



Richland County Government Citizen Participation Plan (CPP)

Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan:

As a recipient of entitlement funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Richland County is required to outline ways in which the citizens of Richland County can actively participate in the planning and investment of HUD funds through a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP). The primary goal of the CPP is to provide citizens--especially low- and moderate-income citizens of the community where HUD-funded activities will take place-- an opportunity to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the programs and projects. Its purpose is to encourage citizen involvement in the development of plans that impact the management and investment of HUD grants, including: the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), and any Substantial Amendments to a plan as required by HUD 24 CFR Part 91, Subpart B.

Responsible Entity:

The Richland County Community Development Office is part of the Grants and Community Outreach Department and is tasked with the management of all HUD awards received by the County. This Office coordinates the planning and administration of all HUD awards received by the County, including the annual entitlement awards: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). This plan also applies to additional one-time awards that have been or will be awarded to the County by HUD, including: CDBG-DR (Disaster Recovery Grant), CDBG-MIT (Disaster Mitigation Grant), CDBG-CV (Covid-19 Grant), and HOME-ARP (HOME Grant through the American Rescue Plan Act). All funds received by HUD are for investment in the unincorporated areas of Richland County and any Units of General Local Governments (UGLG's) that elect to participate in the County's CDBG Program.

As the Grantee, Richland County has discretion to use HUD funds to support County-run projects or to partner with local governments, public agencies, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), Community-Based Development Organizations (CBDOs), Community Development Corporations (CDC), local contractors, private lenders, and charities.

Community Development Office Contact Info:

Physical Location: County Administration Building 2020 Hampton Street, Suite 3058 Columbia, SC 29204	Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
Phone #: 803-576-2230 Email: CommunityDevelopmentInfo@richlandcountysc.gov	

Updated information about Community Development efforts can be found online at:

<https://www.richlandcountysc.gov/Government/Departments/Community-Development>



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HUD Awards Granted to Richland County:

1) Annual Formula-Based Entitlement Awards:

- a. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- b. HOME Investment Partnership (HOME)
- c. Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

2) One-Time Awards:

- a. CDBG-DR (Disaster Recovery Grant) – In response to the 2015 flood
- b. CDBG-MIT (Disaster Mitigation Grant) – In response to the 2015 flood
- c. CDBG-CV (Covid-19 Grant) – In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- d. HOME-ARP (HOME Grant through the American Rescue Plan Act)

Quick Guide on Plans and Reports associated with HUD Grants:

The following plans and reports are developed utilizing the Citizen Participation Plan to guide the management of funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

- 1) Citizen Participation Plan (CCP) – A plan that guides the public engagement requirements for the investment of any HUD funds.
- 2) Five-Year Consolidated Plan (Con Plan) – Updated every five years, the County is required to assess their affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions. The consolidated planning process serves as the framework for a community-wide dialogue to identify housing and community development priorities that align and focus funding from CDBG, HOME, and ESG awards.
 - a. Active Consolidated Plans: 2017-2021 Con Plan & 2022-2026 Con Plan
 - b. Next Consolidated Planning Process: For years 2027-2031 to begin in Fall 2026
- 3) Annual Action Plan (AAP) – Aligning with the Five-Year Con Plan, the County is required to develop an AAP for each set of annual CDBG, HOME, and ESG awards. Each AAP provides a concise summary of the actions, activities, and the specific federal and non-federal resources that will be used each year to address the priority needs and specific goals identified by the Consolidated Plan.
- 4) Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) – An annual report published in December of each year reporting on accomplishments and progress toward Consolidated Plan goals

Access to Information and Records

Richland County's Citizen Participation Plan, most recent Five-Year Consolidated Plan, active Annual Action Plans, and most recent CAPER are available for public viewing on the County's web site – <http://www.richlandcountysc.gov/Government/Departments/Community-Development>. Copies are also available for review at the Richland County Community Development Office upon request. The



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Office is located at 2020 Hampton Street, Suite 3058, Columbia, SC 29204. The Community Development Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Copies may be requested through the County's Ombudsman's Office by calling 803-929-0000 or emailing ombudsman@richlandcountysc.gov. The availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

Confidential materials, which include personal identity information, cannot be reviewed by the public due to client confidentiality and protection.

Types of Information Made Available

Prior to the adoption of any Consolidated Plan or Annual Plan, the following information is made available to citizens, public agencies and other potential interested parties:

- The amount of assistance the County expects to receive (including grant funds and program income);
- The range of activities that may be undertaken;
- The estimated amount of funding that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income;
- The County's plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced, specifying the types and levels of assistance the local government will make available (or require others to make available) to persons displaced, even if the local government expects no displacement to occur; and when and how the local government will make this information available.

Public Hearings & Public Notices

All notices of public hearings will be published in *The State* newspaper (Metro Section, Neighbors or Legal Section) at least fifteen (15) days prior to the public hearing. In addition, notices may be published in other local newspapers. Notices will also be posted on the Richland County website at <http://richlandcountysc.gov> and on the County's social media platforms.

Physical flyers announcing Public Hearings will also be put up in the County Administration Building. Additional notices may be provided through neighborhood-based methods to target specific communities where HUD-funds may be invested, including: community centers, contact with local civic leaders; posting of notices in commercial and neighborhood-based establishments, neighborhood businesses, churches, libraries and post offices.

All public meetings will be held at times and in locations convenient to citizens, particularly those who are potential or actual beneficiaries. Generally, public interest meetings will not be held before 5:00 p.m., on weekdays unless offered in addition to a meeting after 5:00 p.m. for the same topic. Meetings will not be scheduled on Sundays. The County may utilize technology to allow for both virtual hearings and live streaming of in-person hearings to increase citizen participation through expanded access. Persons with special accommodations must notify the Community Development Office two (2)



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business days prior the public meetings and hearings. This gives the County adequate time to provide the needed accommodations.

Whenever possible live-streaming of Public Hearings will be made available through the County's Youtube channel to increase accessibility for citizens.

Needs Assessment Public Hearing & Developing Plans:

Prior to the development of any Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, the community development and housing needs will be assessed, particularly those of low- and moderate-income residents. This process will be conducted through a series of Community Development Needs Assessment Public Hearings. Citizens are encouraged to participate in the development of these documents.

The Community Development Office will hold an adequate number of public meetings and/or hearings in convenient and accessible locations throughout the county for the convenience of citizen input during every Five-Year Consolidated Plan process. At least one needs assessment public hearing will be held every year to address the changing needs for the Annual Action Plan. The participation of citizens will be encouraged in order to assist with determining the community's needs. The County encourages participation by all, but especially low- to moderate-income individuals and households, as well as, members of Presumed Benefit populations, including: senior citizens, adults with disabilities, domestic violence victims, abused and neglected children, unhoused individuals, individuals with HIV/AIDS, and migrant farm workers. Please contact the County if additional accommodations are required to allow input and comment. Comments and suggestions will be considered at Needs Assessment Public Hearings.

The Needs Assessment Public Hearing will address the amount available in funding for CDBG, HOME and any other federal or stimulus funding. The meeting will also address the range of activities that may be undertaken with such funds, particularly in relation to identified community needs. In addition, participation is encouraged by low- and moderate-income citizens, particularly those living in areas where the federal funds are proposed to be used.

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan is due every five years and the next one is due **August 15, 2027 to guide Community Development programming from 2027-2032. The Annual Action Plan is submitted annually to HUD on August 15th.**

Public Comment Period:

A 30-Day comment period from the public is required prior to submitting the Five-Year Consolidated Plan or any Annual Action Plan to HUD. A 15-Day comment period is required prior to submitted the CAPER. A Public Notice must be published announcing the Comment Period with a Public Hearing held to review and to solicit public comments on the contents of these plans. The public hearing(s) will be held consistent with guidelines contained in this document. ***The public will have a minimum of ten (10) days after the Public Hearing to provide written comments on any Plans developed by the***



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Community Development Office. Oral and written comments may be provided at the Public Hearing. Comments may also be submitted in writing by mail or email sent to the Community Development Office during the Comment Period. The County will respond to all written correspondence received.

Amendments/Changes to Plans:

Prior to making any substantial change to the Five-Year Consolidated Plan or Annual Action, Richland County will hold at least one advertised public hearing to inform citizens, particularly those who might be affected by the proposed change, to solicit public comment. Examples of a substantial change would be a 50% increase or decrease in the number of proposed beneficiaries, any increase or decrease of more than 50% in a budget line item, and any addition or deletion of major proposed projects or activities. ***Citizens will be provided no less than 30 calendar days to provide comments on any Substantial Amendments before such amendments are submitted to HUD for approval and implemented.***

Disaster Recovery & Response Clause:

On June 1, 2017, HUD issued *CPD Notice 17-06*, entitled *Using CPD funds for Disaster Response and Recovery*. This notice directs entitlement communities to be prepared to respond quickly to a disaster by ensuring the possible use of federal funding for disaster response is included in the Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Plan, and the Annual Action Plan.

In the event of a presidentially declared disaster, any HOME, ESG, or CDBG funds Richland County reallocated to address the disaster will be considered non-substantial amendments up to the threshold of \$1,000,000. This allows the County to bypass the required 30-Day Public Comment Period to conduct a Substantial Amendment to an Annual Action Plan in the event of a disaster declaration. Funds would not be taken away from active projects or activities under contract. This clause allows the County to quickly pivot historically unused funds from cancelled/stalled projects and programs to repurpose for immediate disaster recovery needs.

Program Performance:

Richland County will conduct one public hearing annually to review program performance and accomplishments for the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). This public hearing will address and outline the various activities that have been accomplished or are underway. Citizens are given no less than fifteen (15) days to review and provide comments prior to the CAPER's submission to HUD. This report is submitted sixty (60) days after the end of the reporting year. Citizens are encouraged to participate in the development of this document.

Technical Assistance

Richland County will provide technical assistance to individuals, representatives of groups serving low- and moderate-income persons, and local non-profits and faith-based organizations who request assistance participating in a County-run program or in applying for funding for an eligible project. Technical assistance may include information on housing, demographics, and explanation of Community Development's programs and services. Community Development staff work closely with



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the local community organizations to ensure widespread awareness of funding opportunities and services. The County routinely issues Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA), Requests for Qualifications (RFQ), and Requests for Proposals (RFP) for services that support its goals and programs.

Grievances

Complaints and grievances are handled in a timely and professional manner. All complaints are reviewed by the Community Development Division Manager, Director of Grants and Community Outreach, and by the County Administrator, if deemed required and necessary. Written grievances should be addressed to the Richland County Community Development Office, 2020 Hampton Street, Suite 3058, Columbia, SC 29204. Written responses to complaints regarding the Community Development Programs and other general grievances will be made within fifteen (15) business days after receipt of the complaint. A response is prepared by the County in an effort to address the complaint. The final County response, if not resolved, is prepared by the County Administrator or his designee.

Persons who wish to appeal the County Administrator's/designee response may do so in writing to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Planning and Development Division, 1845 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC 29204.

Non-English-Speaking Population

Richland County Community Development will accommodate the needs of non-English-speaking residents. Translation services are available upon request. If ten percent or more of the potential or actual beneficiaries of a Community Development project are determined to be non-English-speaking, provisions will be made at the appropriate public hearings for translation of comments and documents into the native language of the majority of the non-English-speaking residents affected.

There is additional information provided at our website and within our office in Spanish, as well as brochures printed in Spanish. If additional documents are needed in Spanish (or another language), they can be made available up request.

Anti-Displacement

It is the policy of Richland County to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that activities undertaken with CDBG, HOME, or ESG funds will not cause unnecessary displacement. The County will continue to administer the CDBG, HOME, and ESG Programs in such a manner that careful consideration is given during the planning phase to avoiding displacement. Displacement of any nature shall be reserved as a last resort action necessitated only when no other alternative is available and when the activity is determined necessary in order to carry out a specific goal or objective that is of benefit to the public.

If the displacement is precipitated by activities that require the acquisition (either in whole or in part) or rehabilitation of real property directly by Richland County or its agent, all appropriate benefits as required by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies' Act of 1970 and amendments. The "Uniform Act" or the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan



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under Section 104 (d) shall be provided to the displaced person or persons. Information about these programs will be provided to all persons who may potentially be displaced in the form of informational brochures on these programs and explained in detail by the County's Community Development staff.