

**FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
FY 2017 CDBG DR**

Introduction

A grant to a locality under the CDBG-DR program may be awarded only if the locality certifies that it is following a detailed citizen participation plan that provides for and encourages citizen participation at all stages of the disaster recovery program.

CDBG-DR applicants and funded entities are required to carry out citizen participation procedures in accordance with the Citizen Participation Plan as described in the Hurricane Harvey Action Plan. Each applicant certifies, by signing a SF-424, that it has and will comply with the requirements of the Citizen Participation Plan as stated in this section. Each applicant must provide evidence that the application was publicly posted for a 30-day public comment period.

Each applicant must maintain a citizen participation file which includes (1) a copy of the Plan Requirements below, (2) the applicant's complaint procedures, (3) any technical assistance provided by the applicant, and (4) public notices, minutes, and attendance lists for any public hearings. Applicants are cautioned that despite the expedited application process, they are still responsible for ensuring that all citizens have equal access to information about project activities.

PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Fort Bend County will follow the plan requirements including:

Outreach Efforts

Provide for reasonable public notice, appraisal, examination, and comment on the activities proposed for the use of CDBG-DR funds. These outreach efforts shall:

- 1) Provide for and encourage citizen participation, particularly by low- and moderate-income persons who reside in slum or blighted areas, and areas in which CDBG-DR funds are proposed to be used;
- 2) Ensure that citizens will be given reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information, and records relating to an entity's proposed and actual use of CDBG-DR funds;
- 3) Furnish citizens information including, but not limited to:
 - (a) the amount of CDBG-DR funds expected to be made available;
 - (b) the range of activities that may be undertaken with the CDBG-DR funds;
 - (c) the estimated amount of the CDBG-DR funds proposed to be used for activities that will meet the national objective of benefit to low- and moderate-income persons; and
 - (d) if applicable, the proposed CDBG-DR activities likely to result in displacement and the entity's anti-displacement and relocation plan.
- 4) Provide citizens with reasonable advance notice of, and opportunity to comment on, proposed activities in an application to the state and, for grants already made, activities

which are proposed to be added, deleted, or substantially changed from the entity's application to the state. "Substantially changed" means changes made in terms of purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries as defined by criteria established by the state; and

- 5) This will be accomplished through one or more of the following methods:
 - (a) Publication of notice in a local newspaper—a published newspaper article may also be used so long as it provides sufficient information regarding program activities and relevant dates;
 - (b) Notices prominently posted in public buildings and distributed to local Public Housing Authorities and other interested community groups;
 - (c) Posting of notice on the Fort Bend County website;
 - (d) Public Hearing; or
 - (e) Individual notice to eligible cities and other entities as applicable using one or more of the following methods:
 - Certified mail
 - Electronic mail or fax
 - First-class (regular) mail
 - Personal delivery (e.g., at a Council of Governments meeting)

Along with the application, the applicant must submit **any notices of public hearings** that relate to the administration of Hurricane Harvey CDBG-DR funds that are provided.

Public Hearing Provisions

For each public hearing scheduled and conducted by a CDBG-DR applicant or recipient, the following public hearing provisions shall be observed:

- 1) Furnish citizens information, including but not limited to:
 - (a) The amount of CDBG-DR funds available per application for Hurricane Harvey
 - (b) The range of activities that may be undertaken with the CDBG-DR Hurricane Harvey funds;
 - (c) The estimated amount of the CDBG-Hurricane Harvey funds proposed to be used for activities that will meet the national objective of benefit to low- and moderate-income persons; and
 - (d) The proposed CDBG-DR activities likely to result in displacement and the unit of general local government's antidisplacement and relocation plans required under 24 CFR 570.488.
- 2) Public notice of any hearing must be published at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the scheduled hearing. The public notice must be published in a local newspaper. Each public notice **MUST** include the DATE, TIME, LOCATION, and TOPICS to be considered at the hearing. A published newspaper article may also be used to meet this

requirement so long as it satisfies all content and timing requirements. Notices must also be prominently posted in public buildings and distributed to local public housing authorities and other interested community groups.

- 3) Each public hearing shall be held at a time and location convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and will include accommodation for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities must be able to attend the hearings, and an applicant must make arrangements for individuals who require auxiliary aids or services if contacted at least 2 days prior to each hearing.
- 4) When a considerable number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate in a public hearing, an interpreter will be present to accommodate the needs of the non-English speaking residents.
- 5) Applicants may conduct a public hearing via webinar if they adhere to the provisions of this section. If the webinar is used to conduct a public hearing, a physical location with associated reasonable accommodations must be made available, to ensure that those individuals without the necessary technology are able to participate.

Complaint Procedures

Fort Bend County written citizen complaint procedures include a timely written response (within 15 working days) to complaints and grievances. Citizens must be made aware of the location and the days and hours when the location is open for business so that they may obtain a copy of these written procedures.

Technical Assistance

When requested, the applicant/recipient shall provide technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low- and moderate-income in developing proposals for CDBG-DR funds. The level and type of assistance shall be determined by the applicant/recipient based upon the specific needs of the community's residents.

Citizen Participation Requirements

In the event that the applicant receives funding from the CDBG-DR program, Fort Bend County may:

- 1) Hold a public hearing any time a substantial change in use of CDBG-DR funds from one eligible activity to another is proposed. GLO will determine when a change is substantial.
- 2) Upon completion of the community development program activities, the locality is encouraged to hold a public hearing and review its program performance, including the actual use of CDBG-DR funds.
- 3) If applicable, the locality must retain documentation of the hearing notice(s), attendance lists, minutes of the hearing(s), and any other records concerning the actual use of funds. The entity's Record Retention Policy (regarding federal grants) must include language that complies with this statement: "HUD regulations generally require your community to retain all its grant-related documentation for 3 years from the date HUD closes its related

disaster grant to the state of Texas. As the state grant remains open, the GLO will notify your office once it has closed.”

Such records must be made available to the public in accordance with Chapter 552, Government Code.

Fort Bend County will submit all notices of any public hearings or requests for public comment that the applicant may have that relates to the administration of Hurricane Harvey CDBG-DR funds provided.

Fort Bend County will certify compliance with the Citizen Participation Plan requirements by completing and signing the required Application for Federal Assistance SF-424.