

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE **2020 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

Introduction

This is the Citizen Participation Plan for use with the Consolidated Plan for the State of New Hampshire (Consolidated Plan). This plan has been prepared and approved by the Housing and Community Development Planning Council (see below). Federal regulations require the adoption and utilization of a Citizen Participation Plan in the Consolidated Plan development process to ensure adequate opportunities for citizen participation.

The Consolidated Plan must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the State to obtain three different grants available to states. These grant programs are: the Community Development Block Grant, administered by the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA); the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and Housing Trust Fund, administered by the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (New Hampshire Housing or NHHFA); and the Emergency Solutions Grant, administered by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Bureau of Housing Supports (DHHS-BHS).

The public is invited to comment on this plan at any time. This plan is considered an integral part of the Consolidated Plan. It provides the opportunity for significant involvement of organizations, agencies, and citizens in the development of the state's Consolidated Plan and ensures access to information during the planning and implementation of programs utilizing federal resources covered by the Consolidated Plan.

In MARCH of 2020, this plan was amended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see amendment provision below for updated noticing timelines and procedures for public input.

Notification of Public Hearings and Meetings

Citizens will be given notice of the availability of the Consolidated Plan documents and of public hearings and meetings pertaining to the Consolidated Plan Process through several avenues.

- Email lists of stakeholders have been developed by the, CDFA NHHFA, and the DHHS-BHS consisting of homeless, housing, community, and economic development interests in New Hampshire. The list includes state agencies, nonprofit shelter, housing and service providers, program and resource administrators, local and regional planners, community development organizations, community economic development organizations, community action agencies, public housing authorities, the banking sector, CDBG entitlement communities, NH Municipalities, HOME Participating Jurisdictions, for-profit

developers, organizations representing special needs populations, and the legal assistance network. These groups will receive information directly via email or mail from CDFA, NHHFA, DHHS-BHS or requesting that they invite their clients, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders to participate in public hearings, submit information on housing, economic development, community development and homeless needs and comment on the draft plan. Additionally, notices will be posted on the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority internet web page at www.nhhfa.org, the Community Development Finance Authority web page at www.nhcdfa.org, and the Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Housing Supports web page at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bhhs/index.htm>

- The use of social media, both to inform partners and engage the general public has begun and is expected to develop further as staff expertise grows. Early social media use has included Twitter, Facebook, and a blog.
- Documents relating to the Consolidated Plan will be posted on the internet web site <https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/nh-consolidated-planning-for-hud/>
- In addition to emailing notices to stakeholders and potential stakeholders, information about Public Hearings, Public Comment Periods, and Draft Consolidated Plan documents will be published no less than 30 days in advance not including the date of publication and the date of the hearing in the statewide edition of the Union Leader. Given the unprecedented economic disruptions during the last year of the Consolidated plan, 2020, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the public comment period is reduced to 5 days.
- Notices about all public hearings shall describe the time, location and purpose of the meeting and indicate a name and phone number of a hearing coordinator to whom requests for special accommodations can be made. Public Hearing notices will be emailed to all interested parties, partners and other stakeholders that are on the CDFA, NHHFA and DHHS-BHS mailing lists for Consolidated Plan information. Given the unprecedented disruptions during this year caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the public hearing will be held virtually.

Location and Format of Public Meetings and Hearings

- The above-listed interests and the public will be invited to attend several public meetings and hearings to provide input to the development process and to react to the draft Consolidated Plan. For the populations that are eligible for Emergency Solutions Grant funds, the State's Continuums of Care including the meetings of the "sub-continuums" operating in different regions of the state will serve as the primary means for citizen input. Early in the process of developing a new Consolidated Plan, public meetings and forums will be held throughout the state with the following objectives: to inform the public about the proposed schedule and process for development and submission of the Consolidated Plan; to solicit information about housing, homeless, community development and economic

development related needs; and to gather information about current programs and program delivery processes. In addition to participating by providing verbal or written testimony at a hearing, citizens and interested parties will be encouraged to submit written (printed or electronic format) comments. Additional mechanisms such as online surveys and/or blogs may be used to gain additional input on the public's perceptions of priority needs that can be addressed with Consolidated Plan resources.

- Once a Consolidated Plan is drafted, a public hearing will be held during a 30 day public comment period to hear reactions from the public about the draft Plan prior to submission and publication. All public hearings will be recorded, and written summaries of the comments and suggestions presented as well as staff responses will be included in the final Consolidated Plan.
- All hearing sites shall be accessible and the hearing coordinator, generally a staff person of the NHHFA, shall be responsible for accommodating the special needs of hearing participants to the greatest extent possible.
- In the event that a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be expected to attend, interpreter services will be arranged and provided.
- All meetings and public hearings will be interactive to the greatest extent possible. Typically, the meetings and hearings will include presentations of data and information by the administrative agencies to assist in soliciting reactions and input from attendees.

Availability of Documents and Access to Records

- To the greatest extent possible any citizen will be provided with any information they request pertaining to the Consolidated Plan process within 15 days.
- Notice of the availability of the draft version of a Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report and related documents will be mailed or emailed to key nonprofit and community groups. Notice of availability of these documents and generally the documents themselves will be available on the internet at <https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/nh-consolidated-planning-for-hud/>
- Summary minutes to hearings will be prepared and made available to the public. Input provided in writing or at the meetings and hearings will be reviewed and considered in the drafting of a final Consolidated Plan.
- Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties will be provided reasonable and timely access to information and records pertaining to the State's Consolidated Plan.

Housing and Community Development Planning Council

- The Housing and Community Development Planning Council(the Council) (see Appendix A) was established by Executive Order 97-3.
- The Council is charged with the preparation of the State's Consolidated Plan which governs various federal programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) such as the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships, Housing Trust Fund and Emergency Solutions Grant programs. These are important tools by which the state and local governments act to address the housing, homeless, community and economic development needs of low-income individuals and families.
- The Executive Director of the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority is the chairperson of the Council and provides staff support for the Council to coordinate and facilitate various aspects of the development of the Plan and related plans and performance reports.
- The Council's Steering Committee is made up of representatives of New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, Community Development Finance Authority, the Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Housing Supports, and the Office of the Governor
- Council membership includes representatives from state agencies representing the housing needs of specific populations (including children, elderly persons, disabled persons, and persons with HIV/AIDS), and economic and community development related issues; local housing authorities; community development agencies; nonprofit housing, economic and community development organizations; local governments; regional planning agencies; nonprofit and for-profit lenders to housing, economic and community development projects; homeless and social service providers for specific populations.
- Any member of the public can gain access to the Consolidated Planning process through members of the Housing and Community Development Planning Council or the staffs of the organizations that they represent. A current list of HCDPC members is always available by contacting any of the three administering agencies.

Citizen Participation Opportunities

- Development of the Citizen Participation Plan
 - Every year the HCDPC will evaluate its Citizen Participation Plan and submit any changes to it with the annual Action Plan.

- The Citizen Participation Plan is available continuously for general comment.
 - This Citizen Participation Plan will be published as part of the final Consolidated Plan.
- Needs Assessment
 - During the development of the Consolidated Plan meetings will be attended by administering agency staff at locations throughout the state to solicit input on state needs.
 - Input on housing, homeless, community and economic development needs will also be solicited online in the form of an invitation to comment via letter or email, and through use of online survey instruments.
 - Each year public hearings will be held to receive comments on the draft Action Plan.
 - A series of meetings are held annually by the Housing and Community Development Planning Council to discuss and reassess state needs.
 - Administering agency staff are available and welcome opportunities to speak to community, economic and regional groups on the Consolidated Plan.
- Draft of Consolidated Plan or Action Plan
 - An estimate of the funds expected to be received in the upcoming year will be published in the Action Plan section of the Draft Consolidated Plan.
 - A description of the types of activities that can be funded will also be published.
 - At least 30 days before the final Plan is submitted for approval to the Governor's Office, citizens will be notified that a Draft of the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan is available for download at <https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/nh-consolidated-planning-for-hud/> Printed copies will be available by request to those without internet access. This will give citizens a reasonable amount of time to review and comment on the Draft Plan.
 - The Draft Plan will contain all sections required by HUD, including the Priorities Table, and an account of all proposed uses of the expected funds.

The Draft Plan will be provided to the public for free. A copy of the Consolidated Plan, or parts thereof, including this Citizen Participation Plan shall be available for download at <https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/nh-consolidated-planning-for-hud/> and provided in print to individuals lacking internet access upon request of the Community Development Finance Authority, New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. The Performance Report (CAPER, below) will be available on the same terms. Copies of the final Consolidated Plan shall generally not be published and made available until the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has issued an approval. Until that time, the Draft Consolidated Plan for Public Comment will be made available.

- Copies of the Consolidated Plan will be available for public review at the NHHFA in Bedford, CDFA in Concord, and DHHS-BHS in Concord.
 - Information about the availability and federal approval of the final Consolidated Plan and Performance Report shall be made available to all interested parties.
 - Written suggestions are encouraged from citizens. All written suggestions are to be sent to the addresses below or emailed to hgoodwin@nhhfa.org
 - Any comments or views expressed by citizens or units of general government pertaining to the draft Consolidated Plan shall be considered in the writing of the final Consolidated Plan. A summary of comments and views expressed by citizens and units of local government and resulting actions taken shall be included in the Final Plan.
- The Final Consolidated Plan or Action Plan
 - Copies of the Final Consolidated Plan or Action Plan and summary comments will be available to citizens free of charge.
 - Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)
 - The CAPER must be submitted to HUD not later than 90 days after the end of the program year (December 31st). **This date has been extended to May 30, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
 - Copies of the CAPER are available at <https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/nh-consolidated-planning-for-hud/> and in print as stated above no less than 15 days prior to submission to HUD.

- Citizen Participation Requirements for Local Governments
 - Per RSA 162 L:14, prior to filing an application for Community Development Block Grant funding, a municipality is required to hold at least one public hearing to obtain the views of citizens on community development, to furnish the citizens with information concerning the amount of funds available and the range of community development activities that may be undertaken under this subdivision and to give affected citizens an opportunity to examine a proposed statement to the projected use of such funds to be applied for. A notice of the hearing shall specify the grounds for the hearing as well as the date, time, and place. This notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality, and a legal notice shall also be posted in at least 3 public places within such municipality at least 10 days prior to the hearing. The 10 days shall not include the day of publication or the day of posting, whichever is later, nor the day of the hearing, but shall include any Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays within the period. This hearing shall be held before the municipality's governing body takes any final action regarding the filing of the application.

- Availability of Technical Assistance
 - Technical assistance on how to gain access to the funds covered by the Consolidated Plan will be available upon request to organizations and individuals serving low and moderate-income people through any of the three administrative agencies (CDFA, NHHFA, and DHHS-BHS). Such assistance shall be in the form of program summaries and detailed application information packets, training sessions, and/or assistance through the application process tailored to the individual needs of the applicant. Each agency agrees to make program and project records available to the public in accordance with federal and state laws.
 - The CDFA and the DHHS-BHS offer periodic workshops for applicants. NHHFA provides technical assistance to applicants as needed or requested.
 - All application packages include the application rating factors and criteria used to evaluate proposals.

Responses to Written Complaints and Concerns

- All written complaints, concerns and suggestions should be sent to any of the following:

- Gloria Paradise, Director, Housing Grant Programs
New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority
32 Constitution Drive
Bedford, New Hampshire 03110
gparadise@nhhfa.org

- Shelley Hadfield, Director of Housing and Community Development
Community Development Finance Authority
14 Dixon Avenue, Suite 102
Concord, New Hampshire 03301
shadfield@nhcdfa.org

- Melissa Hatfield, Bureau Chief
Department of Health and Human Services
Bureau of Housing Supports
State Office Park South
105 Pleasant Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301
Melissa.Hatfield@dhhs.nh.gov

Written complaints will receive a written response within 15 working days. The public may obtain information about the progress of the plan, its targeted development date and public hearings at any time by contacting the NHHFA at (603) 310-9315 or 1-800-640-7239, the hearing impaired may access TDD at (603) 472-2089.