

Public Participation & Citizen Advisory Groups Requirements & Best Practices for CDBG-MIT, 10/30/19

Jelani Newton: Good afternoon everyone and thank you for joining us for today's webinar. So there's been participation requirements and best practices for Community Development Block Grant Mitigation or CDBG-MIT program. My name is Jelani Newton and my colleague Brittany White and I will be your webinar hosts today.

Before we begin, we'll just mention a few quick housekeeping notes. First, for the best audio quality, we recommend that you connect to the webinar audio through your phone line rather than using the computer audio, if possible. Please note that all attendees will be muted throughout the session, but the questions can be sent to the speakers via the Q&A panel at the lower right hand side of your screen. If you look toward the lower right, you'll see the letters "Q&A" with an arrow next to them. If you click on that arrow, it'll expand the field and allow you to type questions to the panelists.

Please make sure that in the Ask section, you select all panelists and that way we'll be able to make sure that all questions are received. And they'll be answered toward the end during a – a Q&A section of the presentation. Last note, the webinar is being recorded and both the slides and the recording will be available on HUD Exchange after the session. With that, I'd like to turn it over to Jen Carpenter at HUD who will lead us in the presentation.

Jen Carpenter: All right. Thanks Jelani and welcome everyone. Thanks for joining us today for this webinar. So we'll be focusing on citizen participation today and really getting into the details of how the requirements and – of the MIT notice are different from your regular DR program. We're going to focus on that so you guys can see – I'm sure if you read the notice, you've seen the differences but we just want to call that out. And then focus on best practices.

I think we got to move it. Let's go – sorry, we're having – OK.

So my name's Jen Carpenter, I'm the assistant director of policy. I'm joined today by one of our new staff members, Mikayla Catani, is a CPD specialist with our office who just started with us in September. We have thrown her into the world of CDBG Mitigation. So she'll be presenting today.

And then, also, we're joined by our partners at Enterprise Community Partners, Jordan Pearlstein. So she'll be focusing on the best practices that we'll go over today.

I will just go through the agenda and then I will throw it over to Mikayla. So Mikayla's going to talk about what is citizen participation and why it's important and then really focus on the requirements that are in the notice and how they differ from CDBG-DR, as I mentioned before.

And then Jordan is going to focus on some best practices, give you guys some tips and tricks on citizen participation and we'll focus on a case study. And then we'll open it up at the end of the presentation for some questions and answers.

All right. So now I'm going to turn it over to Mikayla.

Mikayla Catani: Thank you, Jen. So today we're going to start with defining what is citizen participation. And so to define citizen participation, we must look at both what it is and why it is important. So this slide kind of emphasizes the "what" part of citizen participation.

So citizen participation is a grantee's process to engage the public. And this engagement between the grantee and the public can really lead to idea generation, problem solving, decision making, and just general collaboration between the public and grantees.

So now, the why. Citizen participation is vital because it provides an early warning system for concerns and needs of the people. A citizen participation process also allows for opportunity for an open line of communication between decision makers and the public. Having this process in place provides the grantee a channel to share information timely and accurately to the public. Having this two-way communication can reduce program delays by eliminating confusion and setting up expectations. This will save you time in the long run because you will have the public's support behind you.

So now, an overview of the CDBG-Mitigation grant requirements. As a grantee, you will need to either develop or amend your citizen participation for disaster recovery to reflect the new mitigation requirements. As in regular CDBG-DR you will need to consult with your stakeholders.

The stakeholder consultation is expanded under the CDBG-MIT grant; where normally grantees would consult with states, Indian tribes, local governments, including your entitlement grantees, any federal partnerships, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders and effected parties.

The citizen participation in the CDBG-MIT grant requires you to take these consultations a step further. And there's a slide coming up that will show you the difference between new groups of stakeholders that grantees must consult with.

Your citizen participation plan, as mentioned earlier grantees will need to either amend or create a new citizen participation plan that will incorporate the new mitigation requirements. These requirements will include mandatory public hearings in your HUD identified most impacted and distressed areas; as well as providing reasonable opportunities for citizens to comment and have ongoing access to information about the CDBG-MIT funds. Later, we will also talk about best practices and share some suggestions on how to develop a thought out citizen participation plan and strategy.

So this slide shows the stakeholder consultations that a grantee must consult with. The new requirements include consulting with whatever agency and jurisdiction is responsible for the development of FEMA's hazard mitigation plan or the HMP. This also includes coordinating with your State Hazard Mitigation Officer. When consulting with these key stakeholders, you want to make sure that you're maintaining your documentation. This documentation will show that you're in compliance with all of your citizen participation requirements.

So now, looking at your public website requirements. You will notice that there's not a significant difference between your regular CBDG-DR and your CBDG-MIT public website requirements. Mitigation grantees are required to maintain a public website that's linked to their CDBG-DR grant information with a separate page that is dedicated to CBDG-MIT activities.

This page must be easy for citizens to navigate from the grantee's homepage and will need to provide information for how mitigation funds are used, managed, and administered. Each grantee will need to include links to their action plan and amendments, quarterly performance reports, policies for programs and activities, procurement policies and procedures, executed contracts, and the status of services or goods that are currently being procured.

At a minimum, these websites need to be updated monthly. However, grantees will need to provide citizens, effected local governments, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the action plan and the grantee's use of these mitigation funds.

So public hearings are a new requirement under the CDBG-MIT grant. The number of public hearings is dependent on the grantee's allocation amount. Grantees with an allocation amount under \$500 million must conduct a total of two public hearings with one of these hearings prior to the publication of their action plan for public comment.

Grantees with a MIT allocation between \$500 million and \$1 billion must conduct a total of three public hearings with once again, at least one these hearings prior to the publication of their action plan for public comment.

Lastly, grantees with an allocation greater than \$1 billion must conduct a total of four public hearings with half of these public hearings before the publication of the action plan for public comment.

It is important for all grantees to hold public hearings in a different HUD identified most impacted and distressed area. When planning for these public hearings, please consider locations that demonstrate geographic balance and accessibility options to maximize your participation.

Public hearings have a few civil rights requirements that you should be aware of. When planning a public hearing, each grantee must ensure that public hearing is held in a facility that is physically accessible to persons with disability. If this is not achievable the grantee must prioritize alternative methods of information sharing that will allow for these qualified individuals with disabilities to participate.

Examples may include, recording the public hearing and posting it to your grantee official website. Just as a reminder, as grantees, you must provide effective communication for all individuals under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, this means that you must provide meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency, which means that you will need to translate notices and other vital documents based on the LEP needs in your area.

Public comment periods. This slide shows the key difference between the CDBG-DR grant and the CDBG-MIT grant for public comment periods on the action plan. For CDBG-MIT grantees will need to have minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days for their initial action plan and a 30 day public comment period for any subsequent substantial amendments.

Previously, CDBG-DR grants have had public comment periods requirements ranging anywhere from 15 to 30 days. After a grantee submits his action plan or substantial amendment to HUD, the department will have a 60 day review period. Grantees must consider all comments that are received during this time, whether the comments are received orally or in writing.

A summary of these comments and the grantees responses will need to be submitted to HUD with the action plan or substantial amendment. Note, that non-substantial amendment process has stayed the same. Grantees will still notify the department five business days before the amendment becomes effective. And then, just as a friendly reminder, make sure that you're labeling your amendments sequentially as you post them to your website.

Forming a citizen advisory committee. Forming a citizen advisory committee is a new requirement for the CDBG-MIT grant. Because of this, we will share some best practices on how to stand up and manage a citizen advisory committee in the second part of this webinar. At a minimum, grantees must create a citizen advisory committee that will meet in an open forum at least bi-annually. As the grantee, you have the option to decide if you'd like to create more than one committee or if you would like a part of your committee to meet more frequently than twice a year.

As the grantee, you can choose if you would like to form this committee as part of your initial action plan preparation process before you receive official approval of your action plan. However, once your action plan is approved, you must create a citizen advisory committee if you have not already done so. These committees are an important form of citizen participation because they provide increased transparency in the implementation of this grant and will give continued opportunities for the public's input on the grantee's CDBG-MIT projects and programs.

Citizen complaints. The citizen complaint process does not have any new requirements. As in regular CDBG-DR, grantees will need to provide a timely written response to every citizen complaint received within 15 working days. If you receive any complaints on fraud, waste, and abuse, make sure to contact HUD's OIG Fraud Hotline.

The contact number and emails are shown on this slide. In addition to citizen complaints, make sure that you have procedures in place that will allow for you to respond timely if and when you receive a request about an applicant's status. You will also need to be prepared to respond with any accessibility options as applicable.

This slide shows a brief summary of all the key differences between CDBG-DR and CDBG-MIT grants when it comes to citizen participation. This is a handy little table that you might want to keep for a quick reference just to make sure you're meeting the additional requirements for

CDBG-MIT funds. We have talked about all of these in today's presentation but if you have any follow-up questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Once again, we will have time for questions at the end of this presentation.

Now, I will turn it over to Jordan from Enterprise Community Partners to go over some of the best practices on our citizen participation.

Jordan Pearlstein: Hi folks, this is Jordan Pearlstein from Enterprise. Thanks for the handoff. As we said, we're going to be talking through some good practices on citizen participation. I say good just because there's always more we can learn, rather than best. But we're going to be talking through specifically some good practices on how you develop a thoughtful citizen participation plan, how you create and manage a citizen advisory committee, and how you resource citizen participation.

The focus on this section is just going to be some good food for thought for you guys about why and how we do some of these components. However, we'll also point out what is a requirement and call back to that as well as what the difference between that and just some good practices and some thoughtful suggestions are for you guys.

So it looks like we're going to start with the citizen participation plan. Just as a reminder, the requirement around this is just to amend your existing citizen participation plan or adopt a new plan.

Just to make sure that it's incorporating the requirements that we just went through. But beyond that, there are a few things that we wanted to walk through with you guys, particularly around the process of developing this plan. This might not be the plan that you use for your formal participation plan that goes online for folks but these might be some helpful steps for you guys to consider just in terms of developing out your strategy on how you want to engage folks in your community.

So there are a few key steps I wanted to walk through with you guys to talk through how to do that. And I did want to note that some of these steps are drawn or adapted from the International Association for Public Participation work on their Five Steps for Public Participation Planning and we'll link to some of those resources at the end.

But the five steps that we're going to be talking through are going to be how you gain internal commitment on your approach and your strategy and your objectives for citizen participation, how you learn from the public to inform your citizen participation plan. How you select the level of participation and that could mean whether you're just informing folks, whether you are actually trying to involve them, or collaborate with them on some decision making or if you're going to delegate some decision making to the broader public in this process.

And then, step four is around how you define the decision process and identify objectives for your citizen participation plan or strategy. And then, finally, we'll talk a little bit about what are some of the key components you would want in a citizen participation plan. Again, not from a

requirements perspective, but from the perspective of these are the elements that will be helpful for you to consider to develop a thoughtful strategy.

So first digging in a little bit more on gaining internal commitment. I want to unpack what that means because that doesn't really reveal too much about what the steps would imply for that. The main things that you're going to want to think about at this very early stage of developing your citizen participation plan or strategy are identifying the decision makers.

So who are the different either entities or individuals that are going to be making key decisions in the mitigation planning or program implementation process. Are these elected or appointed officials? Are they staff within certain agencies? Whoever they are, this will be the first step as identifying who those decision makers are.

And you'll also want to start tracking that against what are the different decision points that need to be made in this planning process and if there are different decision makers for different points. So is someone really responsible for making a final decision about what goes into your action plan versus the person who's responsible for decision making on program design details for instance.

The other thing that you're going to want to do at this stage, if you are part of an agency or department as the grantee that's going to be leading the civic – the citizen participation process. You're going to want to do a little bit of self-reflection within your own organization about your organization's approach to public participation. How have you guys engaged citizens in the past, is a really good place to start.

What's your history on that engagement? Are there different viewpoints within your department or your agency that you need to take account for? So different perspectives that you're going to need to reconcile in terms of the value that your agency sees and actually engaging the public in these sorts of decisions.

And then also, you're going to want to think about what sort of capacity and organizational structure you have and how that might affect your approach to citizen participation. Obviously, these things take time, money, other resources, and other types of capacity. So you want to make sure you're planning for that with that in mind.

The final thing you're going to want to do at this stage is get an initial understanding about what you see as the problems or opportunities that are going to be addressed in your mitigation planning and program design and implementation.

This will be a first crack for you to think about, okay what does the planning process afford us to do in terms of addressing a problem or leveraging or identifying an opportunity? And again, thinking about what are the decisions that need to be made in addressing that problem or ceasing that opportunity.

What are the actual constraints on that decision? This is federal money; there will be plenty of those. So this is a helpful call back to thinking about what's in your Federal Register notice.

You also might have state or local constraints or regulations that you're going to need to think about. Some of them might not be as black and white as that but there might be small political things that you're going to need to consider in terms of what the constraints really are.

You need to get really clear about those, so that you're not putting out an opportunity for folks to influence the design of something or decision about something where at the end of the day that's not really going to be possible because of pre-existing constraints or requirements that have a real influence on that decision.

The other thing that would be helpful for you to do at this early stage, while just gaining internal commitment internally with folks that are going to be involved in this process, is thinking through who that preliminary list of stakeholders are. These can be people that are your technical experts in this field.

These are going to be people that might be working at other agencies or departments within your state or local governments that are going to be very involved in the planning or implementation of mitigation programs. It could also be people in the philanthropic sector who you're going to have to liaise with or leverage money with, or folks in the business community or non-profit sectors.

There are going to be a lot of different types of stakeholders at this stage. Certainly, later in the process we'll also be talking about how you engage folks that are going to be most impacted by the decisions of this programing, and that's going to be really important to bring in as well.

The last piece at this stage and this first step about planning your citizen participation is you're going to want to have some conversations internally again about what the expectations is from your agency or department about the level of citizen participation.

And that's something that's going to be really important to get on the same page with, not just for the folks that are going to be directly implementing citizen participation, but again from the decision makers themselves. Are you simply informing people about what you're doing or what they need to know? Or are you actually involving them or collaborating with them in some of these decision making processes.

So the next step that's going to be really important when you're putting together a citizen participation plan or strategy, is learning from the public. So from that first list of stakeholders that you identified in the step of gaining internal commitment, you're going to start thinking about some representatives from some of those groups that you can talk to in some key informant interviews, maybe some small group interviews with folks to start understanding how different stakeholders understand the decisions that are going need to be made in this mitigation planning and implementation process.

Are these issues that these different stakeholders really care about? Do they feel that they're controversial? What to them would make citizen participation process meaningful and credible? So this is where you're starting to gather more information beyond the people that are directly

involved in your agency or department so that can start to help inform what an actual strategy is going to be for citizen participation.

And once you've had some of these initial conversations, again whether it's interviews or small focus groups with representatives from that preliminary list of stakeholders, you might need to go back and refine your problem or opportunity statement once you've gotten a little bit more information as well as the decisions that need to be made as part of this planning process.

So the next step in the processes of putting together citizen participation strategy is to hone back in on that level of participation that we already talked about. And the step of gaining internal commitment, you were already starting to think about from your internal agency or department's perspective. What level of participation you're looking for from the public?

Again, that could be informing, or involving, or collaborating with them. But this is an opportunity to re-visit that once you now have a better sense of not only what the internal expectations are, like your legal requirements, the level of value that people within your agency or department really place on engaging the public in mitigation planning and program design and implementation. But the likelihood is that the decision makers will actually and fully consider the public input.

So those are the kinds of internal conversations you've already been having, but from the step about learning from the public, you'll now have some more information about external expectations of engagement in the process. So this will be an opportunity for you to revisit what level of participation is going to be appropriate for your citizen participation process. And just to note, that the higher expectations of either the internal stakeholders or external stakeholders, the more influence or involvement you'll likely want to plan for when you're engaging the public.

So another key step that you'll want to go through or that we suggest you guys consider when you're developing your citizen participation strategy is to define the decision process and identify citizen participation objective. So we already talked a little bit at the beginning that it's going to be important for you to understand who the decision makers are, what the actual decision process is going to be as part of this planning process.

So for instance, some of the decisions that might need to get made in this process are about defining the problem or opportunity. Do you want to actually engage citizens at that point in the decision making process, when you settle on what the problems and opportunities actually are?

Do you want to involve citizens in the decision process about gathering information and coming to some sort of agreement about what the existing conditions are relating to mitigation? And hazards, do you want to involve or collaborate with your citizens on establishing decision making criteria; on developing alternative approaches on evaluating alternatives on making decisions?

So there are lots of different decision points just in general that will happen in a planning process, so you'll want to map what those are for yours. And then, again, think through what objective you have for engaging citizens in each point in that process.

And it's important to think about what those objectives are at each stage so you can actually plan for that and communicate that clearly and transparently to the public, to your stakeholders so that you are making promises to the public that you are prepared to keep or the reverse of that, that you're not making promises to the public that you're not necessarily going to be able to follow through on in terms of the level and type of influence they'll have in this process.

So the last piece, I'll just say on this step about developing a citizen participation plan, is about the design. Once you've gone through these steps, and I know for – to some extent these are a bit aspirational, not everyone is going to be able to go through every single piece of each one of these steps.

We did want to provide you with some guidance though and some suggestions about what can contribute to a thoughtful engagement strategy. Once you've gone through those steps, or some part of them, then you'll actually have what you need to design a citizen participation plan.

And one last call out and reminder, this is a difference between what is an actual requirement in the Federal Register notice about your citizen participation plan and some suggested guidance and good practices about just in general how to develop a thoughtful citizen participation plan and strategy.

So I wanted to walk through a few of the components that you'll likely want to have in a citizen participation plan; again, not as a requirement but just as some good practice. And this can even be an internal document for you guys to just help guide your strategy on this.

As a result of some of the steps you've already gone through, you'll be able to likely fill out relating to all of these different components and just to call them out quickly, though of course they'll be in a slide for later if you guys need them.

You'll want to have something about the actual project background and an overview of the mitigation planning process that the citizen participation is geared towards. You're going to want to have a summary about what the scope of the decisions are that are going to be made in this process. The timeline for those decisions, the process and steps of those decisions, and again, the requirements and constraints on those.

You will also want to have a summary of what the citizen participation objectives and desired outcomes are. As well as the level of influence that we talked about. Are they informing? Are they involving? Are they collaborating, etc.?

And what are you actually hope to walk away with from the citizen participation? Is it a decision on a key component of the planning process, for instance? But try and get as clear as possible about what the actual results will be for you guys in this process; and not just you as the agency and department, but for the citizens themselves.

You'll also want to put in a little bit of a summary about the stakeholder analysis so those folks that you identified at the beginning and any other stakeholders you learned about, this will be an opportunity for you to capture that somewhere.

So again, who are the technical experts? Who are the decision makers and influencers? Who are the people that are going to be most impacted by these decisions? Who are others that are providing resources? These are different kinds of broad categories of stakeholders that you'll want to capture in more detail in the stakeholder analysis.

You'll also be able to talk about what issues they care most about or will be most impacted by, the history of engagement your agency or department has had with them, and any barriers to engaging them whether it's language, whether it's need for child care, a variety of different barriers we want to capture there as well as assets. Are there representatives entrusted that you already have with certain organizations or people from that stakeholder group that you can leverage in this.

You'll also, in your plan want to capture where your outreach and engagement methods are. And these might change by the different points in the decision making process. So for instance, if it's at the very beginning of the engagement process, where you're really wanting to inform people about what the mitigation planning process is all about and how they'll be able to be involved.

An engagement method for that will look pretty different than if you're actually trying to do some collaborative decision making with folks later in the process. So it might be at the beginning sharing out information on websites, on newsletters, on fliers, with representatives from stakeholders at different pre-existing community events, for instance.

But whatever, wherever you are in the decision-making process, you'll want to think through, what are the appropriate engagement methods at that stage, and also by different stakeholder groups. So it might need to be adaptable to different kinds of people you're going to be engaging with.

Additionally, you'll want to think about how you're actually going to capture all of the input that you're getting from people. How you're going to be able to synthesize or analyze that. And then, also, how you're going to report back the findings and the decisions, and the progress. That's a really important part of this entire citizen participation plan is when you're actually asking for input from people, they really need to know how that actually influenced your planning process or the decisions that are getting made in terms of your mitigation planning, your programs, etc.

Finally, you'll also want to include some details about the schedule for citizen participation, planning when certain activities are going to be happening for instance, as well as staffing. So how are you actually going to staff your citizen participation approach? How you're going to resource that? What resources are needed? And any other operational details like the location of where different engagements going to be happening, AV needs, all the gory, nitty gritty details.

And then, finally, you'll want to think about how you evaluate your citizen participation. So since you'll have objectives for that citizen participation and desired results, you'll also want to

think about, okay, how do we check in on whether we're actually delivering against those objectives for citizen participation?

So again, this is just an overview of the types of components that can be helpful to have in a citizen participation plan to ensure that you guys are being really thoughtful and informed about how it's being developed.

And for the last time, I will say that there is a difference between this, what we have on the slide and what we've just been talking about and what is actually required either in the notice or at your local or state level. So you will certainly want to check this against what is actually required.

So the other thing that we wanted to talk about were citizen advisory committees. Since this is something that's a new requirement in the mitigation notice that's compared to the Disaster Recovery notices from the last at least few years.

We wanted to make sure we spent a little time to talk through some good practices and how you actually develop and manage a citizen advisory committee. As a reminder, this is the requirement around those from the notice that it must be formed following the approval of the action plan. But you have to do that but you can decide to form it earlier in the process of developing your action plan.

The other part of the requirement is that you have to form at least one – you can form more than one citizen advisory committee. They have met at least twice per year. And in terms of what the call outs were in the notice about the purpose of the advisory group, it was to provide transparency in the implementation of CDBG-MIT funds, to solicit and respond to public comments and input regarding the grantee's, your mitigation activities, and to serve as an ongoing public forum to continuously inform the grantee's CDBG-MIT projects and programs.

So as a reminder, these are the requirements that were in the notice relating to citizen advisory committee and why from that notice you should be doing this. We're also going to be talking about why, again a bit more in general from the field of public participation and civic engagement. An approach like this can be useful.

So beyond the requirement, an advisory committee, your citizen advisory committee can be helpful because it can build ongoing partnership with the community. It can inform your decision makers of key community perspectives. It can develop or improve relationships with key stakeholders that you guys are going to need good relationships with as part of this process. And as an opportunity to understand a range of diverse perspectives.

When can citizen advisory committees be most useful? When you are in a process where there are a lot of decisions that need to be made, and that require some level of public involvement. And also if there's public engagement fatigue which some folks might also be dealing with coming on the heels of some of the disaster recovery engagement that people might have been involved in already.

It can also be used – an advisory committee can be a useful approach in that context. And also, when projects or decisions may be controversial or the result of them. They will result in criticism, regardless of what the decision is. It can be helpful to have it an advisory committee of diverse stakeholders involved to help you with that. And when regular input is needed on complex topics over a long period of time which is in the case of CDBG-MIT.

So I wanted to talk through some of the key components that will be helpful for you guys to consider when you're setting up and managing your citizen advisory committee. One is mission, so what the purpose of the citizen advisory committee and we'll talk more about that in detail in a moment.

The members, who's actually on your citizen advisory committee. What are their roles and responsibilities? What are the operations and operational components of that committee? What are the actual outputs or desired results or deliverables coming out of that committee?

So talking a bit more in detail about the mission, so somethings that will be helpful for you guys to consider when you're thinking about the mission of your citizen advisory committee is what will its relationship be to decision makers? So you guys would have already hopefully been able to identify who the decision makers are going to be in your mitigation planning process. So at this point, when you're thinking about the citizen advisory committees, you'll be able to harken back to that.

And then think about what role the citizen advisory committees are going to have and their relationship with the decision makers. Will they again, be informing decision makers providing some useful input? Will they actually be helping the decision maker make a decision in some way in a collaborative process? Will the group have authority to make any of the key decisions themselves or again, is it just providing insight and input to the decision makers?

Another thing you're going to want to think about is what the relationship is the citizen advisory committee to the broader public. You will be doing, obviously some broader public engagement, whether through your public hearings or other activities you're going to be doing. So how is the citizen advisory committee going to relate to the broader public?

And then, of course, you're going to want to think about the purpose of the citizen advisory committee. Obviously the notice talked about some of the objectives already that they want to make sure you guys are considering for your citizen advisory committee. But are there other objectives or purposes of why you as a grantee want to bring these folks together in addition to what was outlined in the notice. Whatever it is, you want to be really clear about what that is.

And we'd also recommend capturing actually in writing with the citizen advisory committee. So you have a mandate and a mission and some shared values that everyone is aware of and on the same page about to help guide the time that you guys are going to be spending together with the citizen advisory committee.

Another key component that's going to be helpful to think through in forming your citizen advisory committees are who are going to be on the committee. So some of this will be

informed to some extent by what the mission and the purpose is going to be for the citizen advisory committee. But you'll also want to think about the number of members, for instance, that you're going to want to have on this.

You'll want to have enough that if there's some sort of attrition or absences that you have a good enough quorum to make some decisions but you don't want to have so many people that it's going to be really difficult to have a conversation. Usually between one to two dozen is a pretty good number to shoot for, pretty good sweet spot to allow for both sides of that, so for some absences as well as making sure that it's not so big that it's difficult to have really in depth discussions.

You'll also want to think about how members will be recruited and selected and the type of representation you need on that advisory committee for it to fulfill the mission that you set out for it. So representation can mean a lot of different things across a lot of different characteristics from geographic representation. Are there different geographic areas that you want to make sure are being represented on this group; to demographic characteristics, and how reflective this group is going to be of – across different demographic factors; whether it's race and ethnicity, whatever that is, to other sectors.

So do you want folks from the public sector from the philanthropic and non-profit sector, from the private business sectors? So again, there are a lot of different types of criteria you can think about in terms of representation. So you'll want to identify what those things are going to be most relevant for your community. And what it means to have representative folks on your citizen advisory committee.

The other thing that will be helpful for you guys to think about in terms of membership is the duration and term limits of members. Especially if this is going to be a body that you're going to have involved, not just in the early stages of planning or right after the action plan is developed, but through potentially years of implementation and amendments, etc.

You'll want to think about from front end. If you're going to have term limits, I would recommend really considering term limits just so it's really clear that this isn't necessarily something that people either have to find out for an unlimited period of time, potentially for years. And also, it allows you the opportunity to bring on new folks and get new perspectives, over the course of a couple years.

So it allows for that without it having to be a decision made at the moment or a one off decision with one person. So again, something good to think about from the very beginning as well as how you're actually going to fill those spots when there is turnover. Whether that's because you've established term limits and folks are leaving that way or just natural attrition.

So you'll also want to think about the roles and responsibilities of your citizen advisory committee. So some things to think about, obviously there was the requirement that this needs – this group needs to be brought together at least twice per year. That was a requirement from the Federal Register notice.

But are there going to be other expectations that you're going to have for the group? Do you want them to meet more than twice a year? Is there an expectation that they'll review and provide feedback on documents that are being generated.

For instance, what will there – will there be a chair of this committee from these representatives that you're bringing together? So what will those responsibilities be? How will they be selected? And what will be the actual decision making process within the citizen advisory committee?

Do you guys want to operate on consensus? Do you want to operate on majority vote? You don't have to make all of these decisions the moment you get off the phone here, but these are some things that you're going to want to think about when you're forming this group to help you manage it.

The second to last piece we're going to talk about is operations of that group. So the one thing to consider is whether you guys are going to want a third party facilitator for this group, or whether you want them to self-facilitate.

A third-party facilitator can be really helpful to ensure that all of the perspectives on the advisory committee are being represented, that the decision making process that you guys agreed to is actually being followed. That conflicts are being managed constructively so not something you need to have but it's something to consider if you feel like that's going either be helpful or necessary for the group that you guys are bringing together.

You'll also want to think about ground rules. These are something that you can think about on your own, within your agency or department. But it's also going to be something that you're going to need the members of the citizen advisory committee to sign on to and agree to and perhaps provide some insight and input and additions of their own. These are really helpful to be able to get agreement on from the very beginning and recall and return to over the course of the time that you guys are working together.

Again, we talked a little bit about this already in terms of the roles and responsibilities and how often you want to bring the group together, but this is something that you can dive into in a little bit more detail when you're thinking about operations. If it's going to be more than twice a year, for instance, you want it on set times; the third Thursday of every month, for instance. Or do you want it linked to specific decision points in the overall planning process? I think those decisions are yours to make knowing that requirement is that they have to come together at least twice a year.

And then finally on this, you'll also want to think about what the resources are going to be to – that you're going to need to actually do this. We talked a little bit about a third party facilitator, for instance.

But you'll also want to think about other sorts of resources like meeting space, budget, equipment like AV equipment, you'll need all of those details will be helpful for you to capture from the

beginning. Obviously, you can return to this as time goes on and you see how the group is actually running, certain things you might want to amend in that.

The last piece, so similar to how we talked about with citizen participation planning in general, that it's really important to think about the objectives and what the desired results are going to be from that process. You'll want to think about that in specific detail with your citizen advisory committee.

Are there any outputs, deliverables, or results that you want to make sure that this advisory committee contributes to or delivers? Are there meeting records or reports that you're going to want to share with the public? If so, who will produce them? Are there other sorts outputs or deliverables that you think will be important for this committee to either produce itself or contribute to?

So again these are just some good guiding components for you guys to think about and have some conversations about – and even at some point put in writing just to make sure that everyone's on the same page about what the purpose of the group is. Who is going to be a part of it? What are their roles and responsibilities? How's it going to operate? And what are you ultimately hoping to get out of that group in terms of outputs or deliverables?

So lastly we'll talk about really quickly is resourcing for citizen participation. All those things we just talked about take time and money. So just wanted to call out a couple things that might be helpful for you guys to consider as your pulling together your citizen participation plan.

If it's for general citizen participation for the mitigation planning process, these kinds of activities are eligible for admin costs and can be reimbursed. If this is actually before you get your money for CDBG-MIT.

After the award, again these can still be considered admin costs if it's general citizen participation for this overall process. But in your mitigation activities, if you're actually developing a specific plan, then you would – and you're doing citizen participation for a specific planning activity, then you could use planning costs.

So now I wanted to highlight a case study from Houston. It was a case study on their CDBG-DR from 2017 that is – provides a couple examples at least of a few of the things we've been talking about as well as a few others that would be helpful. So the case study in Houston I'm referring to is after hurricane Harvey. There's some more details in here that you guys can refer back to in terms of a bit more of the context that – for the city of Houston.

Well over \$5 billion was allocated to the state of Texas after Harvey over \$1 billion of those dollars went to the city of Houston from the state for them to manage. As I'm sure you can all empathize with, they had a really short window of time in which to develop their action plan or action plan amendment in this case because it was an amendment to the state's plan for its portion of the allocated funds.

For them their overall objective for engaging citizens in this process was to increase transparency in the process and support community efforts that promoted a right to stay and a right to choose framework. And through this process they actually initiated their largest community engagement efforts to date from the city's – of Houston's Housing and Community Development Department.

So through this process, the city in particular the HCDD, the Housing and Community Development Department engaged more than 800 Houstonians in a variety of different ways. So they had a bunch of different engagement methods that they were employing early in this process of developing their action plan, that included public meetings that included an online survey and that also included a tele-town hall conference hosted by AARP.

They relied on partnerships with a variety of different organizations both to help with outreach as well as early in the process to help them develop their approach to community engagement. So very early on, they worked with some community engagements. They conducted some of those early focus groups and interviews that we talked about in the development that's useful to help inform your development of a community engagement plan.

They did that with different stakeholder groups. And then worked with and partnered with those groups throughout the process to make sure that the word was getting out about the different opportunities to engage and different public workshops that were going to be available for people to participate in for surveys to fill out. And they also worked with these folks for support with facilitation as well.

So in their own words, and I'm going to say in their own words because they actually produced a report that I'll link to, that will be linked at the end of this overall presentation that captured their engagement strategy as well as what they felt like worked and where they felt like there were challenges. They talked about a few things in terms of what worked.

They had enormous reach in a relatively short period of time. They reached over 4,500 people over the course of a handful of weeks in the development of their action plan and it was definitely the largest engagement effort that they put on to date. And as we said earlier, they used a variety of different engagement strategies to do that from online surveys to tele-town halls that really increased participation.

There was a really strong commitment from city leadership and decision makers in the process. Part of that was shown by the director of HCDD participating in many of these events, and certainly, all of the large public events. It was really an opportunity for them to build trust with community groups by consulting with them very early in the process and allowing for them to play a really critical role in the design of the process and the execution of their citizen participation activities.

As one sign of that, HCDD did adopt some of the recommendations coming out of those early focus groups in terms of what the engagement strategy would look like and the types of engagement activities themselves.

Building on that, that the partnership approach they took, they found to be incredibly valuable both in terms of the community organizations as well as some of the experts they consulted from the community to design the process. It was also a really helpful way of educating the public.

And an opportunity to not only gather feedback, but also inform people about what's coming into disaster recovery if you can imagine, this is a time at which people need a lot of information regularly to understand what services are going to be available to them or not and when and how to access them.

It also allowed for them to have a flexible format. They developed a core of activities in a format to do that but those were easily adaptable by other partners that were using them to engage folks.

Some of the challenges they faced, it was a lot of people that were involved in this. That was both a blessing and a challenge. Working with all of these different types of partners and stakeholders, again can make sure that you're really developing a strategy and approach that's going to speak to a lot of different stakeholders needs and expectations but it takes a lot of coordination.

Especially in a really short timeline, that can be challenging. They did find that conducting a stakeholder analysis was really helpful for them in making sure that they were reaching all the right people and would encourage other folks to do that as early in the process as possible to make sure you're not missing people.

They did also talk about some of the challenges with capacity. That's one of the things we talked about earlier in this presentation that, that's important to consider. What kind of capacity and resources you're going to need to actually pull some of this off. And a big part of that is going to be facilitation and facilitation expertise. Do you have it? Do you need to train for it?

A couple other points to note, it's difficult to explain complex concepts to people. This is something that I would imagine folks are going to face in this instance as well. When you're talking about mitigation, particularly in the context of federal funds, how do you make sure that, that information is going to actually be digestible and clear and consistent to all of the different kinds of audiences and stakeholders that you're going to be talking with?

Make sure, they suggested testing some of those key messages or presentations out with a variety of stakeholders, maybe in a focus group before rolling it out larger. Just to make sure that it is information that is digestible to a wide variety of people.

So that is some of the lessons they learned from their process. A few of the additional recommendations that they had for others, other communities they're going to be going through citizen participation processes in a similar context. Viewing the media as a partner and an opportunity to get the word out both in terms of some of the information you want people to know about the process overall as well as the opportunities for them to engagement.

And how do you expand beyond some of the normal streams of doing that, like email lists and Facebook posts? Making sure, again, how important it is for you to inform the community on a very regular basis. It's a really difficult step to explain to people and it's not a one-time event. It needs to happen regularly and consistently throughout the process.

Again, we spoke about this earlier, but conducting a stakeholder analysis early in the process to help scope your strategy and approach to citizen participation is going to be really important in creating ongoing opportunities for engagements throughout the planning process. Again, this isn't a one-time event. It happens for – a few times at the beginning of your action plan development.

This is something that you're going to need to be able to communicate and engage with people over a longer term. And by doing that that can actually really develop relationships and trust that can be leveraged should another event happen or point in the planning process or implementation process that it'll be important to bring people together. You'll already have some of those some of those channels solidified with folks.

We talked about this in terms of what you would want to think through to develop your citizen participation plan but one thing they learned as well, is that it's really important to think about on the front end, how you're actually going to collect, store, and analyze the input that you're getting from people in your citizen participation. So again, to think that through on the front end, it can be a little complicated if you don't. Trying to figure out what to do with all of that information on the back end.

And again, we noted this already, but making sure your facilitators are well trained. It's not something that you want to send people out in the community to do unless they have the training and the support to do it. Because they can be potentially difficult, challenging topics to engage people in.

So now, I'm going turn it back to Jen to talk through some of the relevant webinar series, some that have already happened as well as some that are upcoming.

Jen Carpenter: All right. Thanks Jordan. So we just want to remind people if you'd like to ask questions, that's what the Q&A box is for. You can put your questions there and we'll tackle them at the end of this. We're almost wrapped up here.

Just to direct people to our webinar series that we've already completed, we've done two webinars so far so this is our third today. We have a webinar on walking grantees through the Federal Register notice, so we did it on September third and you can find the link here for the slides and the transcript. And also, the second webinar conducting a mitigation needs assessment.

And then for upcoming webinars, just a reminder we announce these through the HUD Exchange. We've also, I realize these slides won't be posted right away. It usually takes us a few days to get these slides posted. So if you're looking for those links, on this previous slide, if you check – if you get the HUD Exchange emails, once materials are posted, that comes out on

the HUD Exchange, so you should have these links in your email through that. And then, also you should have in your email, the registration for next Thursday's webinar on buyouts.

Also, just a note, that there aren't that many differences in the mitigation notice and the DR notice on buyouts. So really, it applies to both even though it's part of the mitigation series. So that's a note for next week. And then on the fourteenth, we'll be working with FEMA again our partner is there and they'll be doing a demo of their BCA toolkit. And then Wednesday, November twentieth we'll be going over some best practices for transformative mitigation projects. Just to give you guys some inspiration there.

And then we've got some slides for additional resources. Some we've already posted in previous webinars and then some additional ones. I think Jordan has added on this specific topic that will be helpful to you guys. So again, these slides will be coming to you soon. Just give us a few days to get them posted and they will be on the HUD Exchange.

And then, we're going to open it up for questions, but if you don't have any questions or if you need additional information after this webinar, we have started this CDBG-MIT inbox. We are answering questions that come through there. Our team is, so feel free to send us questions at that box if you'd rather not do it in this setting, you can email us there and we will get back to you.

So I'm going to just take a look at our track to see if we have anything coming through. So folks are asking about whether HUD will be accepting any minimal community outreach and engagements due to time constraints. So the answer to that is, no. I mean, we have really stretched the times of putting together an action plan in this notice, more than we probably ever have since action plans aren't due until the first of the year in 2020 with the first cohort. So you guys have a lot of time to do this.

We did that on purpose because we knew there were these added requirements and Mikayla talked about at the beginning of the webinar. So those requirements are the requirements so we won't – there won't be any less than that.

So I think it looks like maybe that is our only question for today. So we appreciate everyone listening, we will be following up next week with a buyout webinar so I encourage everyone to be on that. We'll be also – on that webinar we'll be talking about the new buyout and housing incentives national objectives that HUD issued a couple years ago in our notice. We'll be walking through those as well.

So if you don't know about those, I would definitely encourage you to listen to the webinar. And just follow-up if you have any more questions.

So thanks everyone.

Jelani Newton: Thanks so much to all of our panelists. That concludes our session for today. And thanks to all of the attendees for joining us. Please note that you'll be prompted to take a very brief survey once you disconnect from the webinar.

If you could take a couple minutes and provide your feedback it'd be really – very much appreciated. This feedback will be really helpful to us as we work on planning for future webinars. Thanks again to everyone for joining and have a great day.

(END)