

# Seminole County Citizen Participation Plan

2011-2015

The Seminole County Citizen Participation Plan outlines ways in which the citizens of Seminole County can participate in its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Programs. Its purpose is to encourage and solicit public participation in the planning process, as well as to meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Any persons who require assistance in reading or understanding this Plan or any other documents described herein due to disability or difficulty with the language will be provided assistance sufficient to enable them to understand its purpose and provisions.

## 1. AVAILABILITY OF PLANS, DOCUMENTS

The Seminole County Citizen Participation Plan, past and current Consolidated Plans and amendments thereto, annual Action Plans, and past and current Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPERs) are available for public review at any time. Copies of these documents may be obtained through the Community Development Office, Reflections Office Plaza, 534 West Lake Mary Boulevard, Sanford, Florida 32773 during normal business hours which are Monday through Friday from 8AM-5PM. At the time the Citizen Participation Plan, any Consolidated Plan, or any Action Plan is initially proposed, the public will be informed of its availability through a summary notice in the Orlando Sentinel newspaper as a display ad in the Seminole section of the newspaper, and on the County's website (Community Development page). A reasonable number of free copies will be made available. This process will be repeated at any point where any listed document is updated or this process is required by Federal or State law.

## 2. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There shall be at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizens' views. Any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at the public hearings will be considered in preparing the Consolidated Plan or any Action Plan. Together, the hearings must address resident views on housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and review of program performance. One public hearing will be held before the proposed Consolidated or Action Plan is published for public comment and the second public hearing shall be held to obtain public comment on the CAPER. All notices of public hearings will be published in the Orlando Sentinel newspaper at least 7-14 days prior to the public hearing as a display ad in the Seminole section of the newspaper.

## 3. SPECIAL NOTIFICATION

In addition to notices in newspapers, Seminole County will notify persons of proposed Community Development activities and projects in unincorporated County designated "impact areas" (target areas) through neighborhood-based methods. These methods may include direct contact with local neighborhood leaders; posting and/or distribution of notices. Similarly, notification will be provided to the Seminole County Housing Authority in order to encourage the participation of their residents.

## 4. ACCESSIBILITY

Unless otherwise noted, all public meetings concerning the HOME, CDBG, and ESG programs will be held at the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners Chambers at 1101 E. First Street, Sanford, FL 32771. Meetings will be held between 6:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. on weekdays. Meeting locations will be accessible to the handicapped, and the meeting announcement will indicate what extra assistance will be provided to accommodate the special needs of persons with disabilities.

## 5. INFORMATION TO/FROM PUBLIC

Prior to the development of the annual Action Plans, Seminole County will make public to its citizens and other interested parties, information that includes the estimated amount of assistance that the County expects to receive, the range of activities that will be undertaken, including the estimated amount of funding that will benefit persons of low and moderate income. The participation of citizens will be encouraged as part of the determination of the community's needs. Residents' written comments and oral suggestions at the public hearing will be considered as part of the development of the Community Development Needs Assessment.

## 6. COMMENTS/CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED PLAN

Prior to approval of each annual Action Plan by the Board of County Commissioners, a 30-day public comment period will be held to solicit public comment for the proposed activities. Written comments should be made to the

Seminole County Community Development Office, County Services Building, Room 3301, 1101 East First Street, Sanford, Florida 32771. A summary of all comments received will be appended to the Plan.

## 7. TRANSLATION TO OTHER LANGUAGES

Federal regulations governing the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs require that the Citizen Participation Plan address the needs of non-English-speaking residents. If ten percent or more of the potential or actual beneficiaries of any CDBG, HOME, or ESG Program activity 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.

## 8. WRITTEN COMMENTS

Written comments or complaints concerning Seminole County's Consolidated Plan, any Substantial Amendments and any CAPER will be responded to in writing within fifteen (15) working days. A summary of those comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be retained on file in the Seminole County Community Development Office and will be appended to the respective document. Written comments should be made to the Seminole County Community Development Office, County Services Building, Room 3301, 1101 East First Street, Sanford, Florida 32771.

## 9. PROGRAM CHANGES

The County will use the following criteria for determining what changes in the County's planned or actual activities constitute a Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan or any One-Year Action Plan. An amendment is required whenever it makes one of the following decisions:

1. To make a change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds;
2. To carry out an activity using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income), not previously described in the Action Plan;
3. To substantially change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity. The following criteria are to be used for determining whether an amendment would constitute a Substantial Amendment:
  - a) Purpose – Whenever a change in the primary function of an activity requires that it be classified under a different eligible activity. (Note: This does not include a project that is generally unchanged, but is reclassified due to a reinterpretation of HUD regulations or definitions).
  - b) Scope – If the service area, budget, or beneficiaries is changed so that 50% or more of the intended beneficiaries are no longer able to benefit from the activity. This does not include a budgetary change in a Direct Benefit or other activity where a service or other benefit is available as long as funds are available.
  - c) Location – If the location of an activity is changed so that 50% or more of the intended beneficiaries are no longer able to benefit from the project.
  - d) Beneficiaries – If the activity's location or eligible recipients are changed so that 50% or more of the intended beneficiaries are no longer able to benefit from the activity. This does not include a budgetary change in a Direct Benefit or other activity where a service or other benefit is available as long as funds are available.

Citizens will be provided with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on all Substantial Amendments. The County will advertise in the Orlando Sentinel and on its own web site and will provide no less than 30 days to receive comments on any amendment before the amendment is implemented. A summary of any comments, including the reasons for those not accepted, will be appended to the amendment.

## 10. AVAILABILITY OF PROGRAM RECORDS

Citizens of Seminole County will be provided with reasonable access to records concerning any activity undertaken with CDBG, HOME, or ESG Program funds. Any such request for access to records should be made in writing to Seminole County Community Development Office. The telephone number is 407-665-2385 and the TTY number is 407-665-6511. Seminole County may charge reasonable fees for the duplication and provision of materials. Confidential information normally protected under state and federal freedom of information laws will not be available for public review.

## 11. PLANS TO MINIMIZE DISPLACEMENT

The County will make every effort to minimize displacement of households and businesses, and has prepared an Antidisplacement and Relocation Plan to address the actions it will take to do so. That Plan is under separate cover, and is incorporated herein by reference.

## 12. ASSISTANCE TO GROUPS

Technical assistance is available to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under the CDBG, HOME, or ESG Programs.

