

CDBG-DR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The State values citizen and stakeholder engagement. West Virginia has developed a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) in compliance with 24 CFR 91.115, the requirements set forth under 81 FR 83254 for this allocation and other applicable HUD requirements. The State's CPP is intended to maximize the opportunity for citizen involvement in the planning and development of the West Virginia CDBG-DR recovery program including but not limited to:

- The amount of assistance expected to be received by impacted communities;
- The range of eligible activities to be undertaken; and,
- Other Action Plan and program activities.

The goal of the CPP is to provide all West Virginia residents with an opportunity to participate in the planning and assessment of the State's CDBG-DR recovery programs. In order to facilitate citizen involvement, West Virginia has laid out specific actions to encourage participation and allow equal access to information about the program by all citizens, especially those of low- and moderate- income, those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas identified for recovery through CDBG-DR, non-English speaking persons, and other vulnerable populations.

ACTION PLAN

Citizen participation is an essential role in West Virginia's recovery. The State's goal is to provide every citizen, especially low-to-moderate income (LMI) citizens, an opportunity to participate in the planning, implementation and assessment of programs and projects. The participation of citizens is important given the impact of the CDBG-DR programs and projects on their communities. Thus, the State commits to provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, public hearings and other information related to the use of the CDBG-DR funds.

The Action Plan defines how West Virginia will effectively use all available funding to support a data-driven recovery based on the calculation of unmet need across the state. The Action Plan describes the State's proposed allocation by activity and lays out program design for each area of assistance, as well as identifying the beginning and end dates for each disaster recovery activity, and performance and expenditure schedules. Before West Virginia adopts the disaster recovery Action Plan, the State will make available for public input, information regarding program design including the amount of assistance West Virginia expects to receive, the range of activities that may be undertaken, and the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low-to-moderate income, and plans to mitigate displacement.

A summary of all comments received will be included in the final Action Plan submitted to HUD for approval. The final Action Plan approved by HUD will be posted to the West Virginia Development Office disaster website at WVFloodRecovery.com.

AMENDMENTS TO THE ACTION PLAN

Every amendment, substantial or not, shall be numbered sequentially and posted on the State's Disaster Recovery website, not replacing, but in addition to all previous versions of the plan.

SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

West Virginia will engage citizens throughout the program lifecycle to maximize the opportunity for input on proposed program changes that result in a Substantial Amendment. Program changes result in a Substantial Amendment when there is:

- A change in program benefit or eligibility criteria;
- An addition or deletion of an activity;
- A program allocation or re-allocation of more than \$1 million or
- A change in planned beneficiaries.

The State will publish the availability of any draft Substantial Amendment and the dates of the fourteen (14) day public comment period. A copy of any Substantial Amendment will be available at WVFloodRecovery.com website.

Citizens will be provided with no less than fourteen days to review and provide comment on any proposed Substantial Amendment. A summary of all comments received will be included in the final Substantial Amendment submitted to HUD for approval. Final Substantial Amendments approved by HUD will be posted to the Disaster Recovery website at WVFloodRecovery.com.

NON-SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

In the event the State needs to make a plan amendment which is not substantial, it shall notify HUD but will not allow for public comment. HUD will be notified at least five (5) business days before the amendment becomes effective.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

West Virginia immediately began to seek the input from those communities impacted by the June 2016 floods along with stakeholders from across the State. Although a public hearing is not required given the citizen participation waivers provided by HUD for this CDBG-DR allocation, the State held two (2) public meetings to discuss the specific proposed use of the CDBG-DR funds with the public. The State sought input from the impacted communities and other stakeholders regarding the housing, infrastructure and economic revitalization unmet needs. Notice of public hearings was announced through prominent publication on the West Virginia Department of Commerce website, distribution through the impacted communities Long-Term Recovery Committees, posting on the West Virginia Secretary of State website and postings on various social media. All notices were posted in advance of the event. Public hearings were held at a time and location convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries. West Virginia considered all comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at the public hearings.

Individuals who require auxiliary aids or special assistance at public hearings should make a request at least forty-eight hours in advance of the event to the WVDOC by contacting Jennifer

Ferrell at 304-957-2019 or the hearing impaired may call 304-558-1675, or 866-461-3578 (toll-free).

Public meetings were held to present the Substantial Amendment to the Action Plan and further allow the public's input on Tuesday, April 4, 2017 and Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 6:00 PM at the following locations, respectively:

Advent Christian
Fellowship Hall
2nd Avenue &
Spencer Rd. (Rt.
119) Clendenin, WV
25045

WV School of Osteopathic Medicine - first
year lecture hall 400 North Lee St.
Lewisburg, WV 24901

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT PERIOD

West Virginia considered all comments regarding the Action Plan or any Substantial Amendments thereto received in writing, via email, or expressed in-person at official public hearing events. Additionally, in an effort to permit public examination and public accountability, West Virginia will make the information available to citizens, VOADS, public agencies, and other interested parties upon request.

Notice of public comment period will be provided by publication on the WVDOC disaster recovery website and in any notices regarding publication of the Action Plan or a Substantial Amendment. West Virginia will provide notice and open the citizen comment period for the following time frames per action:

- Comment period for the original Action Plan will take place for fourteen (14) days after the publication of the Action Plan.
- Comment period for Substantial Amendments will take place for no less than fourteen (14) days after the publication of the Substantial Amendment.

The Action Plan was posted on the Department of Commerce's website (wvcommerce.org/wvdisasterrecovery) on April 3, 2017. The Action Plan was available for comment for a period of 14 days until April 18, 2017. The Amendment to the Action Plan was posted on the Department of Commerce's website (wvcommerce.org/wvdisasterrecovery) on October 19, 2017. The Amendment was available for public comment for a period of 14 days until November 2, 2017.

OUTREACH TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND THOSE WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

West Virginia is mindful that after a disaster, vulnerable populations, including those with limited English proficiency, may be most in need of resources and most difficult to reach. Such populations could include elderly, disabled, low or moderate income or those with limited English proficiency.

In order to identify impacted vulnerable populations, mapping and intentional consultation will be used by the State. As an example, the State will use American Census Survey data on age, disability and income and FEMA damage data to identify vulnerable populations. Additionally, non-profit or stakeholder identification of need will be utilized. Once these communities are identified, the State will target outreach in these areas. The SoVI[®] targeted, specialized outreach will be conducted to these populations in order to ensure proper notice of the opportunity to attend hearings or provide input on the proposed plan.

West Virginia is committed to providing all citizens with equal access to information about the recovery program, including persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency (LEP). The State follows HUD regulation, 24 CFR Part 1, “Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” which requires all recipients of federal financial assistance from HUD to provide meaningful access to LEP persons.

Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English can be LEP and may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter. Where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate in public hearings or open comment periods, materials to be handed out will be translated into the appropriate language, citizen comments in a language other than English will be translated, and translators will be present.

As a result of initial population analysis, the State will post the Language Assistance Plan to the WV Flood Recovery.com website to outline the services provided to Limited English Proficiency citizens in the disaster service area for the CDBG-DR grant.

CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The State of West Virginia will handle citizen complaints through a Constituent Services Team. All complaints received by the State, any contractor or vendor working on the CDBG-DR program or project, and/or other program sources, will be reviewed by the Constituent Services Team for:

1. Investigation as necessary;
2. Resolution; or
3. Follow-up actions.

It will remain the goal of the State to always attempt to resolve complaints in a manner that is both sensitive to the complainant's concerns and that achieves a fair result.

The goal of the State and its Constituent Services Team is to provide an opportunity to resolve complaints in a timely manner. The State will provide a timely written response (either by letter or email as applicable) within 15 business days of the receipt of the complaint. If it is not practicable to provide a response within this time period, then the complainant shall be notified of the reason for the delay and the expected time period for a response. It shall be the right of any party filing a complaint to participate in the process and appeal a decision reached by the State.

Citizens may file a written complaint or appeal through the Department of Commerce email at DisasterRecovery@WV.gov or submit by postal mail to the following address:

Attention:
Constituent
Services West
Virginia
Development Office,
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Capitol Complex, Building
6, Room 553
Charleston, WV 25305-0311