



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

2024-2028

For

The Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers

and

Southwest Florida Affordable Housing Choice

Foundation, Inc.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT- DISASTER RECOVERY

Grantee: Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers and Southwest Florida Affordable Housing Choice Foundation, Inc.

Recipient's Address: 4224 Renaissance Preserve Way, Fort Myers, Florida 33916

Contact Person: Marcia Davis, Exécutive Director

Contact Email: marcia@hacfm.org

Contact Phone #: 239-344-3221

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The primary goal of the Citizen Participation Plan is to provide citizens, especially low- and moderate-income citizens of the community where CDBG-DR funded activities will take place, an opportunity to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the programs and projects.

The Citizen Participation Plan is required by Section 104(a)(2) of the Housing and Community Development Act and by regulations at 24 CFR 570.486 and as required under the State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery for Hurricane Ian.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) has been prepared and implemented pursuant to federal regulations (U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Regulations 24 CFR Part 570.486). **Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers (HACFM) and Southwest Florida Affordable Housing Choice Foundation, Inc. (SFAHCF, Inc.)** has designed this community-wide Citizen Participation Plan to provide for and encourage citizen participation in the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) applications for rehabilitation and new construction housing units as a part of the recovery process from Hurricane Ian.

The primary goal of this Citizen Participation Plan is to provide all citizens of the community with adequate opportunity to participate in and be advised on the implementation of **HACFM and SFAHCF, Inc.** CDBG-DR funded housing projects. Citizens are encouraged to participate in all phases of the program and will be provided full access to program information. Final responsibility and authority for the development and implementation of the program will lie with **HACFM and SFAHCF, Inc.**

2. SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION

This Plan sets forth policies and procedures for citizen participation as it relates to the County's CDBG-DR funded housing projects. Special emphasis has been placed on encouraging participation by persons of low and moderate incomes, residents of areas where community development funds are utilized, and within areas most significantly impacted by Hurricane Ian.

HACFM and SFAHCF, Inc. will make reasonable efforts to provide for citizen participation during the community disaster recovery process and throughout the implementation of the County's CDBG- DR funded housing projects, with a focus on citizen application intake periods and reporting on program progress and accomplishments.

3. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION CONTACT PERSON

The following individual has been designated as the primary contact person for citizen participation efforts in relation to the CDBG funded projects:

Marcia Davis

Email: marcia@hacfm.org

Phone: 239-344-3221

The Executive Director will serve as the contact person for all matters concerning citizen participation activities under the CDBG-DR funded housing projects. This person shall be responsible for overseeing citizen participation throughout the community disaster recovery process and the implementation of all citizen participation activities and functions.

The specific duties and responsibilities of the citizen participation contact person shall include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Disseminating information concerning the status of current project activities;
- Receiving written comments;
- Serving as a vehicle by which public comments may be transmitted to program staff, County departmental staff and/or County officials.
- Responsible for monitoring the citizen participation process and proposing such amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan as may be necessary.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Upon request, staff of **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** shall provide technical assistance to individual citizens and citizen groups. Focus should be placed on those groups and representatives of persons of low or moderate income impacted by Hurricane Ian. The **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** will determine the level and type of technical assistance required. Technical assistance may include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Interpreting the rules, regulations, procedures and/or requirements of the projects and CDBG- DR funding source;
- Providing information and/or materials concerning the projects;
- Assisting low- and moderate-income citizens impacted by Hurricane Ian to identify their needs, and to help ensure they are informed of the availability and status of the program.

a) Limited English Proficiency Residents

HACFM and **SFAHCF, Inc.** will undertake reasonable actions to facilitate the participation of persons with Limited English Proficiency. Program staff will undertake all reasonable actions necessary to allow such persons to participate in the community disaster recovery process. Such actions may include the provision of materials in languages other than English.

5. REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

HACFM and **SFAHCF, Inc.** will provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. All public meetings and hearings will be held in locations accessible to all persons with disabilities. Upon request a sign language interpreter and/or other appropriate provisions will be made. Persons needing this assistance will be asked to submit a request to **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** designated contact citizen participation contact person for these services at least five (5) working days in advance of the meeting/hearing.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing will be held during the launch of the project to allow actual or potential beneficiaries to voice opinions and provide feedback for the housing projects. Additional public hearings will be held as needed to allow local officials to respond to questions and solicit interest from beneficiaries. Citizens may also express comments and views concerning the housing projects to the governing body at any regularly scheduled **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** Board of Commissioners meeting.

- Public Hearings will normally be held at the regularly scheduled monthly **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** Board of Commissioners meeting.
- Reasonable notice of the hearing will be provided, and the hearing will be held at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, especially persons of low and moderate incomes.
- Hearing notice will be published with dates, times, and locations in the following website: <https://www.hacfm.org>
- At public hearings, actual and potential beneficiaries will be provided with information concerning the CDBG-DR program which may include:
 - the goals and objectives of the CDBG-DR program;
 - the total amount of CDBG- DR funds available for the fiscal year and for the funding round;
 - the role of citizens;
 - the range of activities which may be undertaken;
 - a statement the CDBG-DR funds will be used to benefit low- to-moderate income people;
 - and to provide citizens with contact information such as address, telephone number, and dates for submitting applications and processes for complaints or grievances.

Other public hearings may be held as deemed necessary by **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** in order to inform citizens of community development project(s) and activities, and to solicit citizen opinions and comments. All additional hearings shall comply with the requirements set forth in this Plan.

7. PROGRAM INFORMATION AND ACCESS TO RECORDS

Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties may review in-person information and records relating to projects funded by CDBG-DR. Information for the projects shall be made available for examination and duplication, on request, during regular business hours. To locate records and arrange space for viewing, **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** will require written notice two (2) working days before review.

In no case shall **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** disclose any information concerning the financial status of any program participant(s), which may be required to document program eligibility or benefit. Furthermore, **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** shall not disclose any information that has regulatory confidentiality protection.

Materials to be made available to the public shall include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- The Citizen Participation Plan
- Records of public hearing
- Mailings and promotional materials
- Fair housing materials
- Solicitations for services
- Contracts with consultants, contractors, vendors or other service providers.
- Performance and evaluation reports
- Other reports required by the HUD
- Copies or links to resources for the applicable Federal and State rules, regulations, policies, requirements and procedures governing the CDBG-DR program.

8. PROCEDURES FOR COMMENTS, OBJECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

Citizens are encouraged to submit their views and proposals on all aspects of a community development program at the public hearings. Citizens may, at any time, submit written comments or complaints to **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.**. Complaints regarding the projects should be submitted to:

HACFM and SFAHCF, Inc.
C/O Citizens Comments CDBG-DR
4224 Renaissance Preserve Way,
Fort Myers, Florida 33916

9. ANTI-DISPLACEMENT AND RELOCATION

As a part of the mission of **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** to keep citizens housed, the organization will follow HUD regulations and local anti-displacement policies so that displacement or temporary relocations are minimized as a result of CDBG activities. If displacement or temporary relocation is necessary, persons eligible for relocation assistance under the Real Property Policies Act of 1970 (URA) and Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 will be provided with the types and levels of assistance as required by federal regulations.

10. AMENDMENTS

HACFM and **SFAHCF, Inc.** may, from time to time, modify the provisions outlined herein through amendment to this Citizen Participation Plan. It shall be the policy of **HACFM** and **SFAHCF, Inc.** to periodically review and discuss the effectiveness of this Citizen Participation Plan in allowing citizen participation in the community disaster recovery process and in helping to meet the community development needs and goals identified by the citizens of Lee County. To this end, the Plan will be reviewed and monitored by program and departmental staff as needed during weekly programmatic meetings. Amendments to the Plan will be made as necessary. All amendments shall be approved by the Executive Director.

11. AUTHORITY

No portion of this Citizen Participation Plan shall be construed to restrict the responsibility and authority of the elected officials of and within Lee County in the development, implementation and execution of any Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program.