



Virginia's Public Participation Plan for the State Consolidated Planning Process

Effective July 1, 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

 Accessibility & Inclusion 3

 Adoption of Plan..... 3

Five-Year Consolidated Plan..... 4

 Stakeholder Consultations 4

 Homeless Services Stakeholders 4

 Affordable Housing Stakeholders 4

 Community Development Stakeholders 4

 Input Sessions..... 5

 Public Comment 5

 Public Hearing 6

 Amendments to the Consolidated Plan 6

Annual Performance Reports..... 7

Requirements for Local Governments 7

Public Access to Information..... 7

Response to Complaints..... 8

DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the Commonwealth of Virginia's Consolidated Planning process. The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is the lead agency for the consolidated planning process. The Consolidated Plan addresses how the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds (Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), HOPWA, HOME, and National Housing Trust Funds) administered through the Commonwealth of Virginia are leveraged to address housing, community development, and homeless needs in Virginia. The PPP seeks to provide a pathway for constituents and key stakeholders to influence decisions that affect their communities and neighborhoods.

The PPP covers all aspects of the consolidated planning process including the Analysis of the Impediments to Fair Housing, the five-year Consolidated Plan, the annual Action Plan, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The PPP sets forth a framework to gather input from specific groups of individuals and stakeholders as well as other agencies involved with or affected by the programs or activities covered by the Consolidated Plan. In particular, the PPP is designed to encourage participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

DHCD encourages the participation of all its constituents, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. DHCD will make reasonable efforts to provide language assistance to ensure meaningful access to participation by non-English speaking persons. Given that Spanish is the primary language spoken by constituents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), DHCD will publish a Spanish translation of the PPP and enlist translation services to document any comments received from Spanish speaking constituents.

DHCD complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will make accommodations to documents and public hearings for persons with special needs when requested. Persons requiring such accommodations should call (804) 624-9215. DHCD will prioritize accessibility as it examines the benefits of incorporating novel approaches to public engagement.

ADOPTION OF PLAN

Prior to its adoption by the Commonwealth, the PPP will be posted to DHCD's website for review and commentary from constituents. DHCD will afford a period no shorter than 30 days for receipt of public comment on the PPP. DHCD will adhere to the provisions of this plan as it continues to explore alternative public involvement techniques that encourage a shared vision of change for the community and the review of program performance. In the event that substantial changes are made to the PPP, DHCD will seek additional feedback from stakeholders.

FIVE-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN

DHCD promotes public participation and stakeholder consultation by providing a number of opportunities where stakeholders including clients, customer, service provider, other state agencies, grantees, units of local government, advocacy groups are invited to help shape the Commonwealth's Consolidated Plan.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

In order to develop programs that best suit the needs of the Commonwealth, DHCD aims to continuously engage its stakeholders throughout the consolidated planning process. Before drafting the Consolidated Plan, DHCD will hold preliminary consultations with organizations respectively involved in the affordable housing, homeless services, and community development sectors. Generally, these consultations serve as an open forum for directly involved stakeholders to discuss changing socioeconomic conditions, highlight ongoing programmatic challenges, and establish collective priorities to be addressed in the Consolidated Plan. DHCD will continuously explore new tools and technologies to improve engagement and garner more effective feedback.

HOMELESS SERVICES STAKEHOLDERS

In developing a comprehensive strategy to address homelessness, DHCD will consult myriad organizations throughout the Commonwealth. DHCD will seek input from each Continuum of Care within the state regarding the regional needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. CoCs will be consulted in the development of ESG allocations and program design, as well as in the operation and administration of HMIS funding. DHCD will consult with various agencies and institutions which provide resources and services to individuals experiencing homelessness, specifically seeking insight from those serving special-needs populations. Business and civic leaders across the Commonwealth may also be consulted to identify regional priorities in the homeless services arena.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STAKEHOLDERS

The Commonwealth's affordable housing strategy will be developed in collaboration with businesses and organizations involved in the creation and preservation of affordable housing across Virginia. Feedback obtained may be used in developing the needs assessment and market analysis portions of the Consolidated Plan. DHCD seeks a holistic understanding of the statewide affordable housing landscape through consultation with public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social and fair housing services. DHCD may leverage existing relationships with Virginia Housing, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), and the Virginia Fair Housing Office in order to expand its network of stakeholder consultants.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS

DHCD will consult with local governments in non-entitlement areas of the Commonwealth to determine how to best allocate and administer CDBG funding. Prior to developing the portions of the Consolidated

Plan concerning lead-based paint hazards, DHCD will engage with health and child welfare agencies to obtain and analyze data related to hazards and elevated blood-lead levels. These findings will identify concerns to be further examined in the needs assessment and ultimately target funding to alleviate existing harms.

INPUT SESSIONS

Prior to publishing a draft of the Consolidated Plan, DHCD will hold at least one public input session across the Commonwealth to evaluate community needs for affordable housing, homeless services, and community development projects. This feedback will aid DHCD in conducting a statewide needs assessment and housing market analysis, which will inform the Commonwealth's funding decisions and programmatic methods of distribution for the next five years.

DHCD will notify stakeholders of public input sessions via postings in several newspapers across the state, including a minority-owned newspaper and a Spanish language newspaper. The notice will: summarize the scope and content of the input sessions; specify their time, date, and location; give instructions for submitting written comments; and highlight resources for attendees in need of disability accommodations or translation services. DHCD will provide this information directly to its grantees and partner organizations via e-blast.

In order to solicit informed public input, DHCD will provide input session attendees with background information surrounding the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan, including the eligible activities for each and the Commonwealth's previous methods of distribution. DHCD will share any significant feedback obtained from stakeholder consultations to seek additional comments and views from constituents. Any feedback obtained during input sessions will be considered by the Commonwealth and included in the summary of public comments submitted along with the Consolidated Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Commonwealth will consider any comments or views of constituents received in writing, or orally at public hearings in preparing the Consolidated Plan. DHCD will afford a period of at least 30 days to collect public comments on drafts of the Consolidated Plan and any substantial amendments to the Plan as adopted.

Written comments must be submitted online at feedback.ppc@dhcd.virginia.gov or mailed to:

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
Office of Program Policy and Compliance
Main Street Centre
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, Virginia 23219

A summary of these comments will be posted on DHCD's website along with DHCD's response, where

applicable. This document will be included as an attachment when submitting the final Consolidated Plan to HUD.

PUBLIC HEARING

During the public comment period, DHCD will hold a statewide public hearing to solicit feedback on the contents of the Consolidated Plan prior to submission to HUD. Constituents will be informed of this event via a public notice posted in several newspapers across the state, including a minority-owned newspaper and a Spanish language newspaper. The notice will: summarize the scope and content of the public hearing; specify its time, date, and location; give instructions for submitting written comments; and highlight resources for attendees in need of disability accommodations or translation services. DHCD will provide this information directly to its grantees and partner organizations via e-blast. To promote maximum participation, DHCD reserves the right to host this event virtually.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Per 24 CFR §91.505, the following criteria will constitute either a Substantial Amendment or Non-Substantial Amendment to the Annual Action Plan update to the Consolidated Plan:

A Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan is required under the following conditions:

- Addition/elimination of funding source (e.g., National Housing Trust Fund); or
- Addition/elimination of a method of distribution of funds; or
- Addition/elimination of an eligible activity type; or
- Reduction in funding for a method of distribution of 50 or more percent, relative to the approved annual allocation for that method of distribution

The following conditions constitute a Non-Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan:

- A change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an individual sub-recipient activity funded by any federal program covered in the plan; and
- Any re-use of funds available from cancellation of projects; from projects completed under budget; from funds designated but not expended. Funds will be reused for eligible activities as established in Virginia's Annual Action Plan.

DHCD reserves the right to make non-substantive changes to the Consolidated Plan and its components without opening a public comment period.

In the event of a Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan as adopted, DHCD will make available the amended plan via the agency website at dhcd.virginia.gov/consolidated-plan. When requested, copies of these materials will be provided to the public at no cost. Documents will be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

A period no shorter than 30 days will be afforded for constituents to comment on Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan. Comments on the amended plan by individuals or groups

received in writing or at public meetings will be considered by DHCD. A summary of the public comments received will be included in the final amended plans, as applicable.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Each year DHCD prepares a report detailing the Commonwealth's progress towards the programmatic goals set forth in the preceding Annual Action Plan. Before submitting this document to HUD for review, DHCD seeks public input on the contents of the report.

Prior to publishing the CAPER, DHCD will issue a public notice in several newspapers across the state, including a minority-owned newspaper and a Spanish language newspaper. The notice will: announce the availability of the report; give instructions for submitting written comments; and highlight resources for those in need of disability accommodations or translation services. DHCD will also provide this information directly to its grantees and partner organizations via e-blast.

In preparing the CAPER, DHCD will provide no fewer than 15 days for constituents to submit any comments or views pertaining to the content of the report. A summary of these comments will be posted on DHCD's website along with DHCD's response, where applicable. This document will be included as an attachment when submitting the final CAPER to HUD.

REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

As a CDBG grantee, the Commonwealth of Virginia awards funds to units of general local government for projects which further at least one of the program's national objectives. DHCD is charged with ensuring its CDBG subrecipients adhere to the public participation requirements set forth in [24 CFR 570.486](#). These requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Provision of relevant information to constituents (i.e. expected resources, eligible CDBG activities, projected benefits); and
- Provision of at least one public hearing to solicit feedback related to the jurisdiction's community development and housing needs, to be held before submission of an application for state CDBG funds; and
- Provision of at least one public hearing covering the development of proposed activities and review program performance, to be held before submission of an application for state CDBG funds

DHCD will promote subgrantee compliance with these requirements by requiring prospective grantees provide documentation of the requisite public hearing along with any application for CDBG funds. DHCD reserves the right to request additional evidence of its subrecipients' adherence to participation and consultation requirements. DHCD may provide a public participation template to localities requesting assistance in meeting these standards.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

DHCD will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records pertaining to the consolidated planning process, including data regarding the Commonwealth’s proposed, actual, and historical use of federal funds. Consolidated Plan documents may include, but are not limited to the draft, adopted, and/or substantially amended versions of the Commonwealth’s 5-year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, and CAPERs.

DHCD will publish Consolidated Plan documents to its website, where each will remain available for at least five years following its adoption by the Commonwealth. When requested, copies of these materials will be provided to the public at no cost. Documents will be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS

Complaints pertaining to the Consolidated Planning Process can be submitted to feedback.ppc@dhcd.virginia.gov. Should the Commonwealth receive complaints from constituents related to the Consolidated Plan, amendments, or the CAPER, DHCD will aim to provide a substantive written response within 15 working days of receipt. Any complaints requiring further remediation will be handled by DHCD on a case-by-case basis.

DRAFT