

**FAIRFIELD COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

The Fairfield County Community Development Block Grant Citizen Participation Plan outlines ways in which the citizens of the Fairfield County can participate in the Community Development Block Grant Program. Its purpose is to encourage public participation in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) process, as well as to meet the requirements of Section 104 (a)(2) and (a)(3) of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended.

1. The Fairfield County Community Development Block Grant Citizen Participation Plan is available for public review at the Fairfield County Governmental Complex, 350 Columbia Road, Winnsboro, SC 29180 between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM on business days or by other means upon request. At the time this plan is initially adopted for use, the public will be informed of its availability through a notice in a newspaper of general local circulation. This process will be repeated at any point where the plan is updated or this process is required by federal or state law. If this plan is being adopted or updated at the same time Fairfield County is undertaking a Community Development Needs Assessment, then notice to the public will be given at least seven days prior to the date of the Needs Assessment public hearing.
2. All notices of public hearing will be published in a newspaper of general local circulation at least seven days prior to the public hearing. Such notices will be prominently advertised in an appropriate section of the newspaper and will not appear in the legal notices section or classified section of the newspaper. Such notices should include a statement regarding Fairfield County's policy of non-discrimination. If a newspaper of general local circulation is not available, the notice will be posted at the County administration building or other publicly accessible locations at least ten days prior to the hearing.
3. In addition to notices in newspapers, Fairfield County will make reasonable efforts to inform citizens who may be affected by a CDBG project, but who might not be reached through formal newspaper notices. These methods may include the distribution of leaflets or notices to local organizations or churches; posting of notices in key locations likely to be seen by citizens who might be affected by a CDBG project, such as in post offices or neighborhood businesses; requesting community leaders inform their constituents; and informing radio and television stations of upcoming meetings and activities.
4. All public meetings concerning the Community Development Block Grant Program will be held at times and in locations convenient to citizens, particularly those who are potential or actual beneficiaries. No meeting will be held before 12:00 p.m. on weekdays. The location of such meetings will be accessible to the handicapped or the

announcement of such meetings will indicate what assistance will be provided to accommodate the special needs of handicapped persons.

5. All public meetings will normally be held at physical locations as described above, but when a physical, in-person meeting is determined by the County to be inappropriate, such as during a public health crisis or pandemic, meetings may be held through a virtual platform which allows for citizen participation in discussion and live, real-time interaction. Notices for such virtual meetings shall adhere to all public notice requirements outlined herein, and shall include detailed instructions on how to access the virtual meeting. Special accommodations and assistance will be provided upon request.
6. Prior to the development of any application for Community Development funding, the Fairfield County will assess its community development, economic development, and housing needs, particularly for those of low and moderate income residents. . This process is known as the Community Development Needs Assessment. The participation of citizens will be encouraged as part of the determination of the community's needs. The results of the Needs Assessment will be presented at one or more public hearings. Citizen's comments and suggestions will be considered.
7. At public hearings where the community Needs Assessment is presented, Fairfield County will also present information concerning the Community Development Block Grant Program, including the amount of Community Development funds available, State funding guidelines, and the range of activities that may be undertaken with such funds, particularly in relation to identified community needs.
8. Fairfield County will provide technical assistance to individuals and representatives of groups of low and moderate income persons who request such assistance in developing proposals for Community Development Block Grant funding. This technical assistance shall consist of meetings to discuss community needs, possible projects, and the Community Development Program, as well as the sharing of information and materials relevant to applying for Community Development funds. In order to receive this technical assistance, activities which a group proposes to apply for must be consistent with identified community development and housing needs as well as State CDBG program guidelines. Community Development funds must be available for funding such activities as may be involved. The provision of technical assistance is contingent upon the Council of the Fairfield County giving approval for providing technical assistance. Fairfield County will consider any proposals developed by representatives of low and moderate income groups for community development funding. However, the determination to submit a proposal or application to the State for funding consideration is the prerogative of Town Council.
9. After the development of an application for Community Development Block Grant funding and prior to submission of the application to the State, a public hearing will be held to review and solicit public comment for the proposed activity. The public hearing will be held consistent with the guidelines contained in this document.

10. Federal regulations governing the Community Development Program require that the Citizen Participation Plan address the needs of non-English speaking residents. Census figures for Fairfield County indicate that less than ten percent of the population of the community is non-English speaking and there are no significant concentrations of non-English speaking residents within the County as determined by the most currently available Census data. If five percent or more (or 1,000 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.
11. Written complaints and grievances concerning Fairfield County's Community Development Block Grant program will be responded to in writing within 15 working days where practicable. Such written grievances should be submitted to Jason Taylor, County Administrator at the Fairfield County Governmental Complex, 350 Columbia Road, Winnsboro, SC 29180, (803) 815-4002. The public is advised that before Fairfield County will respond to any written complaint or grievance which involves State law or policy, State CDBG Program Guidelines, or Federal regulations governing the CDBG program, Fairfield County will provide the written grievance and its proposed response Grants Administration, South Carolina Department of Commerce, which will review and approve Fairfield County's response. Persons who wish to appeal the response of Fairfield County to their written complaint or grievance may do so first to Fairfield County Council. County Council will have 45 days to respond to any such appeal. Persons who wish to appeal the response of County Council may do so directly to Grants Administration, South Carolina Department of Commerce. Citizens are advised that the SC Department of Commerce will deny those appeals which involve the consistent application of the community's local program policies. Those persons who may wish to appeal the response of the SC Department of Commerce may do so in the appropriate court of law.
12. Citizens of Fairfield County will be provided with reasonable access to records concerning any projects undertaken with Community Development Block Grant funds. Any such request for access to records should be made so in writing to Jason Taylor, County Administrator at the Fairfield County Governmental Complex, 350 Columbia Road, Winnsboro, SC 29180, (803) 815-4002. Fairfield County may charge reasonable fees for the duplication and provision of material. Confidential information normally protected under State and federal Freedom of Information laws may not be made available for public review.
13. Fairfield County will conduct one or more public hearings to review program performance and accomplishments. At least one public hearing will be held when all activities are completed and prior to the submission of the final close-out paperwork to Grants Administration, SC Department of Commerce

14. Prior to making any substantial change in a Community Development Block Grant funded project, Fairfield County will hold one or more public hearings to inform its citizens and solicit public comment, particularly from those who might be affected by the proposed change. Any modifications to approved community development projects are at the discretion of the State.