



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of*
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT –
DISASTER RECOVERY**

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

Florida values citizen and stakeholder engagement. Florida has developed a Citizen Participation Plan in compliance with 83 Fed. Reg. 5844, 83 Fed. Reg. 40314, § 24 CFR 91.115 and applicable U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements to set forth the policies and procedures applicable to citizen participation. This plan is intended to maximize the opportunity for citizen involvement in the planning and development of the Rebuild Florida recovery program.

In order to facilitate citizen involvement, Florida has laid out target actions to encourage citizen participation and allow equal access to information about the Rebuild Florida program. Florida intends to focus outreach efforts to facilitate participation from individuals of low-and moderate-income, those living in slums and blighted areas, those living in areas identified for recovery through Rebuild Florida, non-English speaking persons and other disadvantaged populations. Florida will publish its action plan in Spanish, French Creole and English.

II. PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) staff conducted stakeholder meetings in each of the 14 HUD-identified most-impacted and distressed areas. At these meetings, participants were given a brief overview of the program and an opportunity to ask questions. DEO worked with participants to identify each community's remaining unmet needs and discuss various program options that may be available to meet those needs. DEO also asked for the participants' feedback and program preference to get a sense of what types of programs would be most beneficial to communities.

Stakeholder meetings were held from March 1, 2018 through March 20, 2018 at the following locations:

- Thursday, March 1, 2018
 - Monroe County
- Friday, March 2, 2018
 - Miami-Dade County
 - Broward County
- Monday, March 5, 2018
 - Volusia County
 - Brevard County
 - Orange County
- Tuesday, March 6, 2018
 - Duval County
 - Flagler County (32136)
- Wednesday, March 7, 2018
 - Clay County (32068)
 - Bradford County (32091)
- Monday, March 19, 2018
 - Desoto County (34266)
 - Polk County
- Tuesday, March 20, 2018
 - Lee County
 - Collier County

DEO conducted a digital outreach campaign consisting of three webinars to keep stakeholders informed of the process and to solicit their feedback. DEO also developed a survey to capture feedback from communities that were outside the HUD-identified, most-impacted and distressed areas and to allow for additional input from communities that were not able to attend stakeholder meetings. Finally, DEO created an open mailing list, which provides ongoing outreach information. The mailing list is open to the public and the registration information is prominently displayed on RebuildFlorida.gov.

DEO has continued its public outreach efforts and has remained available to answer questions from communities and stakeholders. DEO is finalizing its formal public outreach program and anticipates launching its public facing Rebuild Florida website in the near future.

III. PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT PERIOD

Notice of public comment period will be provided by publication on RebuildFlorida.gov. Florida will open the citizen comment period for the following timeframes:

- Comment period for the original Action Plan took place for 14 days after the publication of the Action Plan to RebuildFlorida.gov.
- Comment period for Substantial Amendments took place for 30 days after the publication of the Substantial Amendment to RebuildFlorida.gov.

IV. ACTION PLAN

The State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery defines how Rebuild Florida 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 Florida's proposed allocation by activity and lays out program designs for each area of assistance. The plan also identifies the beginning and end dates for each disaster recovery activity, performance and expenditure schedule.

Before adopting the State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery, DEO sought public input on program design issues including the amount of assistance Florida expected to receive, the range of activities that may be undertaken, the estimated amount of benefit expected for persons of low-to-moderate income and plans to mitigate displacement. A summary of outreach feedback is included in the State of Florida Action Plan approved by HUD. The final plan approved by HUD is posted to RebuildFlorida.gov.

V. AMENDMENTS TO THE ACTION PLAN

DEO 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;
- the addition or deletion of an activity; or
- the allocation or reallocation of more than 10 percent of the original appropriation.

Citizens will be provided with no less than 30 days to review and provide comment on proposed substantial changes. 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 RebuildFlorida.gov.

For other non-substantial amendments, Florida shall notify HUD. Public comment is not required for non-substantial amendments. Every amendment, substantial or not, shall be numbered sequentially and posted on RebuildFlorida.gov, not in replacement of, but in addition to all previous versions of the plan.

VI. PERFORMANCE REPORTING

In accordance to HUD requirements, Florida will submit a Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) through the HUD Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting (DRGR) system no later than 30 days following the end of each calendar quarter. Three days before submission to HUD, Florida will post each QPR for public review and comment on RebuildFlorida.gov. Program QPR's will be posted on a quarterly basis until all funds have been expended and all expenditures have been reported.

VII. LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Florida is committed to providing all citizens with equal access to information about the disaster recovery program, including persons with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Florida follows HUD's 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 may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit or encounter. To address this need, DEO developed and implemented a Rebuild Florida Language Access Plan, which details how Florida will address the needs of LEP individuals. Translators will be present when a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate in public hearings or open comment periods. Outreach materials and citizen comments will also be translated into the appropriate language.

As a result of the initial population analysis, the State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery, any ensuing amendments, outreach materials, the application and related guidance materials will be published in English, Spanish and French Creole. When needed, Florida will use an "I speak" visual card containing a wide range of language samples for applicants to request specialized translation services. DEO has also posted a Babel Notice on RebuildFlorida.gov informing individuals that interpretive and translational services are available upon request.

VIII. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Upon request, limited technical assistance will be provided by Rebuild Florida program staff. Requests should be made in a timely manner and within the time parameters of the appropriate program design. DEO may contract with a Technical Assistance Provider(s) should sufficient demand for technical assistance warrant.