



City of Gainesville, Florida
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
2023-2027

City of
Gainesville

1. Introduction

In accordance with 24 CFR Section 91.105, the City of Gainesville Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department has prepared a Citizen Participation Plan to provide for and encourage citizen participation in the process of preparing and implementing plans related to programs funded by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Citizen Participation Plan provides a guide for citizens and organizations to participate in an advisory role in assisting with the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and Fair Housing Plan, and in the review of the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). The Plan sets forth policies and procedures for citizen participation, which are designed to maximize the opportunity for engagement in the community development process. Special emphasis has been placed on encouraging participation by persons of low and moderate incomes, residents of blighted neighborhoods, residents of areas where community development funds are utilized, residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods identified by the City of Gainesville, minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities.

The Consolidated Plan establishes the City of Gainesville's long-range strategy and five-year investment plan for community development, housing, and homeless services. The Plan allocates federal resources from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME). The Fair Housing Plan, including the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) and/or Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), analyzes fair housing data, housing issues and contributing factors to housing discrimination, which limit housing opportunity and choice. The Fair Housing Plan identifies goals and priorities to address these issues and encourages collaboration with other entities (public housing authorities, participating jurisdictions, in the area). The CAPER is a summary of progress toward achievement of the goals and objectives of the Consolidated and Action plans.

Citizens are encouraged to participate in all phases of the CDBG and HOME programs and will be provided full access to program information. However, final responsibility and authority for the development and implementation of the CDBG and HOME programs, and related plans, will lie with the City of Gainesville.

2. Purpose

Section 508 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987 reinstated the requirement for a written citizen participation plan. The purpose of this plan is to meet HUD's requirements and to spell out the elements of the City's Citizen Participation Plan to encourage citizen input, particularly for the City's program-eligible populations.

The City of Gainesville’s Citizen Participation Plan serves as the foundation for developing stronger citizen relationships in the City. The City supports and encourages full participation of citizens, community groups, and other interested agencies in both the development and evaluation of programs and activities covered in the preparation and implementation of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fair Housing Plan, Substantial Amendments, Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), and other HUD-related plans.

3. Citizen Participation Contact

The Neighborhood Planning Coordinator is designated as the Citizen Participation Coordinator and will serve as the contact person for all matters concerning citizen participation activities. This person shall be responsible for overseeing citizen participation throughout the community development process and the implementation of all citizen participation activities and functions, except those which may be specifically delegated to other parties by this Plan.

The specific duties and responsibilities of the Citizen Participation Coordinator shall include, but not necessarily be limited to: disseminating information concerning proposed projects and the status of current project activities; coordinating various groups which may be participating in the community development process; receiving written comments; serving as a vehicle by which ideas, comments, and proposals from local residents may be transmitted to local officials and/or program staff; and, monitoring the citizen participation process and proposing such amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan as may be necessary.

The Citizen Participation Coordinator may be contacted at (352) 393-8565 during regular business hours. All questions concerning citizen participation in the community development process should be addressed to the Citizen Participation Coordinator.

4. Citizen Advisory Committee Structure

Increasing citizen and community involvement is an important component of gaining a better understanding of the needs in the city and developing appropriate strategies to address those needs. This is evidenced by the creation of a Citizen’s Advisory Committee in 1974. The Citizen’s Advisory Committee for Community Development (CACCD) consists of up to 9 members, and is devoted to activities related to the CDBG, and HOME programs. The CACCD is a primary vehicle for citizen input for these federally funded programs. The City of Gainesville is committed to a meaningful citizen participation process, and therefore, to the continued use of the CACCD.

The primary responsibility of the City Commission-appointed CACCD is to make recommendations to the City Commission regarding the annual distribution of the CDBG and HOME project funds. Those recommendations are based upon the objectives stated in the Consolidated Plan.

The CACCD is a critical component of the public participation process. The CACCD is a resident advisory committee that works with the City’s HCD Department. This committee reviews and evaluates all housing development and public services applications; may perform site visits to the agencies, may hear

presentations from each applicant; and then, makes recommendation to the City Commission for final approval.

In addition to the CACCD, the City Commission appoints an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). Florida statutes require all cities and counties that receive certain State affordable housing funds to establish an AHAC. The primary purpose of an AHAC is to review local rules, regulations, plans, policies, and procedures that impact the cost of housing, and access to affordable housing. Based on that review, each AHAC develops and submits recommendations to its governing body (in Gainesville, the City Commission) and to the state. Furthermore, State statutes allow the AHACs to perform other duties at the request of the governing body.

5. Public Participation Process

The public participation process is designed to engage residents of the following communities or geographic areas in Gainesville:

- Persons affected by housing, community development, and fair housing decisions, investments and challenges, and
- Other persons interested in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fair Housing Plan, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report.

Public Hearings/Meetings

Local governments applying for federal funds must comply with citizen participation regulations outlined in 24 CFR 570.486. Prior to submitting their application for federal funds, the local government applicant must provide sufficient opportunity for affected citizens to gain an understanding of the proposed project activities and the amount of federal funds being sought.

The number of public hearings required depends on the type of plan, amendment process, or performance report considered, but communities are generally encouraged to engage citizens at the onset of the project's planning process.

The purposes of the public hearings and meetings/workshops are to:

- Receive comments from citizens, public agencies, community members and other interested parties;
- Respond to proposals and comments at all stages of the submittal process;
- Identify housing and community development needs;
- Review the proposed use of funds;
- Review program amendments; and
- Review program performance.

The table below summarizes the public hearing, meeting/workshop, notification, comment period, and submittal requirements by type of plan, amendment process or performance report considered:

Public Participation Table					
TYPE OF SUBMITTAL:	Consolidated Plan (including Year 1 Annual Action Plan)	Annual Action Plan	Fair Housing Plan AI / AFH	Substantial Amendments	Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)
<i>Description</i>	Once every five (5) years, the City of Gainesville must develop a Consolidated Plan that identifies goals and strategies for providing affordable and decent housing, a safe and suitable living environment and adequate economic opportunities for program-eligible populations. The Consolidated Plan includes the Year 1 Annual Action Plan.	Each program year (years 2-5), the City of Gainesville must develop an Annual Action Plan that identifies sources of funding and projects to be completed during the program year to implement the Consolidated Plan. The Year 1 Annual Action Plan is included in the Consolidated Plan process. The remaining Year 2 thru Year 5 Annual Action Plans are developed subsequently.	Once every five (5) years, the City of Gainesville must develop a Fair Housing Plan (Analysis of Impediments or Assessment of Fair Housing) to identify fair housing issues and related contributing factors in the jurisdiction and region. The Fair Housing Plan must set goals to overcome fair housing issues and contributing factors identified and those goals must inform subsequent housing and community development planning processes.	A substantial change in the proposed use of program funds requires that amendments to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan be submitted to HUD. Amendments to the Fair Housing Plan are required when there is a material change that impacts the circumstances in the City which may include natural disasters, significant demographic changes, new significant contributing factors, and civil rights findings and/or causes alterations to the Plan's analyses, contributing factors, priorities, and/or goals.	Each program year, the City will issue a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) showing how the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan were implemented. The CAPER includes a description of the resources available and investment of those resources in terms of geographic distribution and populations assisted.
<i>Public Hearings</i>	Minimum of two (2) public hearings to encourage citizen participation, the first to be held early in the planning process and the second to be held at the conclusion of the 30-day comment period.	Minimum of two (2) public hearings to encourage citizen participation, the first to be held early in the planning process and the second to be held at the conclusion of the 30-day comment period.	Minimum of one (1) public hearing during the development of the Plan.	Consolidated Plan/Fair Housing Plan Amendments: Same as for the Consolidated Plan Action Plan Amendments: Same as for the Annual Action Plan.	Minimum of one (1) public hearing at the conclusion of a 15-day public comment period.
<i>Public Meetings/ Workshops</i>	HUD regulations do not require public meetings for the preparation of the Consolidated Plan. The City, at its discretion, may decide to hold a public meeting, in addition to the two (2) required public hearings.	HUD regulations do not require public meetings for the preparation of the Annual Action Plan. The City, at its discretion, may decide to hold a public meeting, in addition to the two (2) required public hearings.	HUD regulations do not require public meetings for the preparation of the Fair Housing Plan. The City, at its discretion, may decide to hold a public meeting, in addition to the one (1) required public hearing.	Action Plan Amendments: HUD regulations do not require public meetings for the preparation of Annual Action Plan Amendments. The City, at its discretion, may decide to hold a public meeting, in addition to the two (2) required public hearings. Consolidated Plan Amendments: HUD regulations do not require public meetings for the preparation of Consolidated Plan Amendments. The City, at its discretion, may decide to hold a public meeting, in addition to the two (2) required public hearings. Fair Housing Plan Amendments: HUD regulations do not require public meetings for the	HUD regulations do not require public meetings for the preparation of the CAPER. The City, at its discretion, may decide to hold a public meeting in addition to the one (1) required public hearing.

Public Participation Table					
TYPE OF SUBMITTAL:	Consolidated Plan (including Year 1 Annual Action Plan)	Annual Action Plan	Fair Housing Plan AI / AFH	Substantial Amendments	Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)
				preparation of Fair Housing Plan Amendments. The City, at its discretion, may decide to hold a public meeting, in addition to the one (1) required public hearings.	
<i>Published Notice of Plan Availability for Review/ Comment</i>	Minimum of one (1) notice of plan availability for public review and comment, including a summary of the plans and locations and hours of availability; published in a newspaper of general circulation and any smaller publications serving program-eligible populations; and published at the start of the 30-day comment period.	Same as for Consolidated Plan.	Same as for Consolidated Plan.	Same as for Consolidated Plan.	Minimum of one (1) notice of CAPER availability for public review and comment; including a summary of the CAPER; locations and hours of availability; published in a newspaper of general circulation and any smaller publications serving program-eligible populations; and published at the start of the 15-day comment period.
<i>Comment Period</i>	The City will make a draft of the plans available for a 30-day comment period. Copies of the draft plans will be made available for review at the Clerk of the Commission's office, HCD Department offices and public libraries serving program-eligible populations. The plans will also be posted to the City's website and a reasonable number of additional copies will be provided to citizens upon request.	Same as for Consolidated Plan.	Same as for Consolidated Plan.	Same as for Consolidated Plan.	The City will make a draft of the CAPER available for a 15-day public comment period. Copies of the draft CAPER will be made available for review at the Clerk of the Commission's office, HCD Department offices and public libraries serving program-eligible populations. The CAPER will also be posted to the City's website and a reasonable number of copies will be provided to citizens upon request.
<i>Submission of the Plan</i>	Submitted to HUD no later than 45 days prior to the start of the program year, including all HUD-required forms and certifications.	Same as for Consolidated Plan.	Same as for the Consolidated Plan.	Consolidated Plan/Action Plan Substantial amendments may be submitted only once per program year.	Submitted to HUD by December 30th or within 90 days of the close of the program year. The City of Gainesville's program year begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th.

Public hearings and meetings/workshops will be held in buildings accessible to all persons, and at times and locations convenient to stakeholders and potential beneficiaries of each federally funded program. These public hearings and meetings/workshops will address the needs of the community, particularly those of program-eligible populations.

Public hearings, meetings and/or workshops are held during the regularly scheduled CACCD meetings to hear and review proposals for funding amendments, new funding proposals, and submission to HUD of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, CAPER, and other plans and reports, as applicable. CACCD meets at least once a month, except in July and August when meetings are held on an as-needed basis. Additionally, the CACCD meetings provide an opportunity to receive citizen feedback regarding activities being funded through CDBG, HOME, and other sources, as applicable.

Public Comment

All residents, particularly those low and moderate income residents of neighborhoods targeted for the use of CDBG, HOME, or Section 108 funds, will be afforded opportunities to participate in discussions on these programs. Residents have the opportunity to make comments by (1) communicating directly with the Citizen Participation Coordinator or; (2) attending meetings of the CACCD; and (3) attending meetings of the City Commission when such items are being considered. Any citizen or citizen's group desiring to comment or object to any phase of the planning, development or approval of the application for CDBG or HOME funds, to the implementation of any CDBG or HOME program, performance reports, or to any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Fair Housing Plan should submit such comments or objections either in person, by telephone, or in writing.

Citizen comments are received during regular office hours of the City by calling (352) 334-5026, or writing the Department of Neighborhood Improvement, Housing & Community Development Department, City of Gainesville, P.O. Box 490, Station 22, Gainesville, FL 32627-0490. Likewise, comments to the City Commission are addressed to the City Commission by calling (352) 334-5015, or writing to the City Commission, City of Gainesville, P.O. Box 490, Station 19, Gainesville, FL 32627-0490.

All meetings of the CACCD and City Commission are open to the public in compliance with the Florida Government-in-the-Sunshine Law. Each group sets its own agenda and rules for addressing the group, and allows for public discussion.

CACCD members serve in an additional role of hearing citizen comments through personal contact with friends and neighbors. Depending on their involvement or representation in other community groups, they may also serve in a formal or informal liaison role with these groups.

Notification Procedures

The City of Gainesville will give adequate notice of public hearings and meetings/workshops related to federal programs. As required by HUD, documentation of these notices must be submitted with the respective application for federal funds. To reach the broadest audience possible, the City places meeting notices in various media outlets and in a variety of languages, when applicable.

Residents are notified of City Commission, AHAC, and CACCD public hearings and meetings/workshops in the following manner:

- Clerk of the Commission’s Weekly Notice of Meetings; and
- City of Gainesville website (www.cityofgainesville.org).

In addition, when public meetings/workshops are held in targeted neighborhoods, any one or a combination of means may be used to publicize the events, including: display ads in the Gainesville Sun; distribution of flyers or handouts; and announcements on radio, television or the City’s website (www.cityofgainesville.org). Notifications of the availability of federal funds may be made in a like manner.

Notice of all regularly scheduled CACCD and AHAC meetings will be published in the Notice of meetings and the City website at least seven (7) days in advance. Every effort will be made to hold these meetings at locations that are convenient to residents of targeted neighborhoods and accessible to the disabled.

Notice of all public hearings will be published in a newspaper of general circulation at least 10 days in advance of the event.

Information about public hearings and meetings/workshops can also be accessed by calling the HCD Department at (352) 334-5026.

6. Development of the Consolidated Plan and Fair Housing Plan

The policies and procedures in this Citizen Participation Plan relate to specific stages of action mandated by Housing and Urban Development (US HUD) and the entitlement program guidelines in the consolidated planning and fair housing processes.

Development of the Consolidated Plan

The stages for the development of the Consolidated Plan include:

- Needs Assessment Stage - The identification of housing and community development needs.
- Plan Development Stage – The preparation of a draft use of funds for the upcoming year. This process may include the development of a proposed new five-year Strategic Plan depending on the cycle.

Development of the Fair Housing Plan

The steps in the fair housing planning process will lead to a Fair Housing Plan that includes strategies to address policies, practices, programs, and activities that restrict fair housing choice and access to opportunity. The City of Gainesville will follow the process and procedures described below in the development of the Fair Housing Plan.

- Community Participation Stage - The City will make the HUD - data and any other data to be included in the Plan, available to the public and provide reasonable opportunities for public involvement during the development of the Fair Housing Plan.

- The data or links to the data will be posted on the City’s website as soon as feasible after the start of the public participation process.
- Fair Housing Plan Development Stage – The identification and discussion of the fair housing issues affecting protected class members as well as the identification and prioritization of significant contributing factors for the fair housing issues, and development of goals to overcome the effects of the contributing factors.

7. Substantial Amendments

Citizens will be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and Fair Housing Plan. Public notice and public comment requirements will be implemented in accordance with the public participation process described in Section 5 of this CPP (also refer to the public participation process table in Section 5).

Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan

The Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan can be amended to provide for changes in the purpose, location, scope or beneficiaries of an activity. Substantial amendments are triggered by the following actions:

- The addition or elimination of an activity differing from the ones originally described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.
- A change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.
- Budget changes to any activity that is equal to at least fifteen (15) percent of the annual entitlement grant.
- Any use of HUD Section 108 financing that was not described in the Consolidated Plan.

A substantial amendment does not apply for the correction of an inadvertent omission of any data or funding details that were available for public comment, and subsequently approved by the Gainesville City Commission. Documents may be amended to correct such oversights without implementing the Substantial Amendment Process.

In the event of a natural disaster or pandemic which a state of emergency has been declared by the Mayor, Governor and/or President of the United States; any unexpended CDBG funds is subject to being redirected for the immediate response and/or recovery of the declared emergency. Existing contracts are subject to reduction and amending. CDBG funds will be used in a manner that addresses the immediate needs of the community as deemed appropriate by the Director of Housing and Community Development in conjunction with the City Manager and/or Mayor.

Newly authorized funding, in response to the natural disaster or pandemic, as provided by HUD **WILL NOT** result in a Substantial Amendment. The newly authorized funding will result in a minor amendment to the activities within the current Annual Action Plan and updated within the eCon Planning Suite. Regulatory notification will occur using any means available to fulfill the regulatory required or revised public comment and advertisement period including but not limited to posting on the City of Gainesville’s main and Department web pages, community news forum or paper, and posting of flyers in public buildings or high foot traffic areas.

Fair Housing Plan

The City will revise its Fair Housing Plan under the following circumstances:

- A material change occurs. A material change is a change in circumstances in the City that affects the information on which the Plan is based to the extent that the analysis, the fair housing contributing factors, or the priorities and goals of the Plan no longer reflect actual circumstances. A material change includes, but is not limited to:
 - Presidentially declared disasters, under title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.), in the City that are of such a nature as to significantly impact the steps the City may need to take to affirmatively further fair housing;
 - Significant demographic changes;
 - New significant contributing factors in the City; and
 - A civil rights finding, determination, settlement (including Voluntary Compliance Agreements), or court order.
- Upon HUD's written notification specifying a material change that requires the revision.

8. Annual Performance Report

Every year, the City must submit to HUD the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), within 90 days of the close of the program year. In general, the CAPER describes how funds were actually spent and the extent to which these funds were used for activities that benefited low and moderate income people. The Annual Performance Report shall be made available for review and comment. Public notice and comment requirements will be implemented in accordance with the procedures described Section 5 of this CPP.

9. Availability of Program Information

The City of Gainesville uses the annual planning process to provide for accountability in the administration of the CDBG and HOME programs. Prior to the adoption of Consolidated Plans or Annual Action Plans, city staff shall make information regarding the program available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties. City staff will address concerns and provide an opportunity for all comments to be addressed.

The City shall provide the public notice of anticipated receipt of grant funds, including an estimate of the amount of CDBG, HOME, and program income expected in the following year along with a description of the range and types of activities than can be funded with these resources. Also, the notice will provide an estimate of the amount of these funds that will benefit low and moderate income people. The City will also provide the public with its plan to minimize displacement of persons (see section 10 for the anti-displacement plan). Contact information will be included in the notice so that interested persons can obtain additional information.

10. Access to Program Information

Full access to HCD Department program information, documents, and schedules of meeting times and publication dates will be provided to the public. Program records and information, consistent with state and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, are available for citizen review at the office of the HCD Department located at 306 N. E. 6th Avenue, Thomas Center “B”, 2nd Floor, Room 245, Gainesville, Florida. The HCD Department office may be reached by telephone at (352) 334-5026 or by fax at (352) 334-3166 during normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Information is also available on the City’s website (www.cityofgainesville.org). Upon request, the City of Gainesville will provide copies of standard documents at no charge to the general public.

Key documents of the HCD Department are placed on file for public inspection in its offices and at the Alachua County Library. All documents which are reviewed by the City Commission are also on file in the offices of the Clerk of the Commission. Key documents include, but are not limited to:

- The Consolidated Plan;
- The Annual Action Plan;
- The Fair Housing Plan;
- The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER); and
- Other HUD Reports, as applicable.

Other information and records relating to the City’s use of various federal and state program funds may be reviewed by the public in the offices of the HCD Department in compliance with the Florida Public Records Law and applicable HUD regulations.

11. Technical Assistance

Upon request, the City’s HCD Department will provide technical assistance to groups representing the needs of program-eligible populations, especially those groups representative of persons of low or moderate income, as may be required to adequately provide for citizen participation in the planning, implementation and assessment of the CDBG, HOME, and other federally funded programs.

Such technical assistance is intended to increase citizen participation in the community development decision making process and to ensure that such participation is meaningful. Technical assistance shall also be utilized to foster public understanding of federal program requirements.

Technical assistance shall be provided on request and may include, but not necessarily be limited to: interpreting the CDBG and HOME program rules, regulations, procedures and/or requirements; providing information and/or materials concerning the CDBG or HOME programs; and, assisting low and moderate income citizens, and residents of blighted neighborhoods to develop statements of views, identify their needs, and to develop activities and proposals for projects which, when implemented, will resolve those needs.

Technical assistance for developing proposals will be limited to guidance in completing applications for funding, providing information on deadlines and project eligibility, and providing technical assistance

concerning HUD regulations. City staff members will neither prepare applications, nor appear as advocates for or against specific project proposals.

12. Encouraging Public Participation

The City of Gainesville provides this Citizen Participation Plan for the purposes of providing for and encouraging public participation, emphasizing the involvement of low- and moderate-income people, especially those living in designated revitalization areas or slum and blighted areas, and neighborhoods identified as low- and moderate income. The City of Gainesville will make every reasonable effort to encourage the participation of minorities, non-English speaking persons, limited English proficiency persons, and persons with disabilities.

Low and Moderate Income Persons

The public participation process outlined herein is designed to promote participation by low and moderate income citizens, as well as residents of blighted neighborhoods and CDBG or HOME project areas. The City may take additional steps to further promote participation by such groups, or to target program information to these persons should officials feel that such persons may otherwise be excluded or should additional action be deemed necessary. Activities to promote additional participation may include: posting of notices in blighted neighborhoods and in places frequented by low and moderate income persons, and holding public hearings in low and moderate income neighborhoods or areas of existing or proposed CDBG or HOME project activities.

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with special needs who require assistance to participate in public hearings or meetings/workshops are requested to notify the City's Office of Equal Opportunity at (352) 334-5051 (voice) or (352) 334-2069 (TDD), at least two business days in advance of the event. The Office of Equal Opportunity will inform the Citizen Participation Coordinator.

The City will consult with local disability advocacy groups to identify the most effective ways to reach persons with different types of disabilities, and if willing, use their communication networks to provide notice of upcoming events of interest to the disability community. The locations of all public hearings as described herein shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities. The City shall provide a sign language interpreter whenever the Citizen Participation Coordinator is notified in advance that one or more deaf persons will be in attendance. The City shall provide reasonable accommodations whenever the Citizen Participation Coordinator is notified in advance that one or more hearing or visually impaired persons will be in attendance at a meeting or workshop. Additionally, the City shall provide reasonable accommodations whenever the Citizen Participation Coordinator is provided reasonable advance notification that one or more persons with mobility or developmental disabilities will be in attendance.

Limited English Proficiency

The City will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate non-English speaking citizens expected to participate in a public hearing or meeting/workshop of the CACCD or City Commission. Printed notices of such meetings will be prepared in the language of the non-English speaking citizens and the City will

employ the services of an interpreter to assist in translating the event for the benefit of the non-English speaking citizens.

Stakeholders

Federal regulations require the City of Gainesville to consult with public and private agencies when developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and Fair Housing Plan. The City of Gainesville will encourage the participation of local and regional institutions, Continuums of Care, businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community-based and faith-based organizations in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and Fair Housing Plan.

Public Housing Agencies

The City of Gainesville will encourage, in conjunction with consultation with public housing agencies, the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments (including any resident advisory boards, resident councils, and resident management corporations) in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and Fair Housing Plan, along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located. The City will provide information to the Gainesville Housing Authority (GHA) about Consolidated Plan, Fair Housing Plan, and AFFH activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the GHA can make this information available at the annual public hearing(s) required for the PHA Plan.

13. Anti-Displacement

It is the policy of the City of Gainesville to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that activities undertaken with federal or state program funds will not cause unnecessary displacement. The City will continue to administer these programs in such a manner that careful consideration is given during the planning phase to avoid displacement. Displacement of any nature shall be reserved as a last resort action necessitated only when no other alternative is available and when the activity is determined necessary in order to carry out a specific goal or objective that is of benefit to the public.

If displacement is precipitated by activities that require the acquisition (whole or in part) or rehabilitation of real property directly by the City of Gainesville, all appropriate benefits as required by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments, the “Uniform Act”, or the City’s Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan under Section 104(d) shall be provided to the displaced person or persons. Information about these programs will be provided to all persons who may potentially be displaced in the form of informational brochures on these programs and detailed explanations by City staff.

These policies are more specifically outlined in the City’s Displacement Relocation Policy which details the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. This document is available for public review at the office of the HCD Department located at 306 N. E. 6th Avenue, Thomas Center “B”, 2nd Floor, Room 245, Gainesville, Florida.

14. Comment, Grievance, and Complaint Procedure

The City of Gainesville will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally, at public hearings and meetings/workshops. A summary of all comments or views, as well as how they were addressed in the relevant document, will be included in the final Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fair Housing Plan, substantial amendments to the plans, or performance reports.

The City of Gainesville will provide citizens with timely responses to grievances or complaints. Citizens may submit a written grievance or complaint to the City Manager at City of Gainesville, P.O. Box 490, Station 6, Gainesville, FL 32627-0490. The City will make reasonable effort to issue a written response to every written grievance or complaint within 15 working days of receipt. When this is not possible the City shall, within 15 working days of receipt, issue a letter indicating the status of the response and approximate anticipated date of a final determination.

15. Use of the Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Gainesville will use this Citizen Participation Plan when preparing and implementing plans related to programs funded by HUD.

If there are changes because of legislative authority or HUD causes changes in rules, regulations or guidelines which impact its federal programs, such changes will supersede the provisions contained in this Citizen Participation Plan.

In addition to the HCD Department office address and phone numbers referenced herein, inquiries and comments regarding federal programs may also be directed to HUD's Community Planning and Development Department located at the Charles Bennett Federal Building, 400 W. Bay Street, Suite 1015, Jacksonville, FL 32202, or by calling (904) 232-2627.