



Tennessee Housing Development Agency

Andrew Jackson Building Third Floor
502 Deaderick St., Nashville, TN 37243

Bill Haslam
Governor

Ralph M. Perrey
Executive Director

November 22, 2013

Mr. Stephen Moore
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Knoxville Field Office, Region V
John J. Duncan Federal Building
710 Locust Street, Suite 300
Knoxville, TN 37902-2526

Dear Mr. Moore,

We received a copy of the memorandum that Cain Davis, Acting Director of the Knoxville Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) sent to Mary Wilson, Director of Knoxville Field Office, Community Planning and Development, regarding the State of Tennessee's 2012-13 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). We are concerned that FHEO has not approved our CAPER and want to make sure you have all the information you need to better assess our state's efforts in affirmatively furthering fair housing. We hope that the following information will address your concerns and comments more completely than was addressed in the 2012-2013 CAPER initially.

- *The Grantee should engage in affirmative outreach to solicit participation in the CAPER preparation process from eligible members of protected classes including racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, families with children, and persons with disabilities.*

Tennessee sought input and comment from the public, consistent with the State's Citizen Participation Plan. Our outreach for comments was focused around the fifteen day comment period from September 12 – 27, 2013. Efforts to gain citizen participation included the following:

- A summary of the CAPER, notice of the comment period, and a place for the submission of online comments were posted to thda.org in English and Spanish. THDA's website is ADA compliant so that outreach to those with disabilities is inherent in what we post online. The website also features a button that links to google.translate.com which translates the site into other languages to assist those with limited English proficiency. This part of THDA's website is where comments can be received via the web. Other sites that posted a notice of the CAPER public comment period linked to THDA's website and directed the reader to the appropriate webpage.

- A notice in both English and Spanish was published in the following newspapers:
 - Memphis Commercial Appeal
 - Jackson Sun
 - Nashville Tennessean
 - Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle
 - Chattanooga Free Press
 - Knoxville News Sentinel
 - Johnson City Press
- The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's CDBG webpage www.tn.gov/ecd/CDBG/ included a notice that the CAPER Summary was available for comment at thda.org. This notice, along with the rest of their website, could be translated into Spanish by using the 'Translate' button on tn.gov.
- The Tennessee Department of Health distributed the CAPER Summary and notice of solicitation of comments to all of their healthcare stakeholders. These stakeholders included their seven project sponsors.
- The nine Development Districts were asked to post the summary and notice of solicitation of comments on their respective websites. The Development Districts have a contractual obligation to assist us with housing outreach in their respective regions.
- A notice in both English and Spanish was posted on the State of Tennessee's Public Participation page: <https://apps.tn.gov/pmn/index.html>. This is the state's one-stop-shop page for public meetings, public notices and other opportunities for the public to participate in state government.
- THDA posted the solicitation for comments on our agency Facebook page and Twitter feed with a link to the comment page. The Facebook post was in both English and Spanish.

Unfortunately, we did not receive any comments on the CAPER this year. However, we continue to look for additional ways to improve our reach and increase the likelihood that those who wish to make comments know when, where and how to make them. This year saw the addition of our social media accounts to our outreach efforts and the posting to the State of Tennessee Public Participation section of Tennessee's website www.tn.gov. With the addition of social media and as our website analytics suggest, the State continues to increase its efforts in both reaching a broader audience, including eligible members of protected classes, and in soliciting participation in the CAPER preparation process.

The state received a large number of public participation and comments from the process to create and finalize the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). Tennessee's completed AI was reported in our 2012-13 CAPER, along with the extensive outreach conducted as a part of the process. The survey conducted by our contractor, Western Economic Services, garnered more than 800 responses due to significant outreach efforts by the Consolidated Planning partners. The draft of the AI received three comments from state experts in fair housing issues: The Fair Housing Council, the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, and the Disability Law and Advocacy Center.

- *The Grantee should list actions to conduct affirmative outreach to eligible members of protected classes including racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, families with children and persons with disabilities under Citizen Participation.*
 - THDA's website thda.org is an ADA compliant website, operated as such to ensure accessibility to those with disabilities.

- The newspapers that had the published print notices are the widest circulation papers in the state. The readership for each includes eligible members of protected classes.
 - The website thda.org is also equipped with a translator button to convert the site into Spanish. The link to access Spanish translations also allows the translation of other languages.
 - TN.gov offers a 'Translate' button to convert the state's whole website into another language. This allows for the www.tn.gov Public Participation page and the Department of Economic and Community Development page to be translated as needed.
- *The Grantee should submit with the CAPER a copy of notices concerning community meetings and comment made to the Limited English Proficient (LEP) community in languages other than English.*

Attached, please find the notices published in the seven abovementioned newspapers. Additionally, a screen print of the English and Spanish notices from www.thda.org and www.tn.gov/eCd/CDBG/ are also attached.

- *The Grantee should specify all their activities to affirmatively further fair housing and list the amount of money spent on each activity.*

The Consolidated Partners' fair housing activities are detailed in pages 54-60 of the 2012-13 CAPER. Some of the dollar amounts for these activities are included in the CAPER while others were reported without the associated cost to the state. A few of the activities, like policies in support of affirmatively furthering fair housing, may not have a cost to the agency but are reported as current activities that support our fair housing goals. Below, please find a table that enumerates the costs of the activities listed in the 2012-13 CAPER.

In FY 2012-13, the consolidated partners coordinated their efforts in affirmatively furthering fair housing with the development of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) and with various trainings and education. ECD assumed the lead role for developing and securing a statewide Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) over the past year and budgeted \$48,275 for its development. Detailed information on the development of the AI can be found in the FY 2012-13 CAPER, pages 54-55. The consolidated partners additionally spent a total of \$61,696 on education, outreach and training and dedicated over 1,400 hours in staff time to promote fair housing throughout the state. Detailed information on each activity can be found in the table below. The consolidated partners spent a total of \$109,971 on activities to affirmatively further fair housing during FY 2012-13.

One THDA program that we failed to mention in the 2012-13 CAPER that is part of THDA's efforts to affirmatively further fair housing for Tennesseans with disabilities is the Flexible Home Concepts program. This program certifies visitability provisions in newly constructed homes. Visitability standards include:

- Easy access - Thresholds no greater than ½ inch from the driveway or sidewalk and
- Easy use - All doorways on the main floor must be at least 32 inches wide and the main floor must include a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and entertainment area. The bathroom must have space sufficient for a wheelchair to maneuver.

This program was moved from the Council on Developmental Disabilities to THDA to ensure its funding stability. While the program is still in an implementation phase, the program has promise to improve the accessibility of the state's single family housing stock. The Flexible Home Concepts visitability standards have now been included in the state's LIHTC program to improve accessibility of the state's multi-family housing stock.

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Activities

AGENCY	ACTIVITY	AMOUNT
ECD	Development of Analysis of Impediments	\$48,275
ECD	Tennessee Fair Housing Matters Conference sponsorship	\$1,500
ECD	Tennessee Fair Housing Matters Conference – Staff Time (3 staff members attended full day event in Murfreesboro, TN (7.5hrs))	\$755
ECD	SUBTOTAL	\$50,530
DOH	Housing Information Services	\$600
DOH	SUBTOTAL	\$600
THDA	Fair Housing Training for Staff	\$7,706
THDA	Fair Housing Training for Staff – Staff Time (170 staff members received this training (2 hours))	\$8,738
THDA	Tennessee Fair Housing Matters Conference sponsorship	\$2,655
THDA	Tennessee Fair Housing Matters Conference – Staff Time (39 staff members attended full day event in Murfreesboro, TN (7.5hrs))	\$7,517
THDA	Southeastern Affordable Housing Management Association (SAHMA) Fair Housing Compliance course	\$325
THDA	West TN Fair Housing Council Celebration	\$50
THDA	West TN Fair Housing Council Celebration – Staff Time (2 staff members attended full day event in Memphis, TN (13.5 hrs))	\$694
THDA	Homebuyer Education Initiative Annual “Peer Session” Event and Staff Time	\$4,883
THDA	Council on Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Policy and Planning Council participation – (1 staff member – 40 hours annually)	\$1,028
THDA	Flexible Home Concepts Program	\$2,313
THDA	Language Interpreter Services	\$500
THDA	Tennessee Housing Needs Assessment	\$22,432
THDA	SUBTOTAL	\$58,841
ALL	TOTAL	\$109,971

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD)

Tennessee Department of Health (DOH)

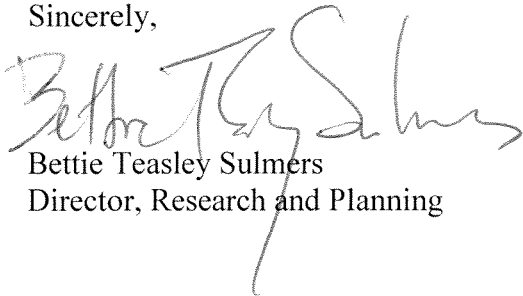
Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA)

Please let us know if you need any additional information from us to satisfy your concerns about Tennessee's 2012-13 CAPER. You can contact either of us for assistance. Our contact information is:

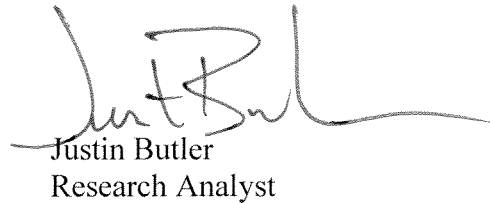
Bettie Teasley Sulmers
Director, Research and Planning
THDA
(615) 815-2125
bteasleysulmers@thda.org

Justin Butler
Research Analyst
THDA
(615) 815-2128
jbutler@thda.org

Sincerely,



Bettie Teasley Sulmers
Director, Research and Planning



Justin Butler
Research Analyst

Cc:

Cain Davis, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Knoxville Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
Mary Wilson, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Knoxville Community Planning and Development
Judi Rose, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Knoxville Community Planning and Development
Coralee Holloway, Tennessee Housing Development Agency
Brooxie Carlton, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development
Tommy Brame, Tennessee Department of Health

Attachments