



Citizen Participation Plan

2018 CDBG-DR Allocation: Public Law 115-254

This document was prepared by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to meet the citizen participation requirements for the 2018 CDBG-DR allocation following Hurricane Michael (DR-4400) in October 2018. The plan reflects the alternative requirements as specified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Federal Register Notice 85 FR 4681 and any amendments, as applicable. DCA ensures the Citizen Participation Plan meets CDBG-DR regulations and takes into consideration any waivers and alternatives made available by HUD.

The Citizen Participation Plan is developed to ensure citizens of the State of Georgia, particularly persons of low and moderate income residing in areas where it is proposed that such funds are to be used, are provided the opportunity and are encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation of the 2018 CDBG-DR activities.

Outreach Summary

In anticipation of receiving federal funds, DCA is required to incorporate specific citizen participation requirements into its Action Plan. This plan outlines how DCA intends to meet or has already met these requirements.

During the development of the Action Plan, DCA will conduct outreach efforts to impacted stakeholders. DCA will consult with elected officials from all FEMA Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) declared counties from the 2018 Hurricane Michael Disaster. DCA will initiate outreach through one of the following mechanisms: conference calls, emails, or in-person meetings. DCA will also host phone calls and communicate through email with local elected officials to ensure feedback is consistent and continual, distribute periodic CDBG-DR status updates produced by the State's CDBG-DR Director, Project Manager, or Field Coordinator and facilitate community meetings with local officials and staff to discuss program guidelines, planning and to receive feedback from local jurisdictions.

The objectives of DCA's outreach activities are to ensure that all citizens are aware of the 2018 CDBG-DR funding and planning process, have an opportunity to comment on or suggest proposed uses for the funds, and to maximize public awareness and access to 2018 CDBG-DR program funds when available.

Fair Housing

DCA is committed to furthering fair housing through established affirmative marketing and outreach activities. DCA will take steps based on the Fair Housing Act of 1968 to reduce disparities in housing choice, access, and opportunities based on protected class (e.g., race, color, religion, familial status, sex, national origin or disability). Toward achieving that objective, DCA will ensure that its outreach, communication and public engagement efforts are comprehensive in order to reach as many impacted citizens as possible.

Development of Disaster Recovery Action Plan

The State is developing the 2018 CDBG-DR Action Plan that will include:

1. The amount of assistance expected to be received, based on projected amounts provided by HUD;
2. The range of activities that can be undertaken including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income;
3. Plans to minimize displacement of persons and assist any persons displaced;
4. An anticipated time schedule for submission of the Action Plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and
5. Incorporation of and response to public comments received during the public comment period.

Action Plan Public Notice and Comment Period

Prior to finalizing the Action Plan, DCA will make available to stakeholders, citizens, public agencies and other interested parties. DCA will provide public notice and seek feedback for the development of the Disaster Recovery Action Plan through emails, website postings, and public meetings.

DCA will publish the draft 2018 CDBG-DR Action Plan for 30 days for public comment on the DCA CDBG-DR Website. The website is linked below:

<https://www.dca.ga.gov/community-economic-development/funding-programs/community-development-block-grant-disaster-6>

For those who are unable to obtain a copy of the draft Action Plan online, a copy will be made available at the DCA Headquarters. Citizens who wish to participate in the planning process are encouraged to contact their local government or reach out to DCA using the following contact information:

Via Email: CDBG-DR@dca.ga.gov

Via Mail: Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Community Finance Division CDBG-DR
60 Executive Park South, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

DCA will make every attempt to hold stakeholder meetings in a time and location convenient to potential beneficiaries. The meetings will be held in an accessible location, and sign language interpreters will be made available upon advance request. DCA will also provide interpretation services for non-English speaking residents at the meetings upon advance request. Stakeholders and citizens will be notified of the public hearing at least one (1) week before it is held.

Amendments to Action Plan

When DCA desires to amend its Action Plan, it will be done in accordance with the Federal Register Notice 83 FR 40316. The Action Plan is a living document that may be subject to amendments in response to new information and data that is realized during the life of the project. Updates to the plan may be substantial or non-substantial.

1. Substantial Amendments

Defined as an amendment that involves one of following:

- A change in program benefit, beneficiary, or eligibility criteria
- The allocation or re-allocation of more than \$1 million
- The addition or deletion of an allowable activity

After the draft of the substantial amendment is complete, DCA will elicit comments from the public. DCA will post the amended plan and a list of all changes to the DCA website. The amendment will be prominently displayed on the website for 30 calendar days.

Written comments on amendments to the Action Plan may be submitted to DCA via email at CDBG-DR@dca.ga.gov or mailed to the following address:

Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Community Finance Division CDBG-DR
60 Executive Park South, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

All comments will be included as an attachment to the final Substantial Amendment. Final Substantial Amendments, approved by HUD, will be posted to DCA's Disaster Recovery website.

2. Non-Substantial Amendments

For non-substantial amendments, DCA shall notify HUD, but public comment is not required.

Every amendment, substantial or not, shall be numbered sequentially and posted on the DCA CDBG-DR website. The Action Plan and all amendments shall be made available in English and Spanish.

Action Plan Complaint Process and Procedures

Persons wishing to object to the activities undertaken may make such objection known in writing to DCA. DCA will consider objections made only on the following grounds:

- The applicant describes needs and objectives plainly inconsistent with available facts and data;
- The activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the applicant; and the program does not comply with the requirements set forth in the Disaster Recovery Action Plan or other applicable laws.
- Such objections should include identification of the requirements not met and supporting data.

DCA will respond to comments, complaints and grievances in a timely manner. Responses will be made in writing and may be responded to via email, if applicable. When practicable, such responses shall be made within fifteen (15) working days and be included in the final Disaster Recovery Action Plan.

Please address your comments, complaints, or grievances to:

Via Email: CDBG-DR@dca.ga.gov

Via Mail: Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Community Finance Division CDBG-DR
60 Executive Park South, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Complaints regarding fraud, waste, or abuse of government funds will be forwarded to the HUD OIG Fraud Hotline (phone: 1-800-347-3735 or email: hotline@hudoig.gov).

Quarterly Performance Reporting

The State must submit a Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) through HUD's Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting (DRGR) system no later than thirty (30) days following the end of each calendar quarter. Within three (3) days of submission to HUD, each QPR must be posted on the DCA website for public review and comment. The website is listed below:

<https://www.dca.ga.gov/community-economic-development/funding-programs/community-development-block-grant-disaster-recovery>

The State's first QPR is due after the first full calendar quarter after the grant award. QPRs will be posted on a quarterly basis until all funds have been expended and all expenditures have been reported.

Following completion of all the aforementioned activities, DCA will confer with HUD, as required, to determine the CDBG-DR grant is ready to be closed out, and with HUD's agreement, will submit and make publicly available its final QPR.

Each QPR will include information about the uses of funds in activities identified in the Action Plan as entered in the DRGR reporting system. This includes, but is not limited to: project name, activity, location, and national objective; funds budgeted, obligated, drawn down, and expended; the funding source and total amount of any non-CDBG-DR funds to be expended on each activity; beginning and actual completion dates of completed activities; achieved performance outcomes such as number of housing units complete or number of low and moderate income persons benefiting; and the race and ethnicity of persons assisted under direct-benefit activities. The State must also record the amount of funding expended for each contractor identified in the Action Plan. Efforts made by the State to affirmatively further

fair housing will also be included in the QPR.

During the term of the grant, the State will provide citizens, affected local governments, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the approved program and to the grantee's use of grant funds as well as contracts procured with CDBG-DR funding. This information shall be posted on the DCA website, <https://www.dca.ga.gov/community-economic-development/funding-programs/community-development-block-grant-disaster-recovery>, and provided on request.

Close Out Process

DCA will make all performance reports available to the public on the CDBG-DR website throughout the grant period.

Prior to close-out of the CDBG-DR program, the final QPR will be made available on the DCA website for public review and comment prior to final submission to HUD.