**State of Indiana Citizen Participation Plan, 2015-2020**

The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) described below is the CPP established for the State’s Five Year

Consolidated Plan. The CPP was developed around a central concept that acknowledges residents as stakeholders and their input as key to any improvements in the quality of life for the residents who live in a community.

Each program year affords Indiana residents an opportunity to be involved in the process. Citizens have a role in the development of the Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plans regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability and economic level.

**Purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan.** The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) describes the process the State uses to collect public input and involve the public in development of the Five Year

Consolidated Plan. The CPP also addresses how the State obtains public comment on its Annual

Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). This Citizen

Participation Plan was developed in accordance with Sections 91.110 and 91.115 of HUD’s

Consolidated Plan regulations.

The purpose of the CPP is to provide citizens of the State of Indiana maximum involvement in identifying and prioritizing housing and community development needs in the State, and responding to how the State intends to address such needs through allocation of the following federal grants:

* Community Development Block Grant (CDBG);
* HOME Investment Partnerships Program funding (HOME);
* Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG);
* Housing Opportunity for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funding; and
* National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) funding.

This Consolidated Plan covers a five-year timeframe. The State’s Consolidated Plan is a comprehensive strategic plan for housing and community development activities. The purpose of programs and activities covered by this Consolidated Plan is to improve the State of Indiana by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and growing economic opportunities, especially for low to moderate income residents.

**Encouraging Citizen Participation**

The State recognizes the importance of public participation in both defining and understanding current housing and community development needs and prioritizing resources to address those needs.

The State’s Citizen Participation Plan is designed to encourage citizens of Indiana equal access to become involved each year.

**Development of the Plans and Performance Reports**

This document outlines how residents of the State of Indiana may participate in the development and review of the State’s Five Year Consolidated Plan; each annual Action Plan; each Annual

Performance Report; and any substantial amendments to a Consolidated Plan and/or Action Plan.

The State of Indiana’s program year begins July 1 and ends June 30. The Indiana Office of

Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) is responsible for implementing and reporting on the all aspects of the Consolidated Plan process. The following schedule provides an approximate timeline for the Consolidated Plan, which happens every five years, the annual Action Plan and the CAPER.

**Annual Schedule.**

July:

* Begin annual Action Plan year
* Begin Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) process

September:

* Beginning to middle of month begin 15-day Public Comment period for CAPER
* CAPER submitted to HUD by September 30

October—November—December—Mid-January

* Plan government Con Plan Meetings
* Create and launch survey to stakeholders

January—February—March:

* Conduct public participation process for Consolidated Plan

March:

* At the end of the month publish Public Notice informing public the draft Consolidated Plan/annual Action Plan are available for public comment and announcing public hearings.

April:

* Begin 30-day Public Comment period for draft Consolidated Plan and draft annual Action Plan
* Hold public hearings by the end of the month

May:

* Consolidated Plan and Action Plan submitted to HUD by May 15

June:

* End of annual Action Plan year

**Participation**. The following provides detailed steps for citizen participation for the Five Year

Consolidated Plan and, as specified, for annual Action Plans.

These techniques incorporate alternative methods of public process that encourage a broad spectrum of participation and a review of program performance.

* *Resident survey.* A survey of Indiana residents will be conducted during the research phase of the Five-year Consolidated Plan in order to gather additional information on housing and community development needs and priorities for the Consolidated Plan. The survey will be available online using software that is Section 508 compliant. The survey is distributed to housing and community development providers (e.g., Indiana Department of Workforce Development’s WorkOne Centers, Continuum of Care participants, Human Rights Council, organizations who work with persons with disabilities) to be distributed to their clients/members, is available on OCRA’s website and is included in an IHCDA email to all who subscribe to IHCDA’s email announcements. The survey will be available in English and Spanish. Special accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made upon request.
* *Stakeholder survey and elected official survey.* An online stakeholder survey is administered each Action Plan year to organizations that provide assisted housing (public housing authorities and nonprofits), social service and health care providers that assist low income and special needs residents, including fair housing organizations. This survey collects information on the greatest housing and community development needs of clients. A similar survey is also distributed to local elected officials, including mayors, county commissioners, city planners, housing program managers, etc., of the nonentitlement areas of the state. OCRA distributes invitations to elected officials to complete the survey; they have the option of completing the survey online or through a phone conversation. During some Consolidated Plan and Action Plan years, the survey may be conducted in the form of key informant interviews from a voluntary sample of officials from throughout the state.
* *Focus groups.* Four focus groups will be held during February and March of Consolidated Plan years with Regional Planning Commissions, advocates for persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities, Continuum of Care Regions, Community Action Agencies and Human Rights Councils. The purpose of the focus groups is to gather in-depth information on the challenges clients face in accessing housing and services in their communities.
* *Stakeholder interviews.* A series of interviews will be conducted annually with key persons or groups who are knowledgeable about housing and community development needs in the State. These interviews will inform the housing and community development needs portions of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan.
* *Public hearings.* A public hearing will be conducted during the 30-day public comment period through videoconferences in five to six locations across Indiana. This meeting will occur at least one month prior to submission of the Plan, generally during the month of March. In the event that a videoconference is unavailable, the State will conduct separate public hearings in 3-4 locations throughout the State. These will occur on different days
* *Written comments*. Written comments will be accepted at any time during the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan processes in email or in hard copy.

**Draft Consolidated Plan public comment**. A reasonable notice—generally two calendar weeks—is given to announce to the public the availability of the draft Consolidated Plan. Availability of the draft Plan is advertised on the State’s website. Notification of the availability of the draft Plan is also published in local newspapers across the State. In addition, all public meeting participants who provided contact information from any prior year’s public hearing will be notified of the availability of the draft Plan and will be encouraged to provide their comments.

A 30-day public comment period is provided to receive written comments on the draft Plan. The 30- day comment period usually begins in early April and ends late April or early May. The draft Plan can be reviewed at OCRA and IHCDA offices and is available to download on the State’s website.

**Final action on the Consolidated Plan**. All written comments provided during the Consolidated

Plan process will be considered in preparing the final Consolidated Plan. A summary of the comments received and a summary of the State’s reasons for not accepting any comments will be included in the final Consolidated Plan. The State considers these comments before taking final action on the Consolidated Plan. The final Consolidated Plan is submitted to HUD, no later than May 15 each year.

**Annual Action Plans.** Each year the State must submit an annual Action Plan to HUD, reporting on how that year’s funding allocation for the CDBG, HOME, ESG, HOPWA, and NHTF grants will be used to achieve the goals outlined in the Five Year Consolidated Plan. The Citizen Participation Plan for preparation of the Action Plan is as follows:

**Draft Action Plan and public hearings**. The draft Action Plan will be available for 30 days to gather public comment on the proposed spending allocation. The State will hold at least one public hearing to describe the State’s proposed allocation of the program year’s funding allocation during the 30-day public comment period. The availability of the draft Plan and public hearings will be publicized through legal advertisements in regional newspapers with general circulation statewide and also on the State’s website. In addition, the notice will be distributed by email to local officials, nonprofit entities and interested parties statewide. The public hearing will be conducted through videoconference and broadcast to several locations across Indiana. In the event that a videoconference is unavailable, the State will conduct separate public hearings in 3-4 locations throughout the State. These will occur on different days.

During the session, executive summaries of the Plan will be distributed and instructions on how to submit comments given. In addition, participants will be given an opportunity to provide feedback or comment on the draft Plan. A summary of the public hearing comments will be included in the final

Action Plan.

**Final Action Plan**. The State staff reviews and considers all written public comments. The final

Action Plan that is submitted to HUD includes a section that summarizes all comments or views in addition to explanations of why any comments were not accepted.

**Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports.** Before the State submits a

Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to HUD, the State will make the proposed CAPER available to those interested for a comment period of no less than 15 days.

Citizens will be notified of the CAPER’s availability through a notice appearing in at least one newspaper circulated throughout the State. The newspaper notification may be made as part of the

State’s announcement of the public comment period and will be published one to two days before the comment period begins.

The CAPER will be available on the websites of the Indiana Housing and Community Development

Authority and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs during the 15-day public comment period. Hard copies will be provided upon request.

The State will consider any comments from individuals or groups received verbally or in writing. A summary of the comments, and of the State’s responses, will be included in the final CAPER.

**Substantial Amendments**

Occasionally, public comments warrant an amendment to the Consolidated Plan. The conditions for whether to amend are referred to by HUD as “Substantial Amendment Criteria.” The following conditions are considered to be Substantial Amendment Criteria:

1. A substantial change in the described method of distributing funds to local governments or nonprofit organizations to carry out activities. “Substantial change” shall mean a reallocation of funds among program categories of programs of more than 10 percent of the total allocation for a given program year’s block-grant allocation..

Elements of a “method of distribution” are:

* Application process for local governments or nonprofits;
* Allocation among funding categories;
* Grant size limits; and
* Criteria selection.

1. An administrative decision to reallocate all the funds allocated to an activity in the Action Plan to other activities of equal or lesser priority need level, unless the decision is a result of the following:

* There is a federal government recession of appropriated funds, or appropriations are so much less than anticipated that the State makes an administrative decision not to fund one or more activities;
* The governor declares a state of emergency and reallocates federal funds to address the emergency; or
* A unique economic development opportunity arises wherein the State administration asks that federal grants be used to take advantage of the opportunity.

**Citizen participation in the event of a substantial amendment.** In the event of a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan, the State will conduct at least one additional public hearing.

This hearing will fall during a comment period of no less than 30 days, during which the proposed Plan amendment will be made available to interested parties. Either IHCDA or OCRA will post information regarding the hearing on their website(s) and send out a notice via their distribution list.

In the event of substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, the State will openly consider all comments from individuals or groups submitted at public hearings or received in writing. A summary of the written and public comments on the amendments and the State’s acceptance or rejection of each comment will be included in the final Consolidated Plan.

**Changes in Federal Funding Level.** Any changes in federal funding level after the Consolidated

Plan’s draft comment period has expired, and the resulting effect on the distribution of funds, will not be considered an amendment or a substantial amendment.

**Availability and Access to Records**

The State provides reasonable and timely access for citizens, public agencies, and other organizations to access information and records relating to the State’s Consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan, performance reports, substantial amendment(s), Citizen Participation Plan, and the State’s use of assistance under the programs covered by the plan during the preceding five years.

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs webpage is www.in.gov/ocra and the Indiana

Housing and Community Development Authority webpage is www.in.gov/ihcda for citizens interested in obtaining more information about State services and programs or to review the plans and performance reports. A reasonable number of free copies will be available to citizens that request it. Upon request, these documents will be provided in a reasonable form accessible to persons with disabilities.

**Citizen Complaints**

The State will provide a substantive written response to all written citizen complaints related to the

Consolidated Plan, Action Plan amendments and the CAPER within 15 working days of receiving the complaint. Copies of the complaints, along with the State’s response, will be sent to HUD if the complaint occurs outside of the Consolidated Planning process and, as such, does not appear in the

Consolidated Plan.