

# **CITY BESSEMER**



## **OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **FY 2021 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

Annual Action Plan  
2021

1

## **Executive Summary**

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

#### **1. Introduction**

The City of Bessemer, Alabama is an Entitlement Community under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD), Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The CDBG Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to entitled cities and counties which allows those communities to focus on developing viable communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanded economic opportunities, with benefits predominantly going to those persons and households of low-and moderate-income.

This document comprises the planning and submission process for the City of Bessemer's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Inasmuch as an Annual Action Plan must be prepared for each year of the Consolidated Plan, the following includes the proposed FY2021 Action Plan. The Plan outlines the City of Bessemer's needs and strategies relative to CDBG entitlement funds for the FY2021 period beginning on June 1, 2021 and ending on May 31, 2022.

The Economic and Community Development of the City of Bessemer serves as the lead agency during the development of the Action Plan. Consolidated Plan rules developed by HUD require all jurisdictions to consult and coordinate with appropriate agencies, and among its own departments, to assure its Consolidated Plan is a comprehensive document that addresses statutory purposes.

To meet these and other requirements in the development of its FY2021 Action Plan, the Economic and Community Development Department consulted with the Bessemer Housing Authority regarding public and assisted housing needs. The department consulted with other service agencies. Public outreach efforts were utilized to gauge the views of residents and community members.

#### **2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan**

This could be a restatement of items or a table listed elsewhere in the plan or a reference to another location. It may also contain any essential items from the housing and homeless needs assessment, the housing market analysis or the strategic plan.

The City has identified the following objectives through its planning process:

- 1) Utilize CDBG funds to improve public facilities, including parks and recreational opportunities, and make public improvements to benefit all residents, but primarily those designated LMI.
- 2) Foster neighborhood stability and combat blight and slum conditions through programs aimed at assisting senior residents through programs which allow them to continue living safely and securely in their homes; partnerships with private partners which will allow the expansion of the city's housing stock; and by encouraging homeownership among LMI persons.
- 3) Encourage economic development through programs aimed at business development, establish partnerships with transportation agencies aimed at connecting LMI residents to job opportunities, historic preservation within the city's commercial district, and job creation.

The desired outcomes of these plans and initiatives include:

- 1) Improved public facilities and public improvements which can be enjoyed by all residents, especially LMI households and neighborhoods which are primarily LMI.
- 2) Clean, safe, and vibrant neighborhoods where decent housing options are available for LMI persons.
- 3) Expanded economic opportunity for all Bessemer residents, but especially those persons of LMI income through the establishment of jobs and commercial activity.

The 2020-24 Consolidated Plan was prepared to serve as a strategic plan for the city's federal entitlement grant resources. The plan utilizes data gathered through feedback with stakeholders in public meetings and through other vehicles, such as an online community needs assessment.

The City intends to continue its efforts to obtain available federal, state, local, and private funding, to provide for community-wide improvements in each of the identified areas outlined as funding permits.

### **3. Evaluation of past performance**

This is an evaluation of past performance that helped lead the grantee to choose its goals or projects.

The City of Bessemer has a large low and low-to-moderate income population. HUD estimates place the city's LMI population at 65 percent. Past community efforts have focused on job creation, housing stability and improvements to public facilities.

The goal of these efforts was to build a safe, clean, and decent community for all residents. The city has established an emergency housing grant program which aims to keep seniors safely in their homes. The program provides federal funds to make emergency repairs to homes owned by the city's seniors. The purpose of this program is two-fold in that it allows seniors to remain in the homes they have enjoyed for years and it maintains the city's housing stock through the repair efforts. A down payment assistance program was created in FY19. Coupled with new interest in Bessemer from housing developers, the city is now focused on helping LMI persons move from rental to homeownership. Bessemer's homeownership rate currently lags the state and county average at just 56 percent.

Other initiatives have included improvements to public facilities and overall public improvements in low-to-moderate neighborhoods. Public facility improvements have included ADA upgrades to the Bessemer Public Library, the Bessemer Recreation Center and DeBardeleben Park. A new "Welcome to Bessemer" sign was erected to remove blight and slum conditions and provide visitors a better first-impression of the city.

The city previously operated an Economic Development Revolving Loan program which aimed to incentivize the creation or expansion of businesses within commercial districts and the creation of jobs for LMI persons. However, the city has ended this program in favor of seeking new ways to incentivize job creation and commercial activity through programs aimed at technical assistance and partnerships with agencies dedicated to job creation. This effort has been successful in that an estimated 7,000 new jobs have been created in Bessemer since 2011, including distribution jobs at the Amazon Distribution Center, BLOX, the Dollar General Distribution Center and the CARVANA Distribution Center. The task now is to connect Bessemer residents to these jobs through partnerships aimed at making transportation available for LMI persons to participate in the expanding job market and incentivize the creation of small businesses and microenterprises which can service the new workforce.

#### **4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process**

Summary from citizen participation section of plan.

The city of Bessemer has created and adopted a Citizen Participation Plan aimed at encouraging the participation of residents in the development of CDBG programs and initiatives. The plan was developed by the Economic and Community Development Department and adopted by the City Council.

Despite the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic, the city was able to engage with stakeholders on the development of programs for the FY21 Action Plan. These citizen participation efforts included public hearings (including virtual meetings) to gather stakeholder feedback on potential programs and activities. One in-person meeting was held at Bessemer City Hall affording residents impacted by the digital divide an opportunity to take part in the planning process.

Residents were afforded the opportunity to:

1. identify housing and community development needs and priorities;
2. review proposed uses of funds; and
3. comment on and review the City's program performance.

All comments, priorities, and proposals received and were considered in the development of the FY2021 Action Plan.

Finally, the proposed plan was shared for the 30-day comment through the city of Bessemer's website at bessemeral.org and through newspaper advertisements in local papers. A copy of the plan was placed at Bessemer City Hall and the Bessemer Public Library.

## **5. Summary of public comments**

This could be a brief narrative summary or reference an attached document from the Citizen Participation section of the Con Plan.

Persons attending the meeting for public comment included members of the Bessemer City Council, the Bessemer Police Department, consultants working on Bessemer's Brownfield Program and members of the Bessemer Public Library and the Bessemer Recreation Center.

Stakeholders generally voiced support for existing programs and activities. City Council members from Districts 2,5 & 6 made mention of the need to expand recreational opportunities for residents across the city, including construction of new parks, especially in low income neighborhoods. Representatives of the Bessemer Police Department expressed interest in working on programs aimed at crime prevention and on partnerships aimed at reducing violence among at-risk youth. Participants from the Bessemer Recreation Center proposed working with the department to market programs such as the Emergency Housing Grant to seniors taking part in programs at the Recreation Center. Stakeholders expressed support for programs aimed at assisting residents in finding better quality housing. Finally, residents voiced support for general public improvements and improvements to public facilities.

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

All comments on the Plan were received, and none were rejected.

## **7. Summary**

The City of Bessemer consulted with various stakeholders in development of the 2020-2024 Five-Year Consolidated Plan and the FY21 Action Plan. This interaction with stakeholders helped prioritize areas and activities for use with CDBG funds. Over the course of the next five years, the city will continue to focus on the needs of housing for the elderly with CDBG grant funds while continuing to work with

public and private partners to expand the city's housing stock. CDBG funds have been identified as a tool to assist in broadening opportunities for LMI households to build, maintain and enjoy a clean, safe, and decent neighborhood environment.

The city is committed to updating and improving public facilities and public infrastructure, particularly in LMI neighborhoods. Programs aimed at parks and recreation development, infrastructure improvements and improvements to public facilities will assist the city's goal of neighborhood revitalization and a better quality of life for all residents.

Finally, city leaders are committed to building a strong economic environment in Bessemer through job creation, creation of commercial activity in LMI neighborhoods, and through expansion of economic opportunity.

The goal of this document is to demonstrate the city's commitment to the ideals espoused by HUD through the CDBG program. The city's CDBG Consolidated Plan and this FY21 CDBG Action Plan have been developed to put these goals and objectives into action so that all residents of Bessemer, especially those who live in LMI households, can thrive.

**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.

Agency Role	Name	Department/Agency
CDBG Administrator	BESSEMER	Economic & Community Development Department

**Table 1 – Responsible Agencies**

**Narrative (optional)**

1. Describe 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.

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

The City of Bessemer's Department of Economic and Community Development prepared the Consolidated Plan. The Department is also responsible for the execution, design and management of all CDBG programs. The City cooperated with the Bessemer Public Housing Authority in development of Fair Housing policies, practices and goals and is cooperating with the One Roof organization to study the need for ESG funds, their use, and possible policies and practices relative to the needs of the homeless. The Bessemer Public Housing Authority is the Lead Agency in

administering the City's Section 8 and Public Housing Programs. One Roof is the Lead Agency in the Continuum of Care in Jefferson County and the municipalities therein.

### **Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information**

#### **Annual Action Plan Public Contact Information**

City of Bessemer office of Economic and Community Development

Abraham Ward, Jr. Principal Rehab Specialist

1700 3rd Avenue North

Bessemer, Alabama 35020

Phone: 205-424-4060 Email: [award@bessemeral.org](mailto:award@bessemeral.org)

Toraine Norris, Mayor Chief of Staff

City of Bessemer

1700 3rd Ave North Bessemer

Phone: 205-424-4060, Email: [tnorris@bessemeral.org](mailto:tnorris@bessemeral.org),



## **AP-10 Consultation – 91.100, 91.200(b), 91.215(I)**

### **1. Introduction**

The City of Bessemer through the Department of Economic and Community Development has endeavored to consult with public and private agencies at every level to develop the FY 2021 Annual Action Plan. Bessemer has a limited number of public service agencies and nonprofits committed to areas such as assisted housing, health services, social services and services to elderly persons, persons with disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS.

However, the Economic and Community Development has sought to overcome this lack of local services by connecting with non-profits headquartered in the Birmingham region who can provide some of the same services to Bessemer being provided in other parts of the Central Alabama region.

The city has maintained a partnership with the Bessemer Housing Authority aimed at accessing public housing needs, planned programs and activities, and strategies for affirmatively furthering fair housing. The city of Bessemer's Stormwater Department has been consulted relative to flood prone areas of the city. The Bessemer Chamber of Commerce is also a partner with the department.

New partnerships are being formulated with the United Way of Central Alabama and the Birmingham Urban League relative to housing needs and other services. The non-profit Create Birmingham has partnered with the city to address the needs of microenterprises and small businesses. These new partnerships were created during the response to COVID-19 and the department will seek to maintain the relationships into the future.

The City also works with agencies such as Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham on housing construction and rehabilitation programs. The City consults with the "One Roof" organization relative to the needs of the homeless. The City has also consulted with members of the faith-based community.

Finally, the city has maintained a working relationship with UAB Medical West and Cahaba Medical relative to health needs within the community.

These partnerships and consultations played a role in the development of the FY2021 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))**

The Department of Economic and Community Development has formed a partnership with the Bessemer Public Housing Authority that has provided successful in bringing more and better housing services and opportunities to the citizens of Bessemer. The City has partnered with the Bessemer Public

Housing Authority to provide educational opportunities relative to health and housing to the citizens of Bessemer. The City has also partnered with the Housing Authority on a program to transition public housing residents to privately-owned housing.

The department has worked with both Medical West Hospital and Cahaba Medical Care on health-related programs, especially during the onset of COVID-19 in the community. Finally, the department is seeking to engage with local mental health and service agencies in the upcoming plan year.

**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 is working with the One Roof organization through the local Continuum of Care to develop policies and practices to address the needs of the homeless and identify the need for ESG funding. One Roof has previously identified 100 chronically homeless persons within the city limits of Bessemer. Of those persons, many are part of homeless families. The City and One Roof are discussing ways to identify the exact numbers of homeless persons and those at-risk of being homeless and seek ways to assist them.

**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 does not receive ESG funds. However, the City is working with the "One Roof" organization to develop policies and practices to address the needs of the homeless and whether to apply for ESG funding.

**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**

**Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated**

1	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Housing Services - Housing Service-Fair Housing
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Housing Need Assessment
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	The Greater Birmingham Habitat for Humanity is a partner with the city of Bessemer in developing affordable housing opportunities. The city and Habitat have consulted on areas for new housing and potential clients for the Habitat program. The anticipated outcome is an expansion of the city's affordable housing stock and opportunities for home-ownership for Bessemer residents.
2	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	Bessemer Public Housing Authority
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Housing PHA Services - Housing Services-Victims of Domestic Violence Services - Broadband Internet Service Providers Services - Narrowing the Digital Divide
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Housing Need Assessment Public Housing Needs
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	The City has consulted with the Bessemer Public Housing Authority on programs such as expanding the city's housing supply and housing opportunities for low-income households. The agencies also briefly discussed expansion of broadband services to public housing residents. These discussions will continue into the upcoming Action Plan year.

3	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	ONE ROOF
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services-homeless
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Needs - Veterans Homelessness Needs - Unaccompanied youth Homelessness Strategy
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	The City consulted directly with One Roof relative to the homeless in the community. The city and One Roof are discussing a partnership aimed at gauging the total numbers of homeless persons and at-risk homeless persons within the city of Bessemer. The partnership will also look at building capacity for homeless services within the city.
4	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	The Foundry
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services-homeless
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Drug Addiction
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	The Foundry was consulted relative to services for the homeless and those dealing with drug addiction. The Foundry also provides other services for those dealing with drug addiction and health, dental, and food insecurity. The city and the Foundry have discussed public improvements near its facilities to ensure a safe environment for its clients.
5	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	AIDS ALABAMA
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-Health

<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless
<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	The city consulted with AIDS Alabama to obtain statistical information on persons with HIV/AIDS in Bessemer. The city proposes to engage further with AIDS Alabama on programs and services aimed at assisting persons with HIV/AIDS in the Bessemer community. The proposed outcome is to identify services for individuals who are HIV positive and have AIDS in the Bessemer community. Currently, such data is limited and unavailable to the department in terms of developing programs to assist those with HIV/AIDS.

**Identify any Agency Types not consulted and provide rationale for not consulting**

**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?
Continuum of Care	One Roof	The Consultation relates to the development of the strategies to address the needs of the homeless with particular emphasis on housing for homeless families. Both One Roof and Bessemer are interested in creating programs to identify and address homelessness in Bessemer.

**Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts**

**Narrative (optional)**



## **AP-12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)**

### **1. Summary of citizen participation process/Efforts made to broaden citizen participation Summarize citizen participation process and how it impacted goal-setting**

The City of Bessemer has established a Citizen Participation process that comports with all HUD rules and regulations. The purpose of the process, relative to CDBG, is to assure that citizens, to the greatest extent possible, have a voice in program design and expenditure goals and targets. Meetings were held on February 17, February 18 and February 24, 2021, to allow citizens to provide input relative to the FY21 Action Plan. Citizens were encouraged to comment on all aspects of the CDBG program and to indicate the programs they would like to see in place. The City's Five-Year Consolidated Action Plan was made available through the City of Bessemer website.

As stated earlier, stakeholders were provided an opportunity to comment on the FY21 plan by notice on the City's website and advertisement in local newspapers.

The public comment period began on March 5th and ended April 5th, 2021. The proposed FY21 Action Plan was listed for viewing at <https://www.bessemeral.org/community-development-announcements>.

The Bessemer City Council unanimously adopted the final plan on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 in a public meeting.

**Citizen Participation Outreach**

<b>Sort Order</b>	<b>Mode of Outreach</b>	<b>Target of Outreach</b>	<b>Summary of response/attendance</b>	<b>Summary of comments received</b>	<b>Summary of comments not accepted and reasons</b>	<b>URL (If applicable)</b>
-------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	----------------------------



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	Public Hearing	Minorities Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: SPANISH Persons with disabilities Non-targeted/broad community	A total of 14 persons attended the various meetings, including members of the Bessemer City Council, the Bessemer Police Department, consultants, and members of the Bessemer's 2021 Brownfield Program and members of the Bessemer Public	Stakeholders attending the public hearings generally voiced support for existing and outlined programs and ideas. City Council members from Districts 2,5 & 6 made mention of the need to expand recreational opportunities for residents across the city. Representatives of the Bessemer Police Department voiced interest in working on programs aimed at crime prevention and partnerships on programs aimed at at-risk youth. Participants from the Bessemer Recreation Center proposed working	All comments were accepted.	17

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)
2	Public Meeting	Minorities Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: SPANISH Persons with disabilities Non-targeted/broad community Residents of Public and Assisted Housing	The Bessemer City Council discussed the Action Plan in meetings on April 13 and April 20.	Council members were generally supportive of the outlined programs and approved the plans on April 20.	NONE.	Citizen Participation Outreach Sort Order Mode of Outreach Target of Outreach Summary of response/attendance Summary of comments received Summary of

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)
3	Internet Outreach	Minorities Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: SPANISH Persons with disabilities Non-targeted/broad community Residents of Public and Assisted Housing	The city's proposed Action Plan was shared on the city of Bessemer's website for a period beginning on March 5, 2021 through April 5, 2021.	NONE RECEIVED VIA INTERNET.	NO COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED.	

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)
4	Newspaper Ad	<p>Minorities</p> <p>Persons with disabilities</p> <p>Non-targeted/broad community</p> <p>Residents of Public and Assisted Housing</p>	<p>The city ran advertisements of its FY Annual Action Plan and proposed activities as well as meeting dates and locations in two local newspapers: the Birmingham News/AL.com and The Western Star. Both papers distribute within the city of Bessemer.</p>	<p>No comments were received.</p>	<p>No comments were received.</p>	

**Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach**

## Expected Resources

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

#### Introduction

Introduction

The City of Bessemer's Economic and Community Development Department manages the CDBG Entitlement grant. The city anticipates funding at \$598,741 in direct allocation from HUD and program income of \$80,000 for the FY21 period. No other funds or resources are anticipated from other private, state or local resources at this time.

#### Anticipated Resources

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				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 Public Improvements Public Services	598,741	80,000	0	678,741	0	The City anticipates annual and program income to be available for FY21.

**Table 5 - 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**

No private, state and local funds have been identified for the FY21 period.

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

The city of Bessemer does own parks and other public facilities where program funds can be expended, including funds directed to public facility and public improvement-related projects.

**Discussion**

The city of Bessemer will primarily depend upon CDBG funds to obtain Action Plan goals and objectives this year. Some local funding will be made available for public facility and public improvement projects, but the exact amount of those funds has not been identified at this time. It is anticipated that CDBG funds may be used to leverage those projects once they have been fully identified and funds are allocated to the projects.

## 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	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)	2020	2021	Affordable Housing	Bessemer, Alabama	Housing Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$255,045	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 25 Household Housing Unit Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers: 18 Households Assisted Homelessness Prevention: 25 Persons Assisted
2	Public Facilities ( EN)	2020	2021	Non-Housing Community Development			CDBG: \$100,000	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 17000 Persons Assisted
3	Public Improvement ( EN)	2020	2021	Non-Housing Community Development			CDBG: \$103,696	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 17000 Persons Assisted



Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
4	Delivery Costs	2020	2021	Affordable Housing Non-Housing Community Development	Bessemer, Alabama	Economic Development Grants (EN) Economic Development Loan (RL) Housing Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN)	CDBG: \$86,000	Public service activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 30 Households Assisted Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 30 Household Housing Unit
5	Program Administration	2020	2021	Administration	Bessemer, Alabama	Economic Development Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$134,000	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 27000 Persons Assisted Public service activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 30 Households Assisted

Table 6 – Goals Summary

## Goal Descriptions

1	<b>Goal Name</b>	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)
	<b>Goal Description</b>	<p>Provides emergency home repair and improvement assistance to elderly, low-to-moderate income, homeowners or disabled low-to-moderate income homeowners, regardless of age, and dependent resident family members who are disabled. Provides up to \$ 7,500 in emergency home repair and improvement assistance. Participants must be 62 years of age or older or permanently disabled. Priority is given to repairs directly related to a certified disability or to direct threats of health and safety.</p> <p>A portion of the grant will be used to provide lead-paint testing to houses which receive emergency housing grant approval.</p> <p>In addition, the city is using a portion of the grant funds for a Down Payment Assistance program directed towards LMI households. The program is in response to the improvement in the job market in the city.</p>
2	<b>Goal Name</b>	Public Facilities ( EN)
	<b>Goal Description</b>	The city has set aside \$100,000 in Program Year 2021 for public facility-related activities. About \$50,000 is being set aside to target public facility improvements, such as improvements to parks and other city facilities. The remaining \$50,000 is being used to support the installation of bus shelters in low-and-moderate income neighborhoods to improve access to transportation and economic development opportunities.
3	<b>Goal Name</b>	Public Improvement ( EN)
	<b>Goal Description</b>	
4	<b>Goal Name</b>	Delivery Costs
	<b>Goal Description</b>	Provide CDBG Support for cost associated with rehabilitation services including the preparation of work specifications, inspections, legal services, underwriting, Environmental Review, and assisting owners and contractors participating in rehabilitation activities authorized under 24CFR 570.202.

5	<b>Goal Name</b>	Program Administration
	<b>Goal Description</b>	<p>Provides CDBG support for costs associated with program administration, including salaries, benefits, office expense, title searches, legal fees, application processing, and other related costs under 24 CFR 570.202. Funds are set aside for Director of Economic and Community Development. Funds can also cover Fair Housing Activities and marketing of Department activities to residents. Capped at 20 percent of grant and program income.</p> <p>About \$99,000 will be used towards general administration of the program, including some Fair Housing related activities. Another \$35,000 has been set aside for local planning efforts.</p>

# Projects

## AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

### Introduction

The City of Bessemer has identified project areas and priorities for the FY21 funds. The primary functions will include program administration, planning cost, lead-paint testing, housing delivery cost, emergency housing grants, home purchase assistance, public improvement and public facility-related projects such as the strategic installation of bus shelters in LMI neighborhoods. Approximately 27,000 residents of Bessemer are expected to benefit in some form or another from the identified activities.

### Projects

#	Project Name
1	ADMINISTRATION
2	PLANNING COST
3	Lead Testing
4	HOUSING DELIVERY COST
5	EMERGENCY GRANTS HOUSING
6	Home Purchase/Down Payment Assistance
7	PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT
8	PUBLIC FACILITIES
9	Public Facilities/Bus Shelters

Table 7 - Project Information

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

Each of the listed projects were identified through consultation with various partners and stakeholders, including residents. The allocation priorities are consistent with goals and objectives identified for the 2021 Program Year. The primary obstacles to addressing these needs will be capacity and potential delays in the project. Also, the Down Payment assistance is predicated on individuals desire to find homes within the city of Bessemer. The department will analyze the outcomes of the allocated projects as the program year closes to determine whether to continue them into FY22.

**AP-38 Project Summary**  
**Project Summary Information**

<b>1</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	ADMINISTRATION
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Program Administration
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Housing Rehabilitation Loan (RL) Housing Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN) Economic Development Loan (RL) Economic Development Grants (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$99,000
	<b>Description</b>	CDBG funds will be used to support cost associated with program administration, including salaries, benefits, office supplies, title searches, legal fees, application processing, and other related costs under 24 CFR 570.202. Funds are aside for a new Director of Economic and Community Development. Funds can also cover Fair Housing Activities and marketing of department activities to residents. Capped at 20 percent of grant and program income.
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	An estimated 17,000 or so persons deemed low and moderate income will benefit from the administration activities, including 27,000 persons overall who live in Bessemer.
	<b>Location Description</b>	Projects will be located in the city of Bessemer, with a focus on Census tracts with low and moderate income households.
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	The Administration portion will pay for general administration of the CDBG grant, including the salary of a new Program Director. Some funds can be set aside for marketing materials and Fair Housing related activities.
<b>2</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	PLANNING COST
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Public Facilities ( EN) Program Administration
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Facilities (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$35,000

	<b>Description</b>	Funds are set aside in FY21 to provide for plans related to open and green space, but may be used to further other plans and studies on behalf of the city. However, funds may also be used to do studies dedicated to various market analyses.
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	An estimated 27,000 persons, of which approximately 17,000 LMI households, will benefit from the activity.
	<b>Location Description</b>	The project location will be the city of Bessemer with an emphasis on low-to-moderate income Census tracts located near the city core.
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	The city has indicated a desire to promote planning for proposed green spaces or recreation spaces in LMI neighborhoods.
<b>3</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	Lead Testing
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Housing Grants (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$15,045
	<b>Description</b>	Provide for lead-based paint regulatory requirements, including test, inspection, risk assessment, project designs, interim controls, abatement and other costs associated with regulatory compliance. 100 % LMI benefit. To benefit to be used in conjunction with Emergency Housing Grant Program
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	An estimated 25 LMI senior or disabled households are anticipated to benefit from the program in FY21.
	<b>Location Description</b>	City of Bessemer
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	Funds will be used to pay the cost associated with lead-based testing associated with the city's Emergency Housing Repair Grant Program.
<b>4</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	HOUSING DELIVERY COST
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama

	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Emergency Repair Grants (EN) Delivery Costs
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Housing Rehabilitation Loan (RL) Housing Grants (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$86,000
	<b>Description</b>	Provide CDBG support for costs associated with rehabilitation services including the preparation of work specifications, inspections, legal services, underwriting, and assisting owners and contractors participating in rehabilitation activities authorized under 24 CFR 570.202.
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	An estimated 27,000 will persons will benefit from the overall delivery of the program. Some 17,000 of these individuals will be LMI individuals.  Some 25 to 50 LMI persons will receive direct benefit from the delivery of the program.
	<b>Location Description</b>	City of Bessemer
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	This will provide for the delivery of the city's housing programs, including the emergency housing grant.
5	<b>Project Name</b>	EMERGENCY GRANTS HOUSING
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Housing Grants (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$150,000
	<b>Description</b>	Provides emergency home repair and improvement assistance to elderly, low-to-moderate income, homeowners or disabled low-to-moderate income homeowners, regardless of age, and dependent resident family members who are disabled. Provides up to \$7,500 in emergency home repair and improvement assistance. Participants must be 62 years of age or older or permanently disabled. Priority is given to repairs directly related to a certified disability or to direct threats of health and safety
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	An estimated 25 LMI senior or disabled households will benefit from the activity.



	<b>Location Description</b>	City of Bessemer
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	The jurisdiction will focus on providing grants to eligible seniors to remain safe and secure in their homes. Staff will identify homeowners eligible for the program and work with contractors and others to address safety issues and code-related issues so that at least 20 seniors can remain in their homes through rehabilitation effort in the 2021 Program Year.
6	<b>Project Name</b>	Home Purchase/Down Payment Assistance
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Housing Grants (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$90,000
	<b>Description</b>	Proposal to provide up to \$5,000 to LMI first time homebuyers in Bessemer to purchase a home due to potential for rising demand for home ownership in the city. Funds can be used to cover up to \$5,000 in down payment assistance to qualified LMI homeowners for a home purchase within the city. The program supports the city's desire to promote home ownership, particularly for low and moderate income families.
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	It is estimated that at least 10-15 LMI households will benefit from this program during the program year, although funding is available to benefit as many as 17 LMI households.
	<b>Location Description</b>	City of Bessemer.
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	The city proposes to set aside \$90,000 to provide grants of up to \$5,000 to LMI first-time homebuyers to purchase a home in Bessemer. The program is being funded because of the rising demand for home ownership in the city due to the influx of new jobs and employment opportunities. The program aims to provide grants towards down payment assistance on the purchase of a home by LMI persons. The department proposes to work with a home counseling agency to equip LMI persons to purchase a home and be knowledgeable homeowners. Once the educational assistance has been provided, the department proposes to make down payment assistance funding available to potential homeowners.

7	<b>Project Name</b>	PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Public Improvement ( EN)
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Facilities (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$103,696
	<b>Description</b>	A portion of this year's grant has been set aside for Public Improvement Activities. Funds can be used for the following: streets, curbs, water and sewer lines, recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds.
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	An estimated 27,000 persons, or 17,000 LMI individuals, will benefit from upgrades and improvement to public infrastructure in Bessemer.
	<b>Location Description</b>	The location of the activities will be in the city of Bessemer with an emphasis on projects within the city's LMI Census Tract areas. Such tracts comprise the majority of the city core.
<b>Planned Activities</b>	The city is currently identifying projects to benefit LMI persons in terms of sidewalks, curb and other public infrastructure repair. CDBG funds may be used in conjunction with other local funds or leveraged with other grant funds.	
8	<b>Project Name</b>	PUBLIC FACILITIES
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Public Facilities ( EN)
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Facilities (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$50,000
	<b>Description</b>	A portion of the grant has been set aside for Public Facilities in Bessemer. Public facilities are considered those owned by the public, such as neighborhood facilities, firehouse, public schools, libraries and park & playgrounds in addition to facilities for persons with special needs such as facilities for the homeless or domestic violence shelters, nursing, or group home for the disabled.
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022

	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	An estimated 27,000 persons, of which 17,000 are LMI, will benefit from activities under this designation.
	<b>Location Description</b>	City of Bessemer
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	The city is setting aside \$50,000 for activities related to public facilities improvements at local parks.
9	<b>Project Name</b>	Public Facilities/Bus Shelters
	<b>Target Area</b>	Bessemer, Alabama
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Public Facilities ( EN)
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Facilities (EN)
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$50,000
	<b>Description</b>	A portion of this year's grant has been set aside to assist with the purchases and installation of public bus shelters along public transportation routes. To be purchased in conjunction with the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority.
	<b>Target Date</b>	5/31/2022
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	Data provided by the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority shows that there are approximately 2,000 on-boards/off-boards in Bessemer for stops along Route 1 while those who use Route 45 in Bessemer average about 1500 on-board/off-board a month. Based on these numbers it is estimated that at least 135 low-to-moderate income persons will use the bus service on a given day per month (number derived by dividing total on-board/off-board by number of days of bus service in the city per month).
	<b>Location Description</b>	The city will target bus shelter activity along Dartmouth Avenue, Ninth Avenue and Fourth Avenue in Bessemer. Census tracts 101, 102 and 103.02 are all LMI Census Tracts where the activity will be concentrated.
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	The city of Bessemer is working with the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority to identify locations for bus shelters in LMI areas. The target locations will be along Dartmouth Avenue, Fourth Avenue and Ninth Avenue.

**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

***All CDBG programs of the City of Bessemer are designed to serve the City as a whole. The City qualifies relative to low-mod service based on the income levels of the citizens of Bessemer.***

**Geographic Distribution**

Target Area	Percentage of Funds
Bessemer, Alabama	100

Table 8 - Geographic Distribution

**Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically**

The entire city of Bessemer qualifies as LMI based on the 65 threshold. However, the department will seek to concentrate funding in the areas with highest LMI populations.

**Discussion**

There is a need for housing, parks and public facilities throughout Bessemer. The entirety of the allocated funds will be dedicated to areas of the city with high minority concentrations and high concentrations of LMI persons. Bessemer is 70 percent African-American and at least 4 percent Hispanic. The general geography of the city includes a concentration of LMI Census Tracts near the city's core. It is in this area where program efforts will be focused, although activities such as Down Payment Assistance will allow persons to purchase a home anywhere within the corporate limits of Bessemer.

## Affordable Housing

### AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

#### Introduction

The city of Bessemer has not identified any one year goals related to homeless, non-homeless and special-need households to be provided affordable housing funds. The city does not receive ESG or HOME funds. The city has as its goal to expand the housing supply, especially housing deemed affordable housing.

The city is working with partners such as Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham on such initiatives. Habitat plans to build at least 50 new homes within Bessemer over the next two years and the city has discussed making down payment assistance available to those seeking a Habitat home. Rental assistance is not included in the FY21 Action Plan priorities, although the city is using CDBG-CV funds to address rental assistance.

The city's primary rehabilitation vehicle at this time is the Emergency Housing Grant program. Approximately 25 households will be assisted through the program in FY21. The city has no current plans for acquisition of existing units.

<b>One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported</b>	
Homeless	0
Non-Homeless	50
Special-Needs	0
Total	50

**Table 9 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement**

<b>One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through</b>	
Rental Assistance	0
The Production of New Units	50
Rehab of Existing Units	25
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	75

**Table 10 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type**

#### Discussion

The city is working with Habitat for Humanity and a new organization and private interest on expanding the housing supply. CDBG funds may be used to assist LMI homeowners with purchases related to the activities of non-profit organizations. The city is also working with the Bessemer Housing Authority on its

plan to expand the level of housing supply available to low-income persons and those with various disabilities, such as special needs.

The city has begun discussions with One Roof on identifying homeless and at-risk individuals in Bessemer. The data is not complete at this time, but, when collected, will be used to determine the level of support needed for homeless housing goals. Initial estimates have placed the number of homeless or at-risk at 100 persons, but this data will necessarily be updated.

## **AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)**

### **Introduction**

The Housing Authority of the City of Bessemer (BHA) manages 1,070 public housing rental units at seven (7) AMPS and administers 473 Section 8 vouchers and 70 VASH vouchers. In addition, BHA manages one (1) bond financed 120 unit Senior Complex and a new 198 unit RAD Multifamily. The first of the developments was built in 1976 and the last was built in 1998. Because of various changes in federal housing policy, it is imperative that BHA engage new comprehensive strategies to accomplish its mission:

The Mission of the Housing Authority of the City of Bessemer is to increase the supply of, and maintain existing affordable rental housing; to encourage homeownership for low-income households and to promote training, educational opportunities and asset independence in a way that improves the health and civic and community vitality of Bessemer, Alabama.

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

To pursue varying and flexible partnerships and funding opportunities to develop additional affordable housing both for rental and homeownership. Increase efforts to broaden the BHA Commissioners policy making ability through information sharing, training and workshops culminating with the creation of an Annual Board/Staff Strategic Planning Workshops. Develop an enhanced real estate Asset Management model to provide for the direction of capital funds in a rational manner, including the potential submission of the Capital Funds Financing Program (CFFP) application. Focus and expand the current Family Self Sufficiency program with an emphasis on educational advancement, homeownership training, job training and asset independence. Develop additional partnerships with other authorities, municipalities, private entities, financial institutions to leverage funding for the benefit of residents and communities. Explore Section 32 Public Housing Homeownership and other public/private mini neighborhood small ownership opportunities. Develop a lease/purchase program for the purpose of extending low-income homeownership for residents who otherwise are unable to purchase at present but will be able to in the next few years in conjunction with the City of Bessemer's Community Development Plans. Increase awareness of the impact of Green Energy Conservation; develop cost saving measures and public/private partnerships to enhance energy efficient developments. Initiate at least one (1) new affordable housing development with an emphasis on creating an affordable, mixed-financed housing community at Hillside; apply for Tax Credits from the Alabama Housing Finance Authority and other private financings. Expand efforts of the Bessemer Housing & Development Corporation, a BHA non-profit instrumentality formed in 2009 to impact neighborhood revitalization throughout the City of Bessemer. Strengthen program operations and fiscal management with the goal being High Performer designation in public housing and continue to expand all aspects of Voucher Management included in the 2009 High Performance Rating.

### **Actions to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and**

### **participate in homeownership**

The Bessemer Public Housing Authority has a program whereby one Public Housing resident sits on the Housing Authorities' Board of Directors. The Bessemer Public Housing Authority has also established a program designed to help transition Public Housing residents into homeownership. The program teaches various financial and life skills necessary to become a homeowner. The City of Bessemer cooperates in this effort to assist in the process when possible. The Agency will expand its FSS program to facilitate a Homeownership program for both Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher residents. The PHA will also develop a Lease Purchase Program for qualified residents and other income eligible.

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

NA

### **Discussion**

The Mission of the Housing Authority of the City of Bessemer is to increase the supply of, and maintain existing affordable rental housing; to encourage homeownership for low-income households and to promote training, educational opportunities and asset independence in a way that improves the health and civic and community vitality of Bessemer, Alabama.



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

### **Introduction**

Bessemer does not currently receive ESG funding, meaning the city is limited in its ability to assist its homeless population. The Community Development Department has reached out in the past to the One Roof organization to assist with assessing and evaluating the city's homeless population and its needs. Currently, the services available to the homeless and their families within Bessemer is limited. One of the department's goals for 2021 will be to build stronger partnerships with agencies such as One Roof to assess and evaluate the homeless situation within the city. Emphasis will also be placed on identifying those at-risk of becoming homeless. The goal is to get an accurate picture of the homeless situation within the city of Bessemer so that plans and activities can be proposed to address homeless and other special needs activities.

### **Describe the jurisdictions one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including**

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

Due to limited staffing, the city of Bessemer has limited ability to address the needs of homeless persons. There is also a lack of resources, as the city does not receive ESG funds. The Community Development Department and Mayor's Office recently began discussions with The One Roof organization on collaboration aimed at addressing homeless needs in the city. The primary objective of the discussions was to identify the number of homeless persons within Bessemer and build capacity within the city to address homeless needs. The city plans to work with One Roof during the program year to identify concrete forms of collaboration to address homeless issues and expand on past efforts with the goal of doing an accurate assessment of the city's homeless population, including those unsheltered and those at-risk of being homeless. Once those individuals have been identified, the city plans to propose actions to address the individual needs of those both homeless and at-risk of becoming homeless.

#### **Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons**

The City has no funding for emergency shelter and transitional housing needs. The city began using its Emergency Storm Shelter as a temporary shelter for homeless persons during the winter of 2020-21. However, there was no turnout for the emergency shelter. The city will seek to address emergency shelter and transitional housing in its discussions with organizations such as One Roof. Another organization based in Bessemer, Latch and Live, has also been identified as a potential partner. The goal is to identify ways to provide both emergency shelter and potential transitional housing for homeless/at-risk persons within Bessemer.

**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 is partnering with One Roof to assess the needs of homeless and those at-risk of homelessness in Bessemer. In order to help chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied adults, the city has to have an accurate count of the homeless population within its boundaries. Past numbers have been pulled from One Roof and the goal is to collaborate with the agency to help identify homeless persons and families so that solutions to housing needs can be proposed. The goal is to propose actionable proposals by the end of FY21 to address the homeless needs, including the amount of time individuals and families experience homelessness. One goal will be to potentially work with the Bessemer Housing Authority to seek ways to provide temporary housing until more permanent, affordable housing can be identified.

**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.**

The City is working with One Roof to determine the level of care needed for the homeless population. Current data is being reviewed with respect to assessing the at-risk population and how best to service them. Currently, the city has no data on those discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care such as health care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and youth facilities and corrections programs and institutions. The collaboration with Medical West and Cahaba Medical Care will help identify potential clients and individuals and families in need of assistance. The city works with the Bessemer Housing Authority on addressing those receiving assistance from public agencies. However, some information is not readily available for other areas such as the number of persons receiving assistance from social services, employment, education, or youth needs.

## **Discussion**

As stated earlier, the city is actively seeking further collaboration with agencies which can assist it with addressing the needs of the homeless. The One Roof organization has indicated a desire to work with the city to identify homeless persons/families and those at-risk. Other agencies such as Latch and Live and the Bessemer Housing Authority can become partners in the effort. One of the goals of the city will be to improve capacity with respect to addressing the needs of homeless persons. This will require

identifying additional resources. The city is proposing to expand its reach to address factors related to homeless and other special needs activities. Currently, there is a lack of partners and data. The relationship with One Roof has the potential to help address these areas as does partnerships with the Bessemer Housing Authority, Medical West and Cahaba Medical Care.

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

### **Introduction:**

The city of Bessemer is committed to providing affordable housing to all through the promotion of Fair Housing. The city has certified its intentions to "affirmatively further fair housing" within its jurisdiction. An Analysis of Impediments was done in 2020 and found no evidence of local policies impacting affordable housing choice and residential development.

The City of Bessemer follows standard housing CODES, and the guidelines of the County Health Department relative to residential housing. Fire protection is maintained at the highest possible level as is police protection. As a result, insurance rates are reasonable. Property tax rates are among the lowest in the country.

### **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**

No public policies were identified or found which can be described as barriers to Fair Housing, including land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations and policies affecting the return on residential investment.

Nevertheless the city has taken steps to promote Fair Housing. The Economic and Community Development Department partnered with the United Way of Central Alabama's Housing Alliance and others to sponsor a *Fair Housing: Know Your Rights* webinar on April 15, 2021. The Mayor also proclaimed April 2021 as Fair Housing Month in Bessemer.

The city plans to continue its partnership with the United Way of Central Alabama and its Housing Alliance to educate residents, tenants and landlords on Fair Housing rules. Additional actions may follow as well. In addition, the city will emphasize through the Economic and Community Development Department the need to ensure Fair Housing Rights for all as the city moves forward in developing and adopting housing policy and a Comprehensive Plan.

### **Discussion:**

The city of Bessemer is committed to providing affordable housing to all and certifies that it will affirmatively further fair housing through the development of its Annual Action Plan and review of local policies and actions which could serve as barriers to fair housing choice. The city will monitor the private sector to ensure Fair Housing policies are being involved and individuals are not being discriminated

against in pursuing housing choice.

## **AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)**

### **Introduction:**

The city of Bessemer is committed to meeting the needs of underserved, foster and maintain affordable housing, evaluate and reduce lead-based paint hazards, reduce the number of poverty-level families, develop institutional structure and enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies. Specific actions to address such areas are outlined in this plan, while others are being developed through partnerships and interactions with relevant agencies.

### **Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs**

An obstacle to meeting the needs of the underserved in Bessemer is a lack of resources. While CDBG funds can be used to help meet some of these needs, the city will continue to explore grant and funding opportunities to meet the needs of the city's underserved population. With the city having a high rate of LMI households, the city plans to first identify the most pressing needs of its underserved population. Having identified the needs of the underserved population, the city plans to pursue avenues of additional funding in PY21 through various public and private sector grant opportunities federal, state and private foundations and nonprofits) to impact the areas identified as pressing for the underserved population. Partnerships with agencies who primarily serve the underserved will also be pursued in PY21. We have reach out to One Roof, Inc. and United Way of Central Alabama. Most recently were have engaged with Meal on Wheels.

### **Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing**

The City is expanding partnerships with organizations whose aim is to provide affordable housing for residents. These partnerships include Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham, the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation and others. With Bessemer experiencing growth in its economic sector, the thinking is this growth will eventually lead to expanded housing opportunities. The city is positioning its CDBG program to assist in helping eligible LMI persons find quality housing within the city. The Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation is working with the city to address housing needs in the city's Northside community, which is home to one of the poorest Census Tract. The partnership aims to return affordable housing to the area and replace slum and blight conditions. The effort involves the non-profit, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham, Navigate Affordable Housing and the city of Bessemer.

In addition, developers are interested in bringing affordable living to Bessemer's Downtown neighborhood. The former City Hall building was sold to Scott Crawford, Inc. in March 2021. The Milwaukee-based company is partnering with Cardinal Capital to rehabilitate the former City Hall into at least 25 to 30 affordable rental units within the Downtown Historic District and commercial area. The developer is not requesting federal funds, but has contacted the state about receiving tax credits which would allow it to rent units to those seeking affordable housing.

Finally, the city and the Bessemer Housing Authority are discussing moving forward with the Juanita Hill Place Development on the city's Southside. The city is also planning to investigate creating an NRSA area. Finally, recommendations have been made to pursue legislative action at the local level to ensure the availability of affordable housing through programs such as improvements to city housing codes.

### **Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards**

The City of Bessemer tests all houses built before 1979 for lead based paint if a painted surface will be disturbed in the rehabilitation process. The City also routinely tests if projects exceed \$5,000.00 in total cost. The City maintains a policy that lead based paint must be abated if identified during the emergency housing grant services and the housing rehabilitation services. The City has sponsored, and will continue to sponsor, public meetings and seminars with partner agencies to inform the public of the dangers of lead-based paint and to educate contractors in required procedures. All participants receive a booklet explaining the dangers of lead-based paint. The City follows all EPA and HUD regulations relative to the treatment and abatement of lead-based paint. Lead based paint is always a consideration in the rehabilitation process.

### **Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families**

The city of Bessemer currently has a poverty rate of 26 percent, according to the most recent Census numbers. This is above both the State and County averages. The goal of City leaders has been to expand the opportunities for residents to find gainful employment by expanding job opportunities within its city limits.

Bessemer has experienced a dramatic increase in job opportunities over the past five years. Companies such as Amazon, Carvana, Lowe's and Dollar General have all located distribution centers within the city. An amazing 7,000 new jobs have been created. The hope is to work with agencies such as the Jefferson County Workforce Development Office, the Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment and the State of Alabama Career Center to provide opportunities for Bessemer residents to connect with the new employment opportunities. The city maintains a strong working relationship with Lawson State Community College, which specializes in programs aimed at the automotive industry, among others.

The hope is these partnerships will allow Bessemer residents to seek, acquire and maintain employment to lower the poverty rate in the city.

### **Actions planned to develop institutional structure**

The City of Bessemer's Economic and Community Development Department is primarily responsible for administering the CDBG grant. The department is currently lacking in capacity due to retirements. However, city leaders do plan to fully staff the department over the next 12 months to ensure quality service in relation to the grant and servicing the needs of Bessemer residents.

Bessemer lacks a strong non-profit community, so the department is seeking non-profit organizations in neighboring Birmingham who can assist with carrying goals and objectives related to the CDBG program. In addition, the department is seeking partnerships with local private industry to address critical issues such as housing supply. As more jobs such as those at Amazon and Carvana have moved into the community, so have opportunities for collaboration.

The city's faith-based community is evolving to better participate in community development, but it is still early. The city has improved its communication with the Continuum of Care to address issues related to homelessness. The city plans to improve some of its delivery issues by:

- Improving capacity within the Economic and Community Development Department
- Creating or expanding partnerships with agencies who can assist the city in carrying out its objectives
- Building stronger coalitions within Bessemer by improving the capacity of its nonprofit community
- Engaging private industry employers on issues related to housing and community development.

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

The City is committed to focusing efforts to ensure the coordination of stakeholders and continual improvements to the programmatic delivery system. The city has established strong partnerships over the past 12 months aimed at enhancing coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies. Some of the partnerships created include those with:

- The Bessemer Housing Authority
- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham
- Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation
- The United Way of Central Alabama

The city is actively pursuing a partnership with the Birmingham Urban League regarding COVID-19 response. In addition, the city has continued talks with agencies such as One Roof and Cahaba Medical Care on services related to the homeless and those who are uninsured.

### **Discussion:**

The city of Bessemer is building strong ties and relationships to address housing affordability and supply, services for the underserved, reduce lead-based paint, develop institutional structure, reduce poverty and work with public and private housing and social services agencies. Great strides have been made within the last year to build stronger relationships with organizations who can bring additional resources



into the community. These resources can assist the city in its efforts to expand the supply of clean, safe and affordable housing and develop programs to minister to the underserved. These budding and growing partnerships will help the city achieve its goals in all areas, but particularly in building stronger communities and neighborhoods.

## Program Specific Requirements

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

#### Introduction:

The City of Bessemer only receives CDBG funding. All funding mentioned in this Action Plan are derivatives of CDBG Entitlement funds or CDBG related Housing Revolving Loan funds.

#### 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	80,000
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
<b>Total Program Income:</b>	<b>80,000</b>

#### Other CDBG Requirements

1. The amount of urgent need activities	0
2. 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. Specify the years covered that include this Annual Action Plan.	70.00%

It is expected that the overall benefit of 70 percent of CDBG funds to benefit low-to-moderate income persons will be realized in FY2021 under the FY2020-24 Consolidated Plan. All programs are designed to achieve 95% low-to-moderate benefit.

