Using Stakeholder Input in Consolidated Planning

Contents

1. Consultation Requirement

Consult with stakeholders and partners to assist with all aspects of the consolidated planning process and address consultation requirements.

Consultation requirements are established at 24 CFR 91.100 (local governments) and 24 CFR 91.110 (States)

There is a general requirement to consult with public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social and fair housing services (including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, homeless persons) during preparation of the consolidated plan.

There are additional specific consultation requirements related to

- Homeless strategy and resources available to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) and persons at risk of homelessness;
- Lead-based paint (LBP) hazards and existing data related to LBP hazards and poisonings;
- Priority nonhousing community development needs, including submission of the priority nonhousing development plan to the State and the County (as applicable);
- Problems and solutions that go beyond a single jurisdiction;
- HOPWA submission, including development of metropolitan-wide strategy for addressing the needs of persons with HIV/AIDS and their families living throughout the Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA) and inclusion of all jurisdictions within the EMSA (relevant to HOPWA recipients)
- Public housing needs and planned programs and activities
- ESG submission, including plan for allocation, development of performance standards for outcome evaluation, and operation/administration of HMIS.

2. Three Steps to Successful Consultation

Step 1: Identify Stakeholders

Leverage Pre-existing Resources

Don't start from scratch!

Don't go it alone!

Pre-existing resources may include:

- Prior Con Plan related consultation efforts
- In-house knowledge & relationships, including entities that are currently or have previously received CPD funds
- Intermediary groups, including area networks/associations, coalitions, task forces, and membership based organizations
- Pre-existing forums/planning processes that overlap with Con Plan activities, especially participatory strategic planning sessions convened by foundations, non-profits, planning authorities or other area-based initiatives

Link to Self-Assessment and Planning Tool in the Citizen Participation and Consultation Toolkit to learn from prior consultation efforts.

Pro-actively Manage the Process

- Maintain a central list of stakeholders that are identified and invited
- To ensure adequate representation, assess list by:
    - Type of stakeholder
    - Geographic area to evaluate involvement of area-based initiatives and non-profits (i.e. community based development orgs)
    - Demographic/target population served by stakeholders
- Review attendance at all engagements against the list to ensure adequate participation by geography and segment. This is an iterative process.

Link to Tool for Using Stakeholder Input in Consolidated Planning.

Step 2: Engage and Obtain Information from Stakeholders

Identify Forums for Engaging Stakeholders

Public hearings are required (24 CFR 91.105 for local jurisdictions and 24 CFR 91.115 for states); in particular, at least one hearing must be scheduled during the development of the Con Plan. However, it is difficult to meet all the goals of consulting with stakeholders (identifying needs and priorities, as well as existing capacity and opportunities to leverage resources) if engagement is limited to public hearings. Additionally, the regulations require jurisdictions to explore public involvement techniques.

Some options for forums include:

- ***Survey(s)/questionnaire(s), poll(s) as well as comment and response sheet(s)*** allow(s) for anonymous feedback. Administered electronically, increases accessibility for stakeholders who cannot make it to in-person forums.
- ***Open house(s)*** allow(s) stakeholders who are not comfortable with public speaking to directly talk with the grantee. They generally feature exhibits and presentations.
- ***Focus group(s), roundtable(s) and/or workshop(s)*** can be used to vet specific concerns/ topics. Participants are selected based on what they share in common. Can be in-person or via teleconference to accommodate schedules.
- ***Participatory mapping exercises*** provide opportunities to visualize and interpret data gathered from stakeholders. Maps can be used to evaluate existing and future/proposed plans and activities. They can be used to visualize identify any gaps between need and service areas.
- ***Advisory committee(s), task force(s), and/or working group(s)*** meet(s) regularly and are appointed to study and provide advise on a specific topic. A task force is usually charged to work towards consensus.
- ***Visioning(s)/Charrette(s)*** are intense, creative work sessions managed by design professionals to develop a common vision.

Create a Timetable for Engaging Stakeholders

Once you have identified the appropriate mix of forums, work back from your submission deadline (taking into account the public comment, public hearing(s) and associated notice periods) to outline the timetable for

- Implementing the selected mix of forums—take into account that some forums (e.g. advisory committees) take longer than others (e.g. surveys) to set up and manage.
- Communicating with stakeholders—be sure to plan for as much advance notice as possible, especially for time-intensive forum(s) that require(s) commitment.

Mix and match forums: an open house can include round-table discussions, participatory mapping sessions, and survey questionnaires

Work with stakeholders: CoC(s) can convene forums and/or a task force for developing the homeless strategy!

Identify Appropriate Contact Person for Engaging Partners

Other in-house/agency staff may be most appropriate (i.e. more familiar to stakeholders) based on pre-existing relationship. Delegate the task of contacting stakeholders but make sure you give them support.

Identify Appropriate Mediums and Create Standardized Materials

There are several options for contacting stakeholders, including face-to-face meetings, phone calls, e-mails, personal letters, mass mailings, website publications, public service announcements (PSAs) or advertisements and flyers/posters. The most effective method will vary depending on familiarity between the contact person and the invitee, the invitee's familiarity with the importance of the Con Plan and the process, as well as the forum used to engage stakeholders.

Support the in-house/agency staff that have been assigned to contact stakeholders by providing them with standardized communication materials and talking points.

Link to Citizen Participation and Consultation Activities in the Citizen Participation and Consultation Guide for a detailed discussion of forums for engaging partners as well as the quick start guides for 19 activities that can be used to address different citizen participation or consultation priorities.

Link to Citizen Participation and Stakeholder Consultation Webinar for a detailed discussion of participatory mapping exercises that can be supported by CPD Maps (i.e. the eCon Planning Suite).

Step 3: Follow Up for a Meaningful and Sustained Process

Confirm Input Received

After each consulting event/forum, summarize the information obtained and send to the attendees for their feedback. This will give stakeholders the opportunity to provide clarification and/or identify new information that should be taken into consideration.

> Certainly, thank your participants but don't stop there!

Track Input Received

Tracking input by Con Plan sections will allow you to manage the information gathered from each engagement and provide clear documentation of comments/concerns/information that were either addressed and/or integrated into the Con Plan.

Link to Tool for Using Stakeholder Input in Consolidated Planning.

Evaluate Partner Involvement and Satisfaction

With each engagement, survey partners to determine satisfaction with the process. Use your tracking list to assess whether all identified stakeholders have had the opportunity to participate. For those stakeholders that were invited but did not attend/participate, reach out to determine if there were any barriers that you couldn't address for future engagements.

Provide Updates and Reports on Con Plan and Beyond

Periodic updates will connect stakeholders to the overall Con Plan process and help them keep track of events/forums they were not able to attend. For meaningful, sustained engagement, do not limit updates to the Con Plan. Provide accessible and short quarterly/annual performance reports on CPD programs to demonstrate implementation of strategic and action plans.

Involve Stakeholders in Administration of Programs

If the formation of an advisory committee/task force/working group was necessary to flesh out a strategy, consider using the committee to inform the operations of the relevant CPD program.