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North Carolina Citizen Participation Plan for HUD CPD Programs

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Rural Economic Development Division
State CDBG Program

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**North Carolina Citizen Participation Plan for
HUD CPD Programs | N.C. Department of Commerce, REDD**

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Introduction

The State of North Carolina, in accordance with the requirements set by 24 CFR Part 91 regarding Consolidated Submissions for Community Planning and Development (CPD) Programs, has created specific policies and procedures to ensure citizen participation. These requirements stem from the final rule that mandates a consolidated plan and a single consolidated performance report for all CPD formula block grant programs under the privity of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This document referred to as the Citizen Participation Plan outlines the policies and procedures that the State of North Carolina will follow. The primary goal of the Citizen Participation Plan is to offer individuals greatly affected by the State HUD CPD formula block grant programs, especially low-and moderate-income residents of North Carolina—the chance to participate in advisory capacity. This engagement will involve planning, implementing, and evaluating the State's HUD CPD formula block grant programs and projects.

Part 1: Encouragement of Citizen Participation

Specific emphasis is placed on the participation of low-and moderate-income persons, including minorities, non-English speaking persons, persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), persons with disabilities, those living in slum and blighted areas, and in areas where the State's HUD CPD formula block grant funds are proposed to be used. In addition, the State encourages the participation of a variety of stakeholders, including statewide and regional agencies, local governments, Indian Tribes, Continuums of Care, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, federal partners, and community-based and faith-based organizations, among others. The State will also actively encourage the participation of both public and private organizations, including broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, agencies whose primary responsibilities include the management of flood-prone areas, public land or water resources, and emergency management agencies. These various stakeholders involved with or affected by the State's HUD CPD formula block grant programs, as described in the Consolidated Plan, play a vital role in developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and any of its Annual Action Plans, Substantial Amendments, and Performance Reports.

The Citizen Participation Plan covers the State's HUD CPD formula block grant programs provided in non-entitlement jurisdictions and, where applicable, in entitlement jurisdictions under the provisions of statutory program requirements or special allocations. The HUD CPD formula block grant programs administered by the State through its NC Consolidated Plan Partners, include the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), Housing Trust Fund (HTF), and various other CDBG-related or special programs. Three agencies, along with their respective divisions, participate as partners of the NC Consolidated Plan Partners by receiving one or more of the State's HUD CPD formula block grant programs. These agencies also actively contribute to the State's consolidated planning process. The subsequent page contains the list of NC Consolidated Plan Partners:



**North Carolina Department of
Commerce, Rural Economic
Development Division**



**North Carolina Housing
Finance Agency**



**North Carolina Department of
Health and Human Services,
Division of Public Health, HIV Care
Program and Division of Aging**



Together the three agencies and their respective divisions will ensure compliance with the State's Citizen Participation Plan and maintain appropriate records.

Part 2: Citizen Participation Plan

The Citizen Participation Plan will be made available during the public hearing(s) focused on housing and community development needs, as well as being accessible on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.nc.gov. At the public hearing(s) citizens, local government, and stakeholders will be informed about the opportunity to comment on the Citizen Participation Plan and any substantial amendments to it. The State will consider any comments or opinions received, whether in writing or shared verbally during the public hearings, regarding the initial or amended Citizen Participation Plan. Those unable to attend or access the public hearing(s), may submit their views and comments by the succeeding information shown.

US Postal Service, Mail to:

Attn: State CDBG Program Public Comment
North Carolina Department of Commerce
Rural Economic Development Division
4346 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4346

Other Means of Submitting Comments:

Telephone: (919) 814-4600 or Email: compliance@commerce.nc.gov or use the email address provided in the public notice once it has been posted

When the State makes substantial amendments to this Citizen Participation Plan, it will be posted on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.nc.gov for public review, allowing the public a reasonable opportunity to comment. Such notice will be posted a minimum of ten (10) calendar days and no more than twenty-five (25) calendar days prior to the public comment period. The public will be given thirty (30) calendar days from the date of notice posting to provide comments. The Citizen Participation Plan will be available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and/or persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), upon request. The final version of the Citizen Participation Plan will be published by the State after the conclusion of the public comment period.

In the case of a disaster, pandemic, or other public health emergency resulting in a special allocation of funds to aid in the response, as well as a substantial amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan. The Citizen Participation Plan will be posted on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.nc.gov, at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the public comment period. The Plan will be open for public review and comment for a minimum of seven (7) calendar days, unless a different timeline is specified by HUD.

The State will strive to utilize available technology and printed methods to notify and engage the public, public agencies, affected residents, and other stakeholders in the development of the Consolidated Plan and any of its Annual Action Plans, Substantial Amendment, and Performance Reports. The records maintained by the State and the partners involved in the NC Consolidate Plan will provide evidence of their commitment to notification and engagement efforts. These efforts include, but are not limited to, disseminating notifications via fax or email, posting

updates on the North Carolina Department of Commerce's website, conducting virtual meetings or forums, disseminating information through electronic newsletters, issuing newspaper notices for hearings, releasing press statements, providing updates via social media, sharing minutes from public hearings, issuing public service announcements, and engaging with neighborhood organizations. The State may also enhance outreach by posting information in one or more widely circulated major newspapers, distributing printed notices and draft plans at accessible public locations, and mailing notifications to specific geographic areas, stakeholders, and residents in North Carolina. The combination of these technological and printed engagement methods will demonstrate compliance with the Citizen Participation Plan.

To evaluate the needs of non-English speaking individuals and ensure they can participate meaningfully, the NC Department of Commerce has established a Language Access Plan (LAP). This plan outlines the steps to take when a need for language services arises. In such cases, staff of the Department of Commerce will reach out to the Commerce Language Access Coordinator, who will implement the necessary measures to facilitate effective communication. The LAP is published on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.nc.gov and is reviewed and updated annually to adapt to community needs. For assistance with language services, please reach out to the staff of the State CDBG Program via email at compliance@commerce.nc.gov or via phone at (919) 814-4673 to be referred to the Commerce Language Access Coordinator. In addition, notifications related to all State HUD CPD formula block grant programs will be distributed to organizations representing persons with disabilities, those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and non-English speaking individuals.

The State's Citizen Participation Plan may necessitate program-specific compliance that is explicit to one or more of the programs associated with the HUD CPD formula block grant programs overseen by the State. In instances where such program-specific compliance is required, each section of the Citizen Participation Plan will explicitly outline the distinctions pertaining to the respective program(s). Conversely, if there are no unique program-specific compliance requirements for any of the State's programs, the policies and procedures detailed in each section of the Citizen Participation Plan will be applicable to all programs uniformly.

The Citizen Participation Plan will be made accessible to persons with disabilities upon request by text telephone/teletypewriter by the following information.

If Using (TTY) Relay Service:

Dial 711 (or 800-735-2962 for English or 888-825-6570 for Spanish) on your TTY and a relay operator will answer with "Relay North Carolina".

For more instructions, please visit: www.relaync.com or www.relaync.com/tty

Part 3: Public Hearings

To maximize citizen participation, public hearings will be held during the development of the final versions of the Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, and Performance Evaluation Reports, prior to their submission to HUD. In accordance with federal regulations related to the Consolidated Plan process, the State will hold at least one (1) public hearing for one or more purposes. For instance, the State may combine the hearing on needs for the coming year's planning with the hearing on the previous year's performance. At a minimum, the State will post a notice of each public hearing on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website at

www.commerce.nc.gov as the lead agency. Such notice will be posted a minimum of ten (10) calendar days and no more than twenty-five (25) calendar days prior to each public hearing. It is permissible to incorporate multiple scheduled public hearings within a single post to the website; however, the stipulated minimum and maximum posting durations remain in effect.

The State may also enhance outreach by posting information through one or more widely circulated major newspapers, as a combined or alternative approach to posting on the website. It is acceptable to consolidate multiple scheduled public hearings into a single newspaper announcement, provided that the established minimum and maximum posting durations are adhered to. The NC Consolidated Plan Partners involved in the consolidated planning process maintain mailing and email lists that include a variety of stakeholders and interested parties throughout the State. Members of these mailing and email lists will be informed through the notification post, and the prescribed time duration for posting will be observed. Public hearings will be available in both in-person and virtual formats. The State's posting will indicate the format(s) for each public hearing. During a virtual public hearing, which may occur independently or alongside an in-person session, participants can engage by either joining an online platform or by dialing in via phone to listen and contribute to the audio discussions.

All public hearings will be scheduled at times and locations that are convenient for both potential and current beneficiaries. These venues will be accessible for individuals with physical disabilities. Additionally, accommodations will be provided for individuals who do not speak English and for those with other disabilities as needed. To ensure the State can properly respond to those needs, the State asks for a minimum notice of five (5) working days. If the State is notified that a significant number of non-English speaking persons plan to attend a public hearing, appropriate provisions will be determined and made, which may include translation of public hearing comments and documents into the native language of the majority of the non-English speaking or LEP residents affected.

In the event of a disaster, pandemic, or other public health emergency resulting in a special allocation of funds that occurs during the development or requires any substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan submission for the current program year or to the Annual Action Plan for the current or previous year to aid in the response, public hearings may be held virtually only, unless specified differently by HUD. A notice will be posted to Commerce's website for a minimum duration of seven (7) calendar days prior to the public hearing. Notifications of the public hearing will indicate how individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can request accommodations. Participants will have the option to attend the virtual public hearing either by joining the online forum or by calling in by phone to listen and take part in the audio portion of the hearing.

Part 4: Development of the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans

In 1994, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) introduced regulations that mandated state agencies administering specific HUD CPD formula block grant programs to incorporate planning and application processes into a single master plan known as the Consolidated Plan. The four agencies participating in this consolidated planning process, which receive one or more of the State's HUD CPD formula block grant programs for administration, are as follows:



**North Carolina Department of Commerce,
Rural Economic Development Division**

- ✓ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program - State and Small Cities
- ✓ Other CDBG-Related or Special Programs



**North Carolina Department of Health
and Human Services, Division of Public
Health, HIV Care Program and Division
of Aging**



- ✓ Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- ✓ Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)



North Carolina Housing Finance Agency

- ✓ HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME)
- ✓ Housing Trust Fund (HTF)

The Consolidated Plan is to assist states and local areas in evaluating their needs for affordable housing and community development, as well as understanding local market conditions. This plan helps guide investment decisions that are both informed by data and tailored to specific locations. The consolidated planning process fosters state, regional, and community-wide conversations, allowing stakeholders to determine housing and community development priorities that align with funding from HUD CPD formula block grant programs. The State's Consolidated Plan has a duration of five years and is officially published in the first year of this period.

Annual Action Plans are developed and published on the first year of the Consolidated Plan and each subsequent year to implement the Consolidated Plan. These Annual Action Plans provide a concise summary of the actions, activities, and specific federal and non-federal resources that will be used each year to address the priority needs and specific goals identified by the Consolidated Plan. Additionally, States are required to specify projects to be funded, a State's Annual Action Plan must specify its method of distributing funds to eligible units of local government and non-profits, or the activities to be undertaken by the state-run programs in the coming year.

During the preparation of the final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, the State will provide a thirty (30) day public comment period. The State will hold at least one (1) public hearing on housing and community development needs before the draft Consolidated Plan is posted for public comment period. As the State prepares the final Annual Action Plan at least one (1) public hearing will be held during the public comment period. At a minimum, the State will post a notice of the public comment period and each public hearing, along with a summary that outlines the contents and purpose of the draft Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.nc.gov as the lead agency. Such notice will be posted a minimum of ten (10) calendar days and no more than twenty-five (25) calendar days prior to the public comment period and each public hearing. To broaden outreach the State will also post the notice and summary related to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan through one or more widely circulated major newspapers, as a combined or alternative approach to posting on the website. The State may, when deemed necessary, reproduce copies of Plans for distribution in libraries, government offices, and other public places. The NC

Consolidated Plan Partners involved in the consolidated planning process maintain mailing and email lists that include a variety of stakeholders and interested parties throughout the State. Members of these mailing and email lists will be informed through the notification post, and the prescribed time duration for posting will be observed.

Public hearings related to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan will follow the provisions outlined in section Part 3 Public Hearings. The hearing will provide the opportunity to receive comments on the housing and community development needs throughout the State, based on a draft of the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan. A limited number of the draft Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan will be available at no charge from the North Carolina Department of Commerce. During the public hearing on the draft Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, the State will provide the following information below to citizens, public agencies, and other interested individuals:

- a) The amount of assistance expected to be received, based on projected amounts provided by HUD or estimated based on previous year's allocations.
- b) The range of activities that can be undertaken including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low-and moderate-income.
- c) Plans to minimize displacement of persons and assist any persons displaced.
- d) An anticipated time schedule for submission of the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan to HUD.
- e) The State's Citizen Participation Plan.

The final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan will contain the State's Citizen Participation Process, and a summary of all comments received along with the State's responses. The State will consider any comments or views received in writing or expressed orally at the public hearing and in writing during the public comment period in developing the final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. If any comments or views are not accepted the reasons why, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. Upon completion of the final Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, the State will publish the final Plan on the North Carolina Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.nc.gov and will submit the final Plan to HUD for approval.

In the event of a disaster, pandemic, or other public health emergency resulting in a special allocation of funds that occurs during the development of the Consolidated Plan for the current period or to the Annual Action Plan for the current or previous year to aid in the response, the duration for posting a notice and public comment period will be modified. Unless specified differently by HUD, the notices will be posted to Commerce's website for a minimum duration of seven (7) calendar days prior to the public comment period and each public hearing. Means will be established to allow for the electronic submission of comments and to receive responses electronically by the conclusion of the modified public comment period.

Part 5: Amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plans

The State will amend an approved Consolidated Plan or Action Plan whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

- (1) Make a change in its allocation priorities, a change in allocation amounts that exceeds 10%, or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
- (2) Carry out an eligible activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income), not previously described in the action plan; or
- (3) Change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

The uniformed and modified provisions regarding reasonable notice and the public comment period, as specified in Part 4 Development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, will be applicable when the State develops the final Substantial Amendment to either the Consolidated Plan or the Annual Action Plans. It is essential to emphasize that a Substantial Amendment does not require public hearing.

Part 6: Performance Reports

The Performance Report serves as a tool for States to report on their HUD CPD formula block grant programs' annual progress and accomplishments related to various housing and community development programs. This report provides details on how effectively States are achieving the goals in their Consolidated Plan against proposed objectives and outcomes; essentially acting as a yearly performance evaluation report submitted to HUD. It is required that each State prepare a Performance Report for its HUD CPD formula block grant programs within ninety (90) calendar days after the conclusion of each HUD CPD formula block grant program year.

In preparing the final Performance Report, the uniformed and modified provisions regarding reasonable notice, the public hearing, and the public comment period, as specified in Part 4 Development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, will be applicable. With one notable exception to the uniform provisions regarding the public comment period, it will be for a minimum of fifteen (15) calendar days. The State will hold at least one (1) public hearing during the fifteen public comment period while preparing the final Performance Report.

Part 7: Citizen Participation Requirements for Units of General Local Governments

Units of general local governments that receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds under the North Carolina Small Cities program are required to comply with the citizen participation requirements outlined in the North Carolina Community Development Block Grant Regulations, 4 NCAC 19L.1002. Documentation must be kept at the local level to support compliance with these requirements.

Part 8: Availability to the Public

The State's Consolidated Plans as adopted, Annual Action Plans, substantial amendments, and Performance Reports will be available to the public, including the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. In accordance with the provisions outlined in sections Part 1 through Part 5.

Part 9: Access to Records

The State will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the State's Consolidated Plan and the State's use of assistance under all HUD CPD formula block grant programs covered by the Consolidated Plan during the preceding five years. All requests for such information should be directed to the appropriate NC Consolidated Plan Partner who oversees the administration of their specific HUD CPD formula block grant program(s).

Part 10: Complaints

Residents or other interested parties may submit complaints related to the State's Consolidated Plans, Action Plans, any Substantial Amendments or Revisions, and Performance Reports. Complaints may be made in writing to:

US Postal Service, mail to:
Attn: State CDBG Director
North Carolina Department of Commerce
Rural Economic Development Division
4346 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4346
valerie.fegans@commerce.nc.gov

A letter responding to each complaint or grievance will be written and sent to the party or parties from whom the complaint or grievance was received. Also, dial 711 (or 800-735-2962 for English or 888-825-6570 for Spanish) on your TTY.

The complainant should state the nature of the complaint, what prior efforts have been made to resolve the problem, and any other pertinent information that would help the staff determine a solution. All complaints will receive careful consideration, and a timely, substantive written response will be provided within fifteen (15) working days or as soon as possible otherwise.

The State of North Carolina Citizen Participation Plan is hereby adopted and sets forth the State's policies and procedures for citizen participation related to the State HUD CPD formula block grant programs.



Kenny Flowers, Assistant Secretary, REDD
North Carolina Department of Commerce

February 20, 2025
Effective Date