

Website Publications

Objective

The objective of this activity is to promote the effective use of website publications to share information between jurisdictions, their coordinating agencies, and the public at large to enhance both the consultation and citizen participation processes.

Summary

This activity involves jurisdictions publishing important information about their Consolidated Planning process on their websites or those of partner agencies. Published information might include dates, times, and locations of public hearings, the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan for the jurisdiction and related documentation, and instructions on how residents can submit comments on these publications. The website should also provide information on the agency's priorities and how they address community needs, market conditions within the jurisdiction, and proposed or potential projects, all of which can serve to generate comments and interest from residents.

The jurisdiction should organize the content on its website in a clear and concise manner so that citizens can easily obtain publications and other information along with simple instructions on how to provide comments. Moreover, the website should provide links where interested parties can access additional information on the agency's Consolidated Planning process, including links to the agency's Twitter and/or Facebook page, and an email address and phone number for residents to submit additional questions.

In some cases a stand-alone website (a website with its own domain name) may be created for the purpose of soliciting public comment, depending on the effectiveness and ease of use of the jurisdiction's current website. If a stand-alone website is created for this purpose, hyperlinks to the new site should be prominently displayed on the main websites of the jurisdiction and its partner agencies.

Application to the Consolidated Plan

Employing website communications can help grantees to both make planning documents available to a wide public audience and generate interest in the Consolidated Plan process.

Target Audience/Usage

This activity's target audience is citizens and stakeholders with regular access to the city website.

Logistics and Materials Needed

- Grantees must either work with the jurisdiction's IT or web development team to develop the website or create a simple stand-alone website such as WordPress or Google Blogger.
- Website content must be developed far enough in advance to be vetted and approved by jurisdiction management.

Examples of the Website Publications

- The city of Austin, TX's main website has a [webpage](#) for Neighborhood Housing and Community Development. The "Recent News" section of this webpage contains a link to a press release

requesting public comment on the city's 2013-2014 Action Plan. The link accesses a PDF version of the Action Plan draft and instructions on how residents can submit comments.

- Fairfax County, VA's Redevelopment and Housing Authority [website](#) contains a link to a public notice soliciting comments on a draft of the agency's proposed funding priorities for the 2015-2016 Annual Action Plan. The public notice contains the necessary contact information for residents interested in providing comments. In a separate link directly below the public notice link, residents can download the draft of funding priorities.
- The New Orleans, LA Office of Community Development (OCD) [website](#) contains a series of hyperlinks from which residents can download the latest Consolidated Plan and other documents, including an RFP for providing housing to homeless persons and an accompanying application for prospective developers. Additionally, there are well-advertised links to access other reports, including the latest CAPER and additional performance reports, and a link for obtaining the latest news from OCD, which includes notice of any future public comment periods.