

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

*(Revised January 11, 2022)*

## Introduction

This is the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) for use with all activities related to the five-year Consolidated Plan for the State of New Hampshire (Consolidated Plan). The CPP was initially prepared and approved by the Housing and Community Development Planning Council. Federal regulations require the adoption and utilization of a Citizen Participation Plan to ensure adequate opportunities for citizen participation in all activities related to the Consolidated Plan. Additional revisions may be made from time to time by agency staff and posted to our websites to reflect any changes or updates to the federal regulations.

The five-year Consolidated Plan, and the subsequent annual Action Plans for years two through five, must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the State to obtain four 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 the 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 Housing Supports (DHHS-BHS).

The public is invited to comment on the CPP at any time. If the CPP is revised, the revision date at the beginning of the document will be updated. This plan is considered an integral part of the Consolidated Plan activities. It provides the opportunity for significant involvement of organizations, agencies, and citizens in the development of the state's Consolidated Plan, and other associated plans and reports to HUD, and ensures access to information during the planning and implementation of programs utilizing federal resources covered by the Consolidated Plan.

## Notification of Public Hearings and Meetings and Comment Periods

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, including but not necessarily limited to those listed below:

- Email lists of stakeholders have been developed by CDFa, NHHFA, and DHHS-BHS consisting of homeless, housing, community, and economic development organizations 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, broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, agencies whose primary responsibilities include the management of flood prone areas, public land or water resources, and emergency management. These groups will receive information directly via email or mail from CDFFA, NHHFA, DHHS-BHS 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 New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority's website at [www.nhhfa.org](http://www.nhhfa.org), the Community Development Finance Authority website at [www.nhcdfa.org](http://www.nhcdfa.org), and the Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Housing Supports website at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bhhs/index.htm>
- The use of social media, both to inform partners and engage the general public, is used to inform the public of actions pertaining to the Consolidated Plan process. Early social media use has included Twitter, Facebook, and a blog.
- Documents relating to the Consolidated Plan will be posted on the internet website <https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/nh-consolidated-planning-for-hud/>
- Notices will be published in a daily newspaper with statewide circulation and posted on the associated agencies' websites. Additionally, Public Hearing notices will be emailed to all interested parties, partners and other stakeholders that are on the CDFFA, NHHFA and DHHS-BHS mailing lists for Consolidated Plan information.

### **Hearings and Comment Periods for Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report**

- At least one public hearing will be held on housing and community development needs before the 5-Year Consolidated Plan and the subsequent annual Action Plans for years two through five, are drafted and posted for comment. There will be a minimum 14-day notice of the date of this public hearing.
- After this public hearing, the public will be informed that there will be a 30-day comment period for the 5-Year Consolidated Plan or the annual Action Plan for years two through five. Before the final Plan is submitted for approval to the Governor's Office, a Draft of the 5-Year Consolidated Plan or the annual Action Plan for years two through five will be 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. Citizens will be able to submit comments via email or mail and the contact for both will be identified in the notice of the comment period. 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. Given the continued disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, public hearings will continue to be held as hybrid, in person and virtually, for the immediate future.

- If there is a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan or an annual Action Plan, the public will be given at least 30 days to comment before the amendment is implemented. Notices will be published in the statewide edition of the Union Leader and posted on the associated agencies' websites. Additionally, notices will be emailed to lists of interested parties, partners and other stakeholders that CDFA, NHHFA and DHHS-BHS maintain. Substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan/annual Action Plan are change in methods of distribution, adding an activity not listed in Annual Action Plan, or change to the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity. Citizens will be able to submit comments via email or mail and the contact for both will be identified in the notice of the comment period.
- The public will be given at least 15 days to comment on the annual Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) before it is submitted to HUD. Notices will be published in the statewide edition of the Union Leader and posted on the associated agencies' websites. Additionally, notices will be emailed to lists of interested parties, partners and other stakeholders that CDFA, NHHFA and DHHS-BHS maintain. Citizens will be able to submit comments via email or mail and the contact for both will be identified in the notice of the comment period.

## Location and Format of Public Meetings and Hearings

- At least one public hearing will be held for public input into the housing and community development needs before the Consolidated Plan is drafted and posted for comment, however the public may also be invited to attend public meetings and forums throughout the state to provide input to the development process. 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 may 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 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.

- 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, Annual Action Plan and Performance Report.
- All hearing sites shall be accessible and the hearing coordinator, generally a staff person of NHHFA, shall be responsible for accommodating the special needs of participants to the greatest extent possible.
- Limited English-speaking residents who wish to attend a public hearing may request interpreter services and these services will be arranged and provided in accordance with NHHFA's Language Access Plan (LAP).
- 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.

#### Citizen Participation Opportunities:

- The Citizen Participation Plan is available on NHHFA's, CDFA's and DHHS's websites continuously for general comment.
- 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.
  - 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, 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, DHHS, Bureau of Housing Supports or New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. Copies of the final Consolidated Plan shall 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.

- Any comments or views expressed by citizens or units of general government pertaining to the draft Consolidated Plan/annual Action 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 submitted to HUD.
- The Final Consolidated Plan or Action Plan
  - Copies of the Final Consolidated Plan or Action Plan will be available on NHHFA's website or a printed copy to citizens free of charge who request it.
- 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 (June 30).
  - Copies of the CAPER are available for comment no less than 15 days prior to submission to HUD. The Draft CAPER will contain all sections required by HUD. The Draft CAPER will be provided to the public for free. A copy 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, or New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. Copies of the final CAPER shall 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 CAPER for Public Comment will be made available.

### Availability of Documents and Access to Records

- If requested by any citizen, information and records relating to the State's consolidated plan and use of assistance under the programs during the preceding 5 years will be provided within 15 days by the applicable agency responsible for the source of funding.
- Notice of the availability of the draft version of a Consolidated Plan, amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report and related documents will be mailed or emailed to key nonprofit and community groups. Notice will be published that these documents are available on the internet at <https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/nh-consolidated-planning-for-hud/>

- 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. Documents will be put in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, if requested. Additionally, documents and notices can be translated upon request for persons with Limited English Proficiency in accordance with NHHFA's Limited English Access Plan (LAP). Requests for documents in either an accessible format or translated should be directed to NHHFA at [jmccarthy@nhhfa.org](mailto:jmccarthy@nhhfa.org).

## 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 oversight of 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.

## CDBG Citizen Participation Requirements for Local Governments

All municipalities receiving CDBG funds from the State of New Hampshire must adhere to the Citizen Participation Requirements set forth in the State's Citizen Participation plan and adopt it. Each municipality also must meet the following requirements:

1. Solicit input on local community development needs and proposed activities particularly by low and moderate-income persons who reside within the municipality in which the grant funds are proposed to be used;
2. Promote public comment on the proposed application and community development activities via a minimum of two public hearings (more if any substantial change is proposed);
3. Provide special technical assistance to groups representative of LMI persons;
4. Identify the needs of non-English speaking residents and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities;
5. Provide for a timely appropriate and effective written answer to complaints and grievances;
6. Provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to information, including the amount of funds available, the range of eligible activities, the activities being applied for, and amount of funds requested.

Each grantee must adhere to the State's Citizen Participation Plan by adopting it as part of its Housing and Community Development Plan.

Per RSA 162 L:14, prior to filing an application for Community Development Block Grant funding, a municipality is required to:

- Through action by the governing body adopt or pass an official act or resolution authorizing the filing of the application and directing the chief executive officer or designee to act in connection with the application and to provide such information as may be required.
- 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.

- Additional information and technical assist regarding the CDBG public hearing requirements can be found at <https://resources.nhcdfa.org/programs/community-development-block-grant/>

## 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.
- 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](mailto:gparadise@nhhfa.org)
  - Mollie Kaylor, Director of Housing and Community Development  
Community Development Finance Authority  
14 Dixon Avenue, Suite 102  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301  
[mkarlor@nhcdfa.org](mailto:mkarlor@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](mailto: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 [clavallee@nhhfa.org](mailto:clavallee@nhhfa.org).