



---

**OFFICE OF LONG-TERM RESILIENCY**  
**CDBG-DR**  
**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

*For storms governed by the Consolidated Notice  
(FR Vol. 87, No. 23, February 3, 2022, as amended)*

**Version 1.0**  
**May 14, 2024**

# VERSION HISTORY

Version Number	Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	05/14/2024	Original Version The creation of this consolidated citizen participation plan eliminates the need for the stand-alone citizen participation plans, including the existing Hurricane Sally Citizen Participation. This document contains all information previously contained in the Hurricane Sally Citizen Participation Plan as well as outreach and communication plans specific to both Hurricane Sally and Hurricane Ian.

## **VERSION POLICY**

Version history is tracked in the table above, with notes regarding version changes. The dates of each publication are also tracked in this table.

Substantive changes in this document that reflect a policy change will result in the issuance of a new version of the document. For example, a substantive policy change after the issuance of Version 1.0 would result in the issuance of Version 2.0, an increase in the primary version number. Non-substantive changes such as minor wording and editing or clarification of existing policy that do not affect interpretation or applicability of the policy will be included in minor version updates denoted by a sequential number increase behind the primary version number (i.e., Version 2.1, Version 2.2, etc.).

## **POLICY CHANGE CONTROL**

Policy review and changes for the State of Florida Office of Long-Term Resiliency are considered through a change-control process. Policy clarifications, additions, or deletions are needed during the course of the program to more precisely define the rules by which the Program will operate. Program staff will document policy-change requests that will be tracked in the program files. Requests are compiled and brought before supervisory staff in a policy meeting. Subject matter experts working in a particular policy area or task area that will be affected by the policy decision may be invited to assist in policy evaluation, if necessary. Policy meetings will be held as frequently as is necessary to consider policy decisions critical to moving the Program forward in a timely manner. Policy decisions will be documented and will result in the revision of the document in question.

# Table of Contents

Definitions and Acronyms .....	1
1.0 Introduction .....	1
2.0 Action Plan.....	2
1.1 Amendments to Action Plan .....	2
2.1.1 Substantial Amendment.....	2
2.1.2 Non-Substantial Amendment .....	2
2.2 Public Participation.....	3
2.2.1 Public Hearing .....	3
2.2.2 Public Comment .....	5
3.0 Public Outreach .....	7
3.1 Outreach Plan .....	7
3.2 Local Efforts .....	7
3.3 LEP Outreach.....	8
3.4 Stakeholder Surveys .....	8
4.0 Accessibility .....	9
4.1 Limited English Proficiency .....	9
4.2 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.....	10
4.2.1 Sign Language Interpretation Service .....	11
5.0 Public Webpage.....	12
6.0 Performance Reporting.....	12
7.0 Technical Assistance .....	12
8.0 Citizen Complaints and Inquiries .....	13
9.0 Appeals.....	15
9.1 Housing Repair and Replacement Appeals .....	15
9.1.1 Reconsideration Request .....	15
9.1.2 HRRP Informal Appeals.....	16
9.2 FloridaCommerce URA Appeals .....	17
9.3 Requirements for Subrecipients' Appeals Processes .....	18
10.0 Fair Housing .....	19
10.1 Suggested Activities for Landlords, Managers, Agents, and the General Public .....	20
10.2 Fair Housing Complaints .....	20
11.0 Anti-Fraud, Waste, and Abuse .....	21
12.0 Public Record Requests .....	22
12.1 Public Records Request Procedure .....	23
12.1.1 Intake and Processing .....	23

**Office of Long-Term Resiliency CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan**

---

12.1.2 Production of Records to Requestor.....24

12.1.3 Public Record Requests for Email Correspondences.....24

13.0 Additional Outreach .....25

Appendix 1: Disaster-Specific Outreach and Communications Plans for Storms Governed by the Consolidated Notice.....26

A1: Hurricane Sally (2020) Outreach and Communications Plan .....26

    Overview .....26

    Methods for Outreach .....26

    Execution of Outreach .....27

A2: Hurricane Ian (2022) Outreach and Communications .....31

    Overview .....31

    Methods for Outreach.....31

    Execution of Outreach .....33

    Additional Outreach .....43

## Definitions and Acronyms

**Action Plan** – The Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Action Plan for Disaster Recovery provides the high-level strategy to carry out strategic and high-impact activities to minimize or eliminate risks and reduce losses from future disasters. The Action Plan also describes the opportunity to improve state and local planning protocols and procedures.

**Acquisition** – The acquiring of real property, in whole or in part, by the recipient, or other public or private nonprofit entity through purchase, long-term lease, donation, or otherwise for any public purpose, subject to the limitation of 24 CFR 570.207. Real property includes air rights, water rights, rights-of-way, easements, and other interests therein (24 CFR 570.201).

**AFN** – Access and Functional Needs

**AFFH** – Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

**Allocation Announcement Notice (AAN)** – Publication announcing the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery allocations for specific disasters and including waivers and alternative requirements specific to the Appropriations Act that allocated the funding.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** – Effective July 20, 1990, a federal law which prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services.

**Applicant** – Any entity that submits a response to the request for applications for potential funding through the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Program.

**Area Median Income (AMI)** – The median household income for an area adjusted for household size as published and annually updated by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development. Once household income is determined, it is compared to the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development's income limit for that household size.

**Bid** – An offer by a company, firm, or individual to provide goods or services, in response to solicitation for those goods or services.

**Buyout** – The acquisition of a property located in a floodway, floodplain, or other Disaster Risk Reduction Area with the intention of reducing risk from future hazards.

**CBO** – Community-Based Organizations

**CFR** – Code of Federal Regulations

**CMS** – Constituent Management Services

**CoC** – Continuum of Care

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – Supports community development activities to build stronger and more resilient communities. To support community development, activities are identified through an ongoing process. Activities may address needs such as infrastructure, economic development projects, public facilities installation, community centers, housing rehabilitation, public services, clearance/acquisition, microenterprise assistance, code enforcement, homeowner assistance, etc.

**Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)** – The Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. These funds are provided as a last resort to help cities, counties, and states to recover from Presidentially declared disasters.

---

**Office of Long-Term Resiliency CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan**

---

**Concern(s)** – An issue identified in FloridaCommerce’s monitoring report, or an environmental review memo sent to the subgrantee and/or subrecipient that, if not addressed or corrected, may result in a finding.

**Consolidated Notice** – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Consolidated Notice, Appendix B of Federal Register Vol. 87, No. 23. The Consolidated Notice governs all Office of Long-Term Resiliency Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery grants beginning with 2020 disasters (Hurricane Sally) and includes amended requirements from previous Federal Register Notices and Community Planning and Development Notices that have regulated Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds in the past. The Consolidated Notice includes waivers and alternative requirements, relevant regulatory requirements, the grant award process, criteria for action plan approval, and eligible disaster recovery activities.

**Contractor** – An entity competitively selected to provide clearly-specified goods or services meeting the procurement requirements at 2 CFR 200, Section 287.055, Florida Statutes, and Section 255.0525, Florida Statutes.

**Corrective Action** – Steps required to be taken to resolve findings and/or concerns identified in the Department of Commerce’s Office of Long-Term Resiliency monitoring report.

**CP** – Citizen Participation

**CPD** – Community Planning and Development

**Deficiency** – An inadequacy based on a federal or state statutory, regulatory, or program requirement.

**Disability** – Federal nondiscrimination laws define a person with a disability to include any (1) individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) individual with a record of such impairment; or (3) individual who is regarded as having such an impairment consistent with federal law under The Social Security Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §423(d), The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §12102(1) -(3), and in accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR 5.403 and 891.505.

**Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting (DRGR) System** – The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development’s web-based reporting and grants management system.

**DR** – Disaster Recovery

**Duplication of Benefits (DOB)** – When a person, household, business, government, or other entity receives financial assistance from multiple sources for the same purpose within the same time period, and the total assistance received for that purpose is more than the total need for assistance.

**Duplication of Benefits (DOB) Gap** –The total amount of excludable and non-excludable benefits received less the dollar amount of excludable benefits from the Duplication of Benefits analysis. Duplication of Benefits Gap amount, along with all future non-excludable benefits received by Recipient(s), shall be provided to the Department of Commerce and deposited in a Duplication of Benefits Gap Funding Account prior to the execution of the Homeowner Grant Agreement.

**ESB** – Elimination of Slums or Blight (national objective)

**FBO** – Faith-Based Organizations

**Federal Register (FR)** – The official journal of the Federal Government of the United States that contains government agency rules, proposed rules, and public notices issued by federal administrative agencies.

**FEMA** – Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FHFC** – Florida Housing Finance Corporation

**Finding(s)** – A specific issue of noncompliance with federal or state regulatory requirements, including the Community Development Block Grant subrecipient/subgrant agreement provisions, that is identified in a monitoring report produced by the Florida Department of Commerce or in an environmental review memo sent to the subrecipient/subgrantee.

**Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce)** – Administrator of the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery and Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. FloridaCommerce is the governor-designated state authority responsible for administering all long-term disaster recovery funds awarded to Florida from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. As used in this document, “FloridaCommerce” refers to the Florida Department of Commerce.

**FONSI** – Finding of No Significant Impact

**Grantee** – As used in this document, the grantee is the State of Florida Department of Commerce’s Office of Long-Term Resiliency as recipient of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**HCDA** – Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended

**HMGMP** – Hazard Mitigation Grant Match Program

**HMGP** – Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

**Household** – All persons occupying the same housing unit, regardless of their relationship to each other. The occupants could consist of a single family, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements. For workforce training activities, the test of meeting low-to-moderate income requirements is based on the income of the household.

**HRP** – Hometown Revitalization Program

**HRRP** – Housing Repair and Replacement Program

**HUD** – The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

**HUD Act of 1968** – The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, as amended

**IA** – (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Individual Assistance

**Income** – Annual income as reported under the United States Census long-form for the most recent available decennial U.S. Census. This definition includes:

- Wages, salaries, tips, commissions, etc.;
- Self-employment income from own nonfarm business, including proprietorships and partnerships;
- Farm self-employment income;
- Interest, dividends, net rental income, or income from estates or trusts;
- Social Security or railroad retirement;
- Supplemental Security Income, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or other public assistance or public welfare programs;
- Retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and
- Any other sources of income received regularly, including Veterans' (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, and alimony.

**Invitation to Bid (ITB)** – A written or electronically posted solicitation for competitive sealed bids.

**Invitation to Negotiate (ITN)** – A written or electronically posted solicitation for competitive sealed replies to select one or more vendors with which to commence negotiations for the procurement of commodities or contractual services.

**IRP** – Infrastructure Repair Program



**LAP** – Language Access and Accessibility Plan

**LEP** – Limited English Proficiency

**Low Moderate Area Benefit (LMA)** – An eligible activity that benefits all residents in a particular area, where at least 51 percent of the residents are Low-to-Moderate Income Persons as determined by the most recently available decennial Census information, together with the Section 8 income limits that would have applied at the time the income information was collected by the Census Bureau, or a current survey of the residents of the service area.

**Low Moderate Housing (LMH)** – Eligible activities that are undertaken for the purpose of providing or improving permanent residential structures which, upon completion, will be occupied by LMI households. To be eligible, structures with one unit must be occupied by a Low-to-Moderate Income Household, with two units, at least one unit must be Low-to-Moderate Income occupied, and structures with three or more units must have at least 51 percent occupied by Low-to-Moderate Income Households.

**Low Moderate Housing Incentive (LMHI)** – Housing incentives tied to a voluntary buyout or other voluntary acquisitions of housing owned by eligible Low-to-Moderate Income Households and provided for the purpose of moving the eligible household outside the affected floodplain or to a lower-risk area, or improving residential structures that will be occupied by an LMI household.

**Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) Household** – A household whose annual income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area as most recently determined by the Department of Urban and Housing Development.

- LMI 30 refers to those individuals/families making less than 30 percent of the Area Median Income.
- LMI 50 refers to those individuals/families making less than 50 percent of the Area Median Income.
- LMI 80 refers to those individuals/families making less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income.
- Above LMI 80 refers to those individuals/families making more than 80 percent of the Area Median Income.

**Low-to-Moderate-Income (LMI) National Objective** – Activities that benefit households whose total annual gross income does not exceed 80 percent of Area Median Income, adjusted for family size. Pursuant to federal statute, the grantee is required to expend 70 percent of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds to meet the Low-to-Moderate-Income National Objective.

**Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) Resident/Person/Individual** – A person whose annual income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area as most recently determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Low Moderate Limited Clientele (LMC)** – An eligible activity in which 51 percent of the actual beneficiaries are Low-to-Moderate Income Persons.

**Mitigation Activities** – Activities funded by the mitigation set-aside that increase resilience to disasters and reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of loss of life, injury, damage to and loss of property, and suffering and hardship, by lessening the impact of future disasters.

**Mitigation Measures** – Measures that—per the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Consolidated Notice, Appendix B of Federal Register Vol. 87, No. 23—must be incorporated into Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery activities carried out by the grantee and its subrecipients as a construction standard to create communities that are more resilient, and to reduce the impacts of recurring natural disasters. When determining which mitigation measures to incorporate, the grantee should design and construct structures to withstand the impacts of severe weather events expected to occur over the service life of the project.

**Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) Areas** – Areas of most impact as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or the state using the best available data sources to calculate the amount of disaster damage.

**Offer** – A response to a solicitation that, if accepted, would bind the offer. Responses to an Invitation to Bid are offers called “bids” or “sealed bids”.

**Office of the General Counsel (OGC)** – The Florida Department of Commerce’s office designated to overseeing the Department of Commerce’s response to all public records requests, drafting and reviewing agency contracts, handling all litigation involving the Department of Commerce, and serving as the Department of Commerce’s chief ethics officer.

**Office of Long-Term Resiliency (OLTR)** – The Florida Department of Commerce’s office dedicated to the administration of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery and Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation funded programs and activities.

**OIG** – Office of Inspector General

**PA** – (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Public Assistance

**PNP** – Private Non-profit Organizations

**Private Loans** – A loan that is not provided by, or guaranteed by, a governmental entity. Private loans require the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery applicant (the borrower) to repay the full amount of the loan (principal and interest) under typical commercial lending terms, i.e., the loan is not forgivable.

**Project/Program/Activity** – The housing, infrastructure, economic development, or planning endeavor undertaken by FloridaCommerce, the subgrantee and/or subrecipient using Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds.

**Public Housing Authority (PHA)** – A state, county, municipality or other governmental entity or public body or agency or instrumentality of these entities that is authorized to engage or assist in the development or operation of low-income housing under the United States Housing Act of 1937 in accordance with 24 CFR 5.100.

**Quarterly Performance Report (QPR)** – The Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Quarterly Performance Report that is required to be uploaded quarterly in the Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting system for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s review of Florida’s disaster recovery programs.

**Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (RECAP)** – RECAPs must have a non-white population of 50 percent or more and a poverty rate that exceeds 40 percent, or is three or more times the average tract poverty rate for the metropolitan/micropolitan area, whichever threshold is lower.

**RARAP** – Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan

**Rebuild Florida** – A disaster recovery program created by the Florida Department of Commerce to help Florida’s long-term recovery efforts from disasters that have impacted the citizens of Florida.

**Release of Funds (ROF)** – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s or Department of Commerce’s granting approval to use Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funding. This approval, or authority to use grant funds, is executed through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development form 7015.16. The authority to use Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds usually occurs after the project environmental review is completed and approved by the Department of Commerce.

**Request for Applications (RFA)** – The Department of Commerce notice requesting applications for funding as a subrecipient for the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery program.

**Request for Funds (RFF)** – A subgrantee and/or subrecipient’s request for funds from the Department of Commerce.

**Request for Proposals (RFP)** – A solicitation, often made through a bidding process, by an agency to communicate its requirements for goods or services to prospective contractors.

**Request for Quote (RFQ)** – An oral, electronic, or written request for written pricing or services information from a Florida state term contract vendor for commodities or contractual services available on the state term contract from that vendor.

**Request for Release of Funds (RROF)** – A subgrantee and/or subrecipient request for a release of funds. This request is executed through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Form 7015.15.

**Response** – Any application received for Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funding.

**Responsible Entity (RE)** – The entity responsible for certain components of the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery administration process including environmental reviews, monitoring, and administration. The Responsible Entity can be the Department of Commerce or a Unit of General Local Government, also known as a subrecipient, as specified by FloridaCommerce.

**SBA** – The United States Small Business Administration, a federal agency.

**Sealed bid** – A method of contracting that encompasses a competitive bid process, the public opening of bids, and making the bid award.

**Service Area** – The total geographic area to be directly or indirectly served by a subgrant project that addresses the Low-to-Moderate Income National Objective, in which at least 51 percent of the residents are low-to-moderate income persons. A service area must include all, and only those, beneficiaries who are reasonably served or would be reasonably served by the activity.

**Slums and Blight** – A blighted area or structure characterized by one or more of the conditions listed in Section 7056(b)(3) of the Community Development Block Grant regulations and as documented under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations specified in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 24, part 570.483(c).

**Solicitation** – Any request to submit offers or quotations to the local government. Solicitations under sealed bid procedures are called “Invitations to Bid.” Solicitations under negotiated procedures are called “Requests for Proposals.” Solicitations under simplified acquisition procedures may require submission of either a quotation or an offer.

**Subcontract** – A contract entered into by a subcontractor to furnish supplies or services for performance of a prime contract, or another subcontract. It includes, but is not limited to, purchase orders, and changes and modifications to purchase orders.

**Subcontractor** – Any supplier, distributor, vendor, or firm that furnishes supplies or services to or for a subrecipient. As related to Section 3 of the of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, as amended, any entity (other than a person who is an employee of the contractor) which has a contract with a contractor to undertake a portion of the contractor’s obligation for the performance of work generated by the expenditure of Section 3 covered assistance or arising in connection with a Section 3 covered project.

**Subgrantee** – A recipient that demonstrated its abilities to carry out competitive applications due to their expertise related to goals of the program.

**Subrecipient** – A competitively-selected recipient, usually a local government, that is provided Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds from the Department of Commerce to agreed-upon eligible disaster recovery activities documented in a Subrecipient Agreement.

**Subgrant Agreement** – An agreement between the Department of Commerce and the subgrantee for the subgrantee to undertake activities using Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds.

**Subrecipient Agreement** – An agreement between the Department of Commerce and the subrecipient for the subrecipient to undertake activities using Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds.

**Subrecipient Enterprise Resource Application (SERA)** – The Department of Commerce’s web-based reporting and grants management system. This system is used by Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery vendors, subgrantees, and subrecipients to submit invoices and supporting documentation in order to be reimbursed for goods and services. The transactions in this system are linked to the state’s Florida Accounting Information Resource system as well as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting system.

**Subrogation** – A legal doctrine that allows one entity to take on the rights of another. In the context of Disaster Recovery grants, a subrecipient must enter into a subrogation agreement in which the funding agency (the Department of Commerce) obtains the right to collect any additional disaster recovery payments the entity obtains for the same purpose after the entity has received disaster recovery benefits.

**Subsidized Loans** – Loans, including forgivable loans, other than private loans. Both Small Business Administration and Federal Emergency Management Agency provide subsidized loans for disaster recovery.

**TA** – Technical Assistance

**UGLG** – Unit of General Local Government

**Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act (URA) of 1970, as amended** – A federal law that establishes minimum standards for federally funded programs and projects that require the acquisition of real property (real estate) or displace persons from their homes, businesses, or farms. The URA's protections and assistance apply to the acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property for federal or federally funded projects pursuant to 49 CFR Part 24 and applicable waivers provided in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Consolidated Notice, Appendix B of Federal Register Vol. 87, No. 23.

**Urgent Need** – A recent need that poses a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community.

**VBS** – Vendor Bid System

**Very Low-Income (VU) Household/Family** – A household whose annual income does not exceed 30 percent of the median income for the area as most recently determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Very Low-Income (VU) Person or Individual** – A person whose annual income does not exceed 30 percent of the median income for the area as most recently determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Vendor** – An entity competitively selected to provide clearly-specified goods or services meeting the procurement requirements at 24 CFR 85.36, 2 CFR Part 200, Section 287.055, Florida Statutes, and Rule 73-23.0051(3), Florida Administrative Code. In accordance with 24 CFR 85.36(c), such procurement actions must be conducted in a manner that provides for free and open competition.

**VHB** – Voluntary Home Buyout Program

**VOAD** – Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster

**Waiver** – A revision to the standard Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery regulations, requirements, and activities, granted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**WFAH** – Workforce Affordable Housing Construction Program

**WRTP** – Workforce Recovery Training Program

**Zero Award** – Is determined when the estimated cost to repair the disaster-related structural damage sustained to an applicant's home is less than the amount of benefits previously received or previously approved from other sources.

# 1.0 Introduction

The Office of Long-Term Resiliency (OLTR) Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Citizen Participation Plan (the “OLTR CPP”) for the Florida Department of Commerce (“FloridaCommerce”) was developed in compliance with [Federal Register, Volume 87, No. 23, February 3, 2022](#), as amended (the “Consolidated Notice”) and other applicable HUD requirements, to set forth the policies and procedures applicable to citizen participation. The OLTR CPP is intended to maximize the opportunity for citizen involvement in the planning and development of CDBG-DR funded recovery programs. The primary goal of the OLTR CPP is to provide Floridians with definitive opportunities to involve themselves in the recovery process as it pertains to CDBG-DR funds.

The Consolidated Notice states that, “to permit a more streamlined process and ensure disaster recovery grants are awarded in a timely manner, provisions of 42 U.S.C. 5304(a)(2) and (3), 42 U.S.C. 12707, 24 CFR 570.486, 24 CFR 1003.604, 24 CFR 91.105(b) through (d), and 24 CFR 91.115(b) through (d), with respect to citizen participation requirements, are waived and replaced by the alternative requirements in this section. The streamlined requirements require the grantee to include public hearings on the proposed action plan and provide a reasonable opportunity (at least 30 days) for citizen comment.” Citizen Participation requirements are outlined in section III.D. Citizen Participation Requirements of the Consolidated Notice.

Florida values citizen and stakeholder engagement and in order to facilitate citizen involvement, FloridaCommerce has laid out target actions to encourage citizen participation and allow equal access to information about the programs. FloridaCommerce intends to focus outreach efforts to facilitate participation from individuals of low-and moderate-income (LMI), those living in slums and blighted areas, those living in the Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) areas, individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and other disadvantaged populations.

The OLTR CPP governs the following disasters:

1. Hurricane Sally – 2020 Disaster
2. Hurricane Ian – 2022 Disaster

In addition to the OLTR CPP, each storm listed above has a separate Outreach and Communications Plan detailing specific outreach activities. These Outreach and Communications Plans are included as appendices in

***Office of Long-Term Resiliency CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan***

---

Appendix 1: Disaster-Specific Outreach and Communications Plans for Storms Governed by the Consolidated Notice

If there are any questions, subgrantees, subrecipients, and citizens may contact FloridaCommerce's OLTR at:

Florida Department of Commerce  
Disaster Recovery Programs  
107 East Madison Street, MSC 420  
The Caldwell Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
(850)-717-8474  
[CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov)

## 2.0 Action Plan

Each State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery, and any following amendments, define how OLTR will effectively use all available funding to support a data driven recovery, based on the calculation of unmet need across the state. Each action plan describes Florida's proposed allocation by activity and lays out program designs for each area of assistance. In addition, these action plans also identify the respective projected timeline(s) for each disaster recovery activity, their performance, and the expenditure schedule.

Before adopting an action plan, FloridaCommerce has sought public input on program design issues including the amount of assistance Florida expects to receive, the range of activities that may be undertaken, the estimated amount of benefit expected for LMI persons, and plans to mitigate displacement. A summary of outreach feedback is included in each respective action plan approved by HUD.

The following State of Florida Action Plans, as approved by HUD, are posted to each applicable disaster's page, as linked below, and are accessible via [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).

- [Hurricane Sally \(2020\) Action Plan](#)
- [Hurricane Ian \(2022\) Action Plan](#)

### 1.1 Amendments to Action Plan

Over time, recovery needs will change. Thus, FloridaCommerce will amend a disaster recovery action plan as often as necessary to best address our long-term recovery needs and goals. An action plan describes proposed programs and activities. As programs and activities develop over time, an amendment may not be triggered if the program or activity is consistent with the descriptions provided in the action plan.

All amendments will be noted in the respective consolidated action plan by an amendment chart in the amendment section at the beginning of the action plan document. This chart will note the previous page number, current page number, section the change is in, and a description of the changes made as well as the reason for the change. All amendments will be numbered sequentially and posted to FloridaCommerce's website into the applicable storm's consolidated action plan as well as individually on the storm's page linked at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).

#### 2.1.1 Substantial Amendment

A change to an action plan is considered to be a substantial amendment if it meets the following criteria:

- A change in program benefit or eligibility criteria;
- The addition or deletion of an activity;
- A proposed reduction in the overall benefit requirement; or
- The allocation or reallocation of a monetary threshold specified in the action plan of the total allocation from HUD.

When FloridaCommerce pursues the substantial amendment process, the amendment will be posted to the applicable disaster's page linked on [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR) for a 30-day public comment period. The amendment will be posted in adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and LEP requirements. FloridaCommerce will review and respond to all public comments received and submit the amendment to HUD for approval.

#### 2.1.2 Non-Substantial Amendment

A non-substantial amendment is an amendment to an action plan that includes technical corrections and clarifications and/or budget changes that do not meet the monetary threshold for substantial amendment



to the action plan and does not require posting for public comment. FloridaCommerce will notify HUD five business days before the change is effective.

## 2.2 Public Participation

FloridaCommerce is committed to helping Florida's communities recover from the devastating impacts of disasters, providing Floridians with definitive opportunities to involve themselves in the action plan development process for the use of CDBG-DR funds. Florida values citizen and stakeholder engagement, and to facilitate citizen involvement, FloridaCommerce will lay out targeted actions to encourage citizen participation and allow equal access to information about the program. FloridaCommerce will focus outreach efforts to facilitate participation from LMI individuals, those living in areas identified for recovery, non-English speaking persons, and other disadvantaged populations.

Following the impact of a presidentially declared disaster, FloridaCommerce intends to travel to counties impacted by the disaster and will consult with key stakeholders such as elected and appointed officials, including county managers, commission board members, and emergency management personnel, to understand unmet needs and to get feedback on crafting programs to best meet the needs of the impacted communities as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This focused outreach includes a survey, which is sent to stakeholders and community leaders to assist in determining the unmet needs in the affected areas, as well as phone calls and in-person visits to community leaders to request feedback regarding unmet needs in their local communities. FloridaCommerce conducts outreach to citizens in the form of community workshops, social media posts, and various methods of advertisement distribution. Additionally, FloridaCommerce holds public citizen and stakeholder workshops in the most impacted areas about their unmet disaster recovery needs following the storm.

**Table 1: Hurricane Sally HUD and State-Identified Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) Counties**

Hurricane Sally HUD Designated MID Counties		
Escambia	Santa Rosa	
Hurricane Sally State Designated MID Counties		
Bay	Okaloosa	Walton

**Table 2: Hurricane Ian HUD and State-Identified Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) Counties**

Hurricane Ian HUD Designated MID Counties		
Brevard	Charlotte	Collier
DeSoto	Hardee	Highlands
Hillsborough	Manatee	Monroe
Osceola	Pinellas	Polk
Putnam	Seminole	
Hurricane Ian State Designated MID Counties		
Flagler	Glades	Hendry
Lake	Okeechobee	St. Johns

### 2.2.1 Public Hearing

In addition, the Consolidated Notice requires that FloridaCommerce convene at least one public hearing in the HUD-identified MID areas for the proposed action plan after it has published on its website to solicit public comment and before submittal of the action plan to HUD. CDBG-DR allocations over \$500 million or more will require FloridaCommerce to convene at least two public hearings while promoting geographic balance and maximum accessibility. The intent of these public hearings is to give participants a brief

overview of the program and to provide them with the opportunity to participate in a question-and-answer session about the program and the application process.

Seeking input from stakeholders and communities around the state is a very important part of the planning process. FloridaCommerce utilizes a variety of methods to understand unmet needs and solicit feedback on how to craft programs that will meet the needs of communities as quickly as possible. In addition to gaining feedback, this helps local stakeholders understand what to expect from CDBG-DR funding and allows them to play a key role in shaping the outcomes of the action plans.

Although FloridaCommerce anticipates ensuring that all required public hearings are held in person, FloridaCommerce may convene public hearings virtually in the future if the need arises. Virtual public hearings may be used during the public comment period required for any substantial amendments of the Action Plan or if an additional allocation of funding is provided.

FloridaCommerce's procedures for virtual public hearings are as follows:

- FloridaCommerce will provide at least seven days' notice for any virtual public hearings, as practical.
- FloridaCommerce will post a public notice announcement on the applicable storm's page on the FloridaCommerce website, accessible via: [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).
- FloridaCommerce will email the public notice announcement to the list of members of local government, community leaders, and community members who have expressed interest in the program.
  - For members of local government and community leaders, the signup forms for mailing lists are publicly accessible at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).
  - For community members, the signup forms for mailing lists are publicly accessible on FloridaCommerce's website at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR)
- A registration link and instructions will be provided in all public notices for virtual public hearings.
- Hearings will be held at times convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries with accommodation for persons with disabilities and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure effective communication.
- During all virtual public hearings and public hearings, FloridaCommerce will provide participants an opportunity to ask questions in real time, with answers coming directly from the grantee representatives to all attendees.
- Transcripts for all virtual public hearings will be translated into Spanish (and other applicable languages, as determined by FloridaCommerce) and will be made available on FloridaCommerce's public website. Transcripts will be made available in other languages upon request at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).
- All virtual public hearings will be recorded and a link to the recording will be published to the website at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR). Subtitles will be included in the recordings.
- Auxiliary aids and service are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this and all other FloridaCommerce documents may be reached by persons using Teletypewriter (TTY)/TTD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.
- All questions submitted during virtual public hearings will be collected and summarized along with responses and posted with the accompanying public hearing link to each applicable disaster page linked on [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).

In addition to serving as an outreach platform, these meetings provide FloridaCommerce with an opportunity to focus on regionally specific issues and challenges. In the interest of having greater participation from the public, FloridaCommerce intends to publish a notice of each public hearing in significant newspapers across the affected area in English and Spanish, and other applicable languages, prior to the public hearing date.

### 2.2.1.1 Notice of Public Hearings

FloridaCommerce intends to publish a notice for each public hearing and for each 30-day public comment period in both English and Spanish (and other applicable languages, as determined by FloridaCommerce) in newspapers across the affected area prior to the public hearing date.

Notice of a public hearing will be provided on [www.RebuildFlorida.gov](http://www.RebuildFlorida.gov) seven days prior to the hearing. Additional notice of public hearings may include:

- Email communication sent to stakeholders in relevant impacted areas to encourage community participation.
- Outbound phone calls made to Long Term Recovery Organizations and Community Stakeholders in impacted regions to encourage event participation.
- Postings generated in local newspapers in all relevant languages at least one week in advance of the hearing.

For LEP consideration, content will be provided in the languages deemed appropriate for the impacted area. Additional translation services are available upon request.

### 2.2.2 Public Comment

Florida's citizen public comment period will be open for the following timeframes:

- Public comment period for the disaster's original action plan will be open for 30 days from the date of publication of the action plan to the applicable disaster's webpage linked at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).
- Public comment period for substantial amendments will remain open for 30 days from the publication of a substantial amendment to the applicable disaster's webpage linked at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).

FloridaCommerce will receive comments via mail at:

Attention: Rebuild Florida Constituent Management Services

Florida Department of Commerce

Office of Long-Term Resiliency

107 East Madison Street

The Caldwell Building, MSC 420

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100

Or via the applicable email:

- For Hurricane Sally (2020): [CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov)
- For Hurricane Ian (2022): [HurricaneIan@RebuildFlorida.gov](mailto:HurricaneIan@RebuildFlorida.gov)

#### 2.2.2.1 Notice of Public Comment Period

Before FloridaCommerce adopts an action plan for any grant or any substantial amendment to the grant, OLTR will publish the proposed action plan or amendment for a 30-day public comment period at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).

- Email communications will be sent to stakeholders in relevant impacted areas to encourage community participation.
- Emails will be sent on the first day of the public comment period providing dates and instructions for comment submission.
- Reminder emails will be sent seven days before the close of the public comment period.

- Public comment periods for housing-related amendments will be noted in the weekly social media content for FloridaCommerce's Twitter and Facebook pages in the week the public comment period begins and will continue through the end of the public comment period.
- LEP Consideration- Social media posts will provide reasonable access to LEP individuals. (Posts will be available in Spanish, and other applicable languages or infographics will be included with verbiage on how to access information in other languages.) Additional translation services are able to be provided, upon request.

### **2.2.2.2 Consideration of Public Comments**

OLTR will consider all oral and written comments regarding an action plan or any substantial amendment. A summary of the comments received on a draft action plan, as well as FloridaCommerce's response to each comment, are included in the appendix section of the applicable action plan.

All comments and responses will be submitted to HUD with the action plan or substantial amendment.

## 3.0 Public Outreach

FloridaCommerce is committed to building a foundation for effective outreach throughout the program to all affected eligible Florida homeowners, with targeted efforts to reach those who are elderly, disabled, LMI, families with children under 18 years of age, and/or minorities. This outreach may include establishing and preparing a network of stakeholders, including elected officials, non-profits, faith-based organizations, civic associations, and media outlets, to ensure well-coordinated and effective outreach. Subrecipients of the CDBG-DR program are encouraged to develop an outreach plan utilizing the following outreach strategies developed by FloridaCommerce.

### 3.1 Outreach Plan

During the action plan development, outreach, including outbound phone calls and newspaper ads in English, Spanish (and other applicable languages, as determined by FloridaCommerce) across the affected areas, were completed. These and additional strategies, such as the ones listed below, may be utilized, as appropriate, during open application periods for CDBG-DR programs, and in future outreach campaigns.

- Outbound phone calls to community stakeholders and partners,
- In-person community partner meetings in the affected areas to promote program participation.
- Email communication sent to stakeholders in relevant impacted areas to encourage community participation.
- Mailers
  - For LEP consideration, the mailers should include verbiage for LEP access.
- Paid Media Buys
- Social Media Ads
  - For LEP consideration, ad buys should be posted in applicable languages.
- Radio Ads
  - For LEP consideration, ad buys should be acquired in applicable languages.
- TV ads
  - For accessibility consideration, TTY Line should be included for hearing-impaired individuals.
- Newspaper Ads
  - For LEP consideration, ads should be placed in applicable languages.
  - For accessibility consideration, ads should be placed in hard-to-reach areas to reach underserved, rural, and LMI populations.
- Other (Bus stations, billboards, posting in local businesses, canvassing)
- For LEP consideration, postings should be created in applicable languages (specifically targeted flyers for bus stations and billboards in applicable languages).

Please see Appendix 1: Disaster-Specific Outreach and Communications Plans for Storms Governed by the Consolidated Notice

### 3.2 Local Efforts

Counties and other units of general local government (UGLG) eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds must coordinate to consider the needs of all municipalities (and Federally Recognized Indian Tribes) within the incorporated as well as unincorporated area(s) of the county (and reservations contiguous to the county). Eligible UGLGs, where applicable, should also consult with local housing providers regarding funding for affordable rental housing needs related to the storms. Applicants for funding must provide

FloridaCommerce with documentation that all parties were allowed an opportunity to discuss unmet needs and the best use of the funding.

Additionally, subrecipients are required to conduct outreach to vulnerable populations and are required to have at least one outreach session in an area or areas targeting different special needs populations—such as LEP and disabled individuals—throughout the county or municipality to ensure best efforts to maximize community outreach are achieved and documented. Since certain areas throughout the state have bilingual and multi-lingual populations, there should be at least a Spanish translation of all relevant documentation available for the public (additional languages may be required on a disaster-specific basis). It would be helpful, if applicable, to have a translator available during public meetings to assist LEP individuals and those with disabilities such as hearing impairment.

Applicants for subrecipient funding must allow their citizens access to grant information pursuant to Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law as well as federal requirements. Records should be made available for public inspection during normal business hours. In addition, if possible, information should be posted to websites. Upon request, information must be provided in a format accessible to persons with disabilities. Retention of records must meet existing public record requirements.

### 3.3 LEP Outreach

FloridaCommerce will provide messaging to primary audiences in English, Spanish, and/or any additional languages appropriate and applicable to the geographic area served. FloridaCommerce will use targeted language and specific outreach to LEP individuals in the impacted communities during outreach campaigns. This may include advertisements in newspapers, radio, and television stations. For the development of action plans, FloridaCommerce will run ads in both English and Spanish, and any applicable languages in significant newspapers across the affected areas.

Where applicable, subrecipients should conduct outreach in areas where there are concentrations of individuals with LEP and should provide outreach materials in a form accessible to LEP individuals (including English, Spanish, and/or any additional languages appropriate and applicable to the geographic area served).

### 3.4 Stakeholder Surveys

To allow for additional input from impacted communities, FloridaCommerce will utilize stakeholder surveys developed to capture feedback from communities within the HUD and state-identified MID areas.

Stakeholders are provided several methods to complete surveys including online or over the phone with a FloridaCommerce Constituent Management Services (CMS) team member who provides them with information on the action plan and requests feedback regarding their lingering unmet needs following the impacts of the applicable disaster.

The surveys will remain open during the 30-day public comment period to allow stakeholders ample time to participate in the development of the action plan.

Storm-specific survey results are located in the applicable storm's Outreach and Communications Plan located in Appendix 1: Disaster-Specific Outreach and Communications Plans for Storms Governed by the Consolidated Notice

## 4.0 Accessibility

Florida is committed to providing all citizens with equal access to information about the disaster recovery program, including persons with disabilities and LEP persons. Florida follows HUD's regulation, 24 CFR Part 1, "Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," which requires all recipients of federal financial assistance from HUD to provide meaningful access to LEP persons and persons with disabilities.

OLTR will ensure that all citizens have equal access to information about the programs, including persons with disabilities and LEP, and will ensure that program information is available in the appropriate languages for the geographic area served by the jurisdiction and in forms accessible to persons with disabilities.

To ensure meaningful access for individuals with disabilities or LEP, FloridaCommerce has developed and implemented a Rebuild Florida Language Access and Accessibility Plan, which details how Florida will address these needs. The Language Access and Accessibility Plan is available on the OLTR website at [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR).

Additional interpretive and translational services are available upon request.

### 4.1 Limited English Proficiency

Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English may be in need of language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter. To address this need, FloridaCommerce developed and implemented a Rebuild Florida Language Access Plan, which details how Florida will address the needs of LEP individuals. This Language Access Plan is available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole on the OLTR website at <https://FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR>. As outlined in the Language Access Plan, the four-factor analysis conducted by FloridaCommerce indicates that all 67 Florida counties would benefit from meaningful access to activities, programs, and services in Spanish. FloridaCommerce has taken the proactive step to ensure all vital documents for impacted citizens are translated into Spanish regardless of disaster or geographic location within the state.

Translators will be present when a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate in public hearings or open comment periods. FloridaCommerce brings to each in-person public hearing, printed, Spanish copies of the presentation to be available to LEP attendees who require such accommodation. In addition to these copies, copies translated into other languages can be provided, upon request. To accommodate LEP persons during virtual public hearings, copies of both the public hearing transcript and the slide deck are posted to the website in English and Spanish (and any additional applicable languages) at the time of the hearing. Requests for translation of a public hearing presentation into additional languages can be sent to [CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov).

Outreach materials and citizen comments will also be translated into the appropriate language(s). Translation into additional languages can be provided, upon request.

FloridaCommerce will publish the action plans, any subsequent amendments, outreach materials, and related guidance materials in English and Spanish and any additional languages appropriate and applicable to the geographic area served. For programs to which citizens may directly apply, FloridaCommerce will make all applications available in English and Spanish and any additional applicable languages. When a significant amount of LEP applicants are expected to apply, outreach materials will be made available in the applicable language(s) for the geographic area served. The languages selected are chosen based on the entire eligible area of the CDBG-DR funds and a natural break in the numbers of LEP individuals. Recognizing there may be a need for individuals to have access to the document in additional languages, OLTR will contract with an as-needed translation service to provide personalized translations of the action plans and other program documents, upon request.

FloridaCommerce has also posted an Interpretive and Translation Services Notice on [www.RebuildFlorida.gov](http://www.RebuildFlorida.gov) and [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR) informing individuals that free interpretation services are available upon request in at least 15 different languages. FloridaCommerce will ensure that program information is available in the appropriate languages for the geographic area served by the jurisdiction and will make additional appropriate interpretive and translational services available upon request.

Subrecipients will ensure that program information is available in the appropriate languages for the geographic area served by the jurisdiction. Subrecipients are encouraged to develop policies for accessibility that meet the requirements for LEP and accessibility outlined in the Consolidated Notice and are advised to use the following guidance in the development of such policies.

Subrecipients should make available all vital program documents in English, Spanish, and any additional languages appropriate and applicable to the geographic area served. Additionally, subrecipients should make additional appropriate interpretive and translational services available upon request. Where applicable, subrecipients should make all applications available in English and Spanish upon request.

When a significant amount of LEP applicants are expected to apply, outreach materials will be made available in the applicable language(s) for the geographic area served. The languages selected are chosen based on the entire eligible area of the CDBG-DR funds and a natural break in the numbers of LEP individuals. Public places utilized by subrecipients that work directly in programs available to private individuals will carry signage detailing the availability of specialized translation services.

Subrecipients will make additional appropriate interpretive and translational services available upon request.

## 4.2 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

In accordance with 24 CFR 91.115(a)(3) and (f), this OLTR CPP and other program documents, including but not limited to the CDBG-DR State of Florida Action Plans for Disaster Recovery (Hurricane Sally and Hurricane Ian), and subsequent amendments, will be provided in a form accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

FloridaCommerce strives to provide all information posted to its website in forms that are accessible by screen-readers and other assistive technology.

Auxiliary aids and service are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this and all other program documents may be reached by persons using TTY/TTD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.

FloridaCommerce has posted additional accessibility information on the Accessibility page of [www.RebuildFlorida.gov](http://www.RebuildFlorida.gov) at [FloridaJobs.org/RebuildFlorida/Accessibility](http://FloridaJobs.org/RebuildFlorida/Accessibility). This page links to the Language Access and Accessibility Plan in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole and contains information on the availability of TDD/TTY services for individuals who are in need of relay services, and the availability of additional translation services upon request.

FloridaCommerce welcomes comments on how to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Individuals who use assistive technology are encouraged to contact OLTR at [CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov) if the format of any material on the OLTR website interferes with their ability to access the information.

Upon request, FloridaCommerce will provide additional assistance to individuals with disabilities who require program documents in a form not already made accessible (i.e. braille documents, etc.) FloridaCommerce acknowledges that individuals with disabilities may have special needs and will make every effort to accommodate those needs as they arise.

Subrecipients must also comply with the requirements at 24 CFR 91.115(a)(3) and (f) and take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals with disabilities have meaningful access to access to activities, programs, and services. Subrecipients are encouraged to develop policies for accessibility.



## 4.2.1 Sign Language Interpretation Service

When communicating with hearing-impaired applicants, FloridaCommerce and its subrecipients will provide support. Where applicable, subrecipients should make reasonable efforts to ensure public facilities utilized for program operations provide applicants with designated technical equipment (e.g. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), laptop, USB camera, speakers) or an interpreter, to accommodate hearing-impaired applicants, as practical.

Sign language interpretation services can be provided at public hearings for individuals who require interpretation if advance notice of at least three days is provided. Individuals in need of such services should notify FloridaCommerce via email at [CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov), their UGLG, or applicable program administrator.

## 5.0 Public Webpage

FloridaCommerce will maintain a public website that provides information accounting for how all grant funds are used, managed, and administered, including links to all disaster recovery action plans, action plan amendments, program policies and procedures, performance reports, citizen participation requirements, and activity and program information described in the applicable action plan, and details of all contracts and ongoing procurement processes.

These items are made available through [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR). Specifically, for each disaster, FloridaCommerce will make the following items available: the Action Plan created using DRGR (including all amendments); each QPR (as created using the DRGR system); citizen participation plan; procurement policies and procedures; all executed contracts that will be paid with CDBG-DR funds as defined in 2 CFR 200.22 (including subrecipients' contracts); and a summary including the description and status of services or goods currently being procured by the grantee or the subrecipient (e.g., phase of the procurement, requirements for proposals, etc.). Contracts and procurement actions that do not exceed the micro-purchase threshold, as defined in 2 CFR 200.67, are not required to be posted to a grantee's website.

In addition, FloridaCommerce will maintain a comprehensive website regarding all disaster recovery activities assisted with these funds.

The website will be updated in a timely manner to reflect the most up-to date information about the use of funds and any changes in policies and procedures, as necessary. At a minimum, updates will be made monthly.

## 6.0 Performance Reporting

In accordance with HUD requirements, FloridaCommerce will submit a QPR through the HUD DRGR system no later than 30 days following the end of each calendar quarter. Within three days of submission to HUD, FloridaCommerce will post each QPR on [www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR). Program QPR's will be posted on a quarterly basis until all funds have been expended and all expenditures have been reported.

## 7.0 Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be provided to subrecipients by FloridaCommerce staff. Requests should be made in a timely manner and within the time parameters of the appropriate program design. FloridaCommerce may contract with a Technical Assistance Provider(s) should sufficient demand for technical assistance warrant.

## 8.0 Citizen Complaints and Inquiries

All complaints and inquiries that are submitted to FloridaCommerce will be addressed through OLTR's Constituent Management Services staff. Subrecipients are required to maintain records of all citizen inquiries and complaints and correspondence responding to inquiries and complaints. As applicable, if a subrecipient doesn't resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of an applicant, the applicant may contact FloridaCommerce to be addressed by OLTR's CMS staff. Subrecipients are highly advised to develop and implement guidelines and procedures similar to those listed below.

Complaints are any verbal or written statement of grievance—including phone calls, emails, faxes, or letters—that are received by FloridaCommerce, its subrecipients, and/or other program sources. Inquiries are requests for information or assistance. All complaints and inquiries received by FloridaCommerce or the subrecipient will be reviewed and addressed by the receiving entity (FloridaCommerce's CMS staff or the subrecipient) for:

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

Every complaint and inquiry will be included in a tracking system. The receiving entity (either FloridaCommerce's CMS staff or the subrecipient) will maintain electronic files that include:

- Name of the complainant and contact information;
- Date the complaint was received;
- Description of the complaint;
- Name of each person contacted in relation to the complaint;
- A summary of the result and the date of the response to complainant; and
- An explanation of the resolution of the file.

The receiving entity (FloridaCommerce's CMS staff or the subrecipient) will provide a written response to all complaints within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. Following the initial response, the receiving entity (FloridaCommerce's CMS staff or the subrecipient) will make every effort to provide a resolution to complaints within the 15-working day period. If a resolution cannot be reached within the 15-working day period, the complainant will receive a status update on the issue(s) and, if possible, a timeframe for when a resolution can be reached. FloridaCommerce's CMS staff (or the subrecipient, as applicable) will monitor response times to ensure compliance and will adjust timeframes for additional responses as needed.

Complaints and inquiries can be submitted in any of the following ways:

- Directly to FloridaCommerce:
  - Via FloridaCommerce's website by visiting the Rebuild Program website to complete an online complaint form at: <http://FloridaJobs.org/RebuildFlorida/Rebuild-Florida-Homeowner-Complaint-Form>
  - Via U.S. mail to:

Attention: Constituent Management Services

Florida Department of Commerce

Division of Community Development

107 East Madison Street

Caldwell Building, MSC 420

Tallahassee, Florida 32399

***Office of Long-Term Resiliency CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan***

---

- Via email to: [CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DR@Commerce.fl.gov).
- Contacting CMS staff directly. The CMS e-mail address and phone number are listed on the OLTR's website ([www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/CDBG-DR)).
- Directly to the applicable subrecipient, UGLG, or program administrator via a method identified in the subrecipient's policies and procedures.

## 9.0 Appeals

All applications, guidelines, and websites—FloridaCommerce and subrecipient—will include details on the right to file a complaint or appeal, and the process for filing a complaint or beginning an appeal.

### 9.1 Housing Repair and Replacement Appeals

The directly implemented Housing Repair and Replacement Program (HRRP) allows for applicants to request reconsideration or appeal of program determinations through program reconsideration and/or informal appeal, as follows.

#### 9.1.1 Reconsideration Request

In accordance with 24 CFR Part 91 Citizen Participation Plan and 24 CFR 570.486(a) (7), the HRRP has developed the reconsideration process. Through the reconsideration process, applicants have a mechanism for requesting further review on a decision made on their file. Program policies are not appealable.

##### 9.1.1.1 FloridaCommerce Request for Reconsideration

Throughout the process, decisions will be made on an application and/or project to be delivered. The decisions are made based on statutes, codes of federal regulation, local administrative code, and state and local guidelines as they are interpreted by the Program. The Program will follow this process for an applicant requesting program reconsideration of decisions made by the HRRP.

##### Grounds to Request Reconsideration

Applicants who have applied for funding for disaster recovery may only request reconsideration of the disposition of a Program decision on any of the following:

1. Benefit type
2. Duplication of Benefits (DOB) Gap
3. Scope of Work (SWE)
4. Completed Repair Estimates (CRE)

##### Steps to File a Reconsideration Request

A party requesting a FloridaCommerce reconsideration must file a written request for reconsideration with the HRRP within 30 days of the Award Acknowledgement Letter and before execution of a homeowner grant agreement, whichever occurs first. The written request must include specific information relating to the reconsideration of the HRRP decision. HRRP will acknowledge receipt of the request. HRRP will respond in writing to the request no later than 15-working days after the date of receipt of the request. The response may take one or more of the following actions:

5. Acknowledgment of receipt of the request for reconsideration and notification that the review of the applicant file may take longer than 30 working days;
6. Request for additional supporting documentation or information from the applicant;
7. Status of the investigation and estimated timeframe for decision
8. Final determination of the issue to:
  - A. Concur with the request and make the appropriate adjustments to the previous HRRP decision; or
  - B. Disagree with the request and provide the basis for rejecting the request for appeal to the party.

In order to request a reconsideration, please submit written notice to [CDBG-DR.Reconsiderations@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DR.Reconsiderations@Commerce.fl.gov) or submit by postal mail to the following address:

Attention: Office of Long-Term Resiliency, Reconsiderations

Florida Department of Commerce  
Division of Community Development  
107 East Madison Street,  
Caldwell Building, MSC 420  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

## 9.1.2 HRRP Informal Appeals

There are two cases in which an Informal Appeal can be filed by the applicant: (1) following a determination of ineligibility, or (2) after exhausting the Reconsiderations process.

1. In the case that an applicant is deemed ineligible, the applicant will be notified of their status in an Eligibility Determination Letter from the FloridaCommerce Appeals team. Should the applicant disagree with the determination, they may file an Informal Appeal resulting in a process to further review the HRRP decision.
2. An Informal Appeal may also be filed in the case that an eligible applicant has submitted a request for reconsideration and disagrees with the results. The applicant will be provided with a notice of their right to appeal, and instructions for the process of filing an Informal Appeal.

A party requesting a FloridaCommerce informal appeal must file a written request for informal appeal not later than 30 days after the date of the decision of reconsideration request or when notice has been provided.

The written request for an informal appeal can be sent via email, fax or mail:

[CDBG-DRAppeals@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DRAppeals@Commerce.fl.gov)

Attention: Office of Long-Term Resiliency, Appeals Team

Florida Department of Commerce  
Division of Community Development  
107 East Madison Street  
The Caldwell Building, MSC 420  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

The Hearing Officer will date stamp the written request for an informal appeal upon receipt.

1. The Hearing Officer will prepare and mail a Notice of Hearing to the applicant using delivery confirmation within 15 days of receiving the request for an informal appeal.
2. The Notice of Hearing will include the date and time of the hearing as well as the issue to be addressed during the hearing.
3. The hearing will be scheduled no fewer than 10 business days in advance of occurrence.
4. The applicant will have the option to forward additional documentation to the Hearing Officer prior to the hearing, if applicable.
5. Any additional documentation received by the Hearing Officer will be date stamped and must be received at least 24 hours prior to the hearing.
6. The hearing will be held telephonically on the date and time listed on the Notice of Hearing. The hearings will be recorded using the digital recording system (TBD) or a handheld recording device.
7. The hearing officer will dial the number for the applicant listed on the Notice to Appeal.
8. At least two attempts should be made to contact the applicant.

9. The hearing officer will validate the delivery confirmation as to when the applicant received the Notice of Hearing on the record.
10. During the hearing, the Hearing Officer will establish the record addressing any issues of ineligibility, review all additional documents with the applicant and allow for testimony of the applicant.
11. Following the conclusion of the hearing, a final written decision will be issued by the Hearing Officer based on the merits of the case, testimony of the applicant, additional documentation and program policy and procedure.
12. The final decision will be mailed using delivery confirmation to the applicant within 30 days following the hearing.
13. The Hearing Officer will update the applicant's record and eligibility status in SERA to approve or reject the applicant from moving forward in the process.

## 9.2 FloridaCommerce URA Appeals

Applicants may appeal any case in which he or she believes that FloridaCommerce has failed to properly consider his or her application for assistance. This includes, but is not limited to, the applicant's eligibility for, or the amount of, a payment required for relocation assistance. The applicant must appeal within 60 days of receiving a written determination from the program outlining the program's decision related to his or her eligibility for benefits or amount of benefits.

Households have the right to appeal the following agency determinations:

- Eligibility for URA assistance, including the requirement to relocate;
- Amount of relocation or other related expense payments;
- Timeframe to exercise rights and entitlements of URA, including relocation timeframes.

Households are encouraged to include any statement of fact or other material which they feel has a bearing on the appeal. Agency representatives may assist households in their appeal submission.

Appeals must be submitted within 60 days of the date the person receives notification of FloridaCommerce's decision regarding his or her claim and must be directed to FloridaCommerce in writing to the following postal address:

ATTN: URA APPEALS  
Florida Department of Commerce  
Division of Community Development  
107 East Madison Street  
The Caldwell Building, MSC 420  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

OLTR's Uniform Relocation Assistance Guide and Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance plan can be found [here](#).

Applicants who disagree with a displaced-person determination or the amount of relocation assistance received can file a written appeal with the subrecipient. If the appeal is not resolved with the subrecipient, the appealing individual may submit a written request to FloridaCommerce to review the determination. If the appeal is not resolved with the state, the appealing individual may submit a written request for HUD to review the determination. If full relief is not granted, the individual must be advised, by FloridaCommerce or the subrecipient, as appropriate, of his or her right to seek judicial review.

## 9.3 Requirements for Subrecipients' Appeals Processes

Throughout the process, decisions will be made on an application and/or project to be delivered. The decisions are made based on statutes, codes of federal regulation, local administrative code, and state and local guidelines as they are interpreted by the Program. This policy guides the process for an applicant or contractor requesting an appeal of decisions made by the program.

Applicants have a right to participate in the process. Subrecipients should include an appeals process to provide applicants with a mechanism for requesting further review on program decisions and to submit an appeal. At the time the applicant is notified of their eligibility in their award letter, the subrecipient will include information on the appeals process to provide the applicant the option to appeal should they believe that a mistake has been made regarding their file.

Applicants to subrecipient-administered CDBG-DR-funded programs should direct all appeals to the applicable UGLG or program administrator. If the subrecipient doesn't resolve an appeal to the satisfaction of the applicant, the applicant may contact FloridaCommerce to be addressed by OLTR's CMS staff.

Subrecipients are advised to develop an appeals process that is compliant with the appeals process, as outlined below.

Subrecipients must include in their appeals processes and policies and procedures a process by which applicants may submit an appeal in the following cases, at a minimum:

- Eligibility Determination;
- Scope of Work; or
- Construction Quality

A party requesting an appeal must file a written request with the subrecipient no later than 30 calendar days after the date the action to be reconsidered has occurred or when notice has been provided. The subrecipient must provide a U.S. Mail and an email address to handle only these types of requests. The subrecipient should develop policies describing what information the written request must include.

Subrecipients must respond to requests for appeals in a timely manner. Subrecipients will respond in writing to the request no later than 30 working days after the date of receipt of the request. Subrecipients must develop policies and procedures describing their appeal hearing process. Subrecipients should conduct appeals hearings pursuant to either sections 120.569 and 120.57(1), Florida Statutes, or sections 120.569 and 120.57(2), Florida Statutes. Pursuant to section 120.573, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 28-106, Part IV, Florida Administrative Code. Subrecipients will also be responsible for follow-up on construction quality complaints. Construction quality appeals will be verified by inspection and monitored by FloridaCommerce.

Subrecipients are required to maintain records of all appeals or complaints and records of all relevant correspondence. Information about the complainant's rights and how to file a complaint or appeal in regard to the quality of work should be printed on all subrecipient program applications and/or guidelines.

If an applicant is not satisfied with the UGLG or program administrator appeal decision, they may file an appeal directly to FloridaCommerce via email to [CDBG-DRAppeals@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DRAppeals@Commerce.fl.gov) or by postal mail to the following address:

Attention: Office of Long-Term Resiliency, Appeals Team  
Florida Department of Commerce  
Division of Community Development  
107 East Madison Street,  
Caldwell Building, MSC 420  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399



## 10.0 Fair Housing



**Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, makes discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin illegal in connection with the sale or rental of most housing and any vacant land offered for residential construction or use.**

FloridaCommerce and its subrecipients will develop policies and procedures for compliance with Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) requirements during the implementation of its programs. Such policies and procedures will involve the AFFH review that will include an assessment of any proposed project area's demography, socio-economic characteristics, environmental hazards or concerns, and other factors material to the AFFH determination. Applications should show that housing projects are likely to lessen area racial, ethnic, and low-income concentrations and/or promote affordable housing in low-poverty, non-minority areas in response to natural hazard-related impacts. The findings of this review will be used to inform the selection of projects for funding, in accordance with the Federal Register Notice requirements and the grantee's certification to AFFH. The state will remain highly agile throughout OLTR planning and implementation phases of each program to ensure the process and program design is consistent with HUD's direction to AFFH. All subrecipients will certify that they will affirmatively further fair housing in their subrecipient grant agreements.

FloridaCommerce is committed to affirmatively furthering fair housing through the established affirmative marketing policies summarized below. The goal is to ensure that eligible persons from all racial, ethnic, national origin, religious, familial status, the disabled, "special needs," gender groups, and populations least likely to apply for assistance are given the opportunity to rehabilitate their rental property that sustained damages due to a qualifying disaster and/or its aftereffects. Subrecipients will ensure compliance with the AFFH polices below.

1. In accordance with the affirmative marketing policies and procedures, subrecipients will inform program participants about available opportunities and supporting requirements via counselors, printed and electronic materials, publications, direct contact, workshops/seminars, and/or through the placement of flyers and posters in public facilities.
2. Subrecipients of funding through the HRRP should conduct marketing through widely available media outlets. Efforts should be taken to affirmatively market the subrecipient's housing program as follows:
  - A. Advertise with media outlets, which provides unique access for persons who are considered members of a protected class under the Fair Housing Act.
  - B. Reach out to public or non-profit organizations under the Fair Housing Act.
  - C. Conduct other form of outreach tailored to reaching the eligible population, including door to door outreach if necessary.
3. Applications and forms should be offered in English and Spanish, and Haitian Creole, where applicable. In addition, every effort should be made to assist LEP potential applicants in the application process.
4. Measures should be taken to make the program accessible to persons who are considered members of a protected class under the Fair Housing Act by holding informational meetings in buildings that are compliant with the ADA, providing sign language assistance when requested (with a three-day notice), and providing special assistance for those who are visually impaired when requested (also with a three-day notice).
5. All marketing measures used, including copies of all advertisements and announcements, should be documented and retained and made available to the public upon request.

6. Subrecipients of the Subrecipient HRRP will use the Fair Housing logo in program advertising, post Fair Housing posters and related information, and, in general, inform the public of its rights under Fair Housing regulations.

## 10.1 Suggested Activities for Landlords, Managers, Agents, and the General Public

FloridaCommerce and its subrecipients are committed to affirmatively furthering fair housing through the following suggested information-based activities for landlords, managers, agents, and the general public:

1. Information Outreach: Requesting landlords to post or provide Fair Housing Notices.
2. Information for the General Public: Topics include overview of the Fair Housing laws, (classes, illegal acts, and penalties) rights and responsibilities in buying and selling homes, tenant selection criteria, family issues (e.g., occupancy standards, safety), and renting to the disabled, etc. See 24 CFR.50, 100.65, 100.80.
3. Information for Rental Managers, Agents, and Landlords: Topics include overview of the Fair Housing laws, (classes, illegal acts, and penalties) tenant selection criteria, family issues (e.g., occupancy standards, safety), renting to the disabled, record keeping, advertising, and evictions.

## 10.2 Fair Housing Complaints

FloridaCommerce is committed to affirmatively furthering fair housing by ensuring that eligible persons from protected classes under federal fair housing and nondiscrimination laws, and persons from historically distressed and underserved communities, are provided with the opportunity to apply for assistance to rehabilitate their property that sustained damage due to any of the qualifying disasters and its aftereffects.

The Florida Disaster Recovery Program operates in accordance with The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988. Anyone who feels that he or she has been discriminated against may file a complaint of housing discrimination: 1-800-669-9777 (Toll Free) or [www.HUD.gov/fairhousing](http://www.HUD.gov/fairhousing).

Persons alleging a violation of fair housing laws will be referred to FloridaCommerce's local contact and process to file a complaint. FloridaCommerce will retain a log and record all fair housing inquiries, allegations, complaints, and referrals. In addition, FloridaCommerce will report suspected non-compliance to HUD. The contact for Fair Housing Complaints is [FairHousing@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:FairHousing@Commerce.fl.gov).

## 11.0 Anti-Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Rebuild Florida constituents, employees and contractors may report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse by contacting Constituent Management Services staff, submitting information via the Report Fraud, Waste or Abuse online form (<http://FloridaJobs.org/RebuildFlorida/Report>; (all contact information fields are optional to allow for anonymity) or by sending an e-mail to [CDBG-DR\\_antifraudwasteabuse@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:CDBG-DR_antifraudwasteabuse@Commerce.fl.gov).

All suspected cases of fraud will be taken seriously, and complaints will be reported to OLTR's Compliance and Reporting Manager and FloridaCommerce's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at [OIG@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:OIG@Commerce.fl.gov). If FloridaCommerce's OIG determines that it is appropriate, it will coordinate its investigation with agencies such as the Florida Office of the Inspector General, the Florida Office of the Attorney General, or the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

All substantiated cases of fraud, waste, or abuse of government funds will be forwarded to HUD, OIG Fraud Hotline (phone: 1-800-347-3735 or email: [hotline@HUDOIG.gov](mailto:hotline@HUDOIG.gov)) and FloridaCommerce's HUD Community Planning and Development (CPD) Representative. OLTR must provide a timely response within 15 working days of the receipt of a complaint, as stated in the Consolidated Notice.

**OLTR's comprehensive Anti-Fraud Waste and Abuse Policy can be found [here](#).**

## 12.0 Public Record Requests

Pursuant to Article 1, Section 24, Florida Constitution and Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, FloridaCommerce is subject to the Florida Public Records Law. Accordingly, unless an exemption exists, all records produced or received pursuant to law or in connection with the official business of FloridaCommerce can be requested and provided for inspection. All Public Records Requests will be processed in accordance with FloridaCommerce Administrative Policy 1.06, Processing Public Records Requests.

A Public Records Request may be verbal or take any form (e.g., email, written correspondence, in-person). The Public Records Act does not require that requests be in writing, comply with a certain form, or have any specific content. A Public Records Request may come from a member of the media, the general public, an employee, or any other individual. FloridaCommerce cannot mandate receipt of the name of the requestor or purpose of the request in order to fulfill the Public Records Request.

A Public Record is defined as all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance, or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency.

Public Records include all things made or received in connection with FloridaCommerce's business. All such materials, electronic and on paper, regardless of whether they are in draft or final form, are open to public inspection unless exempt or confidential.

A revision to Chapter 119 went into effect on July 1, 2020, per Senate Bill 966 from the 2020 Florida State Legislature regular session that directly affects FloridaCommerce, and its disaster recovery programs.

As a general matter, all Program related information is subject to Florida's Public Records Laws, which may be viewed by anyone upon request. There are limited exemptions to Florida's Public Records Laws. The following list of exemptions are applicable to the Rebuild Florida Program:

- Social security numbers; and/or
- Bank account numbers; and/or
- Documentation related to ongoing litigation and legal negotiations; and/or
- Limited proprietary information; and/or
- Certain persons in qualifying categories, e.g., active or former sworn or civilian law enforcement personnel; current or former firefighters certified in compliance with s. 633.408; current or former justices of the Supreme Court, district court of appeal judges, circuit court judges, and county court judges; current or former state attorneys, assistant state attorneys, statewide prosecutors, or assistant statewide prosecutors.

Senate Bill 966 (2020 Florida State Legislature regular session) retained the above exemptions, and expanded exemptions to include the following "Other Personal Information" relative to information held by FloridaCommerce, et al:

- Medical history records and information related to health; and/or
- Information related to property insurance; and/or
- Property photographs.

The above items, personal identifying information (information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual), are considered confidential and exempt from s. 119.07(1), Florida Statutes, and s. 24(a), Article I of the State Constitution.

As an agent of FloridaCommerce, all subcontractors and employees are subject to Florida Public Record laws. All project documents and communications, even in draft form, are considered public records including, but not limited to, policies, training material, letters, emails, memos, and texts. Any document or communication related to the project, that are not exempt, is a public record.

The Public Record Coordinator is the person appointed by FloridaCommerce charged with the responsibility of maintaining the Office of Public Records, including processing and tracking Public Record Requests. The Public Records Coordinator is responsible for overseeing FloridaCommerce's compliance with public record/open government requirements and maintains a complete record of all FloridaCommerce's Public Record Requests and corresponding disclosures. The Public Records Coordinator also serves as the primary liaison between FloridaCommerce and the Office of Open Government in the Executive Office of the Governor.

The OLTR's CMS Lead will act as a Public Record Division Liaison and is the primary contact for all public record requests regarding the OLTR Rebuild Florida Program. OLTR's Public Record Division Liaison will coordinate with the respective managers of each program to determine (1) what is and what is not a responsive record; and (2) where to find all responsive records.

FloridaCommerce and OLTR's policy for handling Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is outlined in the OLTR Policy Manual available on the applicable storm's webpage.

## 12.1 Public Records Request Procedure

### 12.1.1 Intake and Processing

1. When a FloridaCommerce employee receives a Public Records Request:
  - A. All employees who receive a Public Records Request will immediately forward the request to the Public Records Coordinator ([PRRequest@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:PRRequest@Commerce.fl.gov)) for acknowledgement and tracking.
  - B. Employees should then immediately notify their supervisor and Division Liaison regarding the request.
  - C. Any employee receiving a Public Records Request will immediately coordinate with a supervisor and the Division's Public Records Liaison regarding questions pertaining to the request such as: (i) what is and what is not a responsive record; and (ii) where to find all responsive records.
  - D. Employees will diligently and expediently work with their Division Liaison to gather all responsive records to provide to the Public Records Coordinator. Collaboration with the Public Records Coordinator is expected throughout the process.
  - E. The Public Records Coordinator will remain, at all times, the point of contact between the requestor and FloridaCommerce.
2. When a Division Liaison receives a Public Records Request:
  - A. Division Liaisons will immediately forward the request to the Public Records Coordinator ([PRRequest@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:PRRequest@Commerce.fl.gov)) for acknowledgement and tracking.
  - B. Division Liaisons will then work with staff in their Division to expeditiously gather all responsive records to provide to the Public Records Coordinator.
  - C. The Public Records Coordinator will remain, at all times, the point of contact between the requestor and FloridaCommerce.
3. When the Public Records Coordinator receives a Public Records Request:
  - A. The Public Records Coordinator will communicate with the requestor to acknowledge receipt of the public record request by email, letter, or facsimile, as appropriate.
  - B. The Public Records Coordinator will then work with Division Liaisons to gather all responsive records to complete the request.

- C. If the request is from a member of the media, the Public Records Coordinator will immediately forward the request to the Office of Communications and External Affairs ([media@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:media@Commerce.fl.gov)). The Office of Communications and External Affairs will acknowledge all media Public Records Requests. The Public Records Coordinator will be informed of all responses to media that include public records.

#### **12.1.1.1 Estimates**

1. The Public Records Coordinator will communicate in writing with the requestor to provide the actual cost and an estimate of the special service charge, if applicable.
2. Payment of the estimated costs is required prior to processing the records for production.

#### **12.1.1.2 Review and Redaction**

1. Once the requested materials have been gathered by the Division, the Division will redact confidential and exempt information (as outlined in 12.0 Public Record Requests) before releasing the records to the Public Records Coordinator for transmittal.
2. The Division will specify and provide all citations for any redactions.
3. The Liaison and/or Division employee will consult with OGC as necessary regarding redactions.
4. Each Division is responsible for redacting records with redaction tape or electronically and, if necessary, must be prepared to assume the cost of paper copies used in the redaction process. No redactions will be done with a marker.

#### **12.1.2 Production of Records to Requestor**

5. Responses to Public Records Requests will be made within a reasonable time taking into account the extent and nature of the request.
6. Copies of the request, acknowledgment, response, invoice, records produced, or a record of what was produced, any related correspondences, and payments will be maintained by the Public Records Coordinator.
7. When the requestor requests in-person inspection of the records, and all necessary fees have been paid, the Public Records Coordinator and the Division Liaison, if necessary, must supervise the inspection of records to ensure confidential information is protected.

#### **12.1.3 Public Record Requests for Email Correspondences**

1. The Public Records Coordinator will review the request and consult with the requestor and Liaison as necessary, to determine possible search terms and time frames to obtain the information requested.
2. The Public Records Coordinator will provide the request for emails to IT with search terms and time frames.
3. Once emails have been retrieved by IT, an estimate will be transmitted by the Public Records Coordinator, if applicable, including the cost of retrieval and review of the emails for exempt or confidential information.
4. Upon retrieval and payment of necessary costs by requestor, the Public Records Coordinator will provide the emails to the Division Liaison for review and redaction (if required), and then provide all responsive documents to the requestor.

## **13.0 Additional Outreach**

FloridaCommerce and its subrecipients will continue to conduct outreach with communities throughout the implementation of CDBG-DR program activities to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the opportunities that exist and can provide feedback along the way. Subrecipients are encouraged to develop and maintain an official outreach plan to keep the general public apprised of outreach efforts.

The Rebuild Florida Outreach and Communications Plans for disasters governed by the Consolidated Notice (storms 2020 and later) are included in Appendix 1: Disaster-Specific Outreach and Communications Plans for Storms Governed by the Consolidated Notice

# Appendix 1: Disaster-Specific Outreach and Communications Plans for Storms Governed by the Consolidated Notice

## A1: Hurricane Sally (2020) Outreach and Communications Plan

### Overview

#### Key Messages

- Hurricane Sally made landfall on the Gulf Coast on September 16, 2020, bringing heavy rainfall and flooding to a large portion of the Florida Panhandle.
- Hurricane Sally’s winds, storm surge, and excessive rainfall caused extensive damage across Northwest Florida. Thousands of structures were damaged in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties by strong wind and storm surge, and approximately 50 structures were destroyed. Many homes suffered roof and siding damage, and reports indicate that at least 240,000 customers lost power due to widespread downed trees and power lines.
- A study from the University of Florida estimates that Hurricane Sally caused \$55–100 million (USD) in agricultural losses in the western part of the region alone.
- On September 23, 2020, Governor DeSantis announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had issued a major disaster declaration for Hurricane Sally.
  - As a result, FEMA approved individual assistance (IA) for families impacted by Hurricane Sally, such as crisis counseling and disaster legal services.
- Shortly following Hurricane Sally, Governor DeSantis expressed his administration’s continued commitment to hurricane recovery, stating that “The people of Northwest Florida are resilient, and these individual assistance programs will go a long way to help their rebuilding process.”
- In the months following Hurricane Sally, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Commerce said that “Hurricane Sally came at a time when many Floridians [were] already facing significant challenges due to COVID-19.” He then expressed resolve to secure resources for Floridians impacted by Hurricane Sally to help the area recover as soon as possible.
- As of March 2022, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had announced a total allocation of more than \$187 million to aid in recovery efforts following Hurricane Sally.
  - Areas identified as Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) include Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay counties, making them eligible for Hurricane Sally Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding.
- The Rebuild Florida programs outlined in the Hurricane Sally Action Plan for Disaster Recovery address housing, infrastructure, and economic revitalization needs. The Action Plan received HUD approval on August 5, 2022.

### Methods for Outreach

#### Outreach Materials

The following materials are recommended to support Rebuild Florida’s Hurricane Sally communications and outreach efforts:

- Fact Sheet
- Press Releases



- Talking Points for Leadership and Events
- Key Messages to Third Party Advocates

## Targeted Media Outlets

Targeted media outlets could include, but are not limited to:

- ABC-3, WEAR-TV
- Pensacola News Journal (PNJ)
- (CBS) WKRG News 5
- (ABC) WMBB News 13
- (NBC) WJHG News 7
- FOX-10 News
- Panama City News Herald
- WPNN, 103.7 FM Radio (790 AM)
- WFLA Panama City, 96.3 & 102.5 FM Radio

The following are trusted sources of information that could be included as they are valuable resources for rural areas:

- Santa Rosa's Press Gazette
- The Crestview News Bulletin
- The Destin Log
- The DeFuniak Herald
- Northwest Florida Daily News
- Bay County News
- WNRP-AM, 92.3 FM News Radio (1620 AM)
- WFTW, 107.5 FM News Talk Radio (1260 AM)

## Spokespersons

The allocation of the CDBG-DR funds and Governor Ron DeSantis' subsequent announcement of the launch of the Rebuild Florida Hurricane Sally programs will positively affect communities impacted by Hurricane Sally. The recovery and rehabilitation of these communities are a priority for the Governor and his administration.

- Governor Ron DeSantis  
State of Florida
- First Lady Casey DeSantis  
State of Florida
- Secretary J. Alex Kelly  
Florida Department of Commerce
- Rose Hebert  
Communications Director, Florida Department of Commerce

## Execution of Outreach

### Implementation

The three phases that make up the implementation of the communications strategy are as follows:

### **Phase 1: Build Up**

Prior to the launch, FloridaCommerce promoted the Hurricane Sally CDBG-DR programs by creating designated CDBG-DR social media posts on X (formally known as Twitter) and Facebook leading up to the opening of the program application cycle. These posts communicate what the programs are, project and applicant eligibility, the amount of funding available, and estimated timelines for project-related details. Communicating program information clearly and early in the process helps ensure that communities in need are aware of funding opportunities. Misinformation or unanswered questions surrounding the program's launch can generate confusion and distrust.

### **Phase 2: Launch**

The launch of the application cycle was preceded by a press release from Governor Ron DeSantis, followed by FloridaCommerce's Secretary the day before or the day of the launch. Following these press releases, FloridaCommerce created and post social media promoting the application cycle and encouraging eligible constituents and subrecipients to apply. Disaster Recovery related events attended or led by Governor DeSantis, the Secretary, or any of the previously mentioned advocates, may be promoted by FloridaCommerce on social media, providing direct quotes when appropriate, and creating or sharing press releases highlighting the event(s).

### **Phase 3: Highlight Success**

In the final phase of the communications effort, FloridaCommerce will celebrate milestones reached, such as any ground-breaking ceremonies; projects completed; and, if applicable, additional funds granted. FloridaCommerce will work to collect success stories and photographs, when available, to feature communities that have been positively impacted by the program.

## **Hurricane Sally Community Stakeholder Survey**

The unmet need assessment summarizes Hurricane Sally impacts and the remaining recovery need for housing, infrastructure, and economic development by compiling, analyzing, and interpreting more than 20 state and federal government data sources. FloridaCommerce developed a survey to capture feedback from communities within the HUD and State identified MID areas and to allow for additional input from communities. In addition, phone interviews were conducted with stakeholders to provide them with information on the Hurricane Sally Action Plan, invite them to complete the community stakeholder survey, and to request feedback regarding their lingering unmet needs follow Hurricane Sally's impact.

Furthermore, survey respondents were asked to rank from most important to least important the various program ideas that were listed in the stakeholder survey. They were also given an opportunity to rank additional mitigation activities if further, limited funding would become available. The survey was launched on March 16, 2022, and respondents were requested to provide initial feedback by March 23, 2022; the survey remained open through the initial development phase of the Plan. The community stakeholder survey results from the eleven respondents are displayed in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3.

### Barriers to implementing Hazard Mitigation Projects

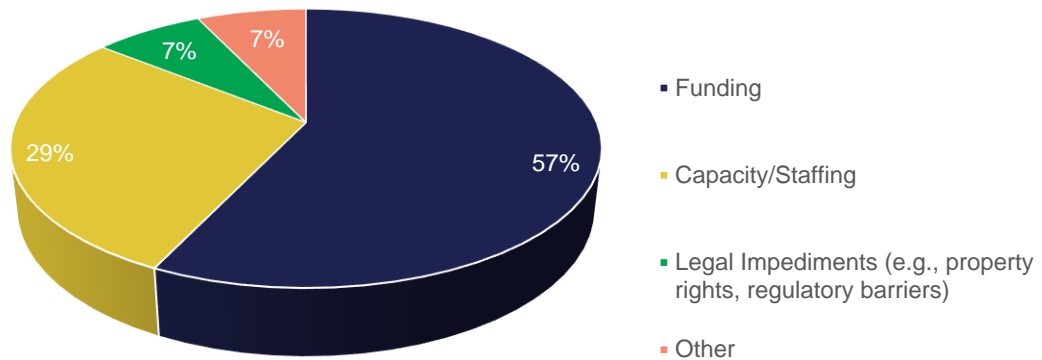


Figure 1: Barriers to Implementing Hazard Mitigation Projects

### General Activities Types

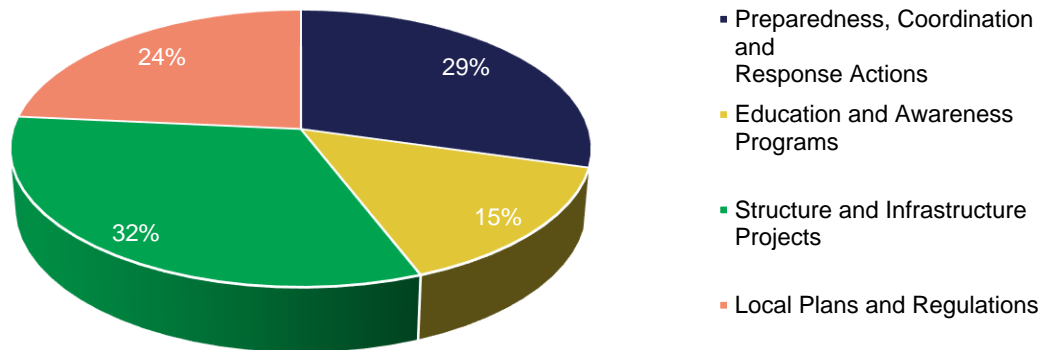


Figure 2: General Activity Types

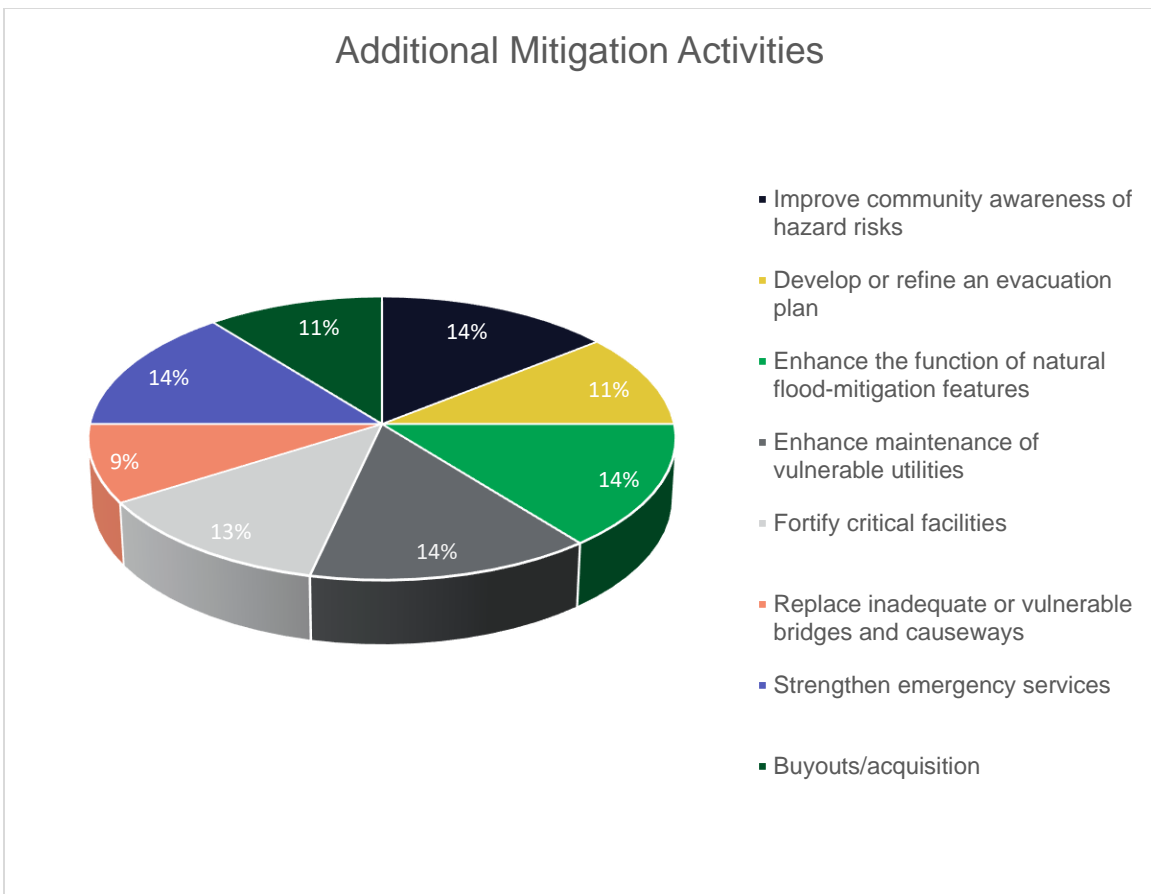


Figure 3: Additional Mitigation Activities

## A2: Hurricane Ian (2022) Outreach and Communications

### Overview

#### Key Messages

- Governor DeSantis declared a state of emergency for the entire State of Florida for Hurricane Ian on September 24, 2022. In the days leading up to Hurricane Ian, Rebuild Florida mobilized construction teams to secure sites of in-progress construction projects.
- Hurricane Ian made landfall in southwest Florida on September 28, 2022. Its path of destruction resulted in 24 counties receiving a FEMA IA and PA designation due to the devastating effects. Hurricane Ian was a Category 5 hurricane and the strongest to impact the region since Hurricane Charley in 2004, which made landfall at the same location.
- Hurricane Ian's winds, storm surge, and excessive rainfall caused extensive damage across the State of Florida. Thousands of structures were damaged by strong wind and storm surge with reports indicating that more than 2.7 million customers lost power due to widespread downed trees and power lines.
- Shortly after landfall, FloridaCommerce began to deploy team members to the Hurricane Ian impacted areas to provide assistance and support towards recovery efforts. From October 3, 2022, through November 9, 2022, a total of 90 FloridaCommerce team members deployed to southwest Florida.
- In June of 2023 FloridaCommerce launched a stakeholder survey to obtain an understanding of the unmet needs in the Hurricane Ian-impacted communities. The survey was directed to community leaders and closed in August of 2023.
- In August of 2023, FloridaCommerce launched the Hurricane Ian Housing Repair and Replacement Program (HRRP) Assessment for homeowners impacted by the storm. Completing the assessment provided early access to apply for housing assistance related to Hurricane Ian. Based on responses, assessment participants may be invited to apply to the Hurricane Ian HRRP.

### Methods for Outreach

FloridaCommerce procured a vendor to develop a Communications and Outreach Plan and complete comprehensive outreach within the Hurricane Ian impacted areas to ensure that individuals impacted by the disaster have ample opportunity to participate in the programs. Prior to the procurement of this vendor, FloridaCommerce utilized multiple methods of outreach and advertisement to connect with the impacted communities.

FloridaCommerce's initial outreach for the Hurricane Ian HRRP assessment was conducted via emails sent to citizens and stakeholders who signed up for the Rebuild Florida email list through the Rebuild Florida webpage and to a list of various county contacts compiled by FloridaCommerce. FloridaCommerce's selected outreach vendor will complete additional and more extensive outreach.

Additional outreach methods may include:

- Collaborating with Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) and Long-Term Recovery Groups for coordinated and efficient recovery efforts.
- The use of digital, print, and traditional media channels to distribute information for maximum outreach and coverage.
- The development of fact sheets, flyers, and banners.
- Organizing and hosting in-person, telephonic and virtual informational sessions to enhance awareness and promote interactive engagement of eligible households with the Rebuild Florida Program.

- Engagement with nonprofit organizations, non-governmental organizations, community action agencies, housing advocacy groups, local governments, social service organizations, and disaster-related community support groups.

## Targeted Media Outlets

Targeted [media outlets](#) may include, but may not be limited to:

- Key West Citizen News
- La Gaceta
- Palatka Daily News
- Sanford Herald
- South Central Florida Life
- Tampa Bay Times

## Spokespersons

The support and promotion of Hurricane Ian long-term resiliency efforts will positively affect communities impacted by the storm. The recovery and rehabilitation of these communities are a priority for the Governor and his administration.

- **Governor Ron DeSantis**  
State of Florida
- **First Lady Casey DeSantis**  
State of Florida
- **Secretary J. Alex Kelly**  
Florida Department of Commerce
- **Communications Director Rose Hebert**  
Florida Department of Commerce

## Third-Party Advocates

The program's credibility among Hurricane Ian-impacted Floridians is critical to its success. Therefore, the program is encouraged to invite community leaders, faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and business partners throughout the region to serve as third-party advocates.

The proposed community leader advocates were selected as they hold trusted and respected positions within the communities they serve. Their roles as third-party advocates could increase credibility of the program.

Recommended community leaders in Brevard, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Flagler, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, and Volusia counties include:

- County Commissioners
- County Communications & Public Services Directors
- County Managers
- Director of the [Florida Department of Elder Affairs](#)
- Director of the [Florida Division of Emergency Management](#)
- [Florida Housing Finance Corporation](#) (FHFC)
- [Florida Public Housing Authorities](#)
- Housing and Human Services Directors
- Planning and Development Directors

- Public Information Officers
- [Unite Florida](#)

## Virtual Workshops and Info Sessions

Online sessions have been proven to provide consistent program messaging, increase accessibility, offer convenience for greater participation, increase interactivity, and is a cost-effective strategy to reach a broader audience. FloridaCommerce may organize and host webinars and virtual information sessions, as needed to serve as an effective and efficient way to educate community members about the available programs.

## Execution of Outreach

### Implementation

The four phases that make up the implementation of FloridaCommerce's communications strategy are as follows:

#### Phase 1: Outreach Development

Prior to release of the Federal Register Notice, FloridaCommerce supported Hurricane Ian CDBG-DR long-term resiliency efforts by preparing outreach materials and plans, including, but not limited to:

- Citizen Participation Plan
- Community Workshop and Public Hearing materials
- Press Release language
- Social Media content

Other activities included reaching out to community partners and local organizations, gathering a comprehensive list of outreach and media outlets, and creating a link for citizens and local governments to sign up for Hurricane Ian updates. Developing our outreach and communications materials ahead of time helped to ensure a quick deployment once the Federal Register Notice was published.

#### Phase 2: Build Up

Once a formal announcement of allocated funds had been made via the publication of the Federal Register Notice from HUD ([Federal Register Vol. 88, No. 96](#)), FloridaCommerce promoted Hurricane Ian CDBG-DR long-term resiliency efforts by deploying email communications to community leaders and citizens. Community Workshops were advertised to interested parties and citizens via email and/or social media. Public Hearings were held in Seminole and Hillsborough counties.

FloridaCommerce Hurricane Ian CDBG-DR long-term resiliency efforts were conducted following the release of the Federal Register Notice by preparing outreach materials including, but not limited to:

- Newspaper Advertisements announcing Public Hearings
- Stakeholder Survey
- Housing Repair and Replacement Assessment

Guidelines and communication packets for each proposed program will be developed and approved internally. FloridaCommerce will develop and deploy targeted online ads on Facebook and Google to share engaging content, program information and directions on how to apply. Communicating program information clearly and early in the process can help ensure that communities in need are aware of funding opportunities. Misinformation or unanswered questions surrounding the program's launch can generate confusion and distrust.

#### Phase 3: Launch

The launch of the application cycles is expected to be preceded by a Press Release from Governor Ron DeSantis, followed with a Press Release by FloridaCommerce Secretary J. Alex Kelly the day before or

the day of the launch and press conference or official announcement event. Programmatic communication materials will be posted and disseminated the day of the program launch which will provide information such as the application cycle, criteria for applying, key deadlines, and eligibility requirements. Following the Press Releases, FloridaCommerce intends to post social media content promoting the application cycle and encouraging eligible constituents and subrecipients to apply. Concurrently, emails will be sent to those registered for the Hurricane Ian mailing list to notify them of opening of the application cycle(s). Long-term resiliency related events attended or led by Governor DeSantis and/or FloridaCommerce Secretary J. Alex Kelly, will be promoted by FloridaCommerce on social media, providing direct quotes when appropriate, and sharing Press Releases highlighting the event(s). Additionally, a series of events the week of the launch with local officials and community members will be hosted to drive awareness on the program, while highlighting the success of the state's resiliency and recovery efforts.

#### **Phase 4: Highlight Success**

In the final phase of the communications effort, FloridaCommerce will celebrate milestones reached, such as any ground-breaking ceremonies, projects completed, and, if applicable, additional funds granted. FloridaCommerce will work to collect success stories and photographs, when available, to feature communities and homeowners that have been positively impacted by the agency. Press releases will be provided monthly for consideration and social media content (on average two a week) will be drafted and circulated weekly for approval.

#### **Outreach for Direct Implementation Programs**

Outreach activities for the Rebuild Florida Housing Repair and Replacement Program (HRRP) will begin March 1, 2024, and will continue until May 31, 2024. If additional outreach efforts are needed, these may be conducted after May 31<sup>st</sup> as approved by FloridaCommerce. The Outreach Team will conduct five (5) specific outreach events in each of the following HUD MID counties: Brevard, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Osceola, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam and Seminole. Additionally, the Outreach Team will complete three (3) specific outreach events in the following HUD and State designated MID counties: Flagler, Glades, Hendry, Lake, Monroe, Okeechobee, and St. Johns.

These outreach efforts will target events on dates and locations that will provide the most community interaction, with specific emphasis on events conducted on evenings and weekends to allow for the greatest amount of participation by low- and moderate-income families that may work during normal business hours.

To help ensure the greatest impact of outreach activities, the team will perform an outreach needs assessment based on program applicant data for coordination of partner Community-Based Organizations (CBO) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) within eligible areas for a final push of eligible applicants.

#### **Hurricane Ian Stakeholder Survey**

The unmet needs assessment summarizes Hurricane Ian impacts and the remaining recovery needs for housing, infrastructure, and economic development by compiling, analyzing, and interpreting more than 20 state and federal government data sources. In addition, FloridaCommerce developed a stakeholder survey to capture feedback from communities within the HUD and state-identified MID areas and to allow for additional input from communities.

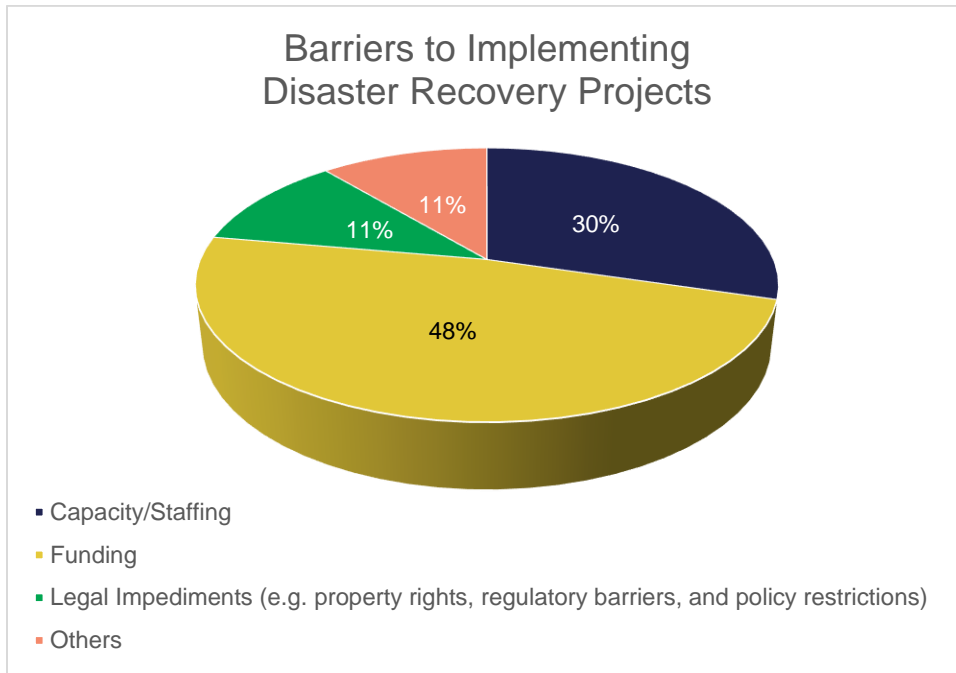
Stakeholders were provided several methods to complete the survey including online or completing it by phone with a FloridaCommerce Constituent Management Services (CMS) team member who provided them with information on the Hurricane Ian Action Plan and requested feedback regarding their lingering unmet needs following the impacts of Hurricane Ian.

Survey respondents were asked to identify barriers to implementing disaster recovery projects that were listed in the stakeholder survey. In addition, respondents were also given the opportunity to rank

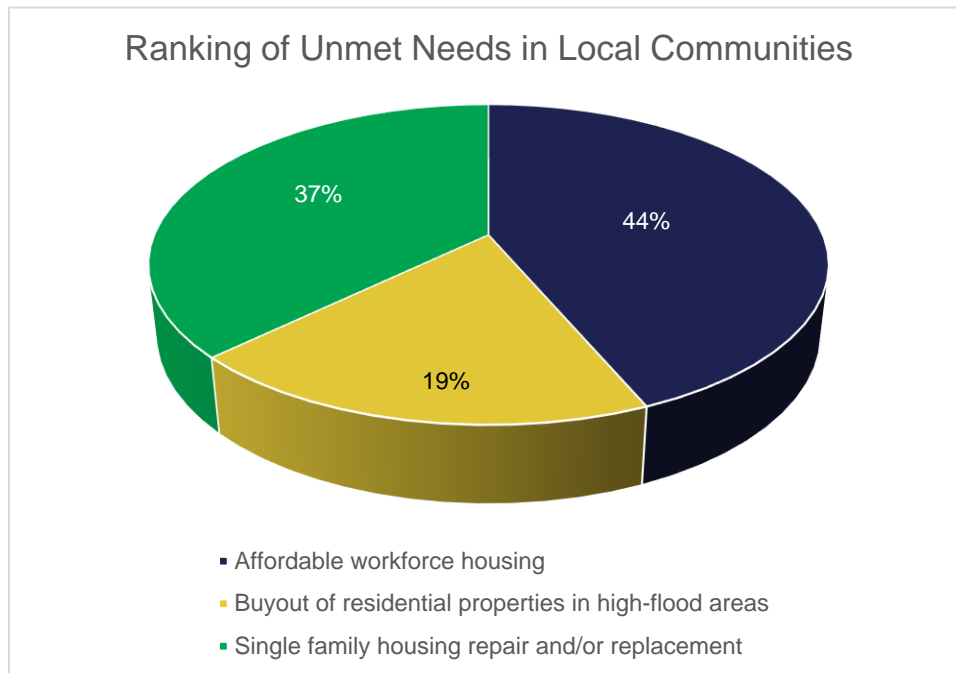


remaining unmet needs in their local communities from most important to least important, as well as additional activities that have been identified as needed but not implemented.

The survey was launched on June 9, 2023, and respondents were requested to provide feedback. The survey remained open during the 30-day public comment period to allow stakeholders ample time to participate in the development of the Action Plan. The community stakeholder survey results from the seventeen respondents are displayed in Figure 4: Barriers to Implementing Disaster Recovery Projects, Figure 5: Ranking of Unmet Needs in Local Communities, Figure 6: Activities identified as most needed but not implemented.



*Figure 4: Barriers to Implementing Disaster Recovery Projects*



*Figure 5: Ranking of Unmet Needs in Local Communities*

Activities identified as most needed but not yet implemented

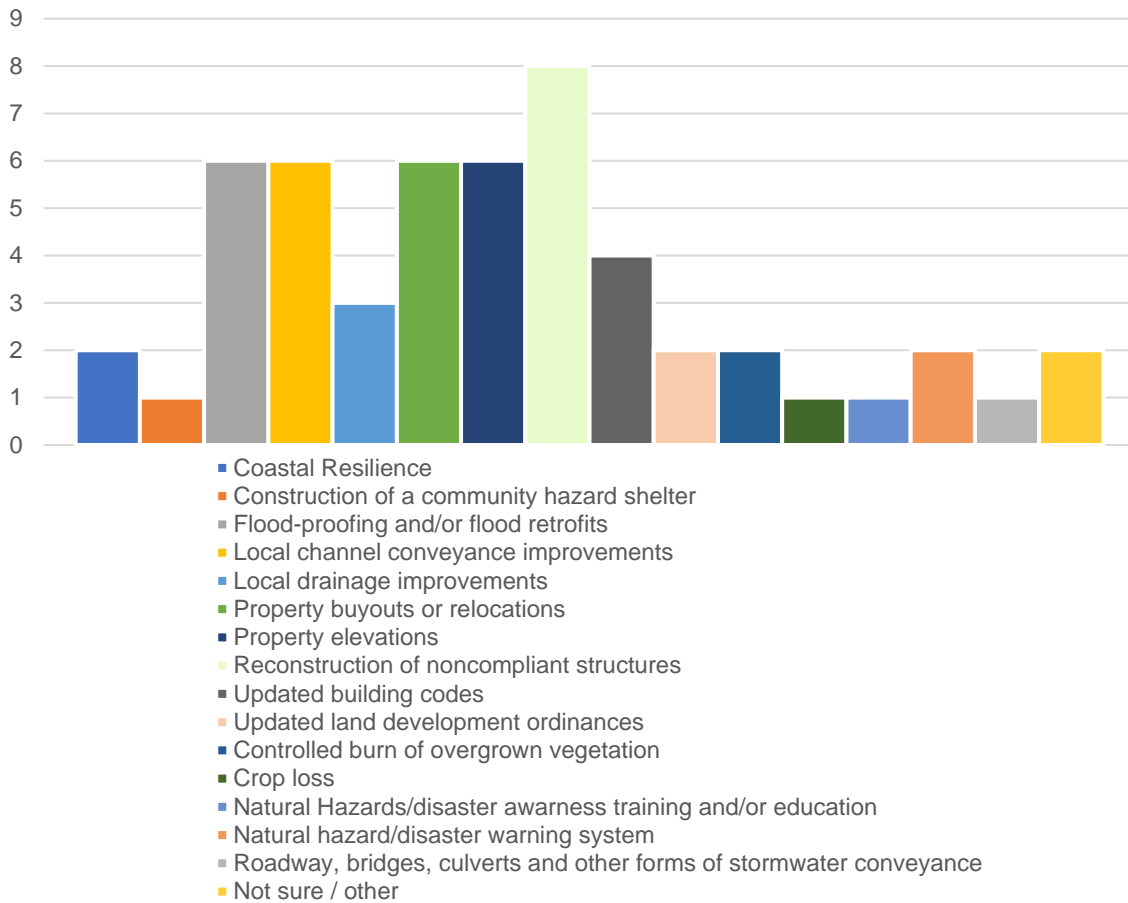


Figure 6: Activities identified as most needed but not implemented

The results of the survey highlighted the overall sentiment by stakeholders that the biggest impediment to implementing disaster recovery projects is the lack of funding needed to realize these projects (48 percent). Survey respondents also identified capacity and/or staffing issues (30 percent) and legal impediments (11 percent) as ongoing hinderances to the implementation of disaster recovery projects needed in these communities. As displayed in the preceding figure, stakeholders expressed through the stakeholder survey that the remaining unmet needs in their local communities were lack of affordable workforce housing (44 percent), the need for single family repair and replacement (37 percent), and buyouts of residential properties in high flood risk areas (19 percent).

In addition, the stakeholder survey asked respondents to highlight which activities had been identified as most needed but not yet implemented in their respective community. Stakeholders who completed the survey significantly identified reconstruction of noncompliant structures as the most needed. In addition, property elevations, property buyouts or relocations, flood-proofing and/or flood retrofits, and local channel conveyance improvements were also identified as activities most needed but not yet implemented, as shown in Figure 6: Activities identified as most needed but not implemented.

**Hurricane Ian Press Releases**

Throughout the outreach phase of Hurricane Ian Action Plan development, FloridaCommerce developed and published numerous press releases to keep impacted communities and individuals informed of the opportunities available to them and to highlight successes through the outreach process.

Hurricane Ian Press releases included the following:

**Office of Long-Term Resiliency CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan**

May 5, 2023	<a href="#"><u>The Florida Department of Commerce Visits Communities Impacted by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole</u></a>
June 2, 2023	<a href="#"><u>The Florida Department of Commerce Visits Fifteen Additional Communities Impacted by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole</u></a>
June 23, 2023	<a href="#"><u>Florida Department of Commerce Meets with Monroe County on Long-Term Recovery Efforts and Hosts Hurricane Evacuation Modeling Workshops in the Florida Keys</u></a>
July 26, 2023	<a href="#"><u>FloridaCommerce Hosts 14 Citizen and Stakeholder Workshops on Disaster Recovery Funds for Hurricane Ian-Impacted Communities</u></a>
July 27, 2023	<a href="#"><u>FloridaCommerce to Host Two Public Hearings for Hurricane Ian-Impacted Communities</u></a>

An example press release can be seen on the following page.

## In Case You Missed It: FloridaCommerce to Host Two Public Hearings for Hurricane Ian-Impacted Communities

Jul 27, 2023

*Public Comment from Citizens and Stakeholders on Florida's Draft State Action Plan for Hurricane Ian Recovery*

**Tallahassee, Fla. –** Today, FloridaCommerce announced it will host two public hearings for Hurricane-Ian impacted communities in Seminole and Hillsborough counties. These hearings seek public comment from citizens and stakeholders on Florida's Draft State Action Plan for Hurricane Ian recovery funding. This funding was federally allocated to Florida for disaster recovery and mitigation following Hurricane Ian.

FloridaCommerce will host public hearings in the following communities:

### **SEMINOLE COUNTY**

Date: Thursday, August 3, 2023

Time: 5:30 p.m.- 7 p.m.

Location: Seminole County Board of County Commissioners  
1101 E. 1st St.  
Sanford, FL 32771

### **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

Date: Friday, August 4, 2023

Time: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Location: Patel Center for Global Solutions Auditorium  
11710 USF Genshaft Dr.  
Tampa, FL 33620

A live-stream option will be available for those who are unable to attend in person.

These public hearings follow nearly 40 listening sessions and workshops held earlier this year with county officials in each county impacted by the 2022 storms. These workshops gave FloridaCommerce valuable insight into the needs of these communities as they continue the hurricane recovery process.

- [FloridaCommerce Hosts 14 Citizen and Stakeholder Workshops on Disaster Recovery Funds for Hurricane Ian-Impacted Communities](#)
- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Visits Communities Impacted by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole
- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Visits Fifteen Additional Communities Impacted by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Meets with Monroe County on Long-Term Recovery Efforts and Hosts Hurricane Evacuation Modeling Workshops in the Florida Keys

On March 15, 2023, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that the state of Florida will receive more than \$910 million in Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding to support long-term resiliency and mitigation efforts following Hurricane Ian in Brevard, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Flagler, Glades, Hardee, Hendry,

---

***Office of Long-Term Resiliency CDBG-DR Citizen Participation Plan***

Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Manatee, Monroe, Okeechobee, Osceola, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Seminole and St. Johns counties. FloridaCommerce will lead the state's efforts in developing the State Action Plan that will provide a high-level strategy for how funding will be used to address unmet, long-term recovery needs in the eligible Hurricane Ian-impacted communities.

HUD identified Lee, Orange, Sarasota and Volusia counties to receive direct funding allocations separate from the amount allocated to the state of Florida. Lee County will receive more than \$1.1 billion, Orange County will receive more than \$219 million, Sarasota County will receive more than \$201 million and Volusia County will receive more than \$328 million for disaster recovery and mitigation efforts. These four counties will be responsible for designing their own programs to address their communities' unmet needs, as well as administering any funds to run those programs. FloridaCommerce is committed to working with all counties to swiftly administer long-term disaster recovery funds.

For those who are unable to attend a public hearing, Floridians impacted by Hurricane Ian can provide comments on the Draft State Action Plan through email to [HurricaneIan@RebuildFlorida.gov](mailto:HurricaneIan@RebuildFlorida.gov) or by mail to:

FloridaCommerce  
Office of Long-Term Resiliency  
Attention: CDBG-Disaster Recovery Program  
The Caldwell Building  
107 East Madison Street, MSC-400  
Tallahassee FL, 32399

For more information, please visit [www.RebuildFlorida.gov](http://www.RebuildFlorida.gov) or email [CDBG-DR@DEO.MyFlorida.com](mailto:CDBG-DR@DEO.MyFlorida.com) for answers to your specific questions.

## Hurricane Ian Social Media Content

Prior to the two public hearings held within the Hurricane Ian impacted communities, in order to ensure there was ample opportunity for the target audience of the hearings to attend, FloridaCommerce posted on social media to advertise the location and times of these hearings. Additionally, FloridaCommerce made similar social media posts announcing public workshops held in six of the impacted counties.

Examples of Hurricane Ian social media content can be seen below

 <p>FloridaCommerce to Host <b>Two Public Hearings</b> for Hurricane Ian-Impacted Communities</p> 	 <p><i>"Under Governor DeSantis' leadership, FloridaCommerce has reaffirmed its commitment to the long-term recovery of these impacted communities— facilitating nearly 40 meetings in the last few months with stakeholders, community members, and local government representatives to gain invaluable insight for developing our state action plan. Local communities know their needs best and their feedback is essential in determining the best way to help Florida residents and their families rebuild their communities."</i></p> <p><b>Florida Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly</b> On hosting 14 citizen and stakeholder workshops on disaster recovery funds for Hurricane Ian-impacted communities</p> 
 <p><b>Was your home impacted by Hurricane Ian?</b></p> <p>We are hosting a Community Workshop aimed to provide assistance and answer questions for citizens impacted by Hurricane Ian in <b>Charlotte County</b>.</p> <p><b>When:</b> July 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., Eastern Time <b>Where:</b> Charlotte Harbor Event &amp; Conference Center 75 Taylor Street Punta Gorda, Florida 33950</p> 	 <p><b>FloridaComme...</b> · 23 Jun</p> <p>In Case You Missed It: @FLDEO Meets with Monroe County on Long-Term Recovery Efforts and Hosts Hurricane Evacuation Modeling Workshops in the Florida Keys. Press release &gt;&gt; <a href="https://bddy.me/3pnhfRK">bddy.me/3pnhfRK</a></p>  <p>Hurricanes Ian and Nicole Long-Term Recovery</p>

## Hurricane Ian Interested Parties Email Communication

An example of a Hurricane Ian email communication can be seen below

---

### In Case You Missed It: Florida Department of Commerce to Host Citizen Workshops on Disaster Recovery Funds for Hurricane Ian-impacted Communities

---

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – Today, the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) announced it will host a series of citizen workshops to hear directly from Floridians about their unmet disaster recovery needs following Hurricane Ian, providing an overview of the Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program and upcoming State of Florida Action Plan that will detail how this funding will address unmet recovery and mitigation needs, and offering impacted Floridians an opportunity to provide their input.

These citizen workshops follow listening sessions that FloridaCommerce facilitated in the 24 counties impacted by Hurricane Ian throughout [April](#) and [May 2023](#). Through the county listening sessions, FloridaCommerce leadership gained valuable insight into long-term recovery needs in counties impacted by 2022 hurricanes, such as workforce affordable housing, infrastructure repair, and housing repair and replacement, and looks forward to hearing directly from citizens regarding their unmet needs.

FloridaCommerce will host the series of citizen workshops in the following communities:

#### **MANATEE COUNTY**

**Date:** Wednesday, June 28, 2023

**Time:** 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Manatee County Administration Building  
1112 Manatee Ave., West  
Bradenton, FL 34205

#### **PINELLAS COUNTY**

**Date:** Thursday, June 29, 2023

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Location:** Pinellas Communications Building  
The Palm Room  
333 Chestnut St.  
Clearwater, FL 33756

#### **POLK COUNTY**

**Date:** Thursday, June 29, 2023

**Time:** 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** Polk State College – Winter Haven  
Room WST-126  
999 Ave. H Northeast  
Winter Haven, FL 33881

**COLLIER COUNTY**

**Date:** Monday, July 10, 2023

**Time:** 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** Collier County South Regional Library  
8065 Lely Cultural Pkwy. #9005  
Naples, FL 34113

**HIGHLANDS COUNTY**

**Date:** Tuesday, July 11, 2023

**Time:** 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** Highlands County Administration Building  
600 S. Commerce Ave.  
Sebring, FL33870

**CHARLOTTE COUNTY**

**Date:** Wednesday, July 12, 2023

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Location:** Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center  
75 Taylor St.  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950

On March 15, 2023, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that the state of Florida will receive more than \$910 million in CDBG-DR funding to support long-term resiliency and mitigation efforts following Hurricane Ian in Brevard, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Flagler, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Manatee, Monroe, Okeechobee, Osceola, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Seminole and St. Johns counties. FloridaCommerce will lead the state's efforts in developing the State Action Plan that will provide a high-level strategy for how funding will be used to address unmet, long-term recovery needs in the eligible Hurricane Ian-impacted communities.

HUD identified Lee, Orange, Sarasota and Volusia counties to receive direct funding allocations separate from the amount allocated to the state of Florida. Lee County will receive more than \$1.1 billion, Orange County will receive more than \$219 million, Sarasota County will receive more than \$201 million and Volusia County will receive more than \$328 million for disaster recovery and mitigation efforts. These four counties will be responsible for designing their own programs to address their communities' unmet needs, as well as administering any funds to run those programs. FloridaCommerce is committed to working with all counties to swiftly administer long-term disaster recovery funds.

For more information, please visit [www.RebuildFlorida.gov](http://www.RebuildFlorida.gov) or email [CDBG-DR@FloridaCommerce.MyFlorida.com](mailto:CDBG-DR@FloridaCommerce.MyFlorida.com) for answers to your specific questions.

---



## Additional Outreach

FloridaCommerce will continue to conduct outreach with communities throughout the implementation of the Action Plan to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the opportunities that exist and can provide feedback along the way. The Rebuild Florida Outreach and Communications Plan for Hurricane Ian recovery efforts can be accessed at: [FloridaJobs.org/docs/default-source/office-of-disaster-recovery/hurricane-ian/floridacommerce-cdbg-dr-communications-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=a57c5fb0\\_4](https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/office-of-disaster-recovery/hurricane-ian/floridacommerce-cdbg-dr-communications-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=a57c5fb0_4).