Overview

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) administers Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds allocated to Texas by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As part of the administration of CDBG-DR funds, the GLO is required to comply with HUD's citizen participation requirements outlined in the updated Universal Notice, as amended.

This Citizen Participation Plan will outline how the GLO will solicit public comment on the 2024 Disasters Action Plan in accordance with HUD guidelines.

HUD's Federal Register Notice Requirements

Public Law 118-158 appropriated CDBG-DR funds to address disaster relief and long-term recovery from disasters occurring in 2024. Under HUD's Federal Register notice 90 FR 4759 (January 16, 2025), a total of $555,687,000 has been allocated to the state for long-term recovery efforts in response to the impacts of the 2024 Disasters. The Texas Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds, Tornadoes, and Flooding (DR-4781) had an incident period of April 26 – June 5, 2024, and a Presidential Disaster Declaration date of May 17, 2024. Hurricane Beryl (DR-4798) had an incident period of July 5 – July 9, 2024, and a Presidential Disaster Declaration date of July 9, 2024.

In order to ensure disaster recovery grants are awarded in a timely manner, HUD published Federal Register notice 90 FR 1754 (January 8, 2025, as amended per Memorandum 2025-02 published on March 10, 2025 and Memorandum 2025-03 published on March 31, 2025), hereafter referred to as the updated Universal Notice, as amended, waiving the 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, and is instead requiring grantees to follow the provisions in section I.C.2 of the updated Universal Notice, as amended, as well as those of 24 CFR 91.115 or 91.105. In accordance with updated HUD guidelines, the GLO will accept public comments on the proposed 2024 Disasters Action Plan for a period of 30 days in order to provide a reasonable opportunity for citizen participation. Additionally, the GLO will convene three virtual public hearings on the proposed Action Plan after it has been published on its website to solicit public comment before submission of the Action Plan to HUD.

Citizen Participation Plan

The GLO is committed to prioritizing citizen participation in all phases of the 2024 Disasters Action Plan development, including the creation of the plan, the solicitation of public comment for the initial action plan and any subsequent substantial amendments, and in maintaining ongoing accessibility of program information.

Action Plan Creation

The GLO will consult with local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations, public housing authorities, Continuums of Care, HUD-approved housing counseling agencies, state housing finance agencies, and other affected parties in the surrounding geographic area during the creation of the Action Plan. The unmet needs survey was distributed to close to 4,000 individuals in local governments, Federally recognized Indian tribes, the Federal government, Continuums of Care, Public Housing Agencies, HUD-approved housing counseling agencies, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and to other stakeholders and affected parties in the surrounding geographic area. The 2024 Disasters unmet recovery needs survey will gather information about damages and unmet needs seen by communities throughout the MID eligible counties.

The GLO will also consult with other relevant government agencies, including state and local emergency management agencies that have primary responsibility for the administration of FEMA funds, as applicable.

Solicitation of Public Comments for the Action Plan and any Substantial Amendments

Before submitting the Action Plan or any substantial amendment for HUD approval, the proposed action plan or substantial amendment will be posted to the GLO's website, https://glo.texas.gov/disaster-recovery/public-notices, for a public comment period of at least 30 days. Upon posting, the GLO will notify affected citizens through email, press releases, statements by public officials, media advertisements, social media postings, public service announcements, and/or contacts with community organizations. The proposed Action Plan and all amendments will be posted in English and Spanish, with other languages available upon request.

Once the public comment period closes, the GLO will consider and provide substantive responses to a summary of all comments received. These comments and responses will be located in the appendices of the Action Plan or substantial amendments submitted to HUD for approval. The GLO will clearly identify any updates or changes made to the Action Plan in response to public comments.

The GLO will accept written comments via:

- Email
    - cdr@recovery.texas.gov
- Physical Mail
    - Texas General Land Office
      Community Development and Revitalization
      P.O. Box 12873

Austin, TX 78711-2873

- Fax
  - (512) 475-5150

In the Action Plan, the GLO will define what constitutes a substantial amendment. At a minimum, the following modifications will constitute a substantial amendment:

- A change in program benefit or eligibility criteria;
- The addition or deletion of an activity;
- The allocation or reallocation of more than $25 million; or
- A proposed reduction in the overall benefit requirement.

Non-substantial Amendments

The GLO will notify HUD at least five business days before a non-substantial amendment becomes effective. HUD will acknowledge receipt within those five business days and the non-substantial amendment will subsequently be posted to the GLO's website: https://www.glo.texas.gov/disaster-recovery/.

Public Hearings

Upon posting the initial proposed action plan for public comment, the GLO will convene three virtual public hearings to solicit comments from interested parties. During these virtual hearings, the GLO will allow for questions and will answer all attendees directly, as appropriate.

These hearings will be held on the Zoom videoconferencing platform with multiple phone-in lines available for those without access to the Zoom application. The hearings will occur on different dates and at different times to accommodate as wide an audience as possible. The GLO will provide meaningful access for individuals with disabilities at the hearing. This will include real-time audio translation of the public hearing, provided that requests are made at least 48 hours in advance.

The GLO will provide reasonable notification and access for citizens, timely responses to all citizen questions and issues, and public access to all questions and responses and the hearing in accordance with the grantee's certification in Appendix B of the updated Universal Notice, as amended.

The GLO has created a multilingual signup form for those planning to comment at the public hearing. This, along with details for the time and location of the public hearing, may be found online at: https://www.glo.texas.gov/disaster-recovery/public-notices.

Action Plan Accessibility

The GLO will ensure that all affected parties have access to information regarding the Action Plan in appropriate languages for the eligible area. Based on an assessment of the eligible area, the Action Plan in its entirety will be translated into Spanish. Recognizing there may be a need for individuals to have access to the document in additional languages, the GLO has contracted with a translation service to provide personalized translations of the Action Plan upon reasonable

request. Any public places that work directly on programs available to private individuals will carry signage detailing this service in applicable languages, as will the GLO's website.

Citizens with hearing or speaking disabilities or those who use a TDD/TTY device can call 1-844-893-8937 (toll free) via the Relay Texas Service at 7-1-1. Relay Texas is a service that provides telephone access for people with speech or hearing loss who find it challenging or impossible to use a traditional telephone. For more information, please see the Relay Texas website at: relaytexas.com. To request translation assistance with documents, events, or other information, citizens can call (512) 463-5139 and leave a detailed message with their name, phone number and questions, and an interpreter will return their call with additional information. Citizens who need technical assistance can contact the GLO office for assistance at 1-844-893-8937 (toll free).

Ongoing Accessibility to Program Information

The GLO will maintain a comprehensive public website that provides information accounting for how all grant funds are used, managed, and administered. Designated staff will monitor for updates and provide them to the website in a timely manner to reflect the most up-to-date information about the use of these funds and any changes in policies and procedures. The GLO will make the following items available on the GLO website https://www.glo.texas.gov/disaster-recovery/:

- Each action plan and associated amendments;
- Each Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) created using the DRGR system;
- Updated procurement policies and procedures;
- Executed CDBG-DR contracts;
- Status of services or goods currently being procured by the GLO (e.g., phase of the procurement, requirements for proposals, etc.);
- A summary of the status and description of goods and services currently being procured;
- CDBG-DR program policies and procedures;
- Citizen participation requirements;
- Activity and program information described in the Action Plan; and
- Application statuses.

The GLO will provide multiple methods of communication, such as websites, toll-free numbers, TTY and relay services, email address, fax number, or other means to provide applicants for recovery assistance with timely information to determine the status of their application.

Citizen Complaints

The GLO will provide a timely written response to every citizen complaint received. The response will be provided within 15 business days of the receipt of the complaint, if practicable. Complaints regarding fraud, waste, or abuse of government funds should be forwarded to the HUD OIG Fraud Hotline (phone: 1-800-347-3735 or email: hotline@hudoig.gov).