**Arkansas CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan**

The following table summarizes changes to the State of Arkansas DR-4441 CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan.



**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**CDBG-DR**

**Background**

The State of Arkansas is a recipient of a U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Grant appropriated in accordance of the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-223). This describes the applicable waivers and alternative requirements, relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, the grant award process, criteria for the action plan approval, and eligible disaster recovery activities. The funds are being made available to assist disaster recovery efforts in response to FEMA DR 4441 (the Arkansas River Flooding), declared on June 8, 2019.

The primary goal of this Citizen Participation Plan is to provide all Arkansas citizens with an opportunity to participate in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the State’s recovery programs. The plan set forth policies and procedures for citizen participation, which are designed to maximize the opportunity for citizen involvement in the community recovery process.

**Public Hearing**

Unlike the Citizen Participation Plan for the Consolidated Plan process, there is no requirement for a public hearing relative to the CDBG-DR Action Plan. The State’s disaster recovery needs will be incorporated into the next required update of the Consolidated Plan. The public will be engaged in the recovery planning process through public and stakeholder outreach, including public meetings, in order to collect input from impacted citizens and community leaders. Public meetings are publicized in coordination with impacted jurisdictions and feedback received is collected and incorporated into the Action Plan process. In addition, the State will ensure that all grantees adhere to fair housing requirements and will capture, review, and maintain records of its status.

**Contact Information**: Citizens may make comments or request information regarding the Consolidated Planning process by mail, telephone, facsimile transmission, or email to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Grants Division, 1 Commerce Way, Suite 601, Little Rock, Arkansas 72202, Tel. (501) 682-7389, TTY: 1-800-285-1131 or dial 711 for Arkansas Relay Service, Fax (501) 682-7499, email JNoble@ArkansasEDC.com.

The State will respond to written comments as appropriate.

**Encouragement of Citizen Participation and Outreach**: The State will invite and encourage citizen participation in the Action Plan process with a focus on outreach to low- and moderate- income persons, racial/ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons with Limited English Proficiency.

Strategy: The State will advertise opportunities for public participation in the Action Plan process through stated, federal, local governments, tribal communities, public housing, housing-related service providers, for-profit developers, professional organizations, other known constituency groups, and citizens who have requested notification. Additionally, the State will advertise through: Groups, organizations, agencies, and churches providing services to or advocating for low- and moderate-income persons, racial/ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons with Limited English Proficiency; and Media sources that have direct contact with low- and moderate-income persons, racial/ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons with Limited English Proficiency.

The AEDC Grants Division is committed to ensuring that all populations impacted by the storm are aware of the programs to assist in the recovery from the 2019 riverine flooding. Through in persons meeting, outreach events, online and traditional media, the state has publicized the programs and conducted outreach efforts throughout the storm impacted areas.

**Public Notice and Comment Period**

A comment period of at least thirty (30) days, as required by HUD, shall be provided for citizens, affected local governments, and other interested parties an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments to the Action Plan. Notices advertising the public comment period will be placed in daily newspapers, non- English newspapers, and weekly community newspapers.

In accordance with CDBG-DR requirements, the State of Arkansas has developed and will maintain a comprehensive website regarding all disaster recovery activities assisted with these funds. The State will post all Action Plans and amendments on the State’s CDBG-DR website <https://www.arkansasedc.com/CDBG-Disaster-Recovery> to give citizens an opportunity to read the plan and to submit comment(s). This website is featured prominently on, and is easily navigable from, the State’s homepage <https://www.arkansasedc.com/>.

Paper copies of the Action Plan will be available in both English (including large, 18pt type) and Spanish.

Comments and complaints may be submitted as follows:

Written comments may be mailed to:

Arkansas Economic Development Commission – Grants Division

Consolidated Planning Coordinator

1 Commerce Way, Suite 601, Little Rock, AR 72202

By telephone: (501) 682-7389, TTY: 1-800-285-1131 or dial 711 for Arkansas Relay Service, or Fax (501) 682-7499, or Email: JNoble@ArkansasEDC.com

At the end of the comment period, all comments shall be reviewed, and a State response will be incorporated into the document. A summary of the comments and the State’s responses will be submitted to HUD with the Action Plan. The Action Plan and any amendments including public comments and responses will be posted on the State’s CDBG-DR website.

**Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

Based on LEP data within the impacted areas collected by the State, both the instructions for commenting on, and access to, the Action Plan will be translated into Spanish. Comments will be accepted through the online commenting form in English and Spanish. The State will make every possible effort to translate and consider comments submitted in any other language within the timeframe.

**Persons with Disabilities**

As noted above, hard copies of Action Plans will be available in large print format (18pt font size) at the location listed above. The online materials will also be accessible for the visually impaired. For more information on how people with disabilities can access and comment on the Action Plan, dial 1-800-285-1131

**Response to Citizen Complaints**

The AEDC Grants Division shall provide a written response to every complaint relative to the CDBG-DR Plan within fifteen (15) working days of receipt if practicable. Complaints may be emailed to dpolk@arkansasedc.com, with a copy to jnoble@arkansasedc.com. Complaints may also be submitted via mail as provided in the “Complaints” section noted below. The state will execute its Appeals Process in response to complaints and will require grantees to adopt a similar process that weighs complaints through an unbiased process of the citizen’s peers. The process will be tiered whereby applicants will be able to appeal a decision and received further review from another level.

**Performance Review**

The requirements for submission of a Performance Evaluation Report (PER) are waived for the CDBG-DR program. As an alternative, the State’s Action Plan must be entered into HUD’s Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting (DRGR) system. The State will submit a performance report in a form to be prescribed by HUD no later than thirty days following the end of each quarter, beginning after the first full calendar quarter after grants award and continuing until all funds have been expended. The quarterly reports shall use the DRGR system and be posted on the State’s website within three days of submission.

**Action Plan Amendments**

In the case of amendments, the State of Arkansas will follow two alternative citizen participation processes. In the cases of a substantial amendment, the procedures detailed above will be followed.

A substantial amendment shall be defined as: a change in program benefit, beneficiary or eligibility criteria, the allocation or re-allocation 10 percent or more of the budget, or the addition or deletion of an activity.

For amendments considered to be non-substantial, the State shall notify HUD, but public comment is not required. Every amendment, substantial or not, shall be numbered sequentially and posted on the website.

**Applicant Status**

The usual methods of notifying citizen of their application status regarding CDBG-DR programs involves communicating through interviews, telephone, email and written. In addition to these very effective methods, the Arkansas CDBG-DR program will include a system where applicants will be able to access their status online.

**The Final HUD-Approved Action Plan**

Following HUD approval of the Action Plan or amendment(s), it will be posted on the State’s CDBG-DR website. Copies of the Final Action Plan will also be made available upon request.

**Complaints**

AEDC will respond in writing to written citizen complaints about the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Annual Performance Report, and Substantial Amendments. Citizen complaints should be submitted to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. Complaints may also be received verbally, and by other means, as necessary where the AEDC determines that a citizen is not reasonably able to submit a written complaint due to a physical or intellectual impairment. In these instances, AEDC may convert these complaints into written form.

AEDC will respond to complaints within fifteen (15) working days, where practicable. Complaints may be submitted as follows:

Compliance Officer

Grants Management Division

Arkansas Economic Development Commission

1 Commerce Way, Suite 601

Little Rock, AR 72202

Complaints may also be submitted by email to: dpolk@arkansasedc.com with a copy to jnoble@arkansasedc.com.

If you need assistance in filing a written complaint, you may contact Dori Polk at 501-682-7335.

Any person that feels that the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000(d) and Executive Order 13166 regulations were not complied with may file a complaint directly to the Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the following links (or as otherwise directed):

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| FORT WORTH REGIONAL OFFICEU.S. Department of Housing and Urban DevelopmentSouthwest Office801 Cherry St., Unit 45, Suite 2500 Fort Worth, TX 76102 | Garry Sweeney, Regional Director | (817) 978-5868Fax: (817) 978-5876 |

Or Contact (888) 560-8913 and for the hearing impaired, please call TTY (800) 927-9275

The Arkansas Fair Housing Commission can be reached toll-free at (800) 340-9108.