



Legislation Text

File #: 170588., **Version:** 1

Approval and Adoption of the Assessment of Fair Housing (B)

This item requests the City Commission to conduct a public hearing to approve and adopt the Assessment of Fair Housing.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) operates several federally funded programs that benefit qualifying Cities and other entities. Programs funded by HUD include the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME). As an entitlement jurisdiction, the City annually receives funds from those programs. In FY2017, the City is slated to receive a combined total of approximately \$1.68 million from those programs. The City uses CDBG and HOME funds for many types of services, including Homeowner Rehabilitation, Down Payment Assistance, Homeless Services, Code Enforcement and other services.

In accordance with HUD's regulations, grantees of certain HUD programs, including CDBG and HOME, are required to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH) in their housing and community development activities. Under the new AFFH Final Rule, issued by HUD in July 2015, HUD grantees are required to prepare an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) for their jurisdictions. The AFH, which replaces the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice required under the previous AFFH rule, is designed to allow grantees to more effectively and efficiently plan for meeting their fair housing obligations. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing is a legal requirement that federal agencies and federal grantees further the purposes of the Fair Housing Act. This obligation to affirmatively further fair housing has been in the Fair Housing Act since 1968. HUD's AFFH rule provides an effective planning approach to aid program participants in taking meaningful actions to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, and foster inclusive communities that are free from discrimination.

In order to promote better coordination and to save resources, HUD encourages grantees to work together to develop Joint AFH's. As such the City, Alachua County, the Gainesville Housing Authority and the Alachua County Housing Authority (Partnership) have entered into a formal agreement to produce a Joint AFH. That Partnership, with the City as the lead agency, has been approved by HUD.

After a competitive bid process, the Partnership retained the services of the Florida Housing Coalition (FHC), a Florida nonprofit organization, to assist in the development of the Joint AFH. The Partnership will share the cost of the services equally. Over the last several months, the Partnership and FHC have conducted extensive research, data gathering and analysis. In addition, they collaborated to conduct a comprehensive community participation campaign. That process engaged residents and stakeholders throughout the City and County. The public outreach specifically targeted residents, realtors, lenders, landlords, housing providers and social service agencies. The public participation techniques included interviews and consultations, an online survey and five (5) public workshops conducted at various locations across the City and County.

On October 16, 2017, a Draft Joint AFH was made available for a 45-Day Public Comment Period that ended on November 30, 2017. The City advertised the Public Comment Period in the Gainesville Sun and the

Gainesville Guardian. During that time period, paper and electronic copies of the Draft CPP have been available for public review and comment. The paper copies have been available at the City's Housing and Community Development Division Office in the Thomas Center, the City Clerk's Office in City Hall, the Alachua County Public Library Headquarters Branch (Downtown), the Cone Park Library Branch, the Library Partnership Branch, the Millhopper Library Branch, the Alachua County Community Support Services Office, the Gainesville Housing Authority Office and the Alachua County Housing Authority Office. The Draft Joint AFH also has been available online at the website of each of the Partners.

At the December 7, 2017 City Commission meeting, staff and FHC will present the findings and recommendations of the Assessment, as well as any additional comments received during the Public Comment period. HUD rules require the City to submit the Joint AFH to HUD by January 4, 2018.

HUD rules require Entitlement Jurisdictions, such as Gainesville, to adopt an AFH in order to continue to receive CDBG and HOME funds. In FY2017, the City is programmed to receive a combined total of approximately \$1.68 million from those programs.

The City Commission: 1) hear a AFH presentation from the Florida Housing Coalition; 2) conduct a Public Hearing to gather additional public comments about the Joint Assessment of Fair Housing; 3) adopt the Joint Assessment of Fair Housing; 4) authorize the City Manager or designee to submit an AFH, including all understandings and assurances contained therein, to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and to act on behalf of the City of Gainesville in all matters pertaining to the AFH; and 5) authorize the City Manager or designee to execute any AFH certifications and other related documentation to receive HUD approval of the AFH, subject to approval by the City Attorney.