

APPENDIX A – CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Introduction

Lexington County receives funds annually from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to implement the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The primary goals of the CDBG program are to provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities particularly for low- and moderate-income persons.

To receive CDBG funds, the County is required to develop and implement a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP). The purpose of the CPP is to encourage citizen participation in the development, implementation and evaluation of the specific activities described within the Consolidated Plan and funded through the CDBG program.

The Consolidated Plan is a comprehensive planning process that describes the County's housing market conditions, identifies overall needs for affordable housing and non-housing community development, and provides strategies to address those needs. The Consolidated Plan also serves as the application for Federal funding under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

The Citizen Participation Plan sets forth the policies and procedures for citizen involvement in the following components of the Consolidated Plan:

- Five-Year Consolidated Plan
- Annual One-Year Action Plan
- Substantial Amendments
- Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER)

Definitions

The following terms are used in the Citizen Participation Plan and can be defined as follows:

Consolidated Plan

This is the collective term for the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual One-Year Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER).

Five-Year Consolidated Plan

This document is prepared once every five years and serves as the County's housing and community development plan. HUD requires the Plan from the County to receive CDBG funds. The Plan is prepared in accordance with the process prescribed in 24 CFR Part 91 and describes the County's housing and community development needs, resources, and priorities and proposed activities to be undertaken over a five-year period.

Annual One-Year Action Plan

This document is prepared annually and is an update to the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. This Plan describes the needs, resources, priorities and proposed activities to be undertaken over a one-year period.

Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

This document is prepared annually and describes the efforts and progress made in implementing the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and One-Year Action Plan for the preceding Program Year.

Program Year

The year in which CDBG, HOME and ESG activities are carried out. The program year begins July 1st and ends June 30th.

Substantial Amendment

HUD requires grantees to submit an amendment to their Annual Action Plan when there is a substantial change in the allocation priorities or methods of distribution to projects funded with CDBG. A substantial amendment is defined as one of the following:

1. Project deletions or changes made in allocation priorities or methods of distribution that have the effect of changing the funding level of individual CDBG projects identified in the Annual Action Plan by more than 30% of an entitlement jurisdiction's annual funding level;
2. Any new eligible activity funded with CDBG not already identified in the Annual Action Plan;
3. Significant changes in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another, in an amount greater than 30% of the annual CDBG allocation.

Substantial amendments will be made available for public comment at the same locations previously described for the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan. Resident comments (verbal and written) received during the citizen participation process will be summarized in writing and included in an attachment to any amendments submitted to HUD.

Citizen Participation Plan Adoption / Amendments

The County will make the CPP available to the public and provide citizens with reasonable notice and opportunity to comment on the adoption of, and amendments to, the CPP. Upon request, the CPP will be provided in a format accessible to persons with disabilities. Prior to adopting or amending the CPP, the County will publish a notice in The Chronicle Newspaper and in the Lexington County's Administration Building (a public facility) establishing a minimum of 15 days for the public to comment.

Development of the Consolidated Plan

In developing the Consolidated Plan, the County will utilize information obtained through citizen participation at public hearings, written comments received, and consultation with:

- Public and private agencies that provide:
 - Assisted Housing
 - Health Services
 - Social Services For:
 - ∞ Children
 - ∞ Elderly
 - ∞ Persons with Disabilities
 - ∞ Persons with HIV/AIDS and Their Families
 - ∞ Homeless Persons
- Local Health and Child Welfare Agencies
- (Lead-Based Paint Hazards and Poisoning).
- Adjacent Jurisdictions (Non-housing Community Development Needs)
- State of South Carolina (Non-housing Community Development Needs)
- Area Planning Agencies (Central Midlands Council of Governments)

Amendments to the Consolidated Plan

HUD requires the County to amend its approved Five-Year Consolidated Plan and/or One-Year Annual Action Plan whenever one of the following decisions is made:

- To make a change in allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
- To carry out an activity using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan not previously described in the Annual Action Plan (including program income); or
- To change the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity.

Prior to implementation, the County will classify an amendment as either substantial or non-substantial. The public will be notified of any amendments classified as substantial and will be provided the opportunity to comment as described in Section VI (Public Comment). An amendment will be considered substantial if it meets the following criteria:

- The amendment will result in a change in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity to another when the activity funds are greater than 30% of the Fiscal Year's CDBG entitlement grant award.
- Adds an activity; or
- Deletes an activity

Following the implementation of any amendment, the County will notify HUD that an amendment has been made by submitting a copy of the amendment along with any supporting documentation.

Public Comment

Citizens are encouraged to participate and provide comments on the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, One-Year Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments and the CAPER. Prior to submission to HUD, the County will place a notice in The Chronicle Newspaper informing citizens of the availability of the document and the time period allowed for submitting comments before the documents are finalized and submitted to HUD. Any public comments received during the comment period shall be considered, summarized and attached to the documents prior to submission to HUD. The numbers of days allowed for public comment on each document are as follows:

- Five-Year Consolidated Plan – **30 days**
- One-Year Annual Action Plan – **30 days**
- Substantial Amendment(s) – **30 days**
- CAPER – **15 days**

Public Hearings

The County will hold a minimum of two (2) public hearings each program year to obtain citizens views and respond to proposals and questions. The purposes of the hearings are to allow the public the opportunity to comment on:

- Program Performance

- Housing and Community Development Needs
- Development of Proposed Activities

Public hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and with accommodation for persons with disabilities. The hearings will generally be held at the Lexington County Administration Building. Also, throughout the comment period surveys and comment cards will be left at various public facilities within Lexington County for community input. Accommodations for persons with visual, hearing or other impairments will be made upon request and reasonable notice. If a significant number of non-English speaking persons can be reasonably expected to attend the hearing, the County will make translation services available. At a minimum, hearings will be conducted during normal County business hours. When practical, hearings may be conducted after normal business hours.

The **first public hearing** is held during the development of the Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) and prior to making the Annual One-Year Action Plan or Five-Year Consolidated Plan available for public comment. The purpose of this hearing is to:

- Discuss the County’s annual performance in achieving its goals and objectives for the preceding program year, and
- Obtain views from citizens on housing and community development needs, including priority non-housing community development needs, for the upcoming program year.

Input from this hearing is utilized in finalizing the CAPER and developing the Annual One-Year Action Plan or Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

The **second public hearing** is held during the development of the Annual One-Year Action Plan or Five-Year Consolidated Plan. This hearing is held primarily to discuss and obtain views from citizens regarding the draft plan including input on proposed activities, and funding amounts.

- Public Hearing on CAPER August – September
- Public Hearing on proposed Annual Action Plan April - May

Notice of the public hearings will be published in The Chronicle and in the Lexington County’s Administration Building (a public facility) at least 7 days before the scheduled hearing date. Notices will include the date, time, location, and purpose of the hearing, and the name and phone number of the County contact person for questions and clarification.

Meetings

In the event local meetings are held in addition to public hearings in the development of the Consolidated Plan, the County will provide citizens with reasonable and timely access. Notice of such meetings will be accomplished by direct invitation, media releases, or similar means to ensure that interested persons have an opportunity to participate. The County will determine the specific form and timing of notification based on the purpose of the meeting.

Availability to Public

Copies of the CPP, Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments and CAPER will be available to the public for review during normal County business hours at the Department of Community and Economic Development, Lexington County Administration Building. All documents will be made available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities upon request and with reasonable notice.

Access to Records

The County will provide citizens, public agencies and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the County's Consolidated Plan and the County's use of CDBG assistance. Specific requests for such information must be submitted in writing to:

Robbie Derrick, Director

Lexington County

Community Development Department

212 South Lake Drive

Lexington, South Carolina 29072

Technical Assistance

The County will provide technical assistance to group representatives of persons of low- and moderate-income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under the County's CDBG program. The level and type of assistance provided will be determined by the County on a case-by-case basis depending on the needs and capacity of the groups

requesting assistance. The technical assistance provided will not include the provision of funds to the groups.

Displacement

The County will make every effort to minimize displacement of persons affected by any CDBG activities. It will comply with the acquisition and relocation requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (43 U.S.C. 4601), and implementing regulations at 49 CFR part 135.

Complaints

The County will provide, at a minimum, a timely, substantive, written response to all written citizen complaints related to the Consolidated Plan, amendments, and CAPER. The response will be provided within 15 working days, when practicable, after receipt of the complaint. All complaints must be submitted in writing to the following address:

Robbie Derrick, Director

Lexington County

Community Development Department

212 South Lake Drive

Lexington, South Carolina 29072