



Community Development Block Grant Program and Osceola HOME Consortium

Citizen Participation Plan 2020-2025

Prepared by: Osceola County
Human Services Department
330 N. Beaumont Avenue, Kissimmee, FL 34741

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- Include virtual hearings as an allowed method for citizen participation;
- Update the types of declared disasters or emergency events to include terrorism and infectious diseases, such as the recent coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) pandemic, that may necessitate expedited substantial amendments;
- Provide details on possible actions, including reprogramming of funding and types of possible activities that may be undertaken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Includes provisions relative to Consolidated Plan citizen participation, Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership and Emergency Solutions Grant waivers made available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act;
- Make minor edits that do not change current citizen participation policies.

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

Osceola County Five Year Consolidated Plan Citizen Participation Plan

Pursuant to regulations of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) emanating from the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, 1987 and 24 CFR Part 91.105 – Citizen Participation and Consultation, Osceola County has created a Citizen Participation Plan to incorporate provisions that affect the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and Osceola HOME Consortium. It contains five sections:

- Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan
- Citizen participation opportunities
- Access to records
- Complaints
- Criteria for substantial amendments

I. Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan

The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to identify and set forth guidelines that the Osceola County Human Services Department will follow to ensure that citizens of Osceola County are adequately aware of programs/activities that are funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Citizen Participation Plan will address the time frame and manner citizens will be informed and encouraged to participate in the planning process for the expenditure of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and HOME Investment Partnerships grant. This plan will also address how citizens will participate in the development of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year plan that discusses strategies to address community needs, priorities, and proposed activities. The plan is due August 15 every five years.

The Annual Action Plan

The Annual Action Plan is a yearly update of the Consolidated Plan where specific projects are identified for that fiscal year funding. The plan is due annually by August 15.

The Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER)

The CAPER is an annual summary that discusses the accomplishments of projects funded the previous fiscal year. The CAPER also discusses the amount of funds budgeted for each project, expenditures, demographic information of beneficiaries, homeless data, and other information pertinent to that fiscal year.

Consultation Activities

During preparation of the Consolidated Plan Osceola County consults with public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and fair housing services for children, veterans, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS, and their families. Additionally, the County consults with the Continuum of Care, and adjacent units of government.

Osceola County replaced the 1991 Citizens' Advisory Task Force with the Community Development Block Grant Citizens Advisory Board (CDBG CAB) in May 6, 2002, to provide and encourage citizen participation, by providing a minimum of two (2) public hearings, each at different stages of the program, for the purpose of obtaining citizens' view and responding to proposals and questions.

The CDBG Citizens Advisory Board will provide comments on the draft Osceola County Five-Year Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan, including needs and proposed strategies, actions, and projects. The County has an active Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) that is kept current on the programs and activities of the CDBG and HOME grants. Additionally, the County will inform public and private agencies that provide housing, health, and social services information about community meetings and public hearings

II. Citizen Participation Opportunities

The Osceola County Citizen Participation Plan encourages citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Citizen Participation Plan, any amendments to these documents, and the preparation of performance reports. It particularly encourages participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used. It also encourages the participation of all its citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.

Before Osceola County adopts the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and Action Plan, it will make the draft plans available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties. The draft plans include the amount of assistance the County expects to receive (including grant funds and program income), and range of activities that may be undertaken, including estimated amount that will benefit persons of low-and moderate-income. Osceola County will also include the County's plan to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced, specifying the types and levels of assistance it will make available to persons displaced, even if the County expects no displacement to occur. The County's Citizen Participation Plan explains how this information will be made available. The County will incorporate language in its Five-Year Consolidated Plan and indicating that should displacement occur the County will follow its adopted Anti-Displacement and Relocation Policy.

Osceola County will publish the proposed Consolidated Plan, Annual Action, Citizen Participation Plan, and CAPER in a manner that affords citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and to submit comments. A summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan will be published in one or more newspapers of general circulation; by making them available at Human Services office; County's website; and by placing them in the County libraries. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan, and will include the list of the locations where copies of the entire proposed

plans may be examined.

To encourage citizen participation, Osceola County will undertake the following activities each year:

- Hold at least two public hearings/meetings during the program year to garner citizen comments on the needs, strategies, actions, projects, and performance
- Offer a comment period, not less than thirty (30) days, on the draft versions of the Osceola County Five-Year Consolidated Plan inclusive of the Citizen Participation Plan, Annual Action Plan, and Substantial Amendments. At any time during a national declared disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, the comment period should be no less than (5) days.
- Offer a comment period, not less than 30 days for Substantial Amendments together with the Consolidated Plan or the Annual Plan. This time period should be no less than (5) days during a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID19.
- Offer a comment period, not less than fifteen (15) days, on the draft version of the CAPER
- Distribute draft copies of the Osceola County Five Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments and CAPER for citizen review. Publish copies of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action, Substantial Amendments and CAPER on the Osceola County website
- Provide special accommodations to residents upon request

A more detailed description of the citizen participation activities are found below:

Public Hearings

Osceola County will hold at least two public hearings per year to obtain public comments on needs, strategies, actions, projects, and performance. One Public Hearing will be held prior to submittal of the Annual Action Plan and the other prior to submittal of the CAPER.

Additional Public Hearings may be held if an amendment is needed. Comments from individuals or groups received in writing or at the public hearing will be considered and included in the plans. During times of a national declared disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, in person public hearings will not be required. Virtual public hearings would be acceptable.

Public Meetings

The County will work with community leaders and neighborhood-based organizations to foster citizen involvement of the residents they serve. The County will hold community meetings in

the neighborhoods of the County Census Tracts primarily served with CDBG funds. Sub-recipients are required to attend public meetings and public hearings if warranted. Comments from individuals or groups received in writing or at the public meeting will be considered and included in the plans.

Public Meetings round #1: Proposed Needs, Strategies, and Projects

The County will hold the first round of public meetings (including the required public hearing) no later than a month before the Osceola County Consolidated Plan (including the Annual action Plan) is due to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Sub-recipients are required to attend Public Meetings. This process also applies to the Annual Action Plans and any Substantial Amendments.

The public hearing will contain a discussion of the following items:

- The amount of assistance the County expects to receive in the coming program year for the CDBG program and Osceola HOME Consortium, including program income
- The range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit low-and moderate-income persons
- The priority needs in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan
- The five-year strategies in the Consolidated Plan designed to address priority needs
- A discussion of the programs or activities that are proposed to be funded

Public Meetings Round #2: Performance

The County will hold the second round of public meetings (including the required public hearing) no later than a month before the Osceola County Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) is due to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Sub-recipients are required to attend Public Meetings.

The public hearing will contain a discussion of the following items:

- The amount of assistance the County received for the CDBG program and Osceola HOME Consortium (including program income) during the previous program year.
- The priority needs in the Consolidated Plan.
- The five-year strategies in the Consolidated Plan designed to address those needs.
- The progress made carrying out the activities and projects in the previous year's Annual Action Plan.

The County will hold public meetings at times and locations convenient to potential beneficiaries, and with accommodation for persons with disabilities. Public hearings will be held during Board of County Commissioner meetings at 1 Courthouse Square, Kissimmee, FL 34741 or during Citizen Advisory Task Force meetings at Osceola County Human Services, 330 N. Beaumont Ave, Kissimmee, FL 34741.

The public hearing notice will request persons with disabilities and persons in need of transportation assistance to notify the County so that it may make appropriate arrangements. When the County expects a significant number of non-English speaking residents to attend, a translator may be available, upon request, if one is available. For special requests, residents may contact the CDBG/HOME Office at 407-742-8402 or via email cdbg@osceola.org with any special requests.

Public Comment Period

To provide citizens with more opportunities to provide input into the Citizen Participation Plan, Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and CAPER, the County will provide the following public comment periods:

- Citizens may comment on the Citizen Participation Plan during the 30-day public comment period or at the Public Hearing. During times of a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, the comment period shall be no less than 5 days.
- Citizens may comment on the Five-Year Consolidated Plan during the 30-day public comment period or at the Public Hearing. During times of a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, the comment period shall be no less than 5 days.
- Citizens may comment on the Annual Action Plan during the 30-day public comment period or at the Public Hearing. During times of a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, the comment period shall be no less than 5 days.
- Citizens may comment on the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report during the 15-day public comment period or at the Public Hearing.
- Citizens may comment on Substantial Amendments during the 30-day public comment period or at the Public Hearing. During times of a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, the comment period shall be no less than 5 days.

To make comments on these documents, citizens may:

- Call Human Services at (407) 742-8402
- Write to "Citizen Comments," care of Osceola County Human Services Department, 330 North Beaumont Avenue, Kissimmee, FL 34741 (citizens may also drop off comments to this address)
- E-mail comments to: cdbg@osceola.org

- Attend the public hearing and public meetings described above. The participation of all citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities and residents of public and assisted housing developments is strongly encouraged.

The County will provide citizens with reasonable opportunities for public comment. The County will advertise a public notice concerning the availability of these documents in the public notice section of the Orlando Sentinel and or Osceola News Gazette and other neighborhood/local newspapers (if available) no later than the first day of the public comment period. During times of a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, advertisements and public notices may be solely on the County's website.

The County will make copies of plans available at its Human Services Department, County website and at all County libraries as well as electronic formats.

Upon request, the County will make the Five-Year Consolidated Plan available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities. Persons with a hearing impairment may call 1-800-955-8771. Non-English speaking residents and sight-impaired individuals may call Osceola County Human Services at (407) 742-8400 to arrange for translated material. A summary of citizen comments will be provided in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and CAPER.

Planning of Public Hearings and Meetings

- Osceola County will hold at least two public hearings per year to obtain public comments on needs, strategies, actions, projects, and performance for the preparation of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.
- A public meeting will be held prior to preparation of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan to collect information. This meeting will be advertised to the public with 7 to 15 days anticipation.
- Osceola County will publish a summary of the draft Five-Year Consolidated Plan inclusive of the Citizen Participation Plan, the Draft Annual Action Plan, and Substantial Amendments, respectively, offering a 30-day comment period. During times of a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID 19, the comment period shall be no less than 5 days.
- The Draft Five-Year Consolidated Plan inclusive of the Citizen Participation Plan, the Draft Annual Action Plan, and Substantial Amendments to the aforementioned documents will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners at a Public Hearing after the 30-day or 5-day if applicable comment period expires.
- A meeting with the CDBG Advisory Task Force will be held to discuss the draft Five Year Consolidated Plan inclusive of the Citizen Participation Plan, the Draft Annual Action Plan, the CAPER, and Substantial Amendments to any of the aforementioned documents. This meeting will occur prior to the Board of County Commissioners meeting. During times of a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, this meeting may be held virtually.
- The summary of the Draft CAPER will be advertised with a fifteen (15) day-comment period.

Amendments to the Five Year Consolidated Plan

The Consolidated Plan regulations (§91.505) require Osceola County to amend its approved Consolidated Plan whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

1. To change allocation priorities or change the method of distributing funds that was not previously discussed in the Consolidated Plan.
2. To carry out an activity, using CDBG or HOME (including program income), not previously described in the Annual Action Plan.
3. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity previously approved in an Annual Action Plan.

Upon completion, the County will make the amendment public and will notify HUD that an amendment was made. The County will ensure that all amendments are contained in the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report submitted to HUD after the end of the program year. The County reserves the right to make non-substantive changes to the Consolidated Plan without opening a public comment period.

The table on the following page summarizes the public hearing and public notice requirements for each CDBG/HOME plan or report.

CDBG and/or HOME Public Hearing and Community Meeting Notice Summary

<i>Type of document</i>	<i>Public Community Meetings</i>	<i>Legal Notices</i>	<i>Others notices and information resources for public</i>	<i>Location of Plans for public review</i>
Combined Five Year Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan	At least 4 community meetings, at least 1 CATF meeting, St. Cloud City Council and Kissimmee City Council and 1 BOCC Public Hearing	Notice in newspaper at least 30 days prior to Public Hearing advertising Public Hearing and 30-day Public Comment period. During times of a declared disaster or pandemic, comment period should be no less than 5 days	Notify residents of community meetings at least 10-14 days prior to the meeting. Post flyers throughout community, mail announcements to target area churches and mail postcards, and post to County website. During times of a declared disaster or pandemic, comment period should be no less than 5 days	Copies of the plan will be provided on the County website, all libraries, and in the Human Services Department
Substantial Consolidated Plan Amendments	At least 1 CATF meeting and 1 Public Hearing	Notice in newspaper at least 30 days prior to Public Hearing advertising Public Hearing and 30-day Public Comment Period. During times of a declared disaster or pandemic, comment period should be no less than 5 days	Public Hearing will be advertised on County website	Copies of the plan will be provided on the County website, all libraries, and in the Human Services Department
Annual Action Plan	At least 2 community meetings, 1 CATF meeting, St. Cloud City Council Review Meeting, and 1 BOCC Public Hearing	Notice in newspaper at least 30 days prior to Public Hearing advertising Public Hearing and 30-day Public Comment Period. During times of a declared disaster or pandemic, comment period should be no less than 5 days	Notify residents of community meetings at least 10-14 days prior to the meeting. Post flyers throughout community, mail announcements to target area churches and mail postcards, and post to County website. During times of a declared disaster or pandemic, comment period should be no less than 5 days	Copies of the plan will be provided on the County website, all libraries, and in the Human Services Department
Substantial Annual Action Plan Amendments	1 CATF meeting, 1 Public Hearing	Notice in newspaper at least 30 days prior to Public Hearing advertising Public Hearing and 30-day Public Comment Period. During times of a declared disaster or pandemic, comment period should be no less than 5 days	Public Hearing will be advertised on County website	Copies of the plan will be provided on the County website, all libraries, and in the Human Services Department

<i>Type of document</i>	<i>Public Community Meetings</i>	<i>Legal Notices</i>	<i>Others notices and information resources for public</i>	<i>Location of Plans for public review</i>
Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report	1 CATF Meeting, 1 Public Hearing	Notice in newspaper at least 15 days prior to Public Hearing advertising Public Hearing and 15 day Public Comment period	Notify residents of community meetings at least 10-14 days prior to the meeting. Post flyers throughout community, mail announcements to target area churches and mail postcards, and post to County website	Copies of the plan will be provided on the County website, all libraries, and in the Human Services Department

- **All Notices are run in the Orlando Sentinel and Osceola Gazette, which are local daily newspapers.**
- **The Consolidated Plan and Annual Plan Notices are published in both English and Spanish.**
- **All Notices contain information on the locations to review plans.**
- **BOCC--Board of County Commissioners**
- **CATF--Citizen's Advisory Taskforce**

III. Access to Records

Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties may review information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan. To locate records and arrange space for viewing, the County requests a written notice two (2) days before review. Reviews of records that are at least two (2) years old will require a 5-day notice. Requests for copies may be subject to a per-page copying charge.

Written requests may be received via email at cdbg@osceola.org or through mail at Osceola County Human Services Dept., Attn: CDBG/HOME Office, 330 N. Beaumont Avenue, Kissimmee, FL 34741.

Technical Assistance

Upon request, the County will provide technical assistance to organizations that wish to develop proposals for funding assistance under any programs covered by the Consolidated Plan. Osceola County will especially encourage group representatives of persons of extremely low to moderate-income persons to request technical assistance. The County will determine the level and type of technical assistance required.

IV. Complaints

The County will provide a substantive written response to every written citizen complaint related to the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and the CAPER within 15 working days. To lodge a formal complaint, write to Osceola County Human Services Dept., Attn: CDBG Office, 330 N. Beaumont Avenue, Kissimmee, FL 34741.

V. Criteria for Substantial Amendment

The Consolidated Plan regulations consider certain amendments to be *substantial amendments* that require a public comment period and additional citizen participation. The Consolidated Plan regulations at 91.105 (c) require that the County include under Substantial Amendment changes in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another. Additionally, Osceola County defines a *substantial amendment* as changes in the use of CDBG or HOME funds, in excess of 50 %, from the original allocation. Increase or decrease in funding for the same original activity with no change in purpose, scope, or beneficiaries will not constitute a substantial amendment; however, such change should be posted in the Department website and also entered into IDIS as all the other amendments.

If the County should need to make a substantial amendment to its approved Consolidated Annual Plan, the County will provide a 30-day comment period before it implements the amendment. During times of a national disaster or pandemic such as COVID19, the comment period shall be no less than 5 days.

The County will also hold a Public Hearing on any substantial amendment(s). To provide reasonable notice to the public, the County will publish a notice of the change in the Orlando Sentinel and/or Osceola News Gazette and other neighborhood/local newspapers (if available)

on or before the beginning of the citizen comment period for the amendment(s).

The County will also distribute information on the substantial amendment(s) to:

- Citizen Advisory Taskforce (CATF)
- County libraries
- County website

In finalizing the substantial amendment, the County will consider any written or verbal citizen comments received at the public hearing. The County will attach a summary of comments (including a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons it did not accept them) to the substantial amendment. Please see an earlier section of this Citizen Participation Plan for information about where to send comments.

Disaster/Emergency events that may require expedited substantial amendments:

It may be necessary to expedite substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan in the event of a declared disaster or emergency. There are three types of disasters/emergency events that may necessitate an expedited substantial amendment including (1) Man-Made-disasters, (2) Natural disasters, and (3) Terrorism. Man-made disasters can include chemical spills, mass rioting, power outages, dam failure, plant explosions, etc. Natural disasters can include earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, wild fires, flooding and public health issues such as wide-spread disease such as the recent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Terrorism events include bomb threats, biochemical attacks like the spread of anthrax, or cyber-attacks like hacking, phishing, and virus distribution, etc. These expedited substantial amendments may include funding new activities and or reprogramming of funds including cancelling activities to meet needs resulting from a declared disaster or emergency. Therefore, Osceola County may utilize CDBG, HOME, ESG funds to meet these needs with a 5-day public comment period instead of a 30-day public comment period which is otherwise required for substantial amendments. For CDBG funding under FY 2019-2020, FY 2020-2021 And the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security ACT or CARES Act, Osceola County may provide 5-day notices for public comments as allowed under the HUD waiver.