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COLUMBUS CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

2024 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

MAY 2024



Executive Summary

AP-05 Executive Summary – 24 CFR 91.200(c), 91.220(b)

1. Introduction

The City of Columbus's 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan provides a comprehensive strategy for leveraging Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the 2024 program year. This plan details the anticipated completion of CDBG and HOME projects, funding allocations, associated activities, and projected beneficiaries. Notably, the 2024 program year marks the fourth phase of implementation under Columbus's 2021-2025 Five Year Consolidated Plan, which establishes priorities and directives for HUD fund allocation over a half-decade period. During this year, Columbus is committed to addressing critical needs such as housing affordability, bolstering public services, enhancing public facilities and infrastructure, promoting fair housing practices, and optimizing program administration. By aligning with these priorities, the City aims to efficiently utilize HUD funds to foster sustainable community development and improve the quality of life for its residents.

2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan

Priority needs for the 2021 through 2025 planning period were developed based on citizen participation, stakeholder consultation, and analysis of the city's top housing, homeless, special needs populations, and non-housing community development needs. These priorities included:

Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply

Development of new single-family and multifamily affordable housing units for both homeownership and rental, to include elderly housing units and units produced by qualifying Community Housing Development Organizations.

Housing Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of homeowner housing to benefit extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

Housing Assistance and Navigation

Supportive programs and services to increase housing access and safety, including accessibility modifications to existing homes, down-payment assistance, tenant-based rental assistance, and lead-based paint testing.

Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements

Promote quality of life and neighborhood revitalization through improvements to current public infrastructure and facilities.

Public Services

Services provided by nonprofit organizations that benefit low-income residents such as homeless, youth, disabled, elderly, and other special populations.

Fair Housing

Provide services to residents and housing providers to advance fair housing.

COVID-19 Response

Funding to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 such as temporary rent, mortgage or utility assistance; financial assistance to small businesses, and other pandemic-related community support.

Program Administration

Plan and administer funding for community development and housing activities with transparency, community involvement, and full compliance with federal regulations.

3. Evaluation of past performance

Annually, the City of Columbus assesses its advancements toward both its long-term and yearly objectives through the creation of a Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). This report must be submitted to HUD within 90 days of the commencement of a new program year. Copies of recent CAPERs can be examined at Columbus's Community Reinvestment and Real Estate Department or accessed online at:

<https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Planning/CAPER>.

4. Summary of citizen participation process and consultation process

Throughout the program year, the City of Columbus engages in diverse public outreach efforts to gather input from city staff, government and non-profit agencies, affordable housing developers, local service providers, and residents.

During the preparation of this Annual Action Plan, the City held a formal public hearing on January 8, 2024, to gather input from interested stakeholders. A second Public Hearing will be held on April 2, 2024, to gather feedback on the draft. This input is summarized in the Participation section of this document. Public comments on the draft Annual Action Plan were received throughout a 30-day public comment period from March 22, 2024, to April 22, 2024.

5. Summary of public comments

The City has not received any comments relevant to the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan during the Public Comment Period or at the Public Hearing held on April 2, 2024.

6. Summary of comments or views not accepted and the reasons for not accepting them.

Not applicable; the City has not received any comments.

7. Summary

During the 2024-2025 program year, the City of Columbus will use its CDBG and HOME fund to address priorities identified in its 2021-2025 Five-Year Consolidated Plan. Specifically, Columbus will fund affordable housing creation, public services and public facility and infrastructure improvements, fair housing and program administration.

The Process

PR-05 Lead & Responsible Agencies – 91.200(b)

1. Agency/entity responsible for preparing/administering the Consolidated Plan

Describe the agency/entity responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan and those responsible for administration of each grant program and funding source.

The following are the agencies/entities responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan and those responsible for administration of each grant program and funding source.

Agency Role	Name	Department/Agency
CDBG Administrator	COLUMBUS	The Community Reinvestment Department
HOME Administrator	COLUMBUS	The Community Reinvestment Department

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

Narrative

Columbus falls under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's CDBG and HOME programs as an entitlement community. The Annual Action Plan outlines projects slated for funding during the 2024 program year, spanning from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

Robert Scott
Director, Community Reinvestment and Real Estate
Columbus Consolidated Government
420 10th Street
Columbus, GA 31901

AP-10 Consultation – 91.100, 91.200(b), 91.215(i)

1. Introduction

In the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan development, Columbus involved 94 residents and stakeholders through meetings, focus groups, interviews, and a survey. The findings were outlined in the Community Participation section of the Consolidated Plan. Additionally, for the 2024 Annual Action Plan interviews were conducted with The Housing Authority of Columbus Georgia and United Way Home For Good.

Ahead of City Council approval and submission to HUD, Columbus plans a 30-day public comment period and a public hearing to gather input from residents and stakeholders on the draft Annual Action Plan.

Provide a concise summary of the jurisdiction’s activities to enhance coordination between public and assisted housing providers and private and governmental health, mental health, and service agencies (91.215(i)).

Columbus collaborates with local medical and housing providers, including mental health services. MercyMed, a partner, offers counseling to low- and moderate-income households. Additionally, the city teams up with NeighborWorks, Habitat for Humanity, and the Land Bank Authority to construct new housing and refurbish existing homes in low- to moderate-income areas. Through these partnerships, Columbus fulfills a crucial function in aligning housing and mental health services for households with limited financial means.

Describe coordination with the Continuum of Care and efforts to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans, and unaccompanied youth) and persons at risk of homelessness.

The City of Columbus is represented on the executive committee of the Columbus-Muscogee/Russell County Continuum of Care. Through monthly participation on the committee, city staff help decide strategies to address homelessness in the region. The City also supports several homelessness agencies, including the Southwest Georgia Housing Opportunities, Home for Good, SafeHouse, and the Open Door Community House as they provide direct services to the chronically homeless and families transitioning out of homelessness.

Describe consultation with the Continuum(s) of Care that serves the jurisdiction's area in determining how to allocate ESG funds, develop performance standards for and evaluate outcomes of projects and activities assisted by ESG funds, and develop funding, policies and procedures for the operation and administration of HMIS.

The City of Columbus is not a direct recipient of ESG funds. However, in its role on the Columbus-Muscogee/Russell County Continuum of Care, the City helps to determine the allocation of ESG funds

according to the city’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness and the 5-Year Consolidated Plan. During the City’s tenure on the executive committee, the CoC has also updated its Data Quality Management Plan with the HMIS Committee and has introduced system performance measures to lower error rates during data collection.

2. Describe agencies, groups, organizations, and others who participated in the process and describe the jurisdiction’s consultations with housing, social service agencies and other entities

	Agency/Group/Organization Name	Type	Section of the Plan Addressed
1	Chattahoochee Valley Libraries	Services – Education	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
2	City of Columbus, City Council	Other – Elected Officials	Economic Development Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
3	City of Columbus, Community Reinvestment	Other – City Staff	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
4	City of Columbus, Fire & EMS	Agency – Emergency Management	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
5	City of Columbus, Parks and Recreation	Services – Children	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
6	City of Columbus, Planning Department	Other – City Staff	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis
7	Coldwell Banker KPDD	Housing	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
8	Columbus 2025	Business and Civic Leaders	Economic Development Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
9	Columbus-Phenix City MPO	Other – Transportation	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
10	Habitat for Humanity	Services – Housing	Housing Need Assessment

			Market Analysis
11	Home for Good	Services - Homeless	Homeless Needs – Families with Children Homeless Needs – Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness Strategy Market Analysis
12	Homeless Resource Network	Services - Homeless	Homeless Needs – Families with Children Homeless Needs – Unaccompanied Youth Homeless Needs - Veterans Homelessness Strategy Market Analysis
13	Hope Harbour	Services – Victims of Domestic Violence	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis
14	Housing Authority of Columbus, GA	Public Housing Authority	Public Housing Needs
15	MercyMed	Health agency	Housing Needs Assessment Market Analysis Non-Homeless Special Needs
16	NeighborWorks	Services - Housing	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis
17	Paz Amigos	Services - Homeless	Homelessness Strategy Non-homeless Special Needs

Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated

Identify any agency types not consulted and provide rationale for not consulting.

During the Consolidated Plan process, a wide variety of community stakeholders throughout the City of Columbus were consulted. A total of 61 professionals were invited to participate in a stakeholder interview. Invitations to participate were emailed to stakeholders or offered by phone. Stakeholders invited to participate represented the following fields: housing developers, real estate agents, public housing authorities, colleges and universities, homeless services, domestic violence services, school districts, non-profit organizations, health service providers, workforce development organizations, businesses, faith-based coalitions, ethnic group organizations, mental health providers, senior services, transit authorities, elected

officials, city staff, libraries, emergency management agencies, legal services providers and regional planning organizations. No agency types were excluded from outreach efforts.

Other local/regional/state/federal planning efforts considered when preparing the Plan

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
10 Year Plan to End Homelessness	Columbus Consolidated Government	The 10 Year Plan aims to make homelessness “atypical, temporary, and non-recurring” through the collaboration of service providers across the city. Eliminating homelessness corresponds with the strategic plan’s public services and affordable housing goals.
2019 Annual Moving to Work Report	Housing Authority of Columbus, GA	Goals of the 2019 Annual MTW Report include converting public housing units to PBV, as well as implementing several activities to expand access to housing for low-income families. These goals overlap with the Strategic Plan goal to expand affordable housing supply.
2022 Annual Moving to Work Plan	Housing Authority of Columbus, GA	Goals of the 2022 Annual Moving to Work Plan include the completion of RAD conversion/demolition for its remaining public housing developments. The creation of additional units for low-income households overlaps with the Strategic Plan goal to expand affordable housing supply.
Columbus 2025 Plan	Greater Columbus, GA Chamber of Commerce	The guiding principles of the Columbus 2025 Plan include “increasing prosperity, improving quality of life and reducing poverty.” Quality of life goals described in the Columbus 2025 overlap with the Strategic Plan’s goals of infrastructure and public facility improvements and expansion of affordable housing supply.
Columbus Consolidated Government 2038	Columbus Consolidated Government	Some of the goals highlighted in the 2038 Comprehensive Plan include expanding opportunities for walking, biking and transit, growing and expanding businesses, and improving access to affordable, quality housing. These goals, along with others listed

Comprehensive Plan		in the Comprehensive Plan, align with the Strategic Plan goals to rehab housing, expand affordable housing supply, provide public services, and improve infrastructure and public facilities.
Columbus – Muscogee County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, 2017–2022	Columbus Consolidated Government	Goals of the city’s Hazard Mitigation Plan include reducing/eliminating community exposure to natural and manmade events and reducing loss to public and private property. These goals indirectly relate to the Strategic Plan’s overall goals of maintaining and expanding affordable housing and protecting and improving infrastructure and public facilities.
River Valley Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)	River Valley Regional Commission	The goals of the CEDs Plan include assisting the workforce of the region, improving infrastructure and improving housing stock – which align with the Strategic Plan goals of housing rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements.

Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts

Narrative (optional):

N/A

AP-12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)

1. Summary of citizen participation process/Efforts made to broaden citizen participation

The City held a workshop on January 8, 2024, to review the city’s 2021–2025 Consolidated Plan priorities. At the workshop staff described eligible activities, provided an estimate of PY 2024 funding, and explained the city’s subgrantee application process. A formal public hearing will be held on Monday, April 2, 2024, to discuss the proposed activities to be funded in the program year.

Summarize citizen participation process and how it impacted goal-setting

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
1	Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/Broad community	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Internet Outreach	Non-targeted/Broad community	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	Public Hearing	Non-targeted/Broad community	No comments received	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Public Comment Period	Non-targeted/Broad community	No comments received	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach

Expected Resources

AP-15 Expected Resources – 91.220(c)(1,2)

Introduction

The City of Columbus receives annual allocations of CDBG and HOME funds for housing construction, rehabilitation initiatives, public services, economic development, and other eligible activities. These funding sources are expected to remain available over the five-year term of the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan. The table below shows the City’s CDBG and HOME allocations for the 2024 program year, including prior year resources.

Anticipated Resources

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 4				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
CDBG	Public - federal	Acquisition Admin and Planning Economic Development Housing	\$1,660,399	\$0	\$2,191,726.68	\$3,852,125.68	\$1,660,399	Block grant from HUD to address housing, community development and economic development needs in the City.

		Public Improvements Public Services						
HOME	Public - federal	Acquisition Homebuyer down payment assistance Multifamily rental new construction Multifamily rental rehab New construction for ownership Tenant Based Rental Assistance	\$1,071,257	\$0	\$0	\$1,071,257	\$1,071,257	Grant from US Department of Housing and Urban Development to address affordable housing needs in the City.

Table 2 - Expected Resources – Priority Table

Explain how federal funds will leverage those additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements will be satisfied.

Nonprofit organizations, as subrecipients of CDBG and HOME funds from the City, enhance their finances through foundation support and fundraising. These external resources expand the reach of City-sponsored programs. The City also encourages seeking additional public and private funds, in line with the Consolidated Plan. Federal funding enables these organizations to extend services to low to moderate-income individuals.

HUD's HOME Program requires a 25% match from non-federal fund sources. Per these requirements, the City requires organizations who receive HOME funding to provide a 25% match using non-federal funds, which is verified through a report submitted to the City on an annual basis.

If appropriate, describe publicly owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that may be used to address the needs identified in the plan.

The City continues to identify properties in its portfolio that can be surplus and conveyed as affordable housing or other beneficial uses for the community. Additionally, the Columbus Land Bank Authority has a stated goal of providing land to be used in the creation of affordable housing and jobs for LMI citizens through residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Annual Goals and Objectives

AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives

Goals Summary Information

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply	2024	2025	Affordable Housing	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply	HOME: \$964,132	Rental units constructed: 1 housing unit Homeowner Housing Added: 11 housing units
2	Housing Rehabilitation	2024	2025	Affordable Housing	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Housing Rehabilitation	CDBG: \$335,240	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 10 housing units
3	Blight Removal	2024	2025	Affordable Housing	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Blight Removal	CDBG: \$239,760	Buildings Demolished: 4 buildings

4	Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements	2024	2025	Non-Housing Community Development	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements	CDBG: \$384,291	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/ Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 4,871 persons assisted
5	Public Services	2024	2025	Non-Housing Community Development Homelessness Non-Homeless Special Needs	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Public Services	CDBG: \$249,059	Public service activities other than Low/ Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 10,484 persons assisted
6	Fair Housing	2024	2025	Other: Fair Housing	Citywide	Fair Housing	CDBG: \$0	Public service activities other than Low/ Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 0 persons assisted
7	COVID-19 Response	2024	2025	Other: COVID-19 Response	Citywide	COVID-19 Response	CDBG: \$0	Public service activities other than Low/ Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 0 persons assisted
8	Program Administration	2024	2025	Other: Program Administration	Citywide	Program Administration	CDBG: \$332,079	N/A

							HOME: \$107,125	
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Table 2 – Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

Goal 1: Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply

Development of new single-family and multifamily affordable housing units for both homeownership and rental, to include elderly housing units and units produced by qualifying Community Housing Development Organizations.

Goal 2: Housing Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of homeowner housing to benefit extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

Goal 3: Housing Assistance and Navigation

Supportive programs and services to increase housing access and safety, including accessibility modifications to existing homes, down-payment assistance, tenant-based rental assistance, and lead-based paint testing.

Goal 4: Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements

Promote quality of life and neighborhood revitalization through improvements to current public infrastructure and facilities.

Goal 5: Public Services

Services provided by nonprofit organizations that benefit low-income residents such as homeless, youth, disabled, elderly, and other special populations.

Goal 6: Fair Housing

Provide services to residents and housing providers to advance fair housing.

Goal 7: COVID-19 Response

Funding to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 such as temporary rent, mortgage or utility assistance; financial assistance to small businesses, and other pandemic-related community support.

Goal 8: Program Administration

Plan and administer funding for community development and housing activities with transparency, community involvement, and full compliance with federal regulations.

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

The projects listed below represent the activities Columbus plans to undertake during the 2024 program year to address the goals of providing decent safe and affordable housing, promoting a suitable living environment, and encouraging investment in infrastructure.

Projects

#	Project Name
1	CDBG Administration
2	Public Service Grants
3	Demolitions
4	Infrastructure and Public Facilities
5	Housing Rehabilitation
6	HOME Administration
7	Affordable Housing Development
8	Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Reserve
9	Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Operating Costs

Table 3 – Project Information

Describe the reasons for allocation priorities and any obstacles to addressing underserved needs

The City's allocation priorities reflect its focus on several needs identified through data analysis, community member input, consultation with City staff and other public agencies, and reviews of relevant plans and studies, such as the 2038 Comprehensive Plan. Key priorities include funding public services, public facilities and infrastructure, and affordable housing development.

The City does not anticipate any obstacle to completing the projects it has identified for the 2024-2025 program year.

AP-38 Project Summary

Project Summary Information

1	Project Name	CDBG Administration
	Target Area	Citywide
	Goals Supported	Program Administration
	Needs Addressed	Program Administration
	Funding	\$332,079
	Description	CDBG Program Administration
	Target Date	June 30, 2025
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	
	Location Description	Department of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, 420 10 th Street, Columbus, GA 31901
	Planned Activities	Salaries, office supplies, advertising, travel, appraisals, printing, cost allocations, etc.
2	Project Name	Public Service Grants

	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Public Services
	Needs Addressed	Public Services
	Funding	\$249,059
	Description	Provision of broad public services covering health, education and homelessness.
	Target Date	June 30, 2025
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	10,484 persons assisted
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Education and career development, healthcare programming, rapid re-housing, financial and wealth building, mentoring, virtual learning programs, CoC and homeless programs, tutorial program, trade-skill training, and similar programs and services designed to benefit LMI persons
3	Project Name	Demolitions
	Target Area	Citywide

	Goals Supported	South Columbus NRSA
	Needs Addressed	Blight Removal
	Funding	\$325,000
	Description	Demolition of dilapidated structures
	Target Date	June 30, 2025
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	4 units
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Demolition
4	Project Name	Infrastructure and Public Facilities
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Infrastructure and Public Facilities Improvements

	Needs Addressed	Infrastructure and Public Facilities Improvements
	Funding	\$384,291
	Description	Improvements to recreational facilities in low-to-moderate income census tracts.
	Target Date	June 30, 2025
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	4,871 persons assisted
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Sidewalks, Street Improvements, Public Facility Improvements
5	Project Name	Housing Rehabilitation Program
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Housing Rehabilitation
	Needs Addressed	Housing Rehabilitation
	Funding	\$250,000

	Description	Rehabilitation of homeowner housing to benefit extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Provision of accessibility upgrades to income eligible households. Provision of lead-based paint testing to income eligible households.
	Target Date	June 30, 2025
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	10 household housing units
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Rehabilitation of homeowner housing to benefit extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Provision of accessibility upgrades to income eligible households. Provision of lead-based paint testing to income eligible households.
6	Project Name	HOME Program Administration
	Target Area	Citywide
	Goals Supported	Program Administration
	Needs Addressed	Program Administration
	Funding	\$107,125

	Description Target Date Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity Location Description Planned Activities	HOME Program Administration June 30, 2025 N/A Department of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, 420 10 th Street, Columbus, GA 31901 Salaries, office supplies, advertising, travel, appraisals, printing, cost allocations, etc.
7	Project Name Target Area Goals Supported Needs Addressed Funding	Affordable Housing Development Citywide South Columbus NRSA Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply \$753,444 (HOME: \$753,444)

	Description	Development of affordable single-family rental and homeowner units. Down-payment assistance.
	Target Date	June 30, 2025
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	12 household housing units
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Development of affordable single-family rental and homeowner units. Down-payment assistance.
8	Project Name	Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Reserve
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Needs Addressed	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Funding	\$160,688
	Description	Acquisition and/or rehabilitation of homebuyer properties

	Target Date	June 30, 2025
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	1 household housing unit
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Acquisition and/or rehabilitation of homebuyer properties
9	Project Name	Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Operating Costs
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Needs Addressed	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Funding	\$50,000
	Description	Salaries, wages, and other employee compensation and benefits; employee education, training, and travel; rent; utilities; communication costs; taxes; insurance; equipment; materials; and supplies.
	Target Date	June 30, 2025

Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	12
Location Description	Citywide
Planned Activities	Salaries, wages, and other employee compensation and benefits; employee education, training, and travel; rent; utilities; communication costs; taxes; insurance; equipment; materials; and supplies.

AP-50 Geographic Distribution – 91.220(f)

Description of the geographic areas of the entitlement (including areas of low-income and minority concentration) where assistance will be directed:

The City directs its CDBG and HOME funds into two geographic areas: a Citywide target area and the South Columbus NRSA. The Citywide target area encompasses the entirety of the City of Columbus, allowing the City to direct CDBG and HOME funds to eligible activities throughout the city. Within the Citywide target area, neighborhoods where the percentage of LMI persons is 51% or higher will be prioritized for CDBG funding. The South Columbus NRSA is a smaller area within the city limits, which is home to approximately 10.8% of the city's total population. An estimated 72% of the residents in the South Columbus NRSA have low or moderate incomes. Eligible activities within both the South Columbus NRSA and Citywide target area include community facilities and improvements, housing rehabilitation and preservation, affordable housing development activities, public services, economic development, planning, and administration.

Geographic Distribution

Target Area	Percentage of Funds
South Columbus NRSA	20%
Citywide	80%

Table 4 – Geographic Distribution

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically

In keeping with the intent and regulations of the federal CDBG and HOME Programs, the City of Columbus will focus its funding in neighborhoods that are predominately composed of low- and moderate-income households and that have substantial needs related to housing quality and affordability, public facilities and infrastructure, and economic development.

The system for establishing the priority for the selection of these projects in Columbus is predicated upon the following criteria:

- Meeting the statutory requirements of the CDBG program
- Meeting the needs of LMI residents
- Prioritizing investment in the South Columbus NRSA
- Focusing on LMI areas or neighborhoods
- Coordination and leveraging of resources
- Response to expressed needs

- Sustainability and/or long-term impact
- The ability to demonstrate measurable progress and success

Priority CDBG funding areas include areas where the percentage of LMI persons is 51% or higher.

Discussion

The South Columbus NRSA is located west of Interstate 185 roughly bound by Brown Avenue and Lumpkin Road on the west, State Spur 22 in the north, and Fort Moore in the south. The portion of the NRSA east of Interstate 185 is bound generally by Old Cusseta Road on the north and east and by Fort Moore in the south. The area is comprised primarily of residential neighborhoods and neighborhood commercial shopping centers. Neighborhoods in the NRSA include Wynnton, Willett, and Avondale Heights. According to HUD's low/moderate income data based on the 2015 ACS, nearly three quarters (72.0%) of residents in the South Columbus NRSA have low or moderate incomes. Residents with low or moderate incomes comprise a significantly larger share in the NRSA compared to the overall population of the city where roughly a third of all residents have low or moderate incomes (39.9%).

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

Introduction

Over the next program year, the City of Columbus plans to assist 6 homebuyers through the production of affordable for-sale units.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	0
Non-Homeless	12
Special-Needs	0
Total	12

Table 3 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	0
The Production of New Units	12
Rehab of Existing Units	0
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	12

Table 4 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type

Discussion

The estimates in the tables above are derived from the anticipated PY 2024 HOME and CDBG projects and activities.

AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

Introduction

Founded in 1938, the Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia (HACG) provides publicly supported housing options for Columbus residents. The HACG also manages and maintains (but does not own) the Harris County, Ellaville, and Buena Vista Housing Authorities. In 2013, the HACG became one of 39 initial Moving To Work agencies. Having shown success with this designation, the HACG has expressed its long-term plans to become a regional Moving To Work agency.

Actions planned during the next year to address the needs to public housing

During its 2024 Moving To Work Plan Year, the HACG plans to continue the RAD/Section 18 Blend conversion process for the remaining 424 public housing units throughout the city. Under this conversion process, the conventional public housing units at Warren Williams + Rivers Homes and Elizabeth F. Canty Homes will become project-based Section 8 voucher units. Once converted there will be no more conventional public housing properties in Columbus, GA.

In 2023, HACG began construction of 90 new mixed-income housing units. BTW South will contain 80 units for low-income seniors earning no more than 60% AMI, and 10 market rate units. This project will be funded utilizing 9% LIHTC, along with other funding sources such as HUD MTW funds, HOME and CDBG. As part of the RAD/Section 18 Blend conversion of Warren Williams + Rivers Homes, the property will be substantially rehabilitated through the use of 4% LIHTC/private activity bonds allocated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). All 182 units will be reserved for low-income families earning 60% or below AMI and project-based Section 8 voucher holders earning no more than 50% AMI. All current residents will be temporarily relocated during construction and relocated back to the site once construction is complete.

Actions to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership

Public housing residents are encouraged to become involved in management with the HACG. The housing authority provides a placement for an HACG resident to serve as a commissioner on the HACG leadership team. Residents are also invited to participate in hearings regarding its Annual Moving To Work Plan and year-end report. The HACG collects and replies to resident comments on these plans. Resident comments are recorded in the final version of the annual plan.

To encourage public housing residents to participate in homeownership, the HACG offers a voluntary Family Self-Sufficiency program to help residents achieve increased financial stability over a 5-year period. The program offers career counseling, job readiness programs, and money management courses. Childcare and transportation assistance are provided.

If the PHA is designated as troubled, describe the manner in which financial assistance will be provided or other assistance

Not applicable.

AP-65 Homeless and Other Special Needs Activities – 91.220(i)

Introduction

Columbus is a participant in the Columbus-Muscogee Continuum of Care, aimed at fostering a collective community commitment to eradicating homelessness. This collaborative effort involves partner agencies working together to enhance access to and utilization of their programs. Columbus remains dedicated to collaborating with the Continuum of Care and local homelessness service providers to realize the city's objectives in addressing homelessness.

Describe the jurisdiction's one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including:

Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs

One of the City's priorities for the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan was to expand the availability of homeless services and housing. Activities funded under this priority may include outreach to unsheltered homeless persons. Local homelessness service providers include the United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley and The Salvation Army. These organizations may offer outreach to people experiencing homelessness by providing food, clothing, and other resources.

Actions to address homeless outreach needs in the 2024 program year include:

- Supporting the Continuum of Care by providing funding for homeless outreach services.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

Through the City's HOME-ARP funding (slated for implementation beginning July 1, 2023), Columbus will contribute \$1,167,947 toward the development of 17 family shelter units to be operated by the Columbus Salvation Army. The City will also contribute \$50,000 in HOME-ARP to Hope Harbour, the region's domestic violence emergency shelter. During PY 24, the City of Columbus may fund services provided by emergency or transitional housing providers, such as the United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley, and The Salvation Army. These providers will continue to offer emergency and transitional housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Actions to address emergency shelter and transitional housing needs in the 2024 program year include:

- Funding through HOME-ARP to support development of 17 new family shelter units
- Supporting the PATH Stability Program

- Funding supportive services for victims of domestic violence
- Conducting rapid re-housing for homeless families

Helping homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living, including shortening the period of time that individuals and families experience homelessness, facilitating access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units, and preventing individuals and families who were recently homeless from becoming homeless again

The City of Columbus and the Columbus-Muscogee CoC support a Housing First model that prioritizes permanent housing and offers case management and other supportive services. The Housing First model supports one of the CoC's priorities, which is to increase access to affordable and permanent supportive housing.

Actions to assist residents experiencing homelessness in making the transition to permanent housing in the 2024 program year include:

- Supporting the PATH Stability Program
- Funding supportive services for victims of domestic violence
- Conducting rapid re-housing for homeless families

Helping low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless, especially extremely low-income individuals and families and those who are: being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care (such as health care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); or, receiving assistance from public or private agencies that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, or youth needs

Housing and service providers in Columbus work together to prevent homelessness in populations who are vulnerable to or at risk of homelessness. At-risk populations include extremely low-income individuals and families, people discharged from institutions, and persons receiving direct assistance with housing, health, social services, education or youth needs. Local service providers such as The Salvation Army offer rent and utility assistance in the city.

Actions to prevent homelessness in the 2024 program year include:

- Conducting rapid re-housing for homeless families

AP-75 Barriers to affordable housing – 91.220(j)

Introduction:

In the upcoming year, the department is gearing up to tackle the challenges posed by various public policies hindering affordable housing. These policies encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from land use controls and tax policies to zoning ordinances and building codes. Recognizing the detrimental impact of these policies, stakeholders have pinpointed the city's property tax structure in Columbus as a significant barrier to affordable housing. At present, homeowners benefit from a homestead exemption tied to the year of purchase, effectively freezing the assessed value of their properties and locking in a fixed tax payment for the duration of their ownership. This tax structure, implemented since 1983, means that property taxes only see adjustments upon sale, improvement, or overall tax rate changes. Despite efforts in 2016, when Columbus citizens voted against a proposition to alter this structure, the community remains committed to exploring avenues to address these housing affordability challenges.

Actions it planned to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment

Instead of continuing to explore additional adjustments to property taxes, Columbus introduced a new proposal: a 1% increase in sales tax. This proposition received voter approval in November 2021, resulting in a raise of the local sales tax rate from 8% to 9%. The revenue generated from this Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) will be allocated towards financing a new judicial building and bolstering the city's public safety budget. This measure is expected to remain effective for a duration of 9 months, during which the community aims to address pressing infrastructure and safety needs without burdening property owners further. The decision to opt for a sales tax hike reflects a strategic shift in funding mechanisms, diversifying revenue sources and distributing the financial responsibility across a broader base of contributors. Proponents argue that this approach ensures that essential civic projects receive adequate funding while mitigating the strain on property owners who may already be grappling with housing affordability challenges. The successful passage of the SPLOST underscores the community's willingness to explore innovative solutions to meet its evolving needs and demonstrates a commitment to responsible fiscal management.

AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction:

This section delineates the City of Columbus's comprehensive approach to safeguarding residents' access to safe, affordable housing while also targeting underserved populations, combating poverty, establishing robust institutional frameworks, and fostering stronger collaboration among public and private sector entities engaged in housing and community development initiatives.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

During the Consolidated Plan planning process, residents and stakeholders voiced concerns about the significant gap in accessible, well-maintained affordable housing. Identifying key barriers, they highlighted:

High development expenses,

Necessity for subsidies to facilitate new affordable housing projects, and

Erosion of existing affordable housing due to rising rents and aging infrastructure requiring renovations.

Moreover, residents and stakeholders stressed the urgency for expanded facilities and services catering to low-income individuals and homeless populations. These services encompass job creation, vocational training, entrepreneurial support, childcare, and case management.

In response, the City of Columbus intends to allocate funding towards a diverse array of initiatives addressing these unmet needs in housing, services, and infrastructure. The goal is to bridge the gap in affordable housing while simultaneously bolstering support systems for vulnerable populations, thereby enhancing community resilience and fostering sustainable growth.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

The City does not have any plans to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily housing and therefore does not have any refinancing guidelines for that activity.

To bolster and diversify the existing stock of affordable housing, the City aims to forge partnerships with non-profit housing entities and private firms, with the primary objective of augmenting the availability of affordable housing options. Collaborative efforts may involve engaging LIHTC (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) developers or other entities contemplating housing ventures within the city limits. Additionally, the City will explore avenues for securing funding or grants that can be leveraged to inject fresh capital into affordable housing initiatives or programs.

Building upon its commitment to enhancing housing affordability, the City will sustain momentum through various ongoing initiatives. These include the homebuyer down payment assistance program and Homeowner occupied rehabilitation, which facilitates crucial repairs and installations encompassing heating and air conditioning systems, roofing, flooring, plumbing, electrical updates and repairs, windows, and exterior doors.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

In the past decade, HUD has prioritized the mitigation of lead-based paint hazards, an effort echoed by numerous jurisdictions nationwide. The federal Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, an amendment to the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act of 1971, regulates lead-based paint in

federally funded housing. These statutes, alongside subsequent regulations outlined in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's guidelines (24 CFR, part 35), safeguard young children from lead exposure in housing receiving financial assistance or undergoing federal sale.

In the event of property rehabilitation projects, the City of Columbus will conduct assessments to determine the presence of lead-based paint. If identified, the City will adhere to the provisions outlined in the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992. Demonstrating its dedication to this cause, the City of Columbus pledges to test and mitigate lead in all pre-1978 housing units benefiting from federal grant funds across its various housing programs.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

Columbus's strategy to combat poverty centers on elevating the economic status of low-income households, ensuring they surpass the poverty threshold. Presently, educational and employment initiatives targeting poverty reduction are administered by entities like the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Development Board, WorkSource Georgia, Columbus State University, Columbus Technical College, Goodwill, Better Work, and local nonprofit organizations.

In a collaborative effort with community stakeholders, the City secured a Vice President of Poverty Reduction with the United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley. This individual will cultivate strategic partnerships across the region and craft a ten-year actionable plan to reduce poverty in Columbus and the broader Chattahoochee Valley area, incorporating input from various stakeholders. Spearheading this endeavor is the Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition, which secured \$1 million in start-up funding from American Rescue Plan to sustain the position and its associated initiatives for an initial three-year period, while concurrently establishing permanent funding streams.

Economic development strategies at both municipal and regional levels are intricately linked to poverty alleviation and workforce enhancement. The River Valley Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, updated in 2022, prioritizes equipping the local workforce with the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies for 21st-century employment. Key objectives under this mandate involve maintaining dialogue with local employers to ensure workforce training programs align with industry needs, facilitating educational initiatives within the local school systems, aiding military-to-civilian job transitions, and promoting apprenticeships and internships for youth.

Similarly, the Columbus 2025 plan, part of the Regional Prosperity Initiative, underscores the importance of nurturing a skilled and educated workforce to bolster regional competitiveness. Objectives within this framework encompass establishing a comprehensive cradle-to-career partnership to synchronize education, training, business, and social services, expanding access to high-quality early childhood education and family support services, fostering awareness of educational and career pathways from an early age, enhancing mentoring programs for at-risk K-12 students, launching adult education campaigns,

forging collaborations between businesses and educational institutions to tailor programs to target industry needs, and developing retention programs for military personnel transitioning out of service.

Moreover, several nonprofit organizations within Columbus provide emergency assistance to individuals in need. These multifaceted efforts highlight the city's commitment to tackling poverty through a holistic approach, combining educational, employment, and social support initiatives to uplift vulnerable communities and foster inclusive economic growth.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

In August 2023, the Community Reinvestment Department held a mandatory training for all CDBG Public Service sub-recipients. The training covered the department's new CDBG-PS policy manual, and included such topics as client eligibility, eligible activities, reimbursements, beneficiary information, monthly reports, and monitoring. The department has also updated its HOME policies and internal financial management and procurement policies. The department will intensify its sub-recipient monitoring in PY 24, including on-site monitoring for the highest risk sub-recipients. Finally, starting in PY 24, the department will implement its "first in, first ready, first out" process for CDBG Public Facilities. Using this process, the department will accept public facilities applications on a rolling basis. Currently, many projects are facing significant material and construction delays, which makes it difficult to select and implement CDBG-PF projects within the Action Plan year. The alternative process will allow us to plan for construction projects over longer and more realistic timeframes.

In the 2023 program year, the City worked within existing partners and coalitions, such as the Continuum of Care, to meet homeless service needs. In addition, the Community Reinvestment Department held mandatory training for all potential CDBG Public Facilities sub-recipients. The training covered the department's new CDBG-PF policy manual, and included such topics as client eligibility, eligible activities, reimbursements, beneficiary information, monthly reports, procurement, Davis-Bacon and monitoring. In the 2024 program year, The Community Reinvestment Department will work closely with state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other service providers to coordinate delivery of services to city residents. Columbus Consolidated Government will also continue to consult with various housing, homelessness, social service, elderly and disability resource agencies to gather data and identify service gaps. In addition, the Community Reinvestment Department will hold a mandatory training for all potential HOME nonprofit and For-profit developers, as well as those administering our Sweet Home Columbus down payment program, to bring rigidity and specificity to affordable housing development. The training will cover the department's new HOME Affordable Housing Development and Accessibility policy manual, and included such topics as client eligibility, eligible activities, reimbursements, beneficiary information, monthly reports, contractor procurement, BABA, and monitoring.

Actions planned to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies

The City of Columbus will maintain its active involvement in the Columbus–Muscogee Continuum of Care, a collaborative initiative uniting nonprofit, governmental, and business leaders in a collective effort to address homelessness. This partnership encompasses a diverse membership, including providers of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, alongside nonprofit social service organizations and government agencies.

Furthermore, the city hosts an annual affordable housing workshop designed to convene stakeholders with a vested interest in enhancing housing accessibility for populations earning below 80% of the area median income. The workshop serves as a platform for fostering dialogue and collaboration among participants, aiming to bolster both the availability and accessibility of affordable housing options. Additionally, it aims to facilitate the provision of comprehensive support services tailored to the needs of low-income households.

Program Specific Requirements

AP-90 Program Specific Requirements – 91.220(I) (1,2,4)

Introduction:

This section describes program specific requirements for CDBG and HOME funds. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income over the 2024 Program Year period is 70.00%.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Reference 24 CFR 91.220(I)(1)

Projects planned with all CDBG funds expected to be available during the year are identified in the Projects Table. The following identifies program income that is available for use that is included in projects to be carried out.

1. The total amount of program income that will have been received before the start of the next program year and that has not yet been reprogrammed	\$0
2. The amount of proceeds from section 108 loan guarantees that will be used during the year to address the priority needs and specific objectives identified in the grantee's strategic plan	\$0
3. The amount of surplus funds from urban renewal settlements	\$0
4. The amount of any grant funds returned to the line of credit for which the planned use has not been included in a prior statement or plan.	\$0
5. The amount of income from float-funded activities	\$0
Total Program Income	\$0

Other CDBG Requirements

1. The amount of urgent need activities	\$0
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2a. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income. Overall Benefit – A consecutive period of one, two or three years may be used to determine that a minimum overall benefit of 70% of CDBG funds is used to benefit persons of low and moderate income.	70%
2b. Specify the years covered that include this Annual Action Plan.	2024 Program Year

HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)

Reference 24 CFR 91.220(I)(2)

1. A description of other forms of investment being used beyond those identified in Section 92.205 is as follows:

Other forms of investment being used in the HOME Program include Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and funding appropriated through the American Rescue Plan act of 2021. No other forms of investment are contemplated for the use in the HOME Program beyond those identified in 92.205. outside of those listed above.

2. A description of the guidelines that will be used for resale or recapture of HOME funds when used for homebuyer activities as required in 92.254, is as follows:

The City’s Home Program Resale/Recapture Provisions are included in the Grantee Unique Appendices attached to this plan document.

3. A description of the guidelines for resale or recapture that ensures the affordability of units acquired with HOME funds? See 24 CFR 92.254(a)(4) are as follows:

The City’s Home Program Resale/Recapture Provisions are included in the Grantee Unique Appendices attached to this plan document.

4. Plans for using HOME funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily housing that is rehabilitated with HOME funds along with a description of the refinancing guidelines required that will be used under 24 CFR 92.206(b), are as follows:

The City does not have any plans to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily housing and therefore does not have any refinancing guidelines for that activity.