



Citizen Participation Plan

Statement of Purpose

Manatee County recognizes that citizen participation is a very important part of the consolidated planning process. To better guide the County’s outreach in gaining citizen input, the County has developed a Citizen Participation Plan. The Manatee County Citizen Participation Plan is designed to create opportunities for citizens to be involved in the development of the Consolidate Plan, Annual Action Plans, the implementation of Substantial Amendments, Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). These plans and documents are required in order to keep compliance with federal regulations related to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs.

This update to the Manatee County Citizen Participation Plan was approved by the Board of County Commissioner on July 25, 2023, and supersedes all the previous versions.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with 24 CFR Section 91.105, the Manatee County Community and Veterans Services (CVS) Department has prepared a Citizen Participation Plan to explain the opportunity all residents have to participate in the process of preparing the Consolidated Plan. The Manatee County Community and Veterans Services (CVS) Department is responsible for administering the Citizen Participation Plan.

The overall goal of the Consolidated Plan is to utilize federal, state and local funding in a coordinated manner to promote the development of viable communities. Viable communities are described as meeting the residents’ needs in regards to affordable and decent housing, a safe and suitable living environment, and adequate economic opportunities particularly for low- and moderate-income persons.

Citizen participation will be encouraged during development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, any Substantial Amendments, AFH, and the CAPER, by providing notice to residents and local organizations through various media methods.

The Citizen Participation Plan sets forth the policies to be used for citizen participation and outlines the procedures to be used to encourage the participation of all Manatee County residents – especially residents who are low-income, minorities, non-English speaking, disabled, and persons with HIV/ AIDS.

Five-Year Consolidated Plan

PUBLIC HEARINGS

In accordance with 24 CFR Section 91.105, Manatee County will host, at a minimum, one Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) public hearing during the development of the Consolidated Plan, prior to its proposed adoption by the Board of County Commissioners for submission to HUD.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The County will publish a notice of availability of the Consolidated Plan and corresponding Annual Action Plan for public review in a newspaper of general circulation, on the County's website at www.mymanatee.org and in the local newspaper. The date of publication will be the beginning of a 30-day public comment period at the end of which a public hearing on the Consolidated Plan and corresponding Annual Action Plan will also be held.

The notice of availability shall include a summary of the Consolidated Plan as well as a summary of those sections of the Consolidated Plan that concern HOME funds. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan, and will include a list of locations where copies of the entire Consolidated Plan may be examined and provide instructions on how to submit public comment.

COMMENT PERIOD

Prior to the BOCC's approval of the Consolidated Plan, a 30-day public comment period shall be held as required by HUD.

The County shall publish a draft of the Consolidated Plan (including the corresponding Annual Action Plan) to be available during the 30-day comment period so that citizens have an opportunity to review the Consolidated Plan prior to adoption.

During the 30-day comment period, the Community and Veterans Services (CVS) Department will receive written comments on the Consolidated Plan from the public and will later include those comments and the County's responses in the final publication of the Consolidated Plan.

Copies of the draft Consolidated Plan will be available for review at the Central Library, South Manatee and Palmetto Branches of the Manatee County Public Library System and available in the public waiting area of the CVS Department. Upon request, the Community and Veterans Services (CVS) Department of Manatee County will provide a reasonable number of additional copies to citizens and groups.

The Manatee County BOCC, as the elected authority of the citizens of Manatee County, has responsibility for the Consolidated Plan. All public comments shall be reviewed and taken into consideration by the Board. The BOCC authorizes final publication of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan as well as their submission to HUD.

SUBMISSION OF PLAN

Following approval by the BOCC, the Consolidated Plan will be submitted to HUD no later than 45 days prior to the start of the program year. Upon submission, all certifications of compliance will be included.

Annual Action Plan

Each program year, as a part of the consolidated planning process, Manatee County must develop an Annual Action Plan that identifies sources of funding, statement of objectives, description of projects, graphic distribution, monitoring of sub-recipients, and results of past efforts.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

To receive public input prior to the adoption of the Annual Action Plan, the BOCC shall hold a minimum of one public hearing at the conclusion of a 30-day public comment period as required by HUD.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A public notice shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation, on the County's website at www.myanatee.org and in the local newspaper no less than 10 days prior to the hearing date to notify the public of their opportunity to attend the hearing and provide comment. The public notice shall include a summary of the proposed Annual Action Plan and all pertinent information as to where the Annual Action Plan is available for public examination, including the location's address and hours of availability.

COMMENT PERIOD

A 30-day comment period of the draft Annual Action Plan will be established for public review prior to submission to the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners for final consideration and adoption.

Hard copies of the draft Annual Action Plan will be available for review at the Central Library, South Manatee and Palmetto Branches of the Manatee County Public Library System and available in the public waiting area of the CVS Department. The Community and Veteran's Department will provide electronic copies of the Annual Action Plan to interested citizens and organizations upon request.

Once the Annual Action Plan has been approved by the BOCC and submitted to HUD, a 45-day HUD review period will commence.

SUBMISSION OF PLAN

Following approval by the BOCC, the Consolidated Plan will be submitted to HUD no later than 45 days prior to the start of the program year. Upon submission, all certifications of compliance will be included.

Amendments

In accordance with 24 CFR Section 91.105, Manatee County will amend its approved plans whenever Community and Veterans Services Department staff makes one of the following decisions:

- To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
- To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan (including program income, reimbursements, repayment, recaptures, or reallocations from HUD), not previously described in the action plan; or
- To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

Manatee County will make amendments public and will notify HUD that an amendment has been made. In accordance with 24 CFR Section 91.105(c)(1), Manatee County may submit any amendments at the end of the program year, along with the CAPER. Letters transmitting copies of amendments will be signed by the official representative authorized to take such action.

Substantial Amendments

In accordance with 24 CFR Section 91.105(b), only Substantial Amendments are subject to a citizen participation process. Prior to the submission of any substantial change in the proposed use of funds, citizens will have reasonable notice of, and the opportunity to comment on, the proposed amendment using the citizen participation methods outlined in this Citizen Participation Plan and/or other methods that result in effective notice and comment.

A Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan(s) will be carried out when Community and Veterans Services Department staff identifies:

- Federal law or regulation require such action; or
- Priority needs and goals not previously described in the plans are identified.

If there are changes because of legislative authority or the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) causes changes in rules, regulations and guidelines which impact the CDBG, HOME, or ESG Programs, said changes will supersede any/all of the provisions contained in this Citizen Participation Plan.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Substantial Amendments to the CDBG, HOME, or ESG activities shall require approval by the Manatee County BOCC. The BOCC shall hold a minimum of one public hearing for public input on any Substantial Amendments. In the event that Manatee County is closed to the public, virtual public meetings and hearings may be used instead. Check www.mymanatee.org for notices of all public meetings, including virtual hearings. Virtual hearings will be used in lieu of in-person hearing if national or local health authorities recommend social distancing and limit public gatherings for public health reasons. Prior to amending its Consolidated Plan for a new activity or a substantial change, the County will publish a notice of the substantial change in a newspaper of general circulation, on the County's website at www.mymanatee.org and in any widely disseminated smaller publications serving low- and moderate-income persons or special needs populations no less than 10 days prior to the hearing date to notify the public of their opportunity to attend the hearing and provide comment. When a smaller publication serving low- and moderate-income persons or special needs population is not available, the notice in the newspaper of general circulation will include a Spanish language notice.

COMMENT PERIOD

The public shall be given an opportunity to comment on any Substantial Amendments made to the County's Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. After proper notice is given, a 30-day public review period will be required to obtain public comment prior to BOCC approval.

Copies of the draft Substantial Amendments will be made available for review by the Community and Veterans Services Department and on the County's website at www.mymanatee.org and available in the public waiting area of the CVS Department. Copies of the Substantial Amendments will be made available to interested citizens and organizations upon request.

Performance Reports

Each year the County will issue a Performance Report showing the progress it has made in carrying out its Strategic Plan and Action Plan.

The Performance Report, or the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), will include a description of the resources available, the investment of those resources, where those resources were spent geographically, persons assisted (including the racial and ethnic status of persons assisted), actions taken to further fair housing, and other actions indicated in the Strategic Plan and Action Plan. The County must send HUD a CAPER by December 30 or within 90 days of the close of the program year. Manatee County's program year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The County will hold a minimum of one public hearing with the BOCC to consider any comments or views of citizens in relation to the published CAPER. A public notice shall be published in a local newspaper and on the County's website at www.mymanatee.org no less than 10 days prior to the hearing date to notify the public of their opportunity to attend the hearing and provide comment.

COMMENT PERIOD

The County will receive comments and make all CAPERs available to the public at least 15 days prior to submission to HUD. The County will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at public hearings in preparing the final version of CAPERs.

A summary of these comments will be attached to the Performance Report, upon completion of the final version to be submitted to HUD. HUD conducts a 30-day review of the CAPER after submission.

Copies of the draft CAPER will be made available for viewing by the Community and Veterans Services Department and located on the County's website at www.mymanatee.org and available in the public waiting area of the CVS Department. Electronic copies of the CAPER will be provided to interested citizens and organizations, upon request.

Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

In accordance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements, a minimum of two public hearings shall be held:

- One public hearing shall be held for public input for the AFH, prior to the draft document being made available for 30-day public comment.
- An additional public hearing shall be held within the noticed 30-day public comment period and prior to approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The County will publish a notice of availability of the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) for public review in a newspaper of general circulation, on the County's website at www.mymanatee.org and in any widely disseminated smaller publications serving low- and moderate-income persons or special needs populations. The date of publication will be the

beginning of a 30-day public comment period at the end of which a public hearing on the AFH will also be held.

The notice of availability shall include a summary of the AFH. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the AFH, and will include a list of locations where copies of the entire AFH may be examined.

The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the AFH, and will include a list of locations where copies of the entire proposed AFH may be examined.

COMMENT PERIOD

Prior to the BOCC's approval of the AFH, a 30-day public comment period shall be held as required by HUD.

The County shall publish a draft of the AFH to be available during the 30-day comment period so that citizens have an opportunity to review the AFH prior to approval and submission to HUD. During the 30-day comment period, the Community and Veterans Services Department will receive written comments on the AFH from the public and will later include those comments and the County's responses in the final publication of the AFH.

Copies of the draft AFH will be available for review at the Central Library, South Manatee and Palmetto Branches of the Manatee County Public Library System. Upon request, the Community and Veterans Services Department of Manatee County will provide a reasonable number of additional copies to citizens and groups.

The Manatee County BOCC, as the elected authority of the citizens of Manatee County, has responsibility for the AFH. All public comments shall be reviewed and taken into consideration by the Board. The BOCC authorizes final publication of the AFH as well as their submission to HUD.

SUBMISSION OF PLAN

Following approval by the BOCC, the AFH will be submitted to HUD.

Consultation

During the development of the AFH and/or Consolidated Plan Year Manatee County will make every effort to consult with other public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social services, including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and homeless persons. The agencies may include local Public Housing Authorities and the local Continuum of Care. Manatee County shall also consult with community-based and regionally based organizations that represent protected class members and organizations that enforce fair housing laws when preparing both the AFH and the Consolidated Plan.

Consultation will also include coordination with regional government agencies in addition to adjacent units of general local government and local government agencies. This includes local government agencies with metropolitan-wide planning and transportation responsibilities.

Comments/Grievances

The County's Community and Veterans Services Department Director or designee will provide a timely written response to complaints, comments, and grievances, within 15 working days, where practicable.

Public Hearings/Public Notices

Manatee County will host, at a minimum, two public hearings with the BOCC annually during the Five-Year Consolidated Plan's term.

To receive public input prior to the adoption of the Annual Action Plan, the BOCC shall hold a minimum of one public hearing at the conclusion of the 30-day public comment period as required by HUD. A second BOCC public hearing will be held later in the program year to consider comments from citizens regarding the published Performance Report (CAPER).

To ensure that advance notice is provided to the public and that BOCC public hearings are accessible to persons with special needs, the County will:

- Publish a notice of the BOCC public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation, on the County's website and in any widely disseminated smaller publications serving low- and moderate- income persons or special needs populations 10 days prior to the day of the BOCC public hearing to allow interested parties to attend.
- Published notices in readable size and provide complete summary information on the purpose of the BOCC public hearing, the date, time and location of the BOCC public hearing, and contact information for persons who may have questions about the BOCC public hearing or who may require information regarding accessibility for persons with special needs.
- Provide a translator at the prior written request of an individual or organization representing non-English speaking persons. Written requests must be made to the Manatee County Community and Veterans Services Department, a minimum of five business days prior to BOCC public hearing dates.
- Disseminate this information at appropriate County libraries, government offices and public spaces.

Community Meetings

Manatee County will host, at a minimum, two community meetings with low- and moderate-income persons and special needs populations annually during the Five-Year Consolidated Plan's term to solicit comments on the strategies and proposed use of funds and to review program performance.

To ensure that advance notice is provided to the public and that community meetings are accessible to persons with special needs, the County will:

- Publish a notice of the community meeting in a newspaper of general circulation, on the County's website and in any widely disseminated smaller publications serving low- and moderate-income persons or special needs populations 10 days prior to the day of the community meeting to allow interested parties to attend.
- Publish notices in readable size and provide complete summary information on the purpose of the community meeting, the date, time and location of the community meeting, and contact information for persons who may have questions about the community meeting or who may require information regarding accessibility for persons with special needs.
- Disseminate this information at appropriate County libraries, government offices and public spaces.

Access to Information

Citizens, public agencies and other interested parties, including those most affected, will have the opportunity to receive information, and review and submit comments on any proposed submission concerning any of the following documents:

- The proposed Annual Action Plans
- The proposed Five-Year Consolidated Plan
- Proposed Substantial Amendments to either an Annual Action Plan or the Five-Year Consolidated Plan
- CAPER (Annual Performance Reports)
- The Citizens Participation Plan
- Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH)
- Other plans requiring submission to HUD

Copies of the previously identified documents will be made available at advertised public buildings and upon request from the Community and Veterans Services Department.

All correspondence, records, and minutes of BOCC public hearings will be retained by the Community and Veterans Services Department and by the Clerk of the Circuit Court. All input received through, or in association with, community meetings and workshops will be retained by the Community and Veterans Services Department only. Any pertinent information such as written proposals from a citizens group, etc., will be presented to the Community and Veterans Services Department staff for review and consideration. If assistance in reading or obtaining program records is needed, the Community and Veterans Services Department should be contacted at 941-749- 3030 or interested parties can access records at the Community and Veterans Services Department at 1112 Manatee Avenue West, 5th Floor, Bradenton, Florida, 34205.

Interested parties may also access many of the program documents at the Manatee County website, www.mymanatee.org.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be provided to citizens, citizen groups, non-profit organizations and agencies as needed in developing project proposals. Such assistance is available upon request from the Community and Veterans Services Department. Anyone needing technical assistance should contact the Manatee County Community and Veterans Services Department at 941-749-3030.

Anti-Displacement

The County has not, nor does it anticipate, funding any activities that will displace any residents or businesses. If displacement does occur, the County will follow all applicable requirements set forth by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (URA), section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act, its Local Relocation and Anti-Displacement Policy, and any other required state and Federal regulations.

Use of Plan

Manatee County will follow this Citizen Participation Plan in the development of the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, AFH, and the Performance Report.

For more information regarding the Consolidated Plan or to submit your comments, inquiries and complaints concerning the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, AFH, or the Performance Reports can be conveyed by contacting the County staff at:

Manatee County Community and Veterans Services Department
1112 Manatee Avenue West, 5th Floor
Bradenton, FL 34205
Telephone: 941-749-3030 • Fax: 941-742-5848
Manatee County, FL

Complaints and related comments on the programs may also be offered at the public hearings. Written complaints may also be made to the Jacksonville Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at the following address:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Community Planning and Development Division Charles Bennett Federal Building
400 West Bay Street, Suite 1015
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Telephone: 904-232-1777
Fax: 904-232-3617