because he/she has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any matter in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing related to a complaint.

### **Use of the Citizen Participation Plan**

Collier County will use this Citizen Participation Plan when preparing and implementing plans related to programs funded by HUD.

If there are changes because of legislative authority or HUD causes changes in rules, regulations or guidelines which impact its federal programs, such changes will supersede the provisions contained in this Citizen Participation Plan.

In addition to the Community and Human Services office address and phone numbers referenced herein, inquiries and comments regarding federal programs may also be directed to HUD's Community Planning and Development Division located at the Jacksonville Field Office, 400 W. Bay Street, Suite 1015, Jacksonville, FL 32202, or by calling (904) 232-2627.

Citizens are encouraged to participate in all phases of the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs and will be provided full access to program information. However, final responsibility and authority for the development and implementation of the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs, and related plans, will lie with Collier County.