

Citizen Participation Plan – Amendments to Existing Plans

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Department of Housing (“**DOH**”) is amending its Citizen Participation Plan, to promote and support “social distancing” while continuing to offer the public an opportunity to provide valuable citizen input and insight into the policies, and procedures of the Department of Housing, particularly as it relates to the administration and implementation of its federal programs. The following process will be used to solicit citizen participation and input into any programmatic amendments necessary to quickly and effectively administer federal funding made available either directly or indirectly as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Effective April 2, 2020, consistent with the Mega-waiver issued by HUD on March 31, 2020, and for a period ending June 30, 2021, community input prior to drafting a substantial amendment to any plan will be waived, including but not limited to an approved consolidated plan or annual action plan concerning the proposed uses of CDBG, HOME, NHTF, ESG and HOPWA funds.
- Staff will prepare an amendment to any respective plan, where applicable, and the amendment shall include a discussion of the amount of assistance the state expects to receive, the range of activities it will undertake with this assistance, and, to the extent possible, the benefit to low and moderate income people of these proposed activities.
- The Amendment will be posted in a prominent place on the Department’s website, along with a notice identifying the availability of the amendment. The Notice will include the opportunity to provide electronic comment for a period of not less than five days and information on participation in a “virtual public hearing”. As part of the Notice, the state will provide information on how citizens who have special needs may obtain the Amendment in a form which is accessible to them.
- Such Notice will be published in at least three (3) newspapers of general circulation, and will include at least one (1) minority publication.
- Copies of the Notice will be emailed to all interested parties who have registered with the Department as part of its “Community Partners” list, as well as the governmental leaders of all 169 towns/cities in the State, and the seven (7) councils of government.
- Any comments received, either at the virtual public hearing or during the public comment period will be considered by the agency before the final amended action plan is submitted to HUD. A summary of the comments and the agency's responses will be an attachment to the final amended action plan.
- The procedures and actions discussed above will constitute the state's citizen participation plan for any substantial amendments, which may need to be made in the course of the program year. A "substantial amendment" to the plan is one which implements a change the use and/or method of distributing those funds.

- This amended citizen participation plan will itself be made available to the public for a five day public comment period prior to implementation, and any interest groups may review and comment accordingly.