

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA and INCORPORATED JURISDICTIONS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT- DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAMS FOR
HURRICANE IRMA

Grantee: Monroe County, Florida

Recipient's Address: Monroe County Government Center, 2798 Overseas Highway, Marathon,
Florida 33050

Contact Person: Helene Wetherington, Disaster Recovery Director

Contact Email: Wetherington-Helene@Monroecounty-fl.gov

Contact Phone #: 305-504-3036

The primary goal of the Citizen Participation Plan is to provide citizens, especially low and moderate income citizens of the community where CDBG-DR funded activities will take place, an opportunity to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the programs and projects.

The Citizen Participation Plan is required by Section 104(a) (2) of the Housing and Community Development Act and by regulations at 24 CFR 91.105.

The plan is vitally important to the success of CDBG-DR funded activities undertaken by local governments. Compliance with the plan reduces the number of legal challenges and citizen complaints against the local government recipient.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) has been prepared and implemented pursuant to federal regulations (U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Regulations 24 CFR Part 91.105). Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada therein have designed this community-wide Citizen Participation Plan to provide for and encourage citizen participation in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-DR) – Disaster Recovery (DR) program. This Plan is an essential element of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada, Village of Islands (“Islamorada”) present and future community disaster recovery process from Hurricane Irma.

The primary goal of this Citizen Participation Plan is to provide all citizens of the community with adequate opportunity to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation, and assessment of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada CDBG-DR program(s). Citizens are encouraged to participate in all phases of the CDBG-DR program(s) and will be provided full access to program information. However, final responsibility and authority for the development and implementation of CDBG-DR program(s) will lie with Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada.

2. SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION

The Plan sets forth policies and procedures for citizen participation, which are designed to maximize the opportunity for citizen participation in the community disaster recovery process. Special emphasis has been placed on encouraging participation by persons of low and moderate incomes, residents of areas where community development funds are utilized, and within areas most significantly impacted by Hurricane Irma. To encourage citizen participation that emphasizes the involvement of low- and moderate-income residents, the County will continue to work with public housing authorities, neighborhood groups, and other organizations representing the City’s low- and moderate-income areas and residents.

The County encourages the participation of local and regional institutions, the Continuum of Care, and other organizations (including businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community/faith-based organizations) in the process of developing and implementing the documents related to the consolidated planning process. Also, the County will encourage participation from broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, agencies who manage flood prone areas, public land or water resources, and emergency management agencies.

Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada will make reasonable efforts to provide for citizen participation during the community disaster recovery process and throughout the planning, implementation and assessment of all CDBG-DR program(s) undertaken by Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada. Local officials will make every effort to involve citizens in all phases of the development, implementation and assessment of community development programs including, but not limited to, the following phases:

- a. identification and assessment of housing and community development needs; determination of CDBG-DR project(s) and documentation; and the development of CDBG-DR application(s);
- b. changes and/or amendments to approved CDBG-DR projects; and,
- c. assessment of CDBG-DR program performance.

All phases of the community disaster recovery process will be conducted by local officials in an open manner. Citizens of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada are encouraged to participate at all levels and will be given access to program information during each phase of any CDBG-DR program as outlined herein.

3. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION CONTACT PERSON

The following persons have been designated Citizen Participation Coordinators for:

Monroe County: Helene Wetherington, Disaster Recovery Director
Wetherington-Helene@MonroeCounty-fl.gov
305-504-3036

Islamorada, Village of Islands: Mary Swaney, Assistant to the Village Manager/PIO
Mary.Swaney@islamorada.fl.us
305-664-6411

The Coordinators will serve as the contact persons for all matters concerning citizen participation activities. This person shall be responsible for overseeing citizen participation throughout the community disaster recovery process and the implementation of all citizen participation activities and functions, except those, which may be specifically delegated to other parties by this Plan such as within a municipal jurisdiction. Each municipal jurisdiction will support the citizen participation activities outlined in this plan.

The specific duties and responsibilities of the Citizen Participation Coordinators shall include, but not necessarily be limited to: disseminating information concerning proposed projects and the status of current project activities; coordinating various groups which may be participating in the community disaster recovery process; receiving written comments; serving as a vehicle by which ideas, comments, and proposals from local residents may be transmitted to local officials and/or program staff; and, monitoring the citizen participation process and proposing such amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan as may be necessary.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The staff of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada shall provide technical assistance to individual citizens and citizen groups upon request. Focus should be placed on those groups and representatives of persons of low or moderate income impacted by Hurricane Irma. Technical assistance shall also be utilized to foster public understanding of CDBG-DR program requirements and will be provided on request and may include, but not necessarily be limited to: interpreting the CDBG-DR program and its rules, regulations, procedures and/or requirements; providing information and/or materials concerning the CDBG-DR program; and, assisting low and moderate income citizens impacted by Hurricane Irma to identify their needs, and to develop activities and proposals for projects which, when implemented, will resolve those needs.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings will be held during the launch of the program and during the close-out of the program to allow citizens to voice opinions and offer proposals concerning the development and performance of CDBG-DR programs. Local officials will respond to questions and proposals from citizens at each public hearing. Citizens may also express comments and views concerning the community recovery process or any specific CDBG-DR project to the governing body at any regularly scheduled BOCC meeting. Islamorada, Village of Islands (“Islamorada”) may choose to provide similar opportunities at Village Council events. Other municipalities may choose to provide similar opportunities at City Council events.

Public hearings will be held at times and locations which will be accessible to all citizens, especially persons of low and moderate incomes, CDBG-DR project areas, and areas impacted by Hurricane Irma. Hearings will normally be held at the regularly scheduled monthly Board of County Commissioner Meetings in either Key Largo, Key West, or Marathon. For a complete listing of Board of County Commissioner meeting dates, times, and locations go to the following website: <https://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/757/9297/All-Meetings-Agendas-Minutes>. Each building site is accessible to persons with disabilities. The incorporated cities may also choose to conduct public hearings at their regularly schedule City Council meetings.

Islamorada shall provide public notice and direct its residents to the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners Meetings during which the public hearings will be held. Additional hearings that may be held by Islamorada shall be held at the Founders Park Community Center located at 87000 Overseas Hwy., Islamorada, Florida. The building and site are accessible to persons with disabilities. A complete listing of Islamorada Village Council meeting dates and times can be viewed at: http://www.islamorada.fl.us/departments/village_clerk/minutes.php. Live and archived Islamorada Village Council meetings can be viewed at: http://www.islamorada.fl.us/departments/communications/archived_meetings.php.

This hearing will normally serve to discuss and review the information appropriate for applications submitted by Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada. An application related public hearing will be held during the initial stage of program development to discuss items regarding community recovery and housing needs, the CDBG-DR program, and the application process. The objective of citizen participation at this stage is to provide meaningful, community-wide citizen input into the decision-making process during the assessment of community needs and the consideration of priorities and options associated with the development and submission of a CDBG-DR application.

Citizens will be provided with information concerning the CDBG-DR program at this public hearing. Such information shall include, but not necessarily be limited to: the goals and objectives of the CDBG-DR program; the total amount of CDBG-DR funds available for the fiscal year and for the funding round; the role of citizens in program planning, implementation, and assessment; the range of activities which may be undertaken; the process to be followed in developing a CDBG-DR application; a statement the CDBG-DR funds will be used to benefit low-to-moderate income people; the schedule of meetings and hearings; location where the application can be reviewed; and, an identification of projects which could result in the relocation of area residences or businesses; and the actions that would be undertaken if such relocation were necessary; provide citizens with contact information such as address, telephone number, and dates for submitting complaints or grievances.

5.1 **Assessment of Performance** Public Hearings

Citizens of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada will be provided with the opportunity to comment on the performance of local officials, Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada staff, consultants, engineers, and contractors, and the actual use of CDBG-DR funds during the implementation of a CDBG-DR program. Citizens will also be requested to assess the performance of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada in resolving identified community development and housing needs, and in achieving its community development goals and objectives. On-going community assessment of the effectiveness of the community disaster recovery process is considered essential to the success of the CDBG-DR program.

At the conclusion of each CDBG-DR project, a community meeting will be held to review program activities and to assess program performance. This meeting shall be held prior to the submission of any required closeout documents to the DEO for a CDBG-DR project. This hearing will be used to ensure community-wide participation in the evaluation of the CDBG-DR program.

5.2 Additional Hearings

Other public hearings may be held as deemed necessary by Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada in order to inform citizens of community development project(s) and activities, and to solicit citizen opinions and comments. All additional hearings shall comply with the requirements set forth in this Plan.

5.6 Limited English Proficiency Residents

Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada has followed the guidance provided in the Language Access Plan to determine the need to undertake reasonable actions to facilitate the participation of persons with Limited English Proficiency. Local officials will undertake all reasonable actions necessary to allow such persons to participate in the community disaster recovery process. Such actions may include the provision of materials in Spanish.

5.7 Public Hearing Notice

Notice of public hearings will be published in three local newspaper of general circulation no more than 25 days prior to the meeting date. Each notice of a hearing shall include the time, date, place, and topics and procedures to be discussed. Monroe County will publish all Public Hearing Notices in the Key West Citizen, the Keys Weekly, and the News Barometer. Additionally, Monroe County will distribute a media release to all media contacts listed in the Addendum 1.

Islamorada will disseminate the public hearing notices through publication on multiple pages of its website, www.islamorada.fl.us, through news releases sent via email to media contacts, residents and other interested persons that are signed up for the email service and posting on its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/IslamoradaFloridaKeys/>.

5.8 Accessibility to Persons with Disabilities

The locations of all public hearings as described herein shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities. Additionally, Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada shall provide reasonable accommodations whenever the Citizen Participation Coordinator is

notified in advance that one or more persons with mobility or developmental disabilities will be in attendance.

For people with disabilities, the program information will be routed through Inter-government Coordination Committees including:

- Older American Advisory Board – Pam Martin, pmflkeys@aol.com, 305-853-0907
- Florida Keys Council for People with Disabilities – Anna Haskins, haskins-anna@monroecounty-fl.gov, 305-292-4590
- Emergency Management Special Needs database – Matt Massoud, Massoud-Matt@monroecounty-fl.gov, 305-289-6043

For people with disabilities interested in program information or meetings specific to Islamorada, assistance shall be made available through its ADA Coordinator – Evie Engelmeyer, ADA@islamorada.fl.us, 305-664-6448.

6. PROGRAM INFORMATION

To facilitate citizen access to CDBG-DR program information, the Citizen Participation Coordinator will keep all documents related to a CDBG-DR program files located on the shared county drive at O:\Local Disaster Recovery\CDBG. Information from the project files shall be made available for examination and duplication, on request, during regular business hours. CDBG-DR program information and materials, concerning specific CDBG-DR projects will be available and distributed to the public at the regularly scheduled public hearings as outlined in this Plan and will be available on the Monroe County Internet website at <https://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/764/Irma-Housing-Grants-and-Programs>. The jurisdiction of Islamorada will direct parties interested in program information to the above listed Monroe County Housing and Grants Programs webpage. Documents specific to Islamorada CDBG-DR program activities will be kept on file by the Citizen Participation Coordinator and made available for examination for examination and duplication, on request, during regular business hours.

Materials to be made available shall include, but are not necessarily limited to: the Citizen Participation Plan; records of public hearing; mailings and promotional materials; letters of approval; grant agreements; financial and procurement records; labor standards materials; performance and evaluation reports; other reports required by the DEO and/or HUD; proposed and approved CDBG-DR program application(s) for the current year or project; written comments or complaints received concerning the community development program, and written responses from Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada; and, copies of the applicable Federal and State rules, regulations, policies, requirements and procedures governing the CDBG-DR program.

In no case shall Monroe County or the incorporated cities disclose any information concerning the financial status of any program participant(s), which may be required to document program eligibility or benefit. Furthermore, Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada shall not disclose any information that has been regulatory confidentiality protection.

7. PROCEDURES FOR COMMENTS, OBJECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

Citizens are encouraged to submit their views and proposals on all aspects of a community development program at the public hearings. Citizens may, at any time, submit written

comments or complaints to Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada. Complaints for County should be submitted to the Citizen Participation Coordinator. Should, after a reasonable period, a party believe that his/her comment or complaint has not been properly addressed or considered, then the aggrieved may appeal his/her case to Monroe County Board of County Commissioners and/or the incorporated jurisdictions City Council.

Local officials shall make every effort to provide written responses to citizen proposals or complaints within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of such comments or complaints where practicable. Should Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada be unable to sufficiently resolve an objection or complaint, it may be forwarded by the aggrieved party to the DEO.

Citizens may, at any time, contact the DEO and/or HUD directly to register comments, objections or complaints concerning the Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada CDBG-DR application(s) and/or program(s). Citizens are encouraged, however, to attempt to resolve any complaints at the local level as outlined above prior to contacting the DEO or HUD.

All comments or complaints submitted to the DEO or the HUD shall be addressed in writing to:

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
Rebuild Florida Program
107 E. Madison Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Or:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Community Planning and Development Division
Atlanta Regional Office
Five Points Plaza Building
40 Marietta Street
Atlanta, Fa 30303-2806

Records of all comments, objections and/or complaints by citizens concerning the Monroe County CDBG-DR program and subsequent action taken in response to those comments shall be maintained on file at Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada and shall be made available for public inspection upon request.

8. AMENDMENTS

Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada may, from time to time, modify the provisions outlined herein through amendment to this Citizen Participation Plan. It shall be the policy of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada to periodically review and discuss the effectiveness of this Citizen Participation Plan in allowing citizen participation in the community disaster recovery process and in helping to meet the community development needs and goals identified by the citizens of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada. To this end, the effectiveness of the Plan will be discussed at public

hearings held in conjunction with the community development program as discussed herein, and potential amendments to the Plan will be reviewed at this time.

Amendments to the Plan will be made as necessary. All amendments shall be approved by resolution of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada and shall be incorporated into this Plan.

9. AUTHORITY

No portion of this Citizen Participation Plan shall be construed to restrict the responsibility and authority of the elected officials of Monroe County and the incorporated jurisdiction of Islamorada in the development, implementation and execution of any Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program.