

PASCO COUNTY BOCC

Citizen Participation Plan

Pasco County, Florida

Pasco County Community Development

3/9/2021



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Introduction

The resources made available to Pasco County through CDBG, HOME, Section 108 Loan Guarantee and ESG programs are directed at meeting the needs and building the capacity of low- to moderate- income residents. The very citizens these resources seek to assist have historically played a small role in forming neighborhood plans or setting neighborhood priorities for resource allocation. This Citizen Participation Plan is intended to increase citizen participation and result in Plans that are based on low- to moderate- income citizen review and comment which are supplemented by feedback from other citizens, businesses, and other community-based entities.

The Lead Agency for the consolidated planning process in Pasco County is the Community Development Department. The Community Development Department is charged with notifying citizens about the planning process, facilitating neighborhood/community meetings, and drafting the Strategic Plan and the Annual Action Plan that summarizes the allocation of CDBG, HOME, Section 108 Loan Guarantee and ESG program funds. In addition, Community Development works in cooperation and consultation with various community partners, representatives, from public and private agencies, and other stakeholders to incorporate the needs of our citizens, thereby maximizing the comprehensiveness of the Plans.

Citizen participation and the requirements of the Citizen Participation Plan should not be construed to restrict the responsibility or authority of Pasco County for the development and execution of its entitlement program activities. The Pasco County Board of County Commissioners remains the sole approving authority for the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Citizen Participation Plan and any amendments to these Plans.

Definitions

Applicant/Grantee – The government body which applies for funding under the formula grant and is responsible for complying with all regulations governing the program. In Pasco County the applicant is the Board of County Commissioners. The applicant becomes the grantee when funding is received.

Annual Action Plan (AAP) – A document submitted to HUD annually that, with community participation, summarizes the actions and activities to be undertaken and specific federal and non-federal resources that will be used yearly to address the priority needs and specific goals identified in the Consolidated Plan. The Annual Action Plan serves as the application for funding for the Community Development formula grant programs (CDBG, ESG, and HOME).

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – A federally funded grant program established for the purpose of developing viable communities, including decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunity for persons of low- and moderate-income. The grant also provides funds for the elimination of slums and blight.

Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) – A 5-year planning document submitted to HUD every five years that, with community participation, identifies the County’s affordable housing and community development needs and priorities.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) – A federally funded grant program established for the purpose of engaging homeless individuals and families living on the street; improving the number and quality of emergency shelters; helping operate these shelters; providing essential services to shelter residents, rapidly re-housing homeless individuals and families, and preventing individuals/families from becoming homeless.

HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) – A federally funded grant program established for the purpose of expanding the supply of decent, safe, affordable housing for persons of low- and moderate-income.

Low- and Moderate-Income (LMI) – An income that does not exceed eighty percent (80%) of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Predominately Low- and Moderate-Income Neighborhood- Generally defined as a primarily residential area comprised of census tracts and/or census tract block group(s) in which a least fifty-one percent (51%) of the residents have an income that does not exceed eighty percent (80%) of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Public Hearing – A meeting to provide information and receive public input that is publicly advertised in a newspaper of general circulation with a minimum of 15 days’ notice, is held a time and place convenient to the intended program beneficiaries and one where accommodations for persons with disabilities are made. A public hearing will address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, proposed strategies and actions for affirmatively furthering fair housing, and a review of program performance.

Special Groups – Groups presumed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to meet the low- and moderate-income criteria. These groups include abused children, elderly persons, battered spouses, homeless persons, severely disabled persons, illiterate persons, and people living with AIDS. Other special groups may also be designated in the Consolidated Plan.

Targeted Areas – Specific areas designated “targeted,” for substantial long-term improvements to be produced within a reasonable length of time. A boundary is established for the area and a schedule of improvements planned and identified.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – The federal department which administers the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs.

Urban Counties – Those counties within a metropolitan area which have a population of at least 200,000 people in their unincorporated areas, and counties with less than 200,000 people in their unincorporated areas but which have entered into Cooperation Agreements with cities whose populations are sufficient to bring the combined city and county population to at least 200,000 persons. Pasco County qualifies as an urban county. Urban counties are entitlement communities under the CDBG program.

Virtual Public Hearings: In the event of an unforeseen and unpreventable event that renders in-person public gatherings impossible or inadvisable, such as a natural disaster or pandemic, public hearings may be held as a virtual hearing:

- Hearing formats may include webinars, webcasts, telecasts, radio or audio broadcasts, or other virtual communication tools as appropriate for the meeting format.
- Virtual hearings will provide, at a minimum, an opportunity for members of the public to publicly ask questions and for the presenter or public officials to make public response.
- All questions and responses will be documented, either in written form, such as meeting minutes or chat scripts, or recorded, or as appropriate for the meeting format.
- Virtual hearings will be publicly noticed, and in the event traditional noticing tools are unavailable or will not effectively reach the public, alternative public noticing efforts will be made and documented.

Citizen Participation Plan

Pasco County Florida is required to adopt and follow a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) that sets forth the policies and procedures for, and encourages citizen participation and consultation in the development, revision, implementation and amendment of the Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) and the Annual Action Plans (AAP), and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

Encouragement of Participation and Consultation

The Citizen Participation Plan is designed to encourage participation of all residents and stakeholders, especially:

- Low- and moderate-income persons;
- Public/assisted housing residents, including their resident boards/councils/corporations;
- Minorities;
- Non-English speakers;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods;
- Residents of designated revitalization and/or slum/blighted areas;
- Residents of areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used;
- Local and regional institutions;
- Continuums of Care;
- Businesses and developers; and
- Public, Private and nonprofit organizations, including philanthropic community-based and faith-based organizations.

Consultation

When preparing the ConPlan, the County will invite other public and private agencies to consult in the preparation of these documents. These invitations will include agencies that provide:

- Public and assisted housing;
- Health services
- Social services (including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, homeless persons);

- Community-based and regionally based organizations that represent protected class members;
- Organizations that enforce fair housing laws
- Other local governments and metropolitan planning organizations;
- Broadband internet service providers and organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide; and
- Agencies whose primary responsibilities include the management of flood prone areas, public land/water resources, and emergency management agencies.

Regulations require that specific areas be addressed in the overall consultation process. These include:

Homeless Strategy

When preparing the portions of the ConPlan describing homeless strategy and the resources available to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) and persons at risk of homelessness, Pasco County will invite the following entities to consult:

- The Continuum of Care;
- Public and private agencies that address housing, health, social service, victim services, employment, or education needs of low-income individuals and families; homeless individuals and families, including homeless veterans, youth, and/or other persons with special needs;
- Publicly funded institutions and systems of care that may discharge persons into homelessness (such as health-care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); and
- Business and civic leaders.

Lead Based Paint

When preparing the portion of the ConPlan concerning lead-based paint hazards, the County will invite state or local health and child welfare agencies to consult and examine existing data related to lead-based paint hazards and poisonings, including health department data on the addresses of housing units in which children have been identified as lead poisoned.

Non-Housing Community Development

When preparing the description of priority non-housing community development needs in the ConPlan, the County will notify adjacent units of general local government, to the extent

practicable. Broad notification will be made when the ConPlan is available online for public comment.

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

When preparing the portion of the ConPlan concerning Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, the County will invite the types of organizations described below to consult. Pasco County will make an effort to provide information to the Public Housing Agency about its affirmatively furthering fair housing strategy and consolidated plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the Public Housing Agency may make this information available at the annual public hearing(s) required for the Public Housing Agency.

- Community -based and regionally based organizations that represent protected class members;
- Organizations that enforce fair housing laws, such as State or local fair housing enforcement agencies; and
- Other public and private fair housing service agencies, to the extent that such entities operate within the County

Public Housing

The County will invite the Public Housing Agency operating in Pasco County to consult on consideration of public housing needs, planned programs and activities, strategies for affirmatively furthering fair housing, and proposed actions to affirmatively further fair housing in the ConPlan.

Access for Persons with Disabilities

Access will be provided at all stages of the ConPlan and Annual Action Plan process to those with disabilities. Access includes:

- All public meetings will be held in accessible locations
- All public hearings will be held in accessible locations
- Written documents, including the Citizen Participation Plan, proposed and adopted ConPlan, AAP, the CAPER, as well as any amendments or revisions to these documents will be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

Those in need of accommodations at public meetings, public hearings or to request documents in an accessible format should contact Pasco County Community Development at 727-834-3447, 8610 Galen Wilson Boulevard, Port Richey Florida 34668.

Assessing Language Needs

Pasco County Florida recognizes the need to undertake reasonable actions to facilitate the participation of persons with Limited English Proficiency. Local officials will undertake reasonable actions necessary to allow such persons to participate in the community development process. Such actions may include the provision of an interpreter and/or the provision of materials in the appropriate language or format for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

Technical Assistance

Pasco County will provide technical assistance to groups, representative of persons of low- and moderate-income, that request assistance in commenting on the proposed Plans, and in the developing proposals for funding assistance under the Plan. Technical assistance does not include the provision of funds to the groups. Technical assistance provided may include, but not limited to:

- Providing information related to housing and community development;
- Responding to citizens' inquiries regarding the Plan and the programs it covers;
- Making referrals to other local, state, and federal agencies when necessary;
- Responding to requests for assistance in developing proposals for funding; and
- Providing assistance with the online application system.

Availability to the Public

There are two types of documents available to the public, each with their own timeframes and requirements: Proposed Documents and Approved/Accepted Documents. The documents will be available to the public in one or more of the following ways:

- From 8:00 am to 5:00 pm EST, Monday through Friday (except for County holidays) at the Pasco County Community Development Department;
- Online at www.pascocountyfl.net/385/Community-Development
- A reasonable number of free paper copies of the Plan will be available upon request; and
- Oral interpretation will be made available upon request to Limited English Proficiency residents.

Proposed Documents

The County will provide residents, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to examine the contents of and submit comments on the below listed documents. Proposed documents are available during their respective comment periods and, upon adoption and/or acceptance by HUD, the final versions will be retained on file. During the comment periods listed in Table 1, further in this document, the following proposed documents will be available:

- Proposed Citizen Participation Plan
- Proposed Consolidated Plan
- Proposed Consolidated Plan substantial amendments
- Proposed Annual Action Plan
- Proposed CAPER

Approved/Accepted Documents

The County will provide residents, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to records for the preceding five years. The documents that will be made available include:

- Citizen Participation Plan as adopted
- Consolidated Plan as adopted
- Consolidated Plan substantial amendments
- Annual Action Plan as adopted
- CAPER accepted by HUD

Public Notices, Comment Periods, and Hearings

The public will be notified of the availability of documents and opportunity to comment at several stages in the Plan and CAPER process as described in this section.

Data

At or as soon as feasible after the start of the public participation process, the County will make the HUD-provided data and any other supplemental information the County plans to incorporate into the Consolidated Plan available to residents, public agencies, and other interested parties. The data will be made available on the Community Development website; HUD provided data will be made available by cross-referencing to the data on HUD's website.

Public Notices

Upon publication of the CPP, the ConPlan, APP, the CAPER and any substantial amendments or revisions to these documents, a public notice with a summary of the proposed document will be published in a newspaper of general circulation. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the document, the duration of the public comment period, and a list of the locations where the entire document may be examined. For the ConPlan, the notice will also include the amount of assistance Pasco County anticipates receiving; the range of activities that may be undertaken; and the estimated amount that will benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Comments for each proposed document will be accepted according to the timeframes described further in this document (Table 1).

Public Meetings

Residents will be provided reasonable and timely access to local meetings. Meetings may be held at various locations throughout Pasco County to provide convenient and timely access to all citizens. All locations will be accessible to those with disabilities.

Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held to obtain views and respond to proposals/comments of all citizens, public agencies, potential/actual beneficiaries and other interested parties. A minimum of two public hearings at different stages of the program year will be held. Public hearings will be held for proposed documents including the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Actions Plan, the CAPER and any substantial amendments or revisions to these documents. Notice of the time, date, locations, and purpose of the meetings will be publicized in a newspaper of general circulation. Additional effort is made through notices on the County's website, other social media venues such as Facebook, email and print notices to the CDBG subrecipients and public housing/assisted housing residents, and notice to neighborhood groups, nonprofits, and other organizations to encourage and emphasize the involvement of low- and moderate- income residents. Meetings may be held at various locations throughout Pasco County to provide convenient and timely access to all citizens. All locations will be accessible to those with disabilities.

Summary of Notice, Comment and Hearing Timeliness

Document	Public Notice	Public Comment Period	Public Hearing
Citizen Participation Plan	Upon publication, will contain the summary of contents, purpose, duration of public comment period, list of locations where document is available	30 Calendar Days prior to the submission of the Consolidated Plan to HUD	In conjunction with public hearing for Consolidated Plan, publish notice online/in newspaper of general circulation
CPP Amendments	Upon publication, will contain the summary of contents, purpose, duration of public comment period, list of locations where document is available	30 Calendar Days prior to implementation of the substantial amendment	Prior to implementing the substantial amendment, may be held in conjunction with public hearings for Annual Action Plan. Publish notice online/in newspaper of general circulation
Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan	Upon publication, will contain the summary of contents, purpose, duration of public comment period, list of locations where document is available. Will also include the amount of assistance, expected, range of activities undertaken, estimated amount that will benefit low/mod residents.	30 Calendar Days prior to submission of the Plan to HUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the planning process to receive comments on the housing and community development needs identified at community meetings • During the development of proposed activities • Publish notice online/in newspaper of general circulation
Plan Amendments	Upon publication, will contain the summary of contents, purpose, duration of public comment period, list of locations where document is available	30 Calendar Days prior to implementation of the substantial amendment	Prior to implementing the substantial amendment, may be held in conjunction with public hearings for Annual Action Plan. Publish notice online/in newspaper of general circulation
CAPER	Upon publication, will contain the summary of contents, purpose, duration of public comment period, list of locations where document is available	15 Calendar Days prior to submission of the CAPER to HUD	Prior to submission to HUD. Publish notice online/in newspaper of general circulation

Table 1

Comments

Proposed documents are published according to the Availability to the Public section described earlier in this document (Page 8). The County will receive comments from citizens according to the timelines listed in Table 1, above.

The County will consider comments or view of residents of the community received in writing, or orally at the public hearings. Residents may submit written comments to:

Community Development Department
8610 Galen Wilson Boulevard
Port Richey, Florida 34668
www.communitydev.com

A summary of comments or views received, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the County's response will be attached to the submitted document(s).

Complaints

The County will provide written response to written complaints from its residents related to the Plan and any amendment, AAP, any revisions and the CAPER within 15 working days of receipt, where practical.

Amendments

Changes to the ConPlan and Annual Action Plan are called amendments. When certain changes are required to these documents, a public participation process is required. This process may include a public notice, comment period, and/or a public hearing as described in Table 1, above.

Citizen Participation Plan

The Citizen Participation Plan may need to be amended. A substantial amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan consists of:

- The addition or removal of any proposed document to the public hearing or comment requirements of the plan
- A change in duration of any of the comment periods described in the Citizen Participation plan unless the comment period is altered at the direction of HUD

Upon completion of the public participation process, the amended Citizen Participation Plan will be made available to the public as described in Table 1.

Consolidated and Action Plans

The projects presented in the Consolidated Plan may need to be amended. Amendments may be necessary if there is a change in allocation priorities, the method of distributing funds, the purpose/scope/location/beneficiaries of an activity, or to carry out projects not previously described in the Plan.

A substantial amendment consists of:

- An increase or decrease to a project or activity that exceeds 30% of an approved allocation
- The addition of an activity not previously described in the ConPlan or Annual Action Plan.

Upon completion of the public participation process described in Table 1, HUD will be notified of the substantial amendment. Amendments may be submitted as they occur or at the end of the program year.

Performance Reports

Pasco County prepares an annual report called the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The CAPER requires a public participation process. This process includes a public notice, comment period and public hearing as described in Table 1. Upon completion of the public participation process, the CAPER will be submitted to HUD.

Anti-Displacement

For federally funded activities, the County will attempt to avoid any displacement. In the event that the County undertakes an activity with federal funding that would involve displacement, the County will follow the procedures as identified within the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Disaster Response and Recovery

On June 1, 2017, HUD issued CPD Notice 17-06, *entitled Using CPD funds for Disaster Response and Recovery*. This notice directs entitlement communities to be prepared to respond quickly to a disaster by ensuring that the possible use of federal funding for disaster response is included in the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, and the Annual Action Plan.

In the event of a presidentially declared disaster, any HOME, ESG or CDBG funds reallocated to address the disaster will be considered non-substantial amendments up to the threshold of \$1,000,000.

Waivers

All of the requirements in the Citizen Participation Plan are subject to change in the event of guidance or waivers issued by HUD. In the event that HUD issues guidance or waivers that affect citizen participation in the planning process County Staff will attempt to provide as much notice as is possible while still complying with the guidance or waiver received from HUD.

Final Plan Approval

Citizen participation and the requirements of the Citizen Participation Plan should not be construed to restrict the responsibility or authority of Pasco County for the development and execution of its entitlement program activities. The Pasco County Board of County Commissioners remains the sole approving authority for the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Citizen Participation Plan and any amendments to these Plans.