



FULTON COUNTY'S CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

1. **§91.105 (1)(2) Encouragement of Citizen Participation and Information to be Provided.**

Fulton County has taken specific actions to provide for and encourage increased participation in its housing and community development programs, particularly by persons of low- and moderate-incomes. These actions include:

- (a) Identification of geographic areas in the County with concentrations of low- and moderate-income persons and concentration of minorities;
- (b) Preparation of project proposal application forms and the Annual Action Plans in a manner so as to afford low- and moderate-income persons and other affected citizens the opportunity to examine its contents and make comments to Fulton County.
- (c) Informing the citizens through newspapers, articles and advertisements, radio, public service announcements, local contact persons, public hearings, cable television announcements, etc., concerning the long and short term objectives to be utilized, the anticipated amount of Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant funds available for proposed activities, the potential activities to be funded, the actual projects chosen for funding, the annual progress in project implementation, and the availability of the Proposed Annual Action Plan for public review and comments;
- (d) Review of all citizen comments and incorporation of such comments into the Consolidated Plan, as applicable;
- (e) Analysis of the impact of Consolidated Plan program activities on neighborhood residents, particularly those of very low, low- and moderate-incomes;
- (f) Conducting needs assessments as a means to best serve low- and moderate-income residents of the County with federal funding before submission in the Proposed Consolidated Plan;
- (g) Meetings with neighborhoods and groups to apprise them of the Consolidated Planning process, project eligibility, project selection, funding and implementation methods;
- (h) Properly administer the Section 108 Program by providing recipients with a valuable tool to accomplish economic development goals that otherwise might be unmet or deferred, [24 CFR 570.700];

- (i) Fulton County will continue to provide a forum for open communication with its citizens, particularly very low, low- and moderate-income persons concerning its HUD funded programs, and the ways these individuals might benefit from these programs. The county will continue to utilize various public notification techniques, including but not limited to: attendance at church and neighborhood meetings, civic associations, public hearings, newspaper articles and advertisement, radio and television announcements, feature stories and individual personal contacts. Fulton County will strive to continuously increase citizen participation in its housing and community development programs, particularly for persons of the targeted income groups;
- (j) Fulton County also makes special efforts to provide timely and accurate information about housing and community development program participation to all the participating municipalities. Many of the heaviest concentrations of low- and moderate-income persons reside within the boundaries of these municipalities—particularly College Park, East Point, and some sections of Fairburn, Hapeville, Union City and Palmetto. Active participation in the Fulton County Housing and Community Development programs is a means to insure that all low- and moderate-income city residents can participate fully in these HUD-assisted activities.

2. §91.105 (3) Access to Records, Local Meetings and Information.

All Fulton County meeting facilities meet ADA accessibility requirements. Fulton County provides reasonable and timely access to all public hearings. All information and records relating to Fulton County Housing and Community Development program activities are available to the public for review and comments as required by Federal, State and local laws and regulations.

CDBG projects for the small municipalities in Fulton County are submitted by the respective cities as a part of the multi-year CDBG application process. Annually, Fulton County advertises those proposed projects and amendments for the relevant funding year in local newspapers prior to submission to the Board of Commissioners for approval in the Annual Action Plan. Citizens provide their comments on the proposed projects during the public comment period.

Notices of public hearings are widely publicized throughout the County. Before the hearings occur, at least one advertisement appears in a local newspaper of general circulation; advertisement appears on Fulton County’s website, and postings occur at the North & South Service Centers, and at additional libraries and governmental buildings. The advertisements are “display ads” or “legal ads” which appear in the sections of the newspaper most likely to be read by citizens, particularly low- and moderate-income citizens. The viewing of all advertisements for the County’s website is at www.fultoncountyga.gov. For the year 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan, the following newspapers were available for advertisement:

- Fulton County Daily Report
- Atlanta Inquirer
- Fulton County’s Website
- Atlanta North Fulton Neighbor
- South Fulton Neighbor
- Northside Neighbor

Copies of public hearing notices, descriptive information concerning the HUD-assisted programs, the Interim Consolidated Plan, any amendments, IDIS Financial Reports or other information is available from Fulton County to permit public review and comment. Documentation is maintained in the Division of Housing and Community Development informing readers of assistance opportunities provided to citizens to insure that all meetings, records, documents and related information are and will be made readily accessible to the citizens of Fulton County.

Before Fulton County adopts a Consolidated Plan or amendment, information will be made available to citizens, public agencies and other interested parties that include the amount of financial assistance the County expects to receive from HUD, and the range of activities which the County expects to undertake, including the amount that will benefit persons of very low- and low-income. The county will also make known any information concerning plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced. [24 CFR 91.105(b)(2)(i)]

Before Fulton County adopts a Consolidated Plan or amendment, a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan or amendments will be published in the Fulton County Daily Report, or a local newspaper of general circulation, and will make copies of the proposed plan available at libraries, government offices and other public places. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan or amendments and will list locations where copies of the entire plan or amendments can be examined. [24CFR 91.1.5(b)(2)(ii)]

Fulton County will notify citizens and all participating municipalities of the availability of the Consolidated Plan as adopted, any amendments and/or its performance report, as these documents are developed, to afford citizens a reasonable opportunity to examine their content. [24 CFR 91.105(b)(2)(iv)]

Fulton County will provide a period of not less than thirty (30) calendar days to receive comments from citizens and units of general purpose local government on the Consolidated Plan, amendments or reports that are to be provided to HUD prior to the submission deadline. [24 CFR 91.105(b)(2)(iv)]

Fulton County will provide citizens, public agencies and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan and the county's use of HUD CDBG, HOME and ESG assistance during the preceding five years. Interested parties should contact the Housing and Human Services Department at (404) 613-7944 for such information. Or requests may be submitted in writing to:

Director
Fulton County Department of Housing and Human Services
Division of Housing and Community Development
137 Peachtree Street, S.W., Suite 300
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Reasonable requests may be satisfied at the time of the request. If additional information is needed in an alternative format which does not exist in HUD-prescribed reports, such request will be fulfilled within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of the request.

3. §91.105 (4) Provide Technical Assistance to Citizens.

The Fulton County Housing and Human Services Department provides technical assistance to Fulton County citizens, particularly to very low, low- and moderate-income persons, who request such assistance in developing project proposals or who request other information (compliance requirements, program performance, funding information, etc.) covered by the Consolidated Plan. Project proposal forms are readily available and are provided at no cost to requesters. A meeting(s) will be arranged for individuals or groups as necessary to explain project eligibility, application and approval processes or implementation requirements for all funding programs administered by the county. Staff of the Fulton County Division of Housing and Community Development will attend neighborhood meetings, meet with non-profit organizations, individuals and others to provide additional technical assistance related to housing and community development programs as requested and as needed.

4. §91.105 (5) Public Hearings.

Fulton County will continue to hold public hearings to obtain citizen comments and concerns and to respond to proposals and questions at all stages of program operation. A minimum of one (1) Needs Assessment Public Hearing will be conducted annually, as required by HUD regulations, to determine the nature of assistance needed. At least one (1) proposed Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan Public Hearing will be held to permit citizen comments on all proposed objectives, priorities and proposed projects. All activities proposed for funding with HUD CDBG, HOME, ESG and other funds will be carefully reviewed and appropriate recommendations will be made to the Fulton County Board of Commissioners by the Fulton County Citizens Review Panel and County staff. The Division of Housing and Community Development staff will assist with the review panel in the preparation of its recommendations to the Board. Notice of public hearings will be published in the local newspaper of general circulation prior to the hearing(s). The hearing(s) will be held at a location(s) and time(s) convenient for potential or actual program beneficiaries. The public hearing(s) will be held at a site(s) which has ADA required accessibility and parking facilities. All public hearings will be properly documented and will include a list of attendees, public comments, available funds, proposed objectives and projects and a description of the actual use of previous year funds. Written minutes of the public hearing(s) will be maintained on file in the department and will be available to the public for review during the normal business hours or at other times, which may be arranged by special request.

The public hearings will be held at two (2) stages of the program year. The needs assessment public hearing(s) are held at the initiation of the planning cycle at which time citizens, agencies and other interested parties are invited to share with Fulton County their views on community development, affordable housing and social services needs. Fulton County also uses this set of public hearings to report to the citizens on prior year performance for its HUD-assisted programs.

The second set of public hearings are held following an open application cycle, which is publicized by newspaper advertisement and other forms of written communication to interested citizens and agencies. The intent of these hearings is to present to the community all the projects submitted for funding. The second set of public hearings will also be utilized to present to the public all the proposed priority housing and non-housing needs, proposed long and short-term objectives and potential resources available to develop a Proposed Consolidated Plan or an update to its existing Consolidated Plan, which will be advertised for public review and comment.

- (a) Provisions for Residents in need of Reasonable Accommodations and Communication.

Following a review of the Census information, and in consultation with County planning data personnel, it has been determined that less than 1% of residents in Fulton County are non-English speaking.

All Fulton County meeting facilities meet ADA accessibility requirements. Citizens in need of reasonable accommodations and communication in an alternative format, please contact the Department of Housing and Human Services at (404) 613-7944. For relay-type service dial 711.

However, Citizens seeking reasonable accommodations should contact the Department of Housing and Human Services at least five (5) working days prior to the public hearing date. This process will allow the department to provide arrangements of services available for the public hearing(s) in question.

5. §91.105 (6) Comments and Complaints.

Fulton County will consider any comments or views of citizens, agencies or other interested parties received in writing or orally at public hearings in preparing the final Consolidated Plan, amendment to the plan or performance report. A summary of these comments, or views not accepted, and the reasons for no acceptance will be attached to the final Consolidated Plan, plan amendment or performance report.

(a) Non-Discrimination Policy/Complaint Review Process.

As a recipient of federal funds, Fulton County must adhere to all federal requirements imposed by or pursuant to Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts, as amended; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; the Fair Housing Act, as amended; and other applicable Acts which prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, disability or familial status. No person shall be excluded from participating in, denied the benefit of or be subjected to discrimination in the receipt or administration of the federal funds covered by this Consolidated Plan. In addition to these federal acts, Fulton County maintains an affirmative action policy of inclusion and does not discriminate based upon race, age, gender, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. Persons who feel that they have been discriminated against or have a complaint pertaining to the Fulton County Consolidated Plan, plan amendments or performance report may file a complaint in writing to:

Director
Fulton County Department of Housing and Human Services
Division of Housing and Community Development
137 Peachtree Street, S.W., Suite 300
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

The complaint must contain the following information:

- (1) Name and address of the Complainant [person(s)] filing the complaint;
- (2) A description of the act or acts considered to be in violation;

- (3) Other available pertinent information, which will assist in the investigation of the complaint.

Such complaints should be filed within sixty (60) calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act. A written response as to the disposition of the complaint will be issued by the Director of the Department of Housing and Human Services no later than fifteen (15) working days after the receipt of the complaint. The response will include information concerning the right-of-appeal, should the complaint disagree in whole or in part with the resolution. A compliant who is dissatisfied with the response to a compliant, or if the response is delayed more than fifteen (15) working days, may appeal in writing to:

Chairman
Fulton County Board of Commissioners
Fulton County Government Center
141 Pryor Street, S.W., Suite 10001
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

A written response as to the disposition of the compliant will be issued by the Chairman, Fulton County Board of Commissioners not later than thirty (30) working days after the receipt of the appeal. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the Chairman, Fulton County Board of Commissioners, he/she may submit the complaint, in writing, to:

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Fair Housing and Equal Employment Opportunity
40 Marietta Street, 15th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

No person shall intimidate, threaten, coerce or discriminate against any person because he/she has made a compliant, testified, assisted or participated in any matter in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to a complaint.

The identity of complainant(s) shall be kept confidential, except to the extent necessary to carry out or conduct investigations, hearings or judicial proceedings arising out of the compliant.

6. §91.105 (7) Criteria for Consolidated Plan Amendments.

The Fulton County policy regarding amendments to the Consolidated Plan requires that any changes in eligible activities and distribution of funds or in the substantive language of the Plan require public hearings, as described in §91.105 (5) above, and official approval by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners.

- (a) The Citizen Participation Plan and Public Comment Process

Any comments on the Fulton County Citizen Participation Plan should be provided to the county with other comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan. The citizen participation plan can be made available to citizens in formats appropriate for persons with disabilities. Fulton

County will continue to make every possible effort to comply with all HUD requirements and provide for and encourage increased citizen participation in its HUD-assisted programs, with continued emphasis given to the encouragement of persons of very low, low- and moderate-income to participate.

For further information concerning these HUD programs administered by Fulton County, interested citizens should contact:

Director
Fulton County Department of Housing and Human Services
Division of Housing and Community Development
137 Peachtree Street, S.W., Suite 300
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone: (404) 612-0747 FAX: (404) 893-6620