**PlanFirst Program Application – Due May 15, 2020**

**Introduction:** The Department of Community Affairs’ PlanFirst program recognizes local governments that clearly demonstrate success with implementing their Local Comprehensive Plan. In order to apply for PlanFirst designation, a local government must have participated in at least two Local Comprehensive Plan update cycles and they must also have Qualified Local Government certification and be current on required reporting to DCA. *(To check status, please visit* [*http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/planreview/default.asp*](http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/planreview/default.asp)*).*

A multi-agency review panel will evaluate a number of indicators of community success with plan implementation to select communities for this designation. All of these indicators are equally important, but size of the community is taken into consideration in the evaluation so that communities of various sizes are equally competitive for PlanFirst designation.

**Instructions:** Please answer all the following questions thoroughly, attaching additional pages where necessary, so that the reviewers have sufficient information to measure the success of your Local Comprehensive Plan implementation. Supporting documents might include: news articles, legal ads, lists of attendees, letters of support or other evidence of local involvement and commitment to successful plan implementation activities in your community. *Total application length, including supporting information and support letters, must not exceed 22 pages. Text areas will expand as needed.* Please send your application as one document, not to exceed 22 pages. Please do not send separate files.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Applicant government |  |
| Mailing address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email |  |
| Contact person; title |  |
| Application prepared by |  |
| I, the undersigned authorized representative of the applicant, certify that to the best of my knowledge the information in this application is true and correct. | |
| Name of authorized official signing |  |
| Title of authorized official signing |  |
| Date |  |
| Signature |  |

**PRE-REQUISITES**

**(to be filled out and determined by DCA staff only)**

1. Applicant has participated in at least two Local Comprehensive Plan Update cycles.

Yes No

1. Applicant has a consistent record of maintaining their Qualified Local Government status **and** submitting required reports to DCA, including the current Report of Local Government Finances. *(Within ten years, the applicant cannot lose status more than twice and/or not more than four weeks collectively).*
   1. QLG status: Yes No
   2. Local government reports: Yes No
2. The Applicant has attained the Minimum Standard for performance as called for in their regional commission's Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Yes No

1. The Work Programs included in the Local Comprehensive Plans consist primarily of specific action items that make it clear exactly what the community intends to do to implement their Local Comprehensive Plan.

Yes No

1. The Applicant is consistently among the top performing local governments within the state for implementation of projects listed in your Local Comprehensive Plan’s Community Work Program.

Yes No

**Additional instructions for filling out application:** There are four major indicators listed in the application. They are:

1. **Goals:** The Goals Element details the over-arching concepts envisioned in the Local Comprehensive Plan and carried out in the action and implementation elements of the Plan.
2. **Leadership:** Leadership guides the Local Comprehensive Planning process and they also ensure that the plan is implemented by guiding day-to-day decision making.
3. **Participation:** Each element of the Local Comprehensive Plan must be prepared with opportunity for involvement and input from stakeholders and the general public, ensuring that the plan reflects community needs and values.
4. **Implementation:** Your Local Comprehensive Plan should lay out specific activities that the community plans to undertake following adoption.

Fully explain how your community addresses each indicator by identifying specific examples and resulting local successes. (Each indicator will be scored based on a scale from 0-5 points, except indicator Q, which may score up to 10 points.) Add exhibits, examples, and photographs as needed to tell your story. Do not exceed 22 pages.

**INDICATOR: GOALS**

**A.** The Goals (or Vision) Element of our Local Comprehensive Plan is supported by the community and its leadership. Please explain how.

**B.** Give examples from the Goals Element in your Local Comprehensive Plan that demonstrate how your Goals are ambitious, yet achievable.

**C.** Discuss ways in which the Goals and Vision articulated in your Local Comprehensive Plan are used by your local elected body, appointed bodies, and staff, in making policy decisions affecting the long-term direction of your community on a continual basis.

**D.** As a result of your answer to question “C”, further discuss the goals/results you’ve achieved towards realizing your Goals and Vision.

**INDICATOR: LEADERSHIP**

**E.** Describe your staffing arrangements (local government staff or contracted relationship) for handling community planning issues and explain why that is the most appropriate arrangement for your community dynamics. Include the number of staff devoted to planning, staff qualifications, and organizational structure.

**F.** Demonstrate that you have an active planning commission or similar body to steer local planning decisions. Include the meeting schedule, a list of members, their affiliations, and background information that is pertinent to their role. Also state why their input is valued.

**G.** Show that you regularly evaluate the effectiveness of your work to implement your Local Comprehensive Plan. Examples may include: annual planning retreats of elected/appointed leadership, monthly staff interdepartmental planning meetings, and/or a regular update of your Community Work Program with a Report of Accomplishments. Also provide documentation for your ongoing processes for accomplishing this which may include but not be limited to agendas, surveys, or articles in the local media.

**H.** Within the table below, list local officials (both elected and appointed) involved in local planning processes, that have recently (within the last 5 years) attended training on how to use the Local Comprehensive Plan effectively. These trainings may include those from DCA’s Community Planning Institute, the Georgia Academy, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, GAZA, GMA or ACCG land use or planning classes, and other similar courses. Add more rows if necessary.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Elected/Appointed Official, Name & Title | Course Name | Agency Sponsoring the Event | Dates |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**I.** Discuss your leadership’s effort to build collaborative partnerships that will achieve shared Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and/or projects listed in your Community Work Program that have been identified in your Local Comprehensive Plan. Partners may include, but are not limited to: The Chamber of Commerce, Regional Commission, Development Authority or other local governments. Include references and page numbers from your current or previous Local Comprehensive Plan. You may also attach letters of support from your partnering organizations, providing specific examples of collaborative efforts.

**INDICATOR: PARTICIPATION**

**J.** Demonstrate how your Local Comprehensive Plan was prepared with multiple community input opportunities that would go beyond the legally mandated public hearings. You may provide information and/or documentation that illustrates your public participation process. Examples include: agendas, sign-in sheets, photos, survey results, and other meeting materials.

**K.** Share how community input was received and incorporated into the following Local Comprehensive Plan Elements: Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and the Community Work Program.

**L.** Specify the members of your Local Comprehensive Plan’s steering committee and their role in the community (e.g. planning commissioner, school board member, neighborhood association, or business owner). Also please share how the steering committee contributed to the development of the Local Comprehensive Plan, including how many times they met throughout the process.

**M.** After adoption of your Local Comprehensive Plan, what active, ongoing, outreach processes have you used to solicit input on planning matters from a cross-section of the community? How have you ensured that your processes are responsive to stakeholders representing all demographic and socio-economic backgrounds?

**N.** List any active advocates you have for Local Comprehensive Plan implementation (such as activist citizens, organizations or neighborhood groups) that affect decisions made by community leaders. How have they affected these decisions?

**INDICATOR: IMPLEMENTATION**

**O.** Demonstrate how your projects/activities in your Community Work Program address items discussed in both your Goals Element and Needs and Opportunities Element.

**P.** Describe the role your Community Work Program plays in your community’s resource allocation (i.e. annual budget, capital budget, staff resources, facilities, etc.)

**Q.** Provide ten of your best recent examples of projects/activities carried out as a direct result of your community’s current or previous Local Comprehensive Plan. Provide references (section and page number from your current or previous plan). Explain how these projects/activities were a result of the plan or the planning process. You may also include photographs, newspaper articles or other exhibits to elaborate on these examples.

Please attach additional sheets as needed to tell your story. Your application must not exceed 22 pages. Your application should be saved/scanned as a PDF document and emailed to [ebony.simpson@dca.ga.gov](mailto:ebony.simpson@dca.ga.gov) no later than May 15, 2020. For more information, contact Ebony Simpson at [ebony.simpson@dca.ga.gov](mailto:ebony.simpson@dca.ga.gov) or 912-663-9865.