

Waccamaw HOME Consortium
Citizen Participation Plan



WACCAMAW

R E G I O N A L

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

WRCOG
Citizen Participation Plan
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

As a recipient of funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is required to have and actively implement a Community Development Citizen Participation Plan. This plan sets forth the policies and procedures for citizen involvement in the development of the Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan (Consolidated Plan), annual action plans, substantial amendments to the plan and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 24 CFR Part 91, Subpart B. (See Appendix A for definitions.)

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments seeks to exceed the minimum federal requirements and make citizen participation a reality at all stages of the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Consolidated Plan. The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments Home Program Manager will act as the agent for Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments to implement all aspects of the Citizen Participation Plan. Implementation will be accomplished through two processes: consultation and direct citizen participation.

Consultation includes consulting with public and private agencies; with organizations concerned with lead-based paint hazards; with state and other local government jurisdictions; and with local housing authorities (24 CFR 91.100).

Citizen participation includes actively encouraging citizens who are affected by the Consolidated Plan to participate in the planning process, submission of substantial amendments and development of the CAPER opportunities to participate through the following methods:

- Coordination of information with agencies and organizations concerned about housing and community development;
- Formal public comment periods;
- Public hearings;
- Open meetings;
- Availability of information and documents;
- Technical assistance;
- Accommodations for persons with disabilities;
- Accommodations for non-English-speaking persons; and
- Complaint procedures.

CONSULTATION

GENERAL: During the development of the five-year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan and the annual action plans, the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments staff will consult with public and private agencies that provide assisted housing,

health services and social services (including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, homeless persons). Consultation will include individual and group meetings, and requests for data related to housing, health services, social services children, the homeless, HIV/AIDS, the elderly and person with disabilities.

LEAD-BASED PAINT: Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments staff will consult with local health and child-welfare agencies on 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 NEEDS: The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments staff will consult with adjacent units of government concerning any non-housing needs identified during the development of the five-year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan and the annual action plans. Should non-housing needs be included in the plans, they will be submitted to the State CDBG offices as required in 24 CFR Part 91, Subpart B, 91.100 (a) (3).

PUBLIC HOUSING: The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments staff will consult with the area housing authority concerning public housing needs and the planned Comprehensive Grant program activities to insure that activities are coordinated to help achieve the comprehensive community development goals. This will be especially true with regard to local drug elimination, neighborhood improvement programs, and resident programs and services.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

These policies and procedures are designed to encourage participation of low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where HUD funds are proposed, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods as defined by the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments. The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments especially encourages the participation of minorities, non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities.

COORDINATION OF INFORMATION: In addition to those low-income residents living in targeted revitalization areas, persons living in public housing, transitional housing, shelters and housing for people with disabilities or HIV/AIDS will be especially encouraged to participate in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan.

Such information will include, but will not be limited to, notices of general information about planned activities, community meetings, public hearings, and availability of copies of the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments and the CAPER.

FORMAL PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS: The general public and interested agencies have 30 days to comment on the Consolidated Plan, the annual action plans and substantial amendments before the final plans or amendments are submitted to HUD. (A substantial amendment is an amendment to the Consolidated Plan or annual plan and is one which includes the addition of a new activity or priority; a change in the nature of an activity, its location, or its target population such that different citizens will be impacted by it; or a change of more than 50 percent in the amount of funds allocated to an activity.) In case of a natural disaster that requires an immediate but substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan, the general public and interested agencies will have 10 days to comment on those amendments that are directly related to the disaster.

The public has 15 days to comment on the CAPER, the Citizen Participation Plan and substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan prior to their submission to HUD.

Notices for the comment periods will be published in the local newspapers that cover the Consortium area and reach Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg counties. News releases will be sent from the County to local media, announcing the comment period and location of draft copies. A summary of the comments or views not accepted and the reasons, therefore, will be attached to the final plan, amendment or CAPER.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments staff will hold a minimum of two (2) public hearings each year to obtain citizens' views on the Consolidated Plan and the annual action plans, the program performance, and to respond to proposals and questions. One hearing will be held before the Consolidated Plan or the action plan for that year is published for comment.

Hearings will be held in the evening for the convenience of working people; at a location convenient to the potential and actual beneficiaries of the plan; and accommodations will be made, if necessary, for persons with disabilities. Anyone with a hearing or sight disability, or any non-English speaking residents may contact the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments 72 hours in advance in order for arrangements to be made to accommodate their needs at the hearing.

Notices for the public hearings will be published in the local newspapers and in the Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg County Administration buildings. News releases will be sent to local media, announcing the comment period and location of draft copies. A summary of the comments or views not accepted and the reasons, therefore, will be attached to the final plan, amendment or CAPER.

OPEN MEETINGS: Citizen meetings concerning development of the Consolidated Plan, annual plans or neighborhood revitalization will be held at various times and in various locations to accommodate the working hours of the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of the plan. When feasible, an effort will be made to publish notices for such meetings at least 14 days in advance in the local newspapers and post in Administrative Buildings through the Consortium Boundaries. News releases will be sent from the County to all local media, announcing the date, time and place of the public hearings. Each advertisement will appear at a minimum, seven (7) days prior to the hearing in the local papers.

Other meetings, related to the development, implementation or review of the Consolidated Plan, annual plans or neighborhood revitalization, will be open to all beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries of the plan.

AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS: Draft copies of the Consolidated Plan, the annual action plans, CAPER and Citizen Participation Plan will be available in the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, 1230 Highmarket Street, Georgetown, SC for viewing from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Additional single copies may be obtained from the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments at no charge.

Following submission of the Consolidated Plan, the annual action plans, CAPER and Citizen Participation Plan, final copies of each will be available in the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, 1230 Highmarket Street, Georgetown, SC office for viewing from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Additional single copies may be obtained from Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments at no charge.

Copies of the draft and final Consolidated Plan, the annual action plans, CAPER and Citizen Participation Plan will be distributed to the main libraries in Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg County complexes, City of Myrtle Beach and the area housing authorities.

In accordance with South Carolina state law, housing and community development records belonging to the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments are considered public information. Exceptions are records that contain confidential information about individuals participating in or benefiting from the programs.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN: Before adoption of the Consolidated Plan or the annual Action Plan, the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments will make available to citizens, public agencies and other interested parties information about the plan, including the amount of assistance Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments expects to receive (including extended funding, additional grants and program income), and the range of activities that may be undertaken with those funds, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income.

DISPLACEMENT: The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments will make every effort possible to minimize displacement of persons affected by any CDBG or HOME activities. Development of a displacement policy is in progress. When the policy is completed, details on displacement and the type and level of assistance will be made available to all rehabilitation loan applicants and to future applicants immediately after the loan process has begun.

TECHINICAL ASSISTANCE: The **Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments** will attempt to provide individual technical assistance upon request or at the direction of the **Grant Administrator** to organizations and individuals representative of low and moderate income people who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding through the Consolidated Plan. All potential applicants for funding are encouraged to contact Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments staff for assistance before completing a proposal form. All applications should be made in writing with a reasonable amount of time to schedule and plan for the technical assistance.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Public hearings and community meetings will be held in locations accessible to persons with restricted mobility. A sign-language interpreter will be available at public hearings and community meetings, if requested at least 72 hours in advance.

For inquires about the program, the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments has access to a TDD system for all hearing-impaired citizens. Access to the system is available (with the proper equipment) by calling (800) 833-7400.

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments staff is available to assist visually impaired citizens by reading materials to them, upon request.

NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PERSONS: Interpreters will be available for non-English speaking citizens, at public hearings and community meetings, if requested at least 72 hours in advance. A copy of the Consolidated Plan, the annual action plans, substantial amendments and the CAPER will be made available in Spanish from the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, if requested at least seven (7) working days in advance.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES: Written complaints and grievances concerning Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments Community Development Program will be responded to in writing within fifteen (15) working days, where practicable. Such written grievances should be submitted to David Essex, Executive Director, Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, 1230 Highmarket Street, Georgetown, SC 29440. The telephone number is (843) 546-8502. Should the individual not be satisfied, he or she may arrange a meeting with the Housing Program Manager to discuss the matter. Any citizen may address the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments Board at its regular meeting to discuss problems not resolved at staff level.

APPENDIX A DEFINITIONS

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN: The document that describes the needs, resources, priorities and proposed activities to be undertaken over a one-year period with respect to HUD programs, including the CDBG and HOME programs, and is part of the Consolidated Plan

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER): The document that provides HUD with the necessary information to assess each grantee's ability to carry out its programs in compliance with applicable regulations and requirements and describes the grantee's program achievements to its citizens.

CONSOLIDATED HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (or "Consolidated Plan"): The document that is submitted to HUD that serves as the planning document (comprehensive housing affordability strategy and community development plan) of the jurisdiction and an application for funding under any of the Community Planning and Development formula grant programs (CDBG, ESG, HOME OR HOPWA), which is prepared in accordance with the process prescribed in 24 CFR Part 91. The plan describes needs, resources, priorities and proposed activities to be undertaken over a five-year period with respect to HUD programs, including the CDBG program.

SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT: an amendment to the Consolidated Plan or annual plan and is one which includes the addition of a new activity or priority; a change in the nature of an activity, its location, or its target population such that different citizens will be impacted by it; or a change of more than 50 percent in the amount of funds allocated to an activity.