



**City of Florence Alabama
Community Development Block Grant
Citizen Participation Plan**

Introduction

The City of Florence, Alabama encourages participation of citizens in the development and planning of activities relative to its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG). Annual entitlement grants are made to the City from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the purpose of addressing the needs specifically of low to moderate income residents. Through this Plan, citizen involvement in the CDBG and ESG programs are designed to be an open process in which citizens are informed and can influence decisions on activities.

Access to Information and Records

The City, through its Planning and Community Development Department, offers citizens access to information and records relating to the City's proposed use of CDBG and ESG funds. The City will make available to citizens, records regarding the past use of funds, the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, and any substantial amendments proposed. Records are available during regular business hours at Florence City Hall in the Planning and Community Development Department.

Public Hearings

The City will hold a public hearing to obtain the views of citizens, and to respond to proposals and questions, on the City's housing community development needs. This hearing will be held early in the planning process to allow citizens and community and neighborhood organizations an opportunity to make recommendations and comments. This hearing will be held at a time and location convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, with accommodation for the handicapped.

Official notice will be placed on the City's website at www.florenceal.org. All public hearing locations will be wheelchair accessible and accommodations for sign interpretive services can be made available if requested one week in advance of meetings. Once the Consolidated Plan and/or the Annual Action Plans are completed; they will be placed on review for 30 days for public comments.

Publication of Final Statement

The Executive Summary of the Consolidated Plan will be published and made available at the Florence City Hall Planning and Community Development Department, Suite 115 and the City's web site at www.florenceal.org. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan as well as identify where the full text of the Consolidated Plan may be reviewed.

Technical Assistance

The City will provide technical assistance to neighborhood citizen committees, civic groups, and individual citizens in understanding the Community Development program requirements, policies, and regulations governing the CDBG Entitlement program.

Complaint Procedure

Any citizen or group of citizens, with specific complaints regarding parts or the entire CDBG Entitlement program has the right to appeal through specified channels. Written complaints will be

responded to in writing within 15 working days from the data received by the Planning and Community Development Department.

- 1.) Any person or group that is aggrieved by an action or proposal related to the CDBG Entitlement program shall first make their complaint known to the Planning and Community Development Department:
Melissa Bailey, Director of Planning and Community Development
City of Florence
P.O. Box 98
Florence, AL 35631
(256) 740-8806

- 2.) If the aggrieved person or group does not obtain satisfactory results from appealing to the staff, then an appeal may be made to the local governing body through the Office of the Mayor:
Office of the Mayor
City of Florence
P.O. Box 98
Florence, AL 35631
(256) 760-6400

- 3.) If the aggrieved person or group desires to carry appeal forward from the local governing body they may contact:
U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development
950 22nd Street North, Suite 900
Birmingham, AL 35203

Bilingual

English being the predominant language of all neighborhoods in the City of Florence, the requirement for meeting the needs of non-English speaking residents is not applicable.

Substantial Amendments

The City of Florence will amend its Final statement whenever it decides not to carry out an activity described in the Final Statement, or decides to carry out an activity not previously described, or decides to substantially change the purpose, scope, location, beneficiaries, or budgeted dollar amount of an activity. Any new project or transaction to existing activities over \$150,000.00 or as noted above changes in the purpose, scope, location and beneficiaries, will constitute a substantial change or amendment for purposes of requiring a written amendment.

Prior to amending its Final Statement, the City will provide citizens with reasonable notice of, and an opportunity to comment on such proposed amendments, by publication on the City of Florence Planning & Community Development website at least 30 days prior to amendment by the City. The City will make available to the public, and will submit to HUD, a description of amendments adopted.

https://florenceal.org/departments/planning_and_community_development/index.php

Performance Report

Citizens will be given a comment period of a minimum of 15 days to provide input on the Consolidated Action Plan and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

National Emergency

During National Emergency's declared by the President of the United States the City of Florence will adjust consultations and reviews according to Federal and State guidance.

- CARES Act in response to Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)
Efforts to contain COVID-19 require limited public gathering, such as those often used to obtain citizen participation. There is a need to respond to the quickly growing spread and effects of COVID-19. Therefore, HUD waives 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2) and (k), 24 CFR 91.115 (c)(2) and (i) and 24 CFR 91.401 to allow grantees to determine what constitutes reasonable notice and opportunity given their local circumstances. This authority is in effect through the end of the 2020 program year.

The City of Florence will place a public notice on the government website located at https://florenceal.org/departments/planning_and_community_development/community_development_block_grant.php to notify citizens of a five (5) day public comment period for substantial amendments to the Consolidated or Annual Action Plans.

Applicable

This Citizen Participation Plan shall apply to all Community Development Block Grant Entitlement activities that are on-going as of the adoption of said Plan, as well as all future activities.

This Plan shall remain in effect, from its adoption date, and until all activities assisted under the CDBG Entitlement program are completed, or until it is superseded by a new or amended Plan.