

INTRODUCTION

Maryland's Consolidated Plan

The State of Maryland has undertaken a major planning initiative called the Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan is a planning tool required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that guides the use of federal, and to a lesser extent State, housing and community development funds. HUD has established three basic goals for the Consolidated Plan. The goals are:

- **Goal 1. To provide decent housing**
- **Goal 2. To provide a suitable living environment, and**
- **Goal 3. To expand economic opportunities.**

Goal 1 includes: Assisting homeless persons to obtain housing, retaining the affordable housing stock, increasing the availability of permanent housing that is affordable to low-income Americans without discrimination, improving access to housing credit, and increasing supportive housing that includes structural features and services to enable persons with special needs to live in dignity.

Goal 2 includes: Improving the safety and livability of neighborhoods, increasing access to quality facilities and services, reducing the isolation of income groups within areas by de-concentrating housing opportunities and revitalizing deteriorating neighborhoods, restoring, enhancing and preserving natural and physical features of special value for historic, architectural, or aesthetic reasons, and conserving energy resources.

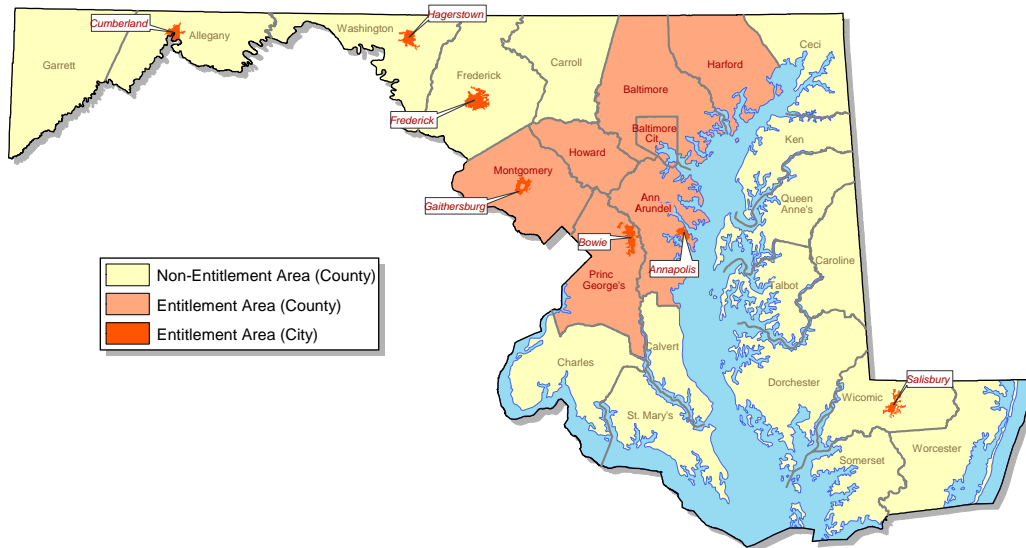
Goal 3 includes: Creating jobs accessible to low-income persons, providing access to credit for community development that promotes long-term economic and social viability, and empowering low-income persons to achieve self-sufficiency in federally-assisted and public housing.

Efforts to achieve each of these goals must primarily benefit low-income persons. The Consolidated Plan must be developed in accordance with the following statutory goals: Elimination of slums and blight, elimination of conditions that are detrimental to health, safety and public welfare, conservation and expansion of the nation's housing stock, expansion and improvement of the quantity and quality of community services, better utilization of land and other natural resources, reduction of the isolation of income groups within communities and geographic areas, restoration and preservation of properties of special value, alleviation of physical and economic distress, and conservation of the nation's scarce energy resources.

It should be noted that the State's Consolidated Plan primarily focuses on the State's **non-entitlement** jurisdictions. The non-entitlement jurisdictions are areas, primarily rural, which do not receive direct allocations of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) funds directly from HUD. Rather, the State administers these funds on their behalf. The State's entitlement jurisdictions which are NOT covered by the State's Plan – because they receive direct funding from HUD - are Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, and the Cities

of Annapolis, Baltimore, Bowie, Cumberland, Frederick, Hagerstown and Salisbury. All other areas in the State fall under the State's Consolidated Plan. The map below shows the State's entitlement and non entitlement jurisdictions.

Maryland's Non-Entitlement and Entitlement Areas by Jurisdiction
2010



It should be noted, however, that because all of the State's own housing, community development, and economic development programs are operated on a Statewide basis, and that some federal programs (such as Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits) are also funded on a Statewide basis, there is some discussion of these areas as well.

What is Consolidated?

The Consolidated Plan is called the Consolidated Plan because it combines all of the planning and application requirements of HUD's four main formula programs into a single Plan. The four formula programs covered by the Plan are the:

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Program**
- **HOME Investments Partnership Program (HOME)**
- **Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Program, and the**
- **Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) Program**

The planning and application requirements that are consolidated include the Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), the HOME program description, the CDBG final statement, the ESG application, the non-Housing Community Development Plan, and the HOPWA application.

There are also other funds under other programs covered by the Consolidated Plan. These funds are obtained through competitions, and, depending upon the program, can either be used either Statewide or only in certain jurisdictions depending upon the requirements of the program. The main competitive programs that fall under the Consolidated Plan include:

- Assisted Living Conversation Program for Eligible Multifamily Projects
- Brownfields Economic Development Initiative
- Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control Programs
- HOPE Programs
- Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program Coordinators
- Housing Counseling Programs
- John Heinz Neighborhood Development Program
- Low-Income Housing Preservation Program
- Public Housing Family Self Sufficiency
- Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) Program
- Revitalization of Severely Distressed Public Housing Program
- Rural Housing and Economic Development Program
- Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Housing (SRO) Program
- Shelter Plus Care Program
- Supportive Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) Program
- Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811) Program and
- Supportive Housing Program, among others

NOTE: HUD is currently promulgating regulations for the HEARTH Act, which will consolidate a number of homeless programs listed above. In addition, they are in the process of developing new regulations for the Sustainable Communities Initiative and the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, both of which may need to be consistent with the Consolidated Plan depending on final regulations for those programs.

This Plan covers funds received under the above programs for federal fiscal years (FFY) 2010 through 2015. Annual updates will be made each year to the Plan during this five year period to: 1) set annual goals for housing, economic, and community development activities, and 2) make any necessary adjustments to policies or objectives because of changes in federal and State programs, or because of changes in needs.

Eligible applicants vary from program to program, with some programs open to virtually any housing provider, while others are limited only to non-profit agencies, others only to public housing authorities, etc. Regardless of who applies for assistance, applications under these programs must be certified as being consistent with the Consolidated Plan at the appropriate level.

State agencies, as well as many non-profit corporations, public housing authorities and others have successfully competed for funding under these competitive programs in the past. *The State strongly supports applications for any activities under these programs, or any other programs, including those for which regulations are being developed, which carry out the goals of the Consolidated Plan.* In addition, it should be noted that while not directly covered by the Consolidated Plan, HUD's funding allocations for the Section 8 Voucher Program is to be made

in a way that enables participating jurisdictions to carry out their own Consolidated Plans. Also, Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) must prepare their own PHA Plans which also must be consistent with the Consolidated Plan.

The Five Year Plan and the Annual Action Plan

This document contains two planning elements. The first element is a "big picture" five-year overall planning strategy. This "big picture" strategy was developed using surveys, public comments, public hearings, census data, meetings with interested parties (for example, agencies working with persons with disabilities), and information from other State agencies. It sets the State's broad goals, such as revitalizing communities or providing housing for low-income persons. The second element is called the one-year Annual Action Plan, which starts on page _____. This element is much more detailed, and covers the specific actions the State plans to take in the next year to help meet its five-year goals. For example, while the five-year Plan states we will provide homeownership opportunities, the Annual Action Plan will specify the number of units to be produced during the coming year. Because it only covers a one-year period, this document is updated annually, with new goals so that eventually we reach the overall "big picture" goals laid out in the five-year Plan.

The Consolidated Plan Development Process

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is the State's lead agency for developing Maryland's Consolidated Plan. DHCD conducted extensive citizen participation and out reach efforts when developing the Plan, as detailed below.

Consultation With Other State Agencies

While DHCD was designated the lead agency in developing the Consolidated Plan, it worked in consultation with other State agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, profit-motivated housing sponsors, and other groups and individuals interested in housing, community development, and economic development policy in Maryland. It also followed an approved Citizen Participation Plan that was designed to involve as many citizens as possible into the plan development process.

State agencies other than DHCD which provided input into the Consolidated Plan included the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), Department of Human Resources (DHR), Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA), Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDoD) and the Maryland Commission on Human Relations (NCHR).

DHMH's Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration has primary responsibility for developing the State's HIV/AIDS policies, and its Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Developmental Disabilities, and Mental Hygiene Administrations helped developed strategies for the disabled. DHR has primary responsibility for helping the homeless in Maryland, and had major input into that section of the Plan, as did DHMH as many homeless persons have disabilities. MDE's primary focus with DHCD was working on lead paint abatement issues, while MDoA focused on the needs of the elderly and frail elderly. Census materials and data were provided by MDP, and DBED primarily focused on economic issues, especially in regard

to the CDBG program where it is allocated part of the State's CDBG funds. The primary focus of the MHRC was on fair housing issues, including assisting in updating the State's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, and the MDoD provided information and input in assisting persons with disabilities with housing opportunities.

Citizen Participation Efforts

DHCD undertook numerous efforts to gain citizen participation in the preparing the Plan. These included conducting needs surveys, holding numerous public hearings, mass mailings, newspaper notices and advertisements, and using information from other open forums (such as those for the State Development Plan) to gain public input into determine the housing, community development, and economic development needs in the State, and to develop strategies for addressing the identified needs.

Surveys

DHCD conducted two needs surveys when developing the Consolidated Plan. One of these surveys focused on Housing and Homeless needs, and the other focused on Community Development and Economic Development needs. These surveys were done on line, with le mail blasts sent to over 1,000 persons and organizations with a stake in the development of the Plan, including all chief elected officials at the County and municipal level, State's Public Housing Authorities, the Department's Housing and Community Development Contacts, for-profit and non-profit developers, Community Action Agencies, service providers and/or advocacy organizations including organizations advocating for or providing services to persons who were homeless, persons with HIV/AIDS, persons with disabilities, or low-income persons in general, and all individuals who had contacted DHCD with an interest in the Consolidated Plan.

Not all persons who visited the surveys filled them out, and some persons only filled them out in part. However, they provided valuable insight on what people felt were important in terms of housing and community needs. Copies of the surveys can be found in **Appendix I and II**.

Public Hearings

A total of 7 public hearings were held specifically on the Plan in communities located throughout the State. All of the public hearings were held in sites accessible to the handicapped. The first three hearings were held before a draft of the Plan was written, so that suggestions, comments and recommendations could be made early in the planning process. The hearings were held at the following dates, times, and places: Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. at the Caroline County Public Library in Denton, Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development in Crownsville, and Thursday, February 4, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. the Fairview Branch Library in Owings. (A fourth hearing had been scheduled for Friday, February 5, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. at the Allegany County Office Complex in Cumberland, but was cancelled due to a record snow storm that closed down highways, buildings, and offices across the entire State). The second set of hearings, held after the draft Plan had been issued, were held on the following days, time and places: Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. at the Caroline County Public Library in Denton, Wednesday, April 21, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development in Crownsville; Thursday, April 22, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. at the Fairview Branch Library in Owings, and Friday, April 23, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. at the Allegany County Office Complex in Cumberland

All notices of public hearings and the comment period were published in newspapers throughout the State, including Baltimore Sun, Baltimore Afro-American, Daily Mail (Hagerstown), Capital Gazette (Annapolis), Star Democrat (Easton), Dorchester Star, Caroline Times-Record, Kent County News, Bay Times, and Record Observer. In addition, DHCD sent out a mass mailing to nonprofit and for-profit housing developers, municipal and county executives, public housing authorities, community action agencies, advocacy organizations, AIDS/HIV organizations, and local housing and community development contacts, among others, to apprise them of the upcoming hearings and encourage their participation at the hearings and in the development of the new Plan.

Copies of the Consolidated Plan in all its stages were mailed to Maryland's regional libraries, including the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, the Blackwell Library in Salisbury, the Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown, the Lewis J. Ort Library in Frostburg, the Frederick Douglas Library in Princess Anne, and the Southern Maryland Regional Library in Charlotte Hall. As the State's regional lending libraries, these libraries made the Plan available to other public libraries throughout Maryland. In addition, a large print version of the Plan was provided to the Maryland Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. The draft Plan was also made available on DHCD's website for downloading, and free copies of the draft Plan were also provided to persons who requested one.

Media Participation

In addition to the above newspaper notices, the State made additional efforts to broaden citizen participation by issuing press releases to over 200 news organizations. These organizations included newspapers, radio, and television stations. The press releases included information on the Consolidated Plan public hearings, the availability of the Plan for public comment, and the priorities for housing, economic development, and community development assistance.

Internet Availability

As noted above, the draft Plan was posted on DHCD's website. Comments on the draft five-year Plan were also taken via e-mail for those who wished to respond using that format.