



Citizen Participation Plan
Resilient SRQ: Community Development
Block Grant - Disaster Recovery

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Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	5/26/2023	Original version posted on Resilient SRQ webpage for comments.
2.0	12/12/2024	Revised throughout to reflect steps taken since original version, updated address of Resilient SRQ office location.

Section A: Background

Sarasota County is a recipient of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery grant funds (CDBG-DR). Sarasota County established the Resilient SRQ program in the Office of Financial Management to support the use of CDBG-DR funds. The Consolidated Planning requirements at 24 CFR Part 91, Subpart B, require this Program to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan. This Plan describes the Citizen Participation Plan for adoption of CDBG-DR funds in accordance with applicable regulations. Sarasota County encourages citizen participation, particularly from low to moderate income households along with persons with disabilities or with limited English proficiency (LEP).

In compliance with 24 CFR 91.105(a)(3) the original Citizen Participation Plan was published for public comment on the Sarasota County CDBG-DR webpage for a minimum of 14 calendar days. No public comments were received during that time. Should any substantial revisions to this Plan be made, Sarasota County will publish the proposed changes on www.resilientsrq.net for public comment for a minimum of 14 calendar days, ensuring transparency and continued compliance with federal regulations.

Section B: Action Plan

Sarasota County was required to complete and submit an Action Plan detailing how the County will use all available funding to support unmet needs. The Action Plan outlines program designs for each area of assistance along with projected timelines, performance, and expenditure schedule. The plan was made accessible to persons with disabilities and those with LEP as described in Section E: Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Section F: Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.

Before adopting the Action Plan, the County sought public input on activities and the feedback received during this period was included in the Action Plan that was submitted to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Opportunities for feedback were provided during public input meetings, public comments, and other methods described in this Plan.

Substantial Amendments to the Action Plan

In the event amendments are needed to the Action Plan, Sarasota County will follow the process in Section C: Community Outreach. Comments will be accepted for 30 calendar days, and a summary of these comments will be attached to the substantial amendment.

An amendment will be considered substantial if it meets any of the following conditions:

1. Addition or deletion of a program benefit or eligibility criteria;

2. Addition or deletion of an entire program or activity;
3. Increase, decrease, or reallocation of funds amongst other approved activities, where alternation of funds constitutes at or above \$20 million of the total current award; or
4. If additional funds are allocated for the current or subsequent disaster, subject to applicable federal register notice requirements

Section C: Community Outreach

Effective public outreach is essential to the Action Plan and Sarasota County conducted outreach to the following groups:

- Local governments including City of North Port, City of Sarasota, City of Venice, and Town of Longboat Key
- The School Board of Sarasota County
- Nonprofit, social services, and other organizations that advocate on behalf of vulnerable populations and underserved communities impacted by the disaster.
- The local chambers of commerce
- Public housing authorities
- Local or regional emergency management agencies that have primary responsibility for the administration of FEMA funds, if applicable
- Sarasota County residents
- Key stakeholders and Community Representatives, to include any locally established recovery focused groups

The Action Plan was presented at a public Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting and received approval from the BCC before it was submitted to HUD. The BCC meeting provided citizens an additional opportunity to provide input on the Action Plan.

Public Notice for Action Plan and Substantial Amendments

The Action Plan underwent a public notice and comment period, ensuring , citizens had a reasonable opportunity to review and provide input prior to submitting the Action Plan to HUD. The HUD approved Action Plan is posted electronically on the CDBG-DR webpage, or “Resilient SRQ”, www.ResilientSRQ.net. Citizens may request a hard copy of the Plan by emailing ResilientSRQ@scgov.net.

For any Substantial Amendments, a similar process will be followed. Citizens will be provided a reasonable opportunity to review and comment. HUD approved Substantial Amendments will be posseted on the “Resilient SRQ” webpage, and hard copies will be available upon request.

Summaries of the Action Plan and any Substantial Amendments may be provided at the following locations:

- Sarasota County Public libraries.
- Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources
- UF/IFAS Extension
- Community Centers.
- Other municipal government buildings.
- One or more local newspapers.

Comment Period for Action Plan and Substantial Amendments

Sarasota County allowed for public comments for a minimum of 30 calendar days and incorporated public comments in the approved Action Plan. For any Substantial Amendments, Sarasota County will collect comments and consider comments in the following formats:

- Via email to ResilientSRQComments@scgov.net;
- Using an online form available on the CDBG-DR website;
- Comments collected from public input meetings, if any; or,
- Via mail to: Resilient SRQ, 301 N. Cattlemen Rd., Suite 200, Sarasota, FL 34232

Any Substantial Amendment will be made available for 30 calendar days to allow for public comments unless the federal government specifies an alternative public comment period or waives the required public comment period. Sarasota County will inform affected citizens of the comment period through any of the various methods including e-mails, press releases, media announcements, and contacts with neighborhood and community organizations. Sarasota County will consider all comments received both orally and in writing on the Action Plan or substantial amendment.

Public Website

Information related to CDBG-DR will be posted on a consolidated webpage, accessible at www.ResilientSRQ.net. The webpage will allow individuals and entities awaiting assistance to see how all grant funds are used and administered.

Copies of the relevant documents will include at a minimum this citizen participation plan, the Action Plan including all substantial amendments, quarterly performance reports, procurement policies and procedures, information on each CDBG-DR program, any relevant notices or outreach information, and contact information.

Section D. Public Input Meetings for Action Plan

Sarasota County conducted three in-person public input meetings within the HUD-identified Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) area to provide comments on the Action Plan.

The meetings were held in facilities that are physically accessible to persons with disabilities to ensure effective communication in accordance with 24 CRF 8.6.

Meeting Date	Time	Meeting Location
Wednesday, June 21, 2023	5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Frances T. Bourne Jacaranda Public Library 4143 Woodmere Park Blvd., Venice, FL 34293
Thursday, June 22, 2023	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Betty J. Johnson North Sarasota Public Library 2801 Newtown Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34234
Saturday, June 24, 2023	2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Shannon Staub Public Library 4675 Career Ln., North Port, FL 34289

Information about CDBG-DR was shared at two Board of County Commissioners meetings throughout the planning stages. The Board meetings are open to the public, available via livestream or cable television, and allow residents to provide public comments.

Questions received and answers provided during the hearing were made available on the CDBG-DR website within a reasonable time frame.

Input meetings were held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, with accommodation for persons with disabilities and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure effective communication. For individuals with LEP, Sarasota County provided a translation of the documents in Spanish, Ukrainian, and Russian and took reasonable steps to provide additional language assistance as identified in Section E. Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Comments received from other languages were accepted and translated into English. For individuals with disabilities, Sarasota County followed the process listed in Section F. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.

Section E. Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Under the five-year estimates for 2019 of the American Community Survey (ACS), Sarasota County is 3.1 percent Spanish speaking. Based upon this assessment, CDBG-DR notices, outreach materials, and other vital documents will be made available in both English and Spanish. Additional language assistance to LEP persons, to include Spanish and other languages, may include, but is not limited to:

- Oral interpretation services;
- Bilingual staff;
- Telephone service lines interpreter;
- Written translation services;
- Notices to staff and recipients of the availability of LEP services; or
- Referrals to community liaisons proficient in the language of LEP persons.

Request for language assistance, outside of translation of notices, outreach materials, and vital documents into Spanish, or would like information available in an alternative format may be submitted to ResilientSRQ@scgov.net and reasonable steps shall be taken by Sarasota County to ensure access to LEP persons. Requests may also be made to Sarasota County's ADA/Title VI Coordinator via email at adacoordinator@scgov.net or phone by calling 3-1-1.

Any comments received during the public comment period in a language other than English will be translated into English and incorporated for future Substantial Amendments.

Section F. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

Sarasota County will, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in Sarasota County services, programs, or activities. Possible aids and services include qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Sarasota County is committed to continuously improving access to all services, including the county's website. If an individual is unable to use any aspect of the county's website, PDF files, or other attachments, he or she should contact adacoordinator@scgov.net, or call 941-861-5000 (TTY voice: 7-1-1 or 1-800-955-8771); and the county will provide the individual or group with assistance within a timeline both parties

deem reasonable.

Sarasota County will make all reasonable modifications to policies and services, programs, or activities to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to utilize services.

Section G. Application Status

Applicants can check the status of their application by visiting the application webpage, calling 941-861-5309, or emailing ResilientSRQ@scgov.net to determine the status of their application.

Section H. Citizen Complaints

Citizens may submit a complaint by emailing ResilientSRQ@scgov.net or calling 941-861-5309 or 3-1-1. All complaints received shall be reviewed by Sarasota County CDBG-DR program staff for:

1. Conducting investigations, as necessary;
2. Finding a resolution; or
3. Conducting follow-up actions.

Sarasota County will provide a written response to every citizen's complaint within 15 business days following the receipt of the complaint. If additional time is needed, Sarasota County will document the reason for needing additional time. Any complaints regarding fraud, waste, or abuse of government funds will be handled in accordance with Sarasota County's CDBG-DR policies on fraud, waste, or abuse and substantiated complaints will be forwarded to the HUD OIG Fraud Hotline (phone: 1-800-347-3735 or email: hotline@hudoig.gov).

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