



BARNSTABLE COUNTY
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BARNSTABLE COUNTY HOME CONSORTIUM

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Adopted as part of the Barnstable County HOME Consortium's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan

The Barnstable County HOME Consortium's Citizen Participation Plan was prepared for the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan in accordance with 24 CFR 91.105. The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan is to outline the Barnstable County HOME Consortium's policies and procedures to encourage citizen participation in the development and implementation of the Consortium's Five-Year Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, any Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Reports (CAPER). The Barnstable County HOME Consortium will follow the Citizen Participation Plan outlined in this document.

Introduction:

The Barnstable County HOME Consortium (the Consortium) includes all fifteen communities on Cape Cod: Barnstable, Bourne, Brewster, Chatham, Dennis, Eastham, Falmouth, Harwich, Mashpee, Orleans, Provincetown, Sandwich, Truro, Wellfleet, and Yarmouth. The Consortium was created for the purpose of qualifying to receive and expend federal funds for the region under the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME Program). Barnstable County, as the lead entity for the Consortium, has designated the Barnstable County Department of Human Services to be responsible for the overall administrative of the HOME Program and for reporting to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In 1992, Barnstable County established the Barnstable County HOME Consortium Advisory Council (the Advisory Council) to advise and make recommendations regarding administration and funding of HOME Program activities to be undertaken by the Consortium. The Advisory Council is comprised of a community representative from each of the fifteen towns, two at-large members, and the Cape Cod Commission's Affordable Housing Specialist as an ex-officio member. The Advisory Council has had representation from a broad range of housing and community interests, including local housing authorities, non-profit housing agencies, local housing advocates, town government representatives, the religious sector, human services sector, and private citizens.

The Advisory Council is consulted on a regular basis and plays an integral role in the development of the Consortium's Consolidate Plans and Annual Action Plans. The broad range of housing/community

interests and experience of the Advisory Council helps to ensure that the Consolidated Plans and the Annual Action Plans reflect Barnstable County's housing needs and priorities.

The Citizen Participation Plan is designed to encourage public participation of low-income households, particularly those living in slum and/or blighted areas and in areas where HOME funds are proposed to be used. The Citizen Participation Plan encourages the participation of all citizens, including minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with mobility, visual and/or hearing impediments. The Citizen Participation Plan also encourages the participation of public and assisted housing residents in the development and implementation of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.

The objectives of the public participation process are:

- To assist in determining the housing needs of Barnstable County;
- To assess how well Barnstable County is meeting these needs; and
- To assist in determining priorities.

Plans and Reports:

As a recipient of HUD HOME Program allocation funds, the HOME Consortium is required to produce the following documents:

Five-Year Consolidated Plan: A Five-Year Consolidated Plan identifies priority housing needs within Barnstable County. It also identifies the funding (public and private) and the activities required to address priority needs over a five-year period.

Annual Action Plan: An Annual Action Plan identifies the housing and community development funding and activities that the Consortium anticipates being available during each of the program years covered by the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The Annual Plan also serves as the application for HOME program funds allocated by formula to the Consortium.

Consolidated Annual Performance Review (CAPER): The CAPER is an annual report that provides the public with an evaluation of the progress of each activity listed in an Annual Action Plan. This document is prepared at the end of each program year covered by a Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

Development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans

During the development of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, HOME Program staff will consult with local service providers (public and private) to obtain their opinion on the housing and needs of "special needs" households in the County. These households include: 1) elderly/frail elderly; 2) persons with HIV/AIDS; 3) substance abusers; 4) persons with developmental disabilities; 5) persons with mental disabilities; 6) persons with physical disabilities; 7) the homeless; and 8) households with young children. The consultations may include scheduled meetings, focus groups, phone/e-mail interviews, invitations to public meetings, and surveys as deemed appropriate. Additionally, when

preparing the portions of the Consolidated Plan describing Barnstable County's homeless strategy and the resources available to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth), the Consortium will consult with the Barnstable County Continuum of Care Program administered by the Barnstable County's Department of Human Services.

As part of the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, Barnstable County will make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties, the amount of assistance the Consortium expects to receive from HUD allocations and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the amount that will benefit low income persons. Barnstable County includes the anticipated grant fund amount and anticipated program income in the draft Consolidated Plan. Barnstable County includes the anticipated grant fund amount, anticipated program income, and the amount of prior resources in the Annual Action Plans for that HOME program year. The anticipated HUD allocation for that program year will be included in any advertisement announcing the availability and final comment period of the draft Annual Action Plans.

Public Hearings/Meetings:

The Consortium will schedule at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizen's views on housing needs, the development of proposed activities, and to review the program performance at different stages of the program year. The Consortium will provide timely notification of these meetings and public hearings of not less than one week. Barnstable County may notify the general public of the time and date of all public hearings by placing a legal advertisement in the Cape Cod Times or in other local newspapers of general circulation; **and/or** by posting notices on the Barnstable County Human Services or HOME Investment Partnership Program website, other Barnstable County websites, and at Barnstable County buildings. Additional notices may be posted with other local government offices, town halls, libraries, and senior centers, as deemed appropriate. Additionally, public hearing notices may be posted on Barnstable County social media sites; included in Barnstable County ENewsletters; and sent via email to specific group listservs. All public hearings will be held in handicap accessible locations and/or via virtual remote hearings as allowed by state and federal law. The County will make every effort to provide translation services for those needing it upon request. All public hearing and public meeting notices will contain information on how to request reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Encouragement of Citizen Participation:

Citizens are encouraged to submit their views and proposals on all aspects of the Consolidated Plans and Annual Action Plans at the public hearings. However, to ensure that citizens are given the opportunity to assess and comment on all aspects of the HOME Program on a continuous basis, citizens may, at any time, submit written comments or complaints to the HOME Program Manager, Barnstable County Department of Human Services, P.O Box 427, 3195 Main Street, Barnstable, MA 02630 or via email to: homeprogram@barnstablecounty.org

Citizen Comment on the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans:

According to 24 CFR 91.105, all citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties have thirty (30) days to submit comments on the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, (*unless said 30-day requirement is reduced for emergency temporary reasons by HUD*). Barnstable County will notify the general public announcing the availability to examine the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plans and all related documents. Said notices may be by placing a legal advertisement in the Cape Cod Times or in other local newspapers of general circulation; and/or by posting said notices on the Barnstable County Human Services or HOME Investment Partnership Program website, other Barnstable County websites, and at Barnstable County buildings. Additional notices may be posted on Barnstable County social media sites; included in Barnstable County ENewsletters; and sent via email to specific group listserv; and may be posted with other local government offices, town halls, libraries, and senior centers, as deemed appropriate.

The Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan and all related documents will be made available to the general public at the Barnstable County Department of Human Services, 3195 Main Street, Barnstable, MA 02630 and/or via online at the Barnstable County Department of Human Services or HOME Investment Partnership Program website. The official thirty-day (*or lesser as approved by HUD*) comment period will begin when officially posted, but comments are encouraged at all public hearings and meetings and participants may contact the HOME Program office during regular office hours Monday through Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm or via email at: homeprogram@barnstablecounty.org. All comments will be considered and a summary will be made part of the submission of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan to HUD.

Plan to Minimize Displacement

It is rare for the Consortium to undertake projects that include displacement or relocation of residents. HOME Program staff works closely with applicants in an effort to minimize permanent residential displacement. It would be a general practice not to approve any proposed HOME activities involving relocation of tenants, businesses, or owners unless circumstances warrant it. If a project is approved that results in displacement, the HOME Program staff, in compliance with Uniform Relocation Act under the Federal Regulations, will work with a qualified relocation advisory agency to give relocation assistance to the occupants to be replaced.

Amendments to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan:

Due to changes in regional needs during the HOME program years, amendments and/or revisions to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan may be necessary. Some changes may be substantial enough that they significantly alter the priorities of the Annual Action Plan and ultimately the Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

Substantial Amendments:

Amendments and/or revisions that are considered Substantial Amendments will include:

- Funding a new eligible HOME program activity from the prior year’s Annual Action Plan with an allocation of over \$150,000;
- Deletion of funding of an eligible HOME program activity from the prior year’s Annual Action Plan that had an allocation of over \$150,000; and
- Redefinition of the number and type of HOME program beneficiaries.

Minor budgetary revisions to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan, or the re-allocation of the programs funds as allowed by HUD into already established eligible activities will not constitute a Substantial Amendment and may be made without a public hearing or notification.

For any revisions to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan that are deemed to be Substantial Amendments, the Consortium shall officially announce the Substantial Amendment(s) and notify the general public of its availability to examine the Substantial Amendment(s) and all related documents. Said notices may be by placing a legal advertisement in the Cape Cod Times or in other local newspapers of general circulation; and/or by posting said notices on the Barnstable County Human Services or HOME Investment Partnership Program website, other Barnstable County websites, and at Barnstable County buildings. Additional notices may be posted on Barnstable County social media sites; included in Barnstable County ENewsletters; and sent via email to specific group listserv; and may be posted with other local government offices, town halls, libraries, and senior centers, as deemed appropriate.

The public will have thirty (30) days (*unless said 30-day requirement is reduced for emergency temporary reasons by HUD*) to submit written and/or oral comments on the Substantial Amendments from the date the notice of availability is officially posted. All comments will be considered and a summary will be and made part of the revised plan. A written submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for approval will be required prior to the implementation of any Substantial Amendments.

Performance Reports:

HOME Program staff will notice the availability of the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) be by placing a legal advertisement in the Cape Cod Times or in other local newspapers of general circulation; and/or by posting a notice on the Barnstable County Human Services or HOME Investment Partnership Program website, other Barnstable County websites, and at Barnstable County buildings. Additional notices may be posted on Barnstable County social media sites; included in Barnstable County ENewsletters; and sent via email to specific group listserv; and may be posted with other local government offices, town halls, libraries, and senior centers, as deemed appropriate.

The public will have not less than thirty (15) days (*unless said 15-day requirement is reduced for emergency temporary reasons by HUD*) to submit written and/or oral comments on the CAPER.

Availability to the Public and Access to Records:

To facilitate citizen access to HOME program information, the HOME Program under the direction of the Barnstable County Department of Human Services, will keep all documents related to the HOME Program on file at 3195 Main Street, Barnstable, MA 02630, which can be accessed upon request by email to: homeprogram@barnstablecounty.org. Information from the project files shall be made available for examination and duplication, on request. HOME Program staff will make every reasonable effort to assure that HOME Program information is available to all citizens, especially those of low income and those residing in blighted neighborhoods and/or HOME project areas. Barnstable County will make every effort to provide translation services for those needing it upon request.

In no case shall Barnstable County disclose any information concerning the financial status of any program participant(s) that may be required to document program eligibility or benefit. Furthermore, Barnstable County shall not disclose any information which may, in the opinion of legal counsel, be deemed of a confidential nature.

Technical Assistance:

The Consortium's HOME Program staff offers technical assistance, upon request, to all low, very low and poverty income individuals and/or organizations serving low income neighborhoods or persons. The assistance is for the purpose of developing proposals to request funding under its HOME program and activities. Consortium staff will also provide technical assistance to grant recipients to ensure compliance with federal rules and regulations.

Complaints:

The scheduled public hearings as described herein are designed to facilitate public participation in all phases of the HOME program planning process. Citizens are encouraged to submit their views and proposals on all aspects of the regional HOME housing plan at the public hearings. However, to ensure that citizens are given the opportunity to assess and comment on all aspects of the HOME program on a continuous basis, citizens may at any time submit written comments or complaints to:

Barnstable County HOME Program
Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 427
3195 Main Street
Barnstable, MA 02630
homeprogram@barnstablecounty.org

Information about the Barnstable County HOME Program and staff contact information can be found online at: <https://www.bchumanservices.net/>

HOME Program staff will respond to all comments and complaints regarding any phase of the Consolidated Plan, or any activities implemented under the plan, in writing within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of them, where feasible. Responses will be substantive, where appropriate. When complaints remain unsatisfied, HOME Program staff will bring the complaint to the Consortium Advisory Council for review and resolution.

Adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan:

The Citizen Participation Plan will be adopted as a section of the Consolidated Plan, thereby going through the same process of local review and public comment, ending with a thirty (30) day public comment period. Amendments and changes to the Citizen Participation Plan will be addressed in the annual update of the Consolidated Plan.