

The Consolidated Plan: An Often Overlooked One-Stop Shop for Data

CARTER BURTON

While the Consolidated Plan is technically an application for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding, it contains a comprehensive housing needs assessment and market analysis which can jumpstart local affordable housing initiatives, saving local governments from undertaking duplicative data collection exercises.



of which require no citizen participation. Stakeholder input is data and essential to determining community need. While statistics are a good base for supporting initiatives, numbers alone do not accurately represent the concerns of a community. Public input is a requirement for the Consolidated Plan providing easy access to data that has been analyzed and used to identify priority needs.

A Comprehensive Data Set to Identify Community Needs.

The Consolidated Plan allows local governments to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions and provides strategies for implementing actionable steps every 3-5 years which allows for access to recent housing data on a regular basis.

The Con Plan is a catch-all of resources for identifying housing, homeless, and community development needs. The Con Plan incorporates the best available data from HUD, the U.S. Census, American Community Survey (ACS), Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA), Bureau of Justice Statistics, Center for Disease Control, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and more. The Con Plan also considers alternate sources such as Fair Housing Plans, Public Housing Plans, Local Government Comprehensive Plans, SHIP Local Housing Assistance Plans, Community Redevelopment Area Plans, and Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plans to provide supplemental data. There are very few regulatory planning documents that offer a one-stop shop for data, but that is essentially what the Consolidated Plan does.

Community engagement in consolidated planning surpasses requirements set forth for other planning documents, some

Federal regulation requires that HUD Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds be spent in low-to moderate-income areas, or what are known as “target areas.” HUD defines “target areas” as census tracts where at least 51% of the population is low to moderate income. Planners and Houser’s can look to the Consolidated Plan to identify areas of opportunity, and in some cases, find maps available that identify low-income census tracts, block groups, or racial/ethnic concentrated areas of poverty (RECAPs).

The Consolidated Plan supports interagency collaboration, coordination, and consistency, removing “silos,” which reduces opportunities for leveraging ideas and resources. The requirement for consultation with organizations providing housing, health, and social services renders the data that is expansive and representative of the entire community, including its non-profit, private, and government sectors. Basically, the Consolidated Plan functions as a collaborative piece serving a multitude of organizations and supporting interdepartmental cooperation when working towards common goals. The Consolidated Plan also promotes consistency across planning documents. For example, data from the Consolidated Plan can

inform the Housing Element of a Comprehensive Plan or align housing strategies with the SHIP Local Housing Assistance Plan. For all these reasons, the Florida Housing Coalition recommends starting with the Consolidated Plan to help identify need, and the data to support other strategic planning efforts, or to include in applications for funding. **In short, if you have a Consolidated Plan, use it; you will be pleasantly surprised at how much information you already have.**



Carter Burton is the Director of Housing and Community Development and a Technical Advisor with the Florida Coalition. Carter's expertise is in HUD housing and community development programs, including CDBG, HOME, and ESG, and developing Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, and related performance and evaluation reports. Carter also leads the Coalition's work in the area of housing for households with developmental disabilities and authored the Coalition guidebook for those with disabilities to engage in community planning processes.

Center for Racial Equity

The Florida Housing Coalition launched one of its largest initiatives in February, 2021: The Center for Racial Equity.

The Center for Racial Equity is the manifestation of an organizational commitment to advance racial equity in housing and serves as a composite platform for the Coalition's efforts focused on race and equity in public and private investments, regulations, legal and policy frameworks that shape Florida's neighborhoods, cities, and regions. This work is done side by side with national and state organizations.

A Special Thank You to Our Funders Collaborative

To Our Major Underwriters:



BANK OF AMERICA



FIFTH THIRD BANK



To Our Sponsors:



To Our Allies:

Black Business Investment Fund, Community Justice Project, FloridaGreenBuildingCoalition, FloridaProsperityPartnership, Habitat for Humanity of Florida, Hispanic Federation Florida, Local Initiatives Support Corporation-Florida, National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Association of Black Women in Construction, National Association of Real Estate Brokers, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, National Housing Trust, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, University of Florida

To Our Supporters:



SYNOVUS