



**Citizen Participation Comments**

# **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

## **City of Ocala**

**Adopted as part of the 2019-2024 Consolidated Plan**

**by the Ocala City Council**

**on August 6, 2019**

**Amended May 29, 2020**

**This document supersedes all previous Citizen Participation Plans  
for the City of Ocala, Florida.**



**City of Ocala's Amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) for  
the release of CARES Act 2019 Supplemental Funding and Community,  
Planning and Development (CPD) Entitlement Funds  
Issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and  
Urban Development (HUD)**

In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant program has notified the City of Ocala that it has received a formula allocation from the first round of CDBG-CV funding in the amount of \$154,129 to be used specifically for the prevention of, preparation for, and response to the Coronavirus. This allocation was authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Public Law 116-136, which was signed on March 27, 2020.

**Proposed Changes to the Citizen Participation Plan:**

- Provisions relative to Consolidated Plan, Citizen Participation and Community Development Block Grant waivers made available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Public Law 116-136, signed into law March 27, 2020) as transmitted by HUD in the April 9, 2020 CARES Act Flexibilities for CDBG Funds Used to Support Coronavirus Response Guide:
  1. Update public comment period to five (5) calendar days during declared disasters or emergency events, such as the recent coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
  2. Allow virtual public hearings during declared disasters or emergency events, such as the recent coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, as an allowed method for citizen participation.
  3. The FY 2020 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) is due to HUD no later than December 31, 2020.

\*\*If virtual hearings are used, real-time responses and accommodations for persons with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency will be made available to the greatest extent possible.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

### **1. Purpose and Goals**

- 1.1. The Citizen Participation Plan, pursuant to 24 CFR 91.105, sets forth the policies and procedures for citizen participation in the development of the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), any revisions to the AFH, the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments, the Annual Action Plan, and any substantial amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).
- 1.2. The Consolidated Plan is a combination of formerly separate federal grant applications and includes a one-year (1) application detailing specific projects funded by these grants and a five-year long-range planning document. Federal grants covered under the Consolidated Plan include the Community Development Block Grant
- 1.3. The Citizen Participation Plan is intended to provide an effective means of involvement in all phases of the City of Ocala consolidated planning process by an informed citizenry, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. The City will emphasize participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those residents of slum and blighted areas and of areas in which formula grant funds are proposed to be used and by residents of predominately low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, including City designated revitalization and target areas. In order to accomplish this purpose, the goals of the Citizen Participation Plan are to:
  - 1.4. Provide opportunities for citizens to express their views and proposals concerning needs in the community, and to establish priorities concerning these needs.
  - 1.5. Provide opportunities for citizens to take part in policy formation regarding the Consolidated Plan.
  - 1.6. Ensure that citizens are provided with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, public hearings, information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan including the range of activities that may be undertaken, the amount of anticipated funds and proposed and actual use of funds.
  - 1.7. Provide for technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low- and moderate-income that request such assistance in developing proposals.
  - 1.8. Provide opportunities for citizens to review and comment on proposed Formula Grant Program activities and use of funds.

- 1.9. Ensure that citizens have questions and complaints answered in a timely and responsive manner.
- 1.10. Ensure that the needs of non-English speaking residents will be met in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate.
- 1.11. Provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities wishing to participate in the community development planning process.

## **2. Policies**

- 2.1. Use existing partnerships and organizations in the community (in addition to the public hearing process and public notices in newspapers) to encourage participation, including participation by minorities, non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities, identifying housing needs and needs of the homeless and special populations, in the development of the Consolidated Plan. The City encourages the participation of local and regional institutions, the Continuum of Care, and other organizations (including businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, community/faith-based organizations, providers of broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, and agencies whose primary responsibilities include the management of flood prone areas, public land or water resources, and emergency management agencies).
- 2.2. Create and/or support neighborhood-based citizen advisory committees in areas targeted for comprehensive revitalization activities under federal grant programs. These committees will advise on needs and activities relative to their community.
- 2.3. Provide Housing Authorities within the jurisdiction with information about Consolidated Plan activities related to the Authorities' developments and surrounding communities so that the housing agency can make this information available at the annual public hearing required under the Comprehensive Grant program.

## **3. Citizen Comments on the Citizen Participation Plan and Amendments**

- 3.1. The City of Ocala will provide public notice of the proposed Citizen Participation Plan and amendments prior to adoption and allow a thirty (30) day period for public comments. The notice will provide sufficient information about the plan and/or amendment to permit informed comment. The notice will include the location for viewing the plan, indicate the dates of the comment period and provide a means for transmitting comments to the Community Development

Services Department. The notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in legible print and will be published in the local area newspaper which is currently the Ocala Star Banner.

- 3.2. Upon request, the citizen participation plan will be provided in a format to accommodate persons with disabilities (e.g., oral, Braille, electronic, or large print copies for the visually impaired; and/or delivering copies to the homebound) and for minority populations and persons with limited English proficiency.

#### 4. **Development of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice “AI”**

- 4.1. Consultation: Following the HUD announcement to withdraw the Notice Extending the Deadline for Submission of the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) dated January 5, 2018, the announcement states “Consolidated Plan program participants should continue to update their AIs in accordance with the HUD Fair Housing Planning Guide.” HUD encourages program participants to collaborate in opportunities to share resources and address fair housing issues, including, but not limited to:
  - 4.1.1. public housing authorities, including residents, resident advisory boards, resident councils, and resident management corporations;
  - 4.1.2. other providers of assisted housing, health services and social services, including those focusing on services to children, elderly person, person with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDs and their families, and homeless persons;
  - 4.1.3. community-based and regionally-based organizations that represent protected class members and organizations that enforce fair housing laws, such as state or local fair housing enforcement agencies;
  - 4.1.4. regional government agencies, adjacent units of local government and local government agencies, including local government agencies with metropolitan-wide planning and transportation responsibilities.
  - 4.1.5. Consultation with these agencies could include, but is not limited to, telephone or personal interviews, internet surveys, focus groups, public hearings and workshops.

- 4.2. Publishing Data: The City will make available HUD-provided data and other supplemental information the City plans to incorporate into the AI at the start of the public participation process, or as soon as feasible after. HUD-provided data will be made available by cross-referencing to the data on HUD's website.
- 4.3. Public Hearing: A public hearing will be held during the development of the AI and prior to the time the proposed AI is published for comment.
- 4.3.1. The purpose of the hearing will be to obtain the views of citizens on AI-related data and affirmatively furthering fair housing.
- 4.3.2. A public notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least 15 days prior to the public hearing. The notice will provide a reasonable explanation of the subject of the hearing, date, time and place and will provide contacts for accommodating persons with disabilities and non-English speaking residents. The notice will be published in legible print and in a section of the paper other than the legal section. Additional notices may be provided through the government access channel, agency newsletters and special notices to interested agencies, groups and persons.
- 4.3.3. In order to ensure that times and locations of public hearings are convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, the public hearing will be held at varying public locations and times to be announced at least 15 days prior to the meeting with accommodation for persons with physical disabilities. Upon request, provisions will be made for the special needs of non-English speaking persons, as well as for the visually and hearing impaired.
- 4.4. Availability to the Public: After development of a proposed AI, the following will be published in a newspaper of general circulation, in legible print and in a section of the paper other than the legal section:

- 4.4.1. A summary of the proposed AI and the provision of a public comment period.
- 4.4.2. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the AI and will include a list of the locations where copies of the entire proposed Plan may be examined.
- 4.4.3. A reasonable number of free copies of the AI will be provided to citizens and groups that request it.
- 4.4.4. A period of 30 days after the published notice will be provided for comments.
- 4.5. Comments on the Plan: All comments and views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearings, will be considered in preparing the final AI. A summary of these comments or views and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be attached to the final AI.

## 5. **Development of the Consolidated Plan**

Prior to adoption of the Consolidated Plan the following information will be made available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties in the manner and at the time specified:

- 5.1. First Public Hearing: A public hearing will be held during the planning process and prior to the time the proposed Consolidated Plan is published for comment.
  - 5.1.1. The purpose of the hearing will be to obtain the views of citizens on housing and community development needs, including priority non-housing community development needs, to review program performance for the preceding program year, and, if requested, to provide technical assistance on the development of potential activities.

5.1.2. A public notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least fifteen (15) days prior to the public hearing. The notice will provide a reasonable explanation of the subject of the hearing, date, time and place and will provide contacts for accommodating persons with disabilities and non-English speaking residents. The notice will be published in legible print and in a section of the paper other than the legal section. Additional notices may be provided through the government access channel, agency newsletters and special notices to interested agencies, groups and persons.

5.1.3. In order to ensure that times and locations of public hearings are convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, the public hearing will be held in the evening at a central location in the city with accommodation for persons with physical disabilities. Upon request, provisions will be made for the special needs of non-English speaking persons, as well as for the visually and hearing impaired.

5.2. Notice of Funding Availability: Upon notification by HUD of the amount of funding to be received for the upcoming program year, the following information will be published in a newspaper of general circulation, in legible print and in a section of the paper other than the legal section:

5.2.1. Amount of assistance the jurisdiction expects to receive (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken with the funds available. If applicable, requests for proposals from interested agencies will also be included with this notification.

5.2.2. Additional notices may be provided through the government access channel, coalition newsletters and mailings and special notices to interested agencies, groups and persons.

5.3. Availability to the Public: After the development of a proposed Consolidated Plan, including a preliminary recommendation of projects, activities and programs for the upcoming fiscal year, the following will be published in a newspaper of general circulation, in legible print and in a section of the paper other than the legal section:

- 5.3.1. A summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan; the estimated amount of grant funds that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income; a statement that the jurisdiction's plan to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced is available for viewing with the Consolidated Plan; and the provision of a public comment period.
  - 5.3.2. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan and will include a list of the locations where copies of the entire proposed Plan may be examined.
  - 5.3.3. A reasonable number of free copies of the Plan and displacement information will be provided to citizens and groups that request it.
  - 5.3.4. A period of thirty (30) days after the published notice will be provided for comments.
- 5.4. Second Public Hearing: After the comment period, a public hearing will be held on the Consolidated Plan and proposed activities by the City Council.
- 5.4.1. The purpose of the hearing is to provide an opportunity for public comment on the Plan and proposed activities to the City Council prior to approval for submittal to HUD.
  - 5.4.2. A public notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least fifteen (15) days prior to the public hearing. The notice will provide a reasonable explanation of the subject of the hearing, date, time and place and will provide contacts for accommodating persons with disabilities. The notice will be published in legible print and in a section of the paper other than the legal section.
  - 5.4.3. The hearing will be held in varying public locations and times to be announced at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. Upon request, provisions will be made for the special needs of disabled and non-English speaking persons, as well as for the visually and hearing impaired.

5.5. Comments on the Plan: All comments and views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearings, will be considered in preparing the final Consolidated Plan. A summary of these comments or views and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, will be attached to the final Consolidated Plan.

## 6. Substantial Amendments

6.1. The following criteria constitute a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan.

6.2. The use of funds changes from one eligible activity to another. Movement of funds from contingency to eligible activities, or movement of residual funds to contingency, are not considered amendments.

6.3. A decision is made to make a change in the allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds.

6.4. A decision is made 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.

6.5. A decision is made not to carry out an activity described in the Action Plan. This does not include activities which must be dropped due to circumstances beyond the control of City of Ocala, e.g., a subgrantee elects not to do an activity; the activity fails because a property owner refuses to sell; etc. In this instance, no decision process is involved, and it is not necessary to modify or amend the change through the citizen participation process. However, reallocation of funds to a new activity not previously described in the Action Plan will be a substantial amendment.

6.6. The purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity are substantially changed. An activity will be considered substantially changed when any one of the following criteria apply:

6.7. The activity will no longer principally benefit the targeted population as identified in the Action Plan (e.g., senior citizens in certain areas, low- and moderate-income homeowners, homeless men, residents of X neighborhood instead of Y neighborhood, pregnant teenagers).

6.8. The activity will no longer address the low- and moderate-income need identified in the Action Plan (e.g., shelter for homeless, center for senior citizens, housing for low- and

moderate-income households, training as daycare providers) or the activity ceases to address the elimination of slums and blight as identified in the Action Plan.

- 6.9. The activity location of an area-benefiting activity changes so that the completed activity will principally serve beneficiaries other than those originally intended.
- 6.10. The scope of the activity has increased to the point where its completion with project funds would result in the inability to carry out another approved activity or would necessitate reducing the scope of another activity to a point where it would not accomplish its intended purpose.
- 6.11. In the case of a local emergency, such as a natural disaster or other large-scale emergency, funds may be allocated to eligible activities needed to assist in disaster relief without triggering a substantial amendment with approval from City Council. The process for implementing substantial amendments is as follows:
  - 6.11.1. Publish a notice in a newspaper of general circulation giving the proposed change the City is considering, and the availability of any materials on the change. The notice will provide sufficient information about the amendment to permit informed comment. The notice will be published in legible print and in a section of the paper other than the legal section. A thirty (30) day comment period will follow the notice of proposed amendment.
  - 6.11.2. Upon declaration of a State of Emergency, whether federal, state, or local, and a notice of Waiver by the HUD, the time period for public comments may be changed (shortened) per HUD guidelines.
  - 6.11.3. Upon declaration of a State of Emergency, whether federal, state, or local, and a notice of Waiver by the HUD, the availability of a public hearing shall include a virtual meeting per HUD guidelines.
  - 6.11.4. The City may make other notifications of the proposed substantial amendment as deemed appropriate.
  - 6.11.5. At the end of the thirty (30) day comment period, the City will consider all comments received prior to preparing the final proposed substantial amendment. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comment or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the substantial amendment transmitted to HUD.

- 6.11.6. Place the proposed change on the Ocala City Council's agenda for consideration.
- 6.11.7. When adopted, distribute description of the change, including summaries as described above, to affected cities, agencies or entities and to all persons or agencies that sent written comments. Also, the City will send a news release to local media.
- 6.11.8. Send a description of the changes to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, including the summaries described above.

**7. Performance Reports**

The City will advertise the availability of performance reports for viewing by the general public in a newspaper of general circulation. The notice will provide sufficient information about the performance report to permit informed comment. The notice will be published in legible print and in a section of the paper other than the legal section. A fifteen (15) day comment period will follow this advertisement. A summary of these comments will be attached to the performance report. Additional notices may be provided through the government access channel or on the City's website.

**8. Meetings**

The City will provide reasonable and timely notice of all meetings so that all interested parties may have an opportunity to attend.

**9. Availability to the Public**

The City will make available for public inspection the adopted Assessment of Fair Housing, including any revisions to the AI, Consolidated Plan, including substantial amendments to said plan, Annual Action Plan, including amendments, and the performance report described above. These documents will, upon request, be made available in formats which are accessible to persons with disabilities.

**10. Access to Records**

All records and information relating to the Assessment of Fair Housing, Consolidated Plan and the use of funds under that plan will be available for public inspection for a period of not less than five (5) years. All documents relevant to the CDBG programs will be made available for citizen review during the City of Ocala's normal business hours by contacting:

Community Development Services

201 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Ocala, FL 34471

(352) 629-8322

[www.ocalafl.org](http://www.ocalafl.org)

Depending on the age and nature of requested items, staff may need several business days to compile requested document(s). A reasonable number of copies will be made available without charge to the person requesting documents. Numerous copies are available for a nominal fee in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida.

## **11. Technical assistance**

Assistance will be provided to groups, representative of persons of low- and moderate-income, that request such assistance. This assistance may take, but is not limited to the following forms:

- 11.1. Staff participation in committee meetings, including coordination of target area committees.
- 11.2. Workshops for agencies proposing projects.
- 11.3. One-on-one technical assistance provided in person, over the phone, by email, at public meeting, or at scheduled and advertised public hearings. The level and type of assistance will be determined as needed on a case-by-case basis.
- 11.4. Assisting with the establishment of neighborhood planning committees.

The City may provide other types of technical assistance as deemed appropriate.

## **12. Complaints**

Any person wishing to make a formal complaint concerning any aspect of the Assessment of Fair Housing, including revisions, Consolidated Plan, including amendments to the Plan, Action Plan, including amendments, and performance reports, may do so in person, by letter or by telephone to the address/phone numbers given in paragraph 10. Persons wishing to

make a complaint in person should call for an appointment; appointments will be made to occur within a reasonable amount of time from the request. A substantive written response will be made to every written citizen complaint within fifteen (15) working days of receipt, where practicable.

**13. Use of the Plan**

The City will follow this Citizen Participation Plan in the development of the Assessment of Fair Housing, and any revisions to the AI, Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the consolidated plan, Annual Action Plan, and any substantial amendments, and the performance report.

**14. Jurisdiction Responsibility**

The requirements for citizen participation do not restrict the responsibility or authority of the City for the development and execution of its Consolidated Plan or Assessment of Fair Housing.

**15. Anti-Displacement**

The City has adopted an Anti-displacement and Relocation Policy to minimize the extent to which low and moderate-income people will have to leave their homes as a result of the use of these Federal dollars. This Anti-Displacement Plan also describes how the City will compensate people who are actually displaced as a result of the use of these funds, specifying the type and amount of compensation.



## Appendix - Alternate/Local Data Sources

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Data Source Name</b></p> <p>American Community Survey</p>
	<p><b>List the name of the organization or individual who originated the data set.</b></p> <p>US Census Bureau and US Department of Housing and Urban Development.</p>
	<p><b>Provide a brief summary of the data set.</b></p> <p>Housing, demographic, housing market, employment, education, income, population, and economic data provided from the 2010 Census.</p>
	<p><b>What was the purpose for developing this data set?</b></p> <p>To collect important data relevant to the population in the United States.</p>
	<p><b>Provide the year (and optionally month, or month and day) for when the data was collected.</b></p> <p>2006-2012</p>
	<p><b>Briefly describe the methodology for the data collection.</b></p> <p>Survey</p>
	<p><b>Describe the total population from which the sample was taken.</b></p> <p>United States</p>
	<p><b>Describe the demographics of the respondents or characteristics of the unit of measure, and the number of respondents or units surveyed.</b></p> <p>All demographics.</p>