

CITY OF BESSEMER, AL FY22 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) ACTION PLAN

July 2022



Ribbon-cutting for new affordable homes built by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham in Bessemer, December 2021.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-7000

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT

May 13, 2022

The Honorable Kenneth Gulley
Mayor of Bessemer
1700 3rd Avenue North
Bessemer, AL 35020-4906

Dear Mayor Gulley:

I am pleased to inform you of your jurisdiction’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 allocations for the Office of Community Planning and Development’s (CPD) formula programs, which provide funding for housing, community and economic development activities, and assistance for low- and moderate-income persons and special needs populations. Public Law 117-269 includes FY 2022 funding for these programs. Your jurisdiction’s FY 2022 available amounts are as follows:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	\$577,638
Recovery Housing Program (RHP)	\$0
HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME)	\$0
Housing Trust Fund (HTF)	\$0
Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA)	\$0
Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)	\$0

Individuals and families across the country are struggling to recover from four converging crises impacting housing stability: the COVID-19 pandemic, economic hardships, climate change, and racial inequity. Through these bedrock programs, CPD seeks to develop strong communities by promoting integrated approaches that provide decent housing and suitable living environments while expanding economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income and special needs populations, including people living with HIV/AIDS. We urge grantees to strategically plan the disbursement of grant funds to provide relief for those affected by these converging crises and help move our country toward a robust recovery.

Based on your jurisdiction’s CDBG allocation for this year and outstanding Section 108 balances as of May 13, 2022, you also have \$2,388,190 in available Section 108 borrowing authority. Since Section 108 loans are federally guaranteed, this program can leverage your jurisdiction’s existing CDBG funding to access low-interest, long-term financing to invest in your jurisdiction.

HUD continues to emphasize the importance of effective performance measurements in all its formula grant programs. Proper reporting in the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) is critical to ensure grantees comply with program requirements and policies, provide demographic and income information about the persons that benefited from a community's activities, and participate in HUD-directed grantee monitoring. Your ongoing attention to ensuring complete and accurate reporting of performance measurement data continues to be an invaluable resource regarding the impact of these formula grant programs.

The Office of Community Planning and Development is looking forward to working with you to promote steps that will enhance the performance of these critical programs and successfully meet the challenges that our communities face. If you or any member of your staff have questions, please contact your local CPD Office Director.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jemine A. Bryon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "B" at the end.

Jemine A. Bryon
Acting General Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Community Planning and Development



City of Bessemer

Economic & Community Development Department

**FY 2022 PROPOSED ACTION PLAN
CITY OF BESSEMER**

Proposed Statements of Community Development Objectives and Projected Use of Funds

As set forth in 24 CFR Part 91, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires jurisdictions to incorporate their planning and application requirements into one five-year document called the Consolidated Plan. In turn, an Annual Action Plan must be then prepared for each year of the Consolidated Plan. The following constitutes the FY2022 Action Plan.

The projected use of funds stated herein has been developed so as to give maximum priority to activities that will primarily benefit low-to-moderate income persons, or aid in the prevention or elimination of slum and blight conditions. The projected use of funds is consistent with the City's established strategy of stabilizing the community and reversing negative trends associated with urban decay and blight.

2022 CDBG Action Plan Budget

Expected resources for FY2022

Total projected resources FY22	\$871,103.69	100%
*CDBG Allocation	\$577,638	66%
**Projected Program Income	\$85,000	10%
Reimbursement	\$208,465.69	24%

Proposed Activities for FY22

Administration	\$102,200	12%
Planning	\$30,000	3%

Delivery Costs	\$86,000	13%
Emergency Housing Grants for Seniors and Disabled	\$152,000	17%
Lead Paint Testing	\$15,438	2%
Public Services	\$40,000	5%
Public Facilities and Improvements	\$445,465.69	51%
Total proposed expenditures	\$871,103.69	100%

The city of Bessemer anticipates submitting a “Final Statement of Community Development Objectives and Projected Use of Funds” to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on or before **July 28, 2022** (date based on CDBG allocation being received on May 13, 2022).

CITIZEN COMMENTS PERIOD:

The city of Bessemer, office of Economic and Community Development will receive Public Comments on the above proposed Action Plan for 30 days beginning on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 and ending on Friday, July 15, 2022.

Copies of the proposed Action Plan are available for public inspection at www.bessemeral.org and in the Economic and Community Development Department on the Second Floor of Bessemer City Hall. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Additional draft copies will be available online at bessemeral.org on the Community Development Department’s page under “Reports and Action Plans.”

*HUD released the city’s 2022 CDBG allocation on May 13, 2022.

**Program income is comprised of loan receipts from past Housing Revolving Fund and Economic Development loan funds. Such repaid funds, once received, can be directed towards eligible CDBG activities, including 20% towards program administration.

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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) allocation for FY22. Inasmuch as an Annual Action Plan must be prepared for each year of the Consolidated Plan, the following includes the proposed FY2022 Action Plan. The Plan outlines the City of Bessemer's needs and strategies relative to CDBG entitlement funds for the FY2022 period beginning on June 1, 2022 and ending on May 31, 2023.

The Economic and Community Development of the City of Bessemer serves as the lead agency in 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 FY2022 Action Plan, the Economic and Community Development Department consulted with agencies regarding public and assisted housing needs, including the Bessemer Housing Authority. The department consulted with other city departments to identify areas of need. In addition, other agencies such as the Continuum of Care, public and private agencies that address housing, health, social services efforts, employment agencies and several other agencies were consulted at various points in the year to identify city needs and develop goals relative to the creation of this Action Plan. Citizen participation was employed during the preparation and drafting of the plan for FY22 by way of public hearings and opportunities for the public to comment on the proposed plan.

This effort, in addition to feedback from previous year's plans, helped in the development of the FY22 Plan.

The FY22 plan seeks to address areas related to housing, improvements to public facilities and infrastructure, and investments in the Bessemer's human capital.

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 Economic and Community Development Department, through its consultation and citizen participation, has identified the following goals and objectives:

- 1 – Devote CDBG funds towards the improvement of public facilities and make public improvements which will benefit all residents, but primarily those who live in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods.
- 2 – Stabilize neighborhoods and combat blight and slum conditions through housing programs aimed at assisting seniors with housing improvements and through partnerships with private and public partners which will allow the expansion of the city’s housing stock, including the encouragement of homeownership among LMI persons.
- 3 – Invest in the city’s human capital through public service programs aimed at addressing critical need areas which will benefit LMI persons.

The desired outcomes of these plans and initiatives include:

- 1 – Improved delivery of services and amenities to residents through investments in public facilities and public improvements.
- 2 – Clean, safe, affordable and vibrant neighborhoods where decent housing options are available, especially for LMI persons
- 3 – Access to services and knowledge for LMI persons struggling with critical need areas.

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 been an entitlement community since 1995. During this time the city has used CDBG resources to facilitate homeownership and housing rehabilitation, invest in economic growth and job creation, and make needed improvements to public infrastructure and public facilities.

Bessemer has a large low and low-to-moderate income population of 65 percent, according to the latest Census figures and HUD tables. The emergency housing grant program has provided assistance to senior residents in need of emergency repairs to their homes. The city for years operated an Economic Development Revolving Loan program which provided loans to businesses within Bessemer in the hopes of stimulating job growth, especially in distressed neighborhoods. A Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan program offered low-interest loans to residents who could not secure such funds from banking institutions. While these two programs are no longer being utilized by the city, the programs helped in many cases to arrest further declines in distressed neighborhoods.

In addition, the city authorized the use of CDBG funds to make numerous improvements to public facilities, including the Bessemer Public Library, the Bessemer Recreation Center, and DeBardeleben Park. The investments have allowed residents to enjoy these amenities in the city, but especially those residents who suffer with some form of disability. The improvements in all three cases allowed improved access to persons with disabilities to these public facilities as an estimated 6,600 persons (25 percent of the population) with some form of disability. In addition, CDBG funds were used to build a new "Welcome to Bessemer" sign, which sits at the heart of the city's commercial business district and Opportunity Zone off Interstate 20/59, a major federal highway. In FY21, the city reallocated a portion of funds towards the purchase of a new Aerial Fire Engine to replace the aged city vehicle. The new purchase allowed the city to continue operating with a Class 1 ISO rating which ensures lower insurance premiums for businesses and residents throughout the city. The truck's primary service area will be within neighborhoods generally described as "distressed." CARES Act funding has been allocated the last two years to programs aimed at emergency rental and utility assistance, microenterprise stabilization and assistance, and meal delivery services for senior residents.

The city's goal is to allocate CDBG funds in equitable manner which allows benefits which can be realized both short and long-term by its low-to-moderate income population. These efforts will continue into the future.

4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process

Summary from citizen participation section of plan.

The Bessemer City Council adopted an updated Citizen Participation Plan in both FY15 and FY20 (double-check dates). The plan is in compliance with federal regulations found at 24 CFR 91.105. The plan is designed to provide residents, especially those who are low-to-moderate income, an opportunity to participate in the development, implementation and assessment of programs and projects.

The city held public hearings on the morning and evening of February 21, 2022 to solicit feedback from residents on potential programs and activities to include in the FY22 program year. The event was attended by both residents and public officials. In addition, public and private agencies were invited to take part in the public meeting, which was held at a central location at Bessemer City Hall. Residents in need of additional assistance in order to attend the meeting, were asked to contact the Community Development Department at least 48 hours prior to the meeting start date in order for accommodations to be made. Finally, the meeting notice, which was posted at both City Hall and on the city's website, was noticed in both English and Spanish. The city's website's functionality allows residents to access information in their preferred languages.

Attendees at the meeting were given an overview of the program and were afforded an opportunity to:

- Identify housing and community development needs and priorities;
- Review proposed uses of funds; and
- Comment on and review the city's past program performance.

In addition, the city offered residents a 30-day comment period beginning on March 2 to provide written or verbal feedback on proposed Action Plan activities for FY22. The city's proposed Action Plan was posted in the lobby of City Hall, published in newspapers with general circulation within the city and posted to the Community Development page on the city's website. No comments were received on the proposed Action Plan. A delay in the award of allocation required the Economic and Community Development Department to note that activities would be increased or decreased based on the actual allocation delivered by HUD. The city's allocation was made available on May 13, 2022, much later than in past years. Activity funding in this plan has been increased or decreased based on the prior notice.

The city maintains a commitment to consulting with various agencies on community needs in formulating its Annual Action plan. This consultation is on-going and the Economic and Community Development staff has maintained communications with agencies such as the Bessemer Housing Authority, One Roof, the United Way of Central Alabama/Meals on Wheels, Bessemer City Schools, UAB Minority Health, the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation, the Industrial Development Board and many others in developing potential programs and activities. In addition, department staff expanded its reach by connecting with other agencies in discussing potential projects and activities using CDBG resources. One of the goals of the collaboration was to identify ways to leverage the city's CDBG funds with other resources in order to make a larger impact in the Bessemer community. This type of consultation and collaboration will continue into the future.

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 public meetings included members of the Bessemer City Council, the Bessemer Fire Department and members of the general public.

Stakeholders generally voiced support for existing programs and activities, but asked that some programs be modified to ensure greater reach within the community. Others discussed using funds for continued improvement to streets, code enforcement and public safety activities. Attendees complimented the use of CDBG-CV funds for activities which benefitted renters and those in need of utility assistance during the pandemic. There was also discussion on using funds for park upgrades, historic preservation activities and encouraging more business development. Other concerns included ensuring funds dedicated to grants for housing repairs for seniors are being handled to ensure effective use of the programs. Overall, attendees were happy to learn more about the program and the flexibility with which funds can be used to improve the overall quality of life within the community.

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

All comments and views were accepted and taken into consideration in the drafting of the FY22 Action Plan.

7. Summary

The city of Bessemer, through consultation with residents and consultation with other public and private agencies, presents the following activities and projects in the FY22 Action Plan. A combination of CDBG funds and program income will be used to fund activities during this time frame. This plan outlines the priority areas for FY22, which is Year 3 in the city's Consolidated Plan. Areas of need identified in the Consolidated Plan will carry over into the FY22 Action Plan. Over the course of the Consolidated Plan period the city will seek to use these funds to build and maintain a safe, clean, affordable, and decent living environment for residents of the city.

The city is committed to updating and improving the delivery of services through its public facilities and improvements, especially in LMI neighborhoods within the city. 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.

This plan seeks to take the feedback from citizen participation, consultation with other agencies and input from public officials and city departments and present a plan of Action for FY22. Bessemer is committed to the ideals espoused by Congress and HUD through the CDBG program. The city's Consolidated Plan and this FY22 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 neighborhoods, can enjoy a higher quality of life and see incremental improvements within their neighborhoods.

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	BESEMER	Economic & Community Development Department

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

Narrative (optional)

The city of Bessemer's Economic and Community Development Department prepared the Consolidated Plan and each year's Action Plan. The Department is also responsible for execution, design, and management of all CDBG programs.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

City of Bessemer office of Economic and Community Development

Toraine A. Norris, MPA, Economic and Community Development Director

1700 Third Avenue North

Bessemer, Alabama 35020

Phone: 205-424-4060 email: tnorris@bessemeral.org

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

1. Introduction

The city of Bessemer's Economic and Community Development Department has endeavored to consult with public and private agencies at every level to develop the FY2022 Annual Action Plan.

Bessemer has a limited number of public service agencies and nonprofits committed to areas such as assisted housing, homelessness, health services, social services and services to elderly persons, persons with disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS. The department has sought to overcome the city's lack of services by connecting with non-profits and agencies 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.

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 Community Development Department has formed a partnership with the Bessemer Public Housing Authority that has proven successful in bringing better housing and services to residents of Bessemer.

The department has increased its coordination with two medical providers: the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center and Cahaba Medical Care. The coordination includes input and feedback regarding community plans related to health, mental health and other health-related services. Cahaba Medical has also supplied the department with contact information for various health-related services.

Finally, the department maintains its relationship with Medical West Hospital relative to the needs of hospital clients and the Emergency Housing Grant program. Medical West is building a new hospital just outside of Bessemer's city limits and has discussed converting its current facility in the city into a mental health facility.

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 Bessemer maintained communication with the Birmingham/Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby County Continuum of Care during FY21 in order to identify needs and develop strategies as part of its FY22 Action Plan. The city coordinated with One Roof on a Point in Time Homeless count in the city in February 2022. The effort was made to determine an estimated size of the homeless population within the city limits of Bessemer. The Point in Time Count prioritized four groups:

1. Veterans
2. Youth 18-24 years of age.
3. Families
4. Chronic homelessness, focused on those with mental health or disabilities who have spent more than 12 months on the streets.

In addition, the city partnered with the CoC in November 2021 for the Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Competition Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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 Bessemer does not receive ESG funds. However, the city continues to work with organizations such as One Roof and the Continuum of Care to identify needs, funding and strategies to combat homelessness within its jurisdiction. The consultation is on-going and will be bolstered by recent Point-In-Time survey efforts. Funds have been set aside in FY22 for Public Service related activities.

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	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<p>Bessemer Public Housing Authority</p> <p>Housing PHA Services - Housing Services-Children Services-Elderly Persons Services-Persons with Disabilities</p>
	<p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p>	<p>Housing Need Assessment Public Housing Needs</p>
	<p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>The city and the PHA communicate on housing needs related to low income households. The Bessemer Housing Authority shares with the city its Annual Plans and goals related to providing housing within the city. In addition, the Economic and Community Development Department remains in contact with the housing authority regarding programs and services which could be of benefit to housing residents. Finally, the city and housing authority consult on new housing developments and housing development strategies, including scattered site housing and the development/redevelopment of current housing developments owned by the PHA.</p>
2	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<p>GREATER BIRMINGHAM HABITAT FOR HUMANITY</p> <p>Housing Services - Housing</p>
	<p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p>	<p>Housing Need Assessment</p>

	<p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>The Greater Birmingham Habitat for Humanity is a partner organization 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. In addition Habitat has offered to assist the city with rehabilitation of homes where CDBG funds may be not be eligible (ex. flood prone areas). The proposed outcome is the expansion of affordable housing within the city limits of Bessemer.</p>
3	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<p>United Way of Central Alabama</p> <p>Services - Housing Services-Elderly Persons Service-Fair Housing</p>
	<p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p>	<p>Senior Services, Fair Housing</p>
	<p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>The United Way of Central Alabama partnered with the city on the Meals on Wheels program, which is being funded by CDBG-CV funding. IN addition, the agency has been a partner with the city on informational sessions dedicated to Fair Housing and housing, such as assets and opportunities for Landlords. The outcome of the coordination is expected to be a more informed public, including landlords and those who provide housing within the city.</p>
4	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<p>Cahaba Medical Care</p> <p>Services-Children Services-Elderly Persons Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Health Services - Narrowing the Digital Divide Health Agency</p>

	<p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p> <p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	Health Services
5	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<p>Cahaba Medical Care is a Community Health Center (FQHC), with locations throughout central Alabama. The city works with Cahaba Medical Care as a partner and coordinates with them on needs relative to the health of the city's lower income population. Cahaba Medical Care provides feedback and information which the city uses to analyze healthcare needs and potential gaps in health-related services. The agency is also a partner with Economic and Community Development on a broadband study for Bessemer.</p> <p>UAB Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center</p> <p>Services-Children Services-Elderly Persons Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-Health Services-Education Health Agency</p>
	<p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p> <p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	Health Services
	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<p>UAB Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center has partnered with the city of Bessemer on bridging the gap in health services, especially for minority residents. The proposed outcome will be a reduction in health disparities among minorities, including those in the Bessemer area.</p>

6	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p> <p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p> <p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation</p> <p>Housing Services-Employment Neighborhood Organization</p> <p>Housing Need Assessment Economic Development</p> <p>The Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation is a new non-profit operating within the city of Bessemer dedicated to providing new housing and neighborhood revitalization. The agency communicates with the city and the Economic and Community Development Department on housing strategies and neighborhood revitalization efforts. The outcome of this consultation is a better understanding of housing needs in the city and improved coordination in efforts to bring revitalization to distressed areas of the city.</p>
7	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p> <p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p> <p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>One Roof, Inc</p> <p>Services-homeless</p> <p>Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless</p> <p>Homeless Needs - Families with children</p> <p>Homelessness Needs - Veterans</p> <p>Homelessness Needs - Unaccompanied youth</p> <p>Homelessness Strategy</p> <p>The city has consulted with One Roof relative to the homeless population within Bessemer. The consultation included identifying numbers of homeless individuals and potential activities meant to address the city's homeless population. The outcome of this consultation is a better understanding of the needs regarding the city's homeless population and coordination on activities to combat homelessness.</p>

8	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p> <p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p> <p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>CREATE BIRMINGHAM</p> <p>Services-Employment Business Leaders</p> <p>Economic Development</p> <p>The city works with Create Birmingham relative to the needs of small business owners and entrepreneurs. The agency and the city confer on possible solutions to needs affecting microenterprises and consult on ways to improve access to technical assistance and capital for microenterprises. The proposed outcome of these consultations will include better understanding of the issues confronting microenterprise owners, better equipping of microenterprises and growth in the city's economy.</p>
9	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p> <p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p> <p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>Bessemer City Schools</p> <p>Services-Children Services-Education Services - Narrowing the Digital Divide Other government - Local</p> <p>Economic Development</p> <p>The city and the Bessemer City Schools have shared information relative to broadband needs in the city. The Economic and Community Development Department took part in a broadband study in 2022 to assess the broadband needs of Bessemer. The study will be used to pursue broadband related funding at the state and federal levels with the hopes of improving broadband access in the city.</p>

10	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p> <p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p> <p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>AT&T Alabama</p> <p>Services - Broadband Internet Service Providers Services - Narrowing the Digital Divide</p> <p>Economic Development Anti-poverty Strategy</p> <p>The city and AT&T consulted on improvements to broadband access within Bessemer. AT&T shared with the city its efforts to improve broadband access and services available to low-income families. The consultation is expected to result in expanded broadband services within the city.</p>
11	<p>Agency/Group/Organization</p> <p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p> <p>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</p> <p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>Birmingham-Southern College, Urban Environmental Studies Program</p> <p>Services - Narrowing the Digital Divide</p> <p>Market Analysis Economic Development Anti-poverty Strategy</p> <p>The Economic and Community Development Department has consulted and worked with Birmingham-Southern College on numerous projects, including reuse of old buildings in Bessemer and projects aimed at economic development and planning. The college began working with the city in 2022 on a broadband study to assess the broadband needs in Bessemer in hopes of expanding broadband services. The proposed outcome of the study will be a better understanding of broadband needs and data for potential funding opportunities to expand broadband.</p>

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

There were no agencies not consulted as part of the creation of the plan.

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	<p>The city and the Continuum of Care consulted and collaborate on needs related to the homeless population, transitional housing for abused women, and activities related to those with AIDS/HIV.</p> <p>The Continuum of Care's goals align with those of the city in providing shelter and resources to these disadvantaged groups.</p>

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 Plan that comports with HUD rules and regulations. The Economic and Community Development Department has started a policy of reviewing the plan annually to identify any strengths and weaknesses in its citizen participation outreach. The city takes comments from residents throughout the year to facilitate goal-setting. In addition, the city held public meetings on the morning and evening of February 21st to allow residents an opportunity to provide input on programs and activities relative to the FY22 Action Plan. A 30-day public comment period commenced on March 2 and ended on April 1, 2022 with respect to the proposed Action Plan. Another public comment period was commenced between June 15, 2022 and July 15, 2022 after allocations were received and to include the city's reimbursement into the available funding outline for FY22.

Stakeholders are notified of the meetings related to CDBG via the city's website, local newspaper ads and postings in public buildings such as City Hall and the Bessemer Public Library. The various forms of notice are meant to eliminate generational barriers to receiving information and it recognizes the presence of a digital divide in the city. To the extent possible, the city efforts to communicate the proposals in various languages, such as providing a notice of the meeting in both English and Spanish at City Hall and through translation services provided on the city's website. In addition, the city takes effort to reach those who may need further assistance so that they may take part in the citizen participation process.

The proposed FY22 Action Plan was published for a final 30-day period in June at <https://www.bessemeral.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Update-FY-2022-Proposed-Action-Plan-City-of-Bessemer.pdf>

Citizen Participation Outreach

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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)
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1	Public Hearing	Non-targeted/broad community	<p>A total of 8 persons (excluding Economic and Community Development staff) attended the two public meetings held at Bessemer City Hall on the morning and evening of February 21, 2022. The meeting attendees included city officials, city public safety employees and residents. A decision was made to hold the meetings in-person due to the easing of COVID restrictions.</p>	<p>Residents and officials discussed ongoing needs in the city and the role of the CDBG funds in addressing those needs. Needs ranged from improvements to infrastructure, street improvements, housing-related needs, especially for the elderly, historic preservation and how CDBG funds could assist in public safety activities.</p>	<p>All comments were accepted.</p>	
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2	Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/broad community	<p>The city ran advertisements of the public meetings prior to the February 21 meeting in three newspapers with general circulation within the city. The newspapers contacted were The Birmingham News/AL.com, The Western Star, and The Birmingham Times. The city's Citizen Participation Plan called for advertisements to start at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. In addition, the city published its proposed FY22 Action Plan through notice in a newspaper of general circulation within the city for a 30-day period beginning on March 2 and culminating on April 1, prior to HUD's notification of FY22 allocation. A second 30-day comment period was commenced from June 15 to July 15 to</p>	<p>No comments were received via newspaper advertisements.</p>	<p>No comments were received.</p>	
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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)
			include reimbursement totals inadvertently left out of the previous comment period.			

3	Internet Outreach	<p>Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: Spanish, French, various others</p> <p>Non-targeted/broad community</p>	<p>Notice of the public meetings on February 21 was shared on the city's website at the following link: https://www.bessemeral.org/cdbg-public-hearings-in-february. In addition, the city's proposed FY22 Action Plan was shared on the website, beginning on March 2, 2022 for the required 30-day comment period: https://www.bessemeral.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/FY22-CDBG-Action-Plan.pdf. The Action Plan notice did include language that HUD had not released the city's 2022 Action Plan at the time of publishing and amounts for activities would be adjusted based on actual funding totals. The city's website allows documents shared on the site to be translated into</p>	No comments were received.	No comments were received.	https://www.bessemeral.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Update-FY-2022-Proposed-Action-Plan-City-of-Bessemer.pdf
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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	Public notice in public buildings	Non-targeted/broad community	<p>The Economic and Community Development Department posts its meeting notices at City Hall and other public buildings such as the Bessemer Public Library. The department also posts the proposed FY22 Action Plan notice at City Hall and other public buildings when applicable.</p>	No comments were received.	No comments were received.	

Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach

Expected Resources

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

Introduction

The city of Bessemer expects to use both its FY22 CDBG allocation, program income and a reimbursement to fund activities during the program year. Currently, no private, state or local funds are expected to be used in execution of the plan. However, the city will continue during the program year to seek opportunities to leverage CDBG funds with private, state, and local funds in order to maximize impact among its low and moderate income populations. The city has an allocation of \$577,638 from HUD for the current year and expects to receive approximately \$85,000 in program income during the fiscal year. The city also has a reimbursement of \$208,465.67 to the Local Account for FY22 related to monitoring findings.

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	577,638	85,000	208,466	871,104	0	

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

The city currently does not expect to leverage private, state and local funds in executing the Action Plan. However, the city is exploring proposals to leverage CDBG funds with other sources of funding for FY22. Leveraged local or state funds have not been identified as of the drafting of this plan, but could be identified during the program year.

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

No publically owned land or property within the jurisdiction will be used to address the needs identified in the plan.

Discussion

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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	Public Improvement (EN)	2020	2021	Non-Housing Community Development	Bessemer, Alabama	Public Facilities (EN)	CDBG: \$445,466	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 17000 Persons Assisted
2	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)	2020	2021	Affordable Housing	Bessemer, Alabama	Housing Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$167,438	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 20 Household Housing Unit
3	Program Administration	2020	2021	Administration	Bessemer, Alabama	Housing Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN)	CDBG: \$172,200	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 17000 Persons Assisted Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 50 Persons Assisted Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 20 Household Housing Unit
4	Delivery Costs	2020	2021	Affordable Housing Non-Housing Community Development		Housing Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$86,000	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 20 Household Housing Unit

Table 6 -- Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

1	Goal Name	Public Improvement (EN)
	Goal Description	The city of Bessemer is allocating \$445,466 in funds towards to address Public Improvements in FY22.
2	Goal Name	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)
	Goal Description	Funds are allocated to address Emergency Grant repairs.
3	Goal Name	Program Administration
	Goal Description	Funds of \$172,200 are set aside for Program Administration in FY22, including, planning, marketing and Fair Housing activities. A portion of the administration will include monitoring of public service programs included in FY22.
4	Goal Name	Delivery Costs
	Goal Description	Funds of \$86,000 are set aside for Housing Delivery.

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

The city of Bessemer has identified the following projects as part of its FY22 Action Plan. Projects were identified and prioritized based on consultations, public participation, review of city data and evaluation of past performances and prior year Action Plans. Projects were also identified based on the availability of funding in the form of the FY22 grant, program income and funds repaid to the line of credit. The priority projects for FY22 were identified as public improvements and housing. Approximately 51% of all funds for FY22 will be designated to activities listed as public improvements. Another 32% of funding in FY22 will be targeted towards housing. Combined, these two projects will comprise some 83% of all funding in FY22. The remaining funds will be allocated towards program administration, planning and public service projects. The majority of the projects are expected to benefit the city's low-to-moderate income population. Bessemer has a population of 25,615 based on the most recent Census data. Of this, HUD estimates some 65% of Bessemer residents will fall into the category of low-to-moderate income.

Projects

#	Project Name
1	PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS
2	EMERGENCY HOUSING GRANTS FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED
3	ADMINISTRATION
4	DELIVERY COSTS
5	LEAD PAINT TESTING
6	PUBLIC SERVICES
7	PLANNING

Table 7 - Project Information

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

The city identified public improvements based on prior surveys and feedback from the public, including public surveys done as part of the FY2020-24 Consolidated Plan and the city's 2040 Vision Statement. The emergency housing repair program is listed as a priority due to the number of applicants in past years for the program and the age of houses within Bessemer. Only 10 percent of the city's housing was built after 2000. There are no identified obstacles to addressing the needs of the underserved.

AP-38 Project Summary
Project Summary Information

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1	Project Name	PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	
	Needs Addressed	Public Facilities (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$445,466
	Description	A portion of the city's allocation is set aside for public improvements and facilities projects for FY22.
	Target Date	5/31/2023
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	The city of Bessemer anticipates an overall benefit to all residents as a part of public improvement activities in FY22. The primary focus of such benefits will be designated for Census tracts within the city's urban core, the majority of which have high numbers of low-to-moderate income households. An estimated 17,000 persons within these areas will benefit from planned activities, although all 26,000 residents of the city will realize some benefit.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer
	Planned Activities	The city is currently identifying projects to benefit low-to-moderate income persons within the target area. Proposals have included installation of bus shelters, repairs to public facilities and paving projects in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods. A final decision is expected in the fall of 2022. Street improvements ranked highly among Bessemer residents in various surveys and the city's 2040 Vision statement.
2	Project Name	EMERGENCY HOUSING GRANTS FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$152,000

	Description	This project provides home repair and improvement assistance to elderly, low-to-moderate income homeowners or disabled low-to-moderate income homeowners, regardless of age, and dependent family members who are disabled. The project provides grants of up to \$12,500 for 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 on health and safety.
	Target Date	5/31/2023
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 20 families are expected to benefit from this program in FY22.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer
	Planned Activities	The city will focus on providing grants to eligible seniors to remain safe and secure in their homes, as well as those with permanent disabilities. 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 households can remain in through homes.
3	Project Name	ADMINISTRATION
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$102,200
	Description	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 expected to be used for Fair Housing Activities and marketing of department activities to residents.
	Target Date	5/31/2023
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 17,000 families, most primarily low-to-moderate income are expected to benefit from program administration.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer.

	Planned Activities	CDBG funds will be used to support costs 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 also set aside to further Fair Housing activities in FY22.
4	Project Name	DELIVERY COSTS
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$86,000
	Description	The city of Bessemer proposes to use a portion of its FY22 allocation towards housing delivery costs.
	Target Date	5/31/2023
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 20 low-to-moderate income senior households are expected to benefit from this proposed activities. In addition, another 20 households will be accepted into the program for future projects based on the availability of funding.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer.
	Planned Activities	This activity will provide for the delivery of the city's housing program, in particular the emergency housing repair grant program.
5	Project Name	LEAD PAINT TESTING
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$15,438
	Description	This activity provides for lead-based paint regulatory requirements, including test, inspection, risk assessment, project designs, interim controls, abatement and other costs associated with regulatory compliance. The primary beneficiaries are expected to be low-to-moderate households. This activity will be used in conjunction with the city's emergency grant program.
	Target Date	5/31/2023

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 20 families are expected to benefit.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer
	Planned Activities	Funds will be used to pay the costs associated with lead-based paint testing associated with the city's Emergency Housing Repair Grant program.
6	Project Name	PUBLIC SERVICES
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	
	Needs Addressed	Public Facilities (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$40,000
	Description	The city is setting aside a portion of its FY22 allocation to conduct public service activities eligible under the CDBG program.
	Target Date	5/31/2023
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	The city estimates 50 families will benefit from this proposed activities.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer
	Planned Activities	The city of Bessemer is providing a portion of its FY22 funding towards public service activities. Public service activities identified for potential FY22 funding include programs aimed at homelessness and families at-risk of homelessness, programs that benefit persons with HIV/AIDS and job creation. A final decision on activities under the public service category will be made during the fall of 2022.
7	Project Name	PLANNING
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	
	Needs Addressed	Housing Rehabilitation Loan (RL) Housing Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$30,000

Description	The city of Bessemer has set aside approximately 3% of its FY22 allocation to projects which will fall under the category of planning.
Target Date	5/31/2023
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Approximately, 12,000 households in Bessemer are expected to benefit from this activity, the majority of which, or 65%, are expected to be low-to-moderate income.
Location Description	This project activity will take place within the boundaries of the city of Bessemer.
Planned Activities	The city is proposing to use a portion of its Administrative funds for FY22 for planning activities. A final determination on the planning aspect has not been reached, but proposals include an analysis of housing conditions and the housing market within the city limits.

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 of Bessemer is located in southwest Jefferson County in Central Alabama. Bessemer was founded on the iron and steel industry and suffered from a demise of that industry in the United States. Several areas of Bessemer were hard hit by the demise of the iron and steel industry and many of those areas still remain. Bessemer’s low-to-moderate income population is estimated at 65%, based on HUD statistics. Many Census tracts and blocks within the immediate urban center have high rates of poverty, and/or low income neighborhoods. As one moves away from the urban center, the poverty rates and numbers of low income neighborhoods decline.

Several of the aforementioned tracts qualify as Qualified Census Tracts in which at least 50% of households have an income less than 60% of the area median gross income. In addition, several of these tracts have poverty rates which exceed 25%. The following Census tracts are all low income and have high rates of poverty: Tracts 101, 102, 103.01, 103.02, 104.1, 133 (a small portion of this tract is in Bessemer) and 138.01. Again, this does not mean there are no lower income households or housing outside these areas, only that the majority of the city’s lower income neighborhoods and tracts are located within tracts comprising the urban core.

Bessemer is 70 percent black and many of its minority residents live within neighborhoods around the urban core. In addition, the previously mentioned tracts have black populations which range from 67% in Tract 102 (the Downtown) to 93% in Tract 101.

In addition, several public housing communities are located within the city’s urban core, contributing to higher rates of poverty within this area. The city has generally followed a policy of focusing entitlement funds and activities within the urban core in order to maximize impacts on its LMI population. This plan of action for FY22 will focus resources into these same areas. The Emergency Housing Grant program will receive most of its applications from within this area and will seek to benefit homeowners generally within the urban core, although those eligible households outside the urban core will benefit as well. It is generally anticipated that more than 70% of housing grants will originate within the lower income census tracts. In addition, public improvement/facility projects will be directed into the lower income census tracts during FY22.

Geographic Distribution

Target Area	Percentage of Funds
Bessemer, Alabama	100

Table 8 - Geographic Distribution

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically

As one of the city's goals is to reduce poverty and the impacts of poverty on neighborhoods - including reduction of slum and blight conditions and the creation of activities and projects which benefit low-to-moderate income persons - the identified geographic areas allow the city to meet these goals.

Discussion

There is a need for housing and public facilities/improvements throughout Bessemer. The majority of the allocated funds will be dedicated to areas of the city with high concentrations of LMI persons. The general geography of the city includes a concentration of LMI Census Tracts near the city's core, which also have high minority concentrations. It is in this area where program efforts will be focused as in previous years.

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

Introduction

The city of Bessemer receives limited CDBG funds which it can direct towards affordable housing programs related to the homeless, non-homeless and special needs households. The city provides an emergency repair assistance program which is used to make repairs to the homes of seniors and those with permanent disabilities. The FY22 Action Plan sets aside \$152,000 in expected funds towards this goal. The program has been very successful in recent years in assisting senior households and their families to maintain safe, sanitary and stable living environments. Despite a lack of funding, the city does partner with agencies to provide affordable housing opportunities to the non-homeless and special needs households. A partnership with the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham resulted in affordable housing being provided to two special needs households within the neighborhood within Census Tract 101. The city plans to continue this partnership and pursue others to make affordable housing available to the homeless, non-homeless and special needs households in PY22. The city is also proposing to make \$40,000 in public service funds available, a portion of which can be directed to agencies which specialize in addressing homelessness. There is the potential to make such funds available for rental assistance, although city leaders have discussed using other federal funds to address such areas in the form of American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA, funds available due to the limited amount of CDBG funding. Finally, the city is applying to HUD for a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) designation which will allow it to partner with other agencies and leverage funds which can assist in addressing this goal of affordable housing within a specified area.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	0
Non-Homeless	20
Special-Needs	0
Total	20

Table 9 - 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	0
Rehab of Existing Units	20
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	20

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

Discussion

The city continues to work with partner agencies to address affordable housing needs where CDBG funds are limited. Partners include the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham, and the Bessemer Housing Authority. CDBG funds will continue to be directed in FY22 to the emergency repair grant program aimed at seniors and their family members with special needs. The city will aim to make rehabilitation through emergency repairs to at least 20 homes in FY22. The city will continue to work with other agencies to identify ways to leverage public and private funds to expand the affordable housing options to serve the homeless, non-homeless and those with special needs.

AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

Introduction

The Housing Authority of the City of Bessemer (BHA) was established in 1960. It is the primary public housing agency within the city limits of Bessemer.

The mission of the BHA, according to the agency's website, is "to provide drug-free, decent, safe and sanitary housing for eligible families; to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for low-income families who cannot afford to pay market rents, and to provide educational opportunities and promote self-sufficiency and economic independence for all residents." The BHA manages 708 public housing rental units at three AMPS. It administers 560 Section 8 vouchers and 87 VASH vouchers. In addition, BHA manages one bond-financed 120-unit Senior Complex and three multifamily developments, for a total of 364 units. The first of the developments was built in 1966 and the last was built in 1998.

The BHA is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Mayor of Bessemer for five-year terms. The Board is responsible for preserving and expanding the agency's resources and assuring the agency's continued viability and success. One Commissioner must be a recipient of housing assistance within the BHA. Formal actions of the Housing Authority of the City of Bessemer are taken through written resolutions, adopted by the Board and entered into the official records of the Housing Authority.

The majority of the BHA's properties are located within the urban core of Bessemer, comprising Census tracts with high low-to-moderate income percentages.

The Jefferson County Housing Authority also operates a 50-unit property called Terrace Manor I and II within the city limits of Bessemer on Little Drive. The JCHA describes its vision as "improving community quality and promoting self-sufficiency through the increased availability of housing and related services for low-to moderate-income families and those with special needs without discrimination."

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

The city and the BHA collaborate in many ways to assist and address the needs of public housing. Through the appointment process, the Mayor of Bessemer is able to be apprised of developments and needs within housing communities. The city also consults and supports the BHA on the needs of housing residents. The BHA has planned the following goals for FY22, according to its annual plan:

1. Expand the supply of assisted housing.
2. Increase assisted housing choices.
3. Decrease unit turnaround time from 15 days to 10 days.
4. Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of assisted households
5. Achieve and maintain 96% or above occupancy rate
6. Update MG info systems

7. Increase marketing efforts.

The city also is pursuing paving projects in 2022 which will benefit the residents of public housing. Finally, the city plans to pursue public service programs which will be available to residents of Bessemer living in the various public housing communities. Funding under the CDBG-CV program for Meals on Wheels is available to senior elderly residents living within the PHA's.

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

As stated earlier, the BHA Board of Commissioners consist of five members, one of which is a recipient of housing assistance. In addition, the BHA has a Resident Advisory Board which meets monthly with BHA staff.

The BHA operates a Family-Self-Sufficiency, or FSS program. The program is a voluntary initiative for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), public housing residents, and multifamily Properties. The program focuses on participants becoming gainfully employed and building wealth to move towards self-sufficiency, including home ownership.

The BHA established the following objective under its self-sufficiency program for FY22, including increasing the number and percentage of employed persons in assisted families, providing or attracting supportive services to improve assistance recipients' employability, and providing partnerships which will result in additional training to assisted families. The BHA and the city are also working to identify vacant lots for which the BHA can acquire to build new homes and promote homeownership among its residents.

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

The Housing Authority of the city of Bessemer is not troubled.

Discussion

The city and the Bessemer Housing Authority plan to continue collaboration to provide services to residents of public housing and expand affordable housing opportunities within the city. Residents are eligible to participate in CDBG-funded programs offered by the city. In addition, the city and BHA will continue dialogue into FY22 to expand affordable housing opportunities which could provide homeownership opportunities to BHA residents.

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

Introduction

The city of Bessemer does not have a large homeless population based on estimates and homeless counts. The city does not receive nor has it applied for ESG funding as part of its Consolidated Plan. However, the city continues to observe trends, especially economic trends, which could impact the level of homelessness experienced by families and individuals within its jurisdiction. The city is developing improved coordination with local agencies dedicated to providing services for homeless individuals. These efforts will continue into FY22. The city has set aside approximately \$40,000 for public service projects for FY22, a portion of which can be used to assist agencies dedicated to providing services to the homeless and families at-risk of homelessness. Consultations throughout the year with homelessness agencies will include addressing emergency shelters and transitional housing.

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 on its own to address the needs of homeless persons within the jurisdiction. The city's FY22 Action Plan includes funding for public service activities to benefit homeless persons and assessing their individual needs. The city will seek to partner with at least one agency who specializes in this area due to limited staffing and capacity.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The city has limited funds it can direct towards emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons. There are agencies who operate within the city which do provide some level of services in the areas of emergency shelters and transitional housing. A portion of the city's FY22 funding is designated for public service activities, but a partner agency to assist with these areas has not been identified and vetted. The city plans to identify such an agency in the program year in order to improve assistance to homeless persons in need of emergency shelter and transitional housing.

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 Bessemer works closely with the Bessemer Housing Authority in assisting families with

children and veterans and their families find affordable housing units. A goal of PY22 is to find ways to assist other individuals and families who are at-risk or struggling with homelessness, including chronically homeless individuals and families and unaccompanied youth. A two-day Point-In-Time count was conducted by One Roof in late February in order to evaluate the homeless population within Bessemer. In addition, the city maintains contact with business owners and other agencies, including the Bessemer City School system, to better understand the level of homelessness within the city. One of the proposals for FY22 is to work with an agency to assist families who were recently homeless from becoming homeless again. A partner agency has not been identified and vetted as of the submittal of this plan to HUD.

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.

Data from the Bessemer City School system submitted to the Alabama Board of Education sheds some light on the level of at-risk families with children who reside within Bessemer. This data has been invaluable in helping the city determine the level of homelessness and at-risk families who reside within the jurisdiction. Based on this data and other data from homeless counts, the city has set aside funding in FY22 to partner with agencies dedicated to homelessness. The city continues to collaborate with Medical West and Cahaba Medical Care to identify potential individuals and families in need of assistance from medical care institutions. There is still a lack of data on the number of individuals in the jurisdictions who have been discharged from publicly funding institutions and systems of care such as mental health facilities, foster care and youth facilities and corrections programs and institutions. The city proposes in PY22 to better consult with agencies who specialize in these areas in order to identify individuals who will fall into these categories in order to provide a better response to their housing needs.

Discussion

As stated, the city has set aside a portion of its FY22 allocation towards Public Service projects aimed at assisting the homeless and those at-risk of homelessness. Progress was made in FY21 in terms of collaboration with agencies to better understand the city's homelessness needs. Though Bessemer's homeless population appears to be very small, there is still a concern that economic factors, such as an economic downturn, could impact or increase the number of families and individuals within the jurisdiction who are in need of assistance to avoid becoming homeless. The city used a portion of its CDBG-CV funds to provide services aimed at emergency assistance to families in areas such as rent and utility assistance. This effort demonstrated that many families are in need of emergency assistance in order to remain housed. In addition, the city has held dialogue with agencies who specialize in providing

services to the homeless and at-risk populations identified within this section. In some cases data is limited, but there is a general sense of providing some level of funding to homeless agencies in FY22 to begin the process of providing shelter and affordable housing to homeless and at-risk families, including youth and those discharged from public institutions. The city expects to identify and vet an agency in FY22 to help in these areas, including the possibility of improving the capacity of Bessemer-based agencies to provide such programs within its jurisdiction.

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

Introduction:

The city of Bessemer is committed to providing affordable housing as part of its growth and plans. The median value of an owner-occupied house is \$100,100, based on Census estimates from 2016-2020. This is less than the state average of \$149,600 and the Jefferson County average of \$165,000. This means a family can find a reasonably priced home in Bessemer when compared to other jurisdictions. The median home price in most Census tracts within the city is below \$181,000, especially when compared to neighboring jurisdictions. However, several neighborhoods within the city are cost-burdened relative to housing. For example, the neighborhoods encompassing Census tract 104.01 have a housing cost burdened of 45%, according to HUD estimates. This may be related in part to the age of housing within Bessemer. About 73 % of the city's estimated 12,000 housing units were built prior to 1979. Cost burdens can be a burden to affordability for residents. The city seeks to address this through its Emergency Housing Grant program aimed at reducing such barriers for seniors and their disabled family members, but more is needed.

In addition, the city of Bessemer promotes fair housing and has certified its intentions to “affirmatively further fair housing: within its jurisdiction. An Analysis of Impediments done in 2020 found no evidence of local policies impacting housing choice and residential development. Currently, Bessemer has a good supply of affordable housing within its jurisdiction. The city 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 in Alabama and Bessemer are among some of 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

Bessemer has no public policies 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 Mayor of Bessemer has declared April as Fair Housing Month in Bessemer each of the past two years. This has mobilized the Economic and Community Development Department to host fair housing events in conjunction with the United Way of Central Alabama. The most recent fair housing summit was held in April at the Bessemer Recreation Center and was intended for landlords and property managers in the city. The facility rental was paid for with program administration funds. The event afforded landlords and property managers an opportunity to learn more about fair housing in order to inform them of their rights and the rights of their tenants. The city

plans to continue Fair Housing events into the future.

Discussion:

The city of Bessemer is committed to ensuring affordable housing is available within its jurisdiction 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 continues to work with non-profit agencies such as the Bessemer Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham and the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation to ensure the availability of affordable housing supply within its jurisdiction.

AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction:

The city of Bessemer is committed to meeting the needs of its underserved, fostering and maintaining affordable housing, evaluating and reducing lead-based paint hazards, reducing the number of poverty-level families, developing institutional structure and enhancing 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 consultations with relevant agencies.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

The biggest obstacle to meeting the needs of the underserved population in Bessemer is a lack of resources. These are both financial and institutional. Bessemer's CDBG allocation does not afford it enough financial resources to meet the various underserved needs. In addition, there is a lack of institutions, such as non-profits, within the city with the capacity and resources to assist in these areas. The city has a high rate of LMI households and high minority concentrations within several of its Census tracts. The city has established relationships with non-profits outside of its jurisdiction in an effort to meet the needs of the underserved. These non-profits have included agencies such as The Continuum of Care, the United Way of Central Alabama, Meals on Wheels (under CDBG-CV) and others. In addition, the Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama located offices within downtown Bessemer towards the end of FY21. These offices, located at 1911 4th Avenue North, offer programs geared towards the low-income, including weatherization and energy assistance. The city has also appointed its Economic and Community Development Director to serve as a commissioner on the agency in order to improve community representation. The city plans on a public service component in FY22 and has set aside a portion of its CDBG funding to pursue such efforts through collaboration with other non-profits and the designation of sub-recipients.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

The city of Bessemer is a relatively affordable community when compared with neighboring communities in Jefferson County. The median cost of an owner-occupied home is lower than metropolitan, county and state averages. In addition, the median gross rent in Bessemer is lower than municipal, county and state averages. This does not mean the city is not pursuing efforts to foster and maintain affordable housing. The city is partnering with agencies such as Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham and the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation to expand the availability of affordable housing in FY22. Both agencies have outlined plans to build additional housing in Bessemer in FY22, including Habitat for Humanity's plans for a new subdivision which will offer affordable homeownership and seek to deconcentrate poverty within the city. In addition, the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation is planning to construct new affordable housing within an area the city has designated for a possible Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, or NRSA. The new housing will be affordable and expand the supply of newer affordable housing within the city, according to BRC

planners. The city also encourages the rehabilitation of the current housing stock. Should the city receive its NRSA approval, the plan is to work with agencies such as the BRC and Habitat to improve the environment in the target area to maintain the supply of affordable housing. The Bessemer Housing Authority has also informed the city of its plans to revitalize its Southside Homes community through a RAD Demonstration. These plans will assist the city in fostering and maintaining affordable housing. The city's Emergency Housing grant program offers assistance to seniors and their disabled family members which allow emergency improvements to be made to the homes of seniors. The hope is the repairs will prolong the life of many of these homes and maintain a supply of decent, safe and affordable housing within the city. Approximately, \$152,000 of the city's FY22 allocation has been targeted to the grant program.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

The city of Bessemer tests all houses built before 1979 for lead-based paint. The city has set aside \$15,438 in its FY22 allocation for lead-based paint testing on homes awarded emergency housing grants. The city has sponsored and will continue to sponsor, seminars and public meetings with partner agencies to inform the public of the dangers of lead-based paint and to educate contractors on required procedures. Finally, the city will monitor the availability of funding at the federal and state level to combat lead-based paint in FY22, based on its limited CDBG funds.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

The poverty rate in the city of Bessemer based on the most recent Census is 26 percent. This is higher than county and state averages. City leaders have sought to reduce the number of poverty-level families through job creation and economic development opportunities. Bessemer has been able to recruit more than 7,000 jobs to the city in recent years, with many paying a minimum wage of \$15 an hour. The city plans to continue working with agencies such as the Jefferson County and the State of Alabama to provide opportunities for Bessemer residents to connect with 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. In addition, the city is considering using a portion of its public service funding to pursue programs aimed at financial literacy. Financial literacy can be one of the impediments to families moving out of poverty.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

The city's Economic and Community Development Department is given primary responsibility for managing CDBG funds and building coordination to address needs outlined in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The department is currently staffed by two persons: a Director and a Principal Housing Specialist. However, the department has managed over the past years to build relationships with several organizations to address needs in the community. The organizations include the Continuum of Care, the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham (philanthropic), One Roof, Habitat for

Humanity of Greater Birmingham, the non-profit Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation and public institutions such as the Bessemer Housing Authority and city departments. The city plans to maintain these relationships over the next 12 months and seek to expand them to reach other agencies which can assist it in areas such as housing, homelessness and community development. The department also maintains a relationship with the Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce and the Bessemer Industrial Development Board. There is a lack of non-profit in Bessemer, but one goal this year will be to seek to build the capacity of non-profits located in Bessemer to assist with the city's efforts. The city plans to continue to seek partnerships with private industry, including financial institutions, to address critical needs areas. The city's faith-based community is evolving to better participate in community development. Several churches have pledged to assist the city should a NRSA be established. There remains some weaknesses in addressing critical needs due to limited staffing at the department level and the limited capacity of non-profits within Bessemer. The city plans in FY22 to:

- Revisit its departmental capacity and staffing
- Create or expand partnerships with agencies which can assist the city in carrying out its objectives;
- Build coalitions, including at the neighborhood level, to impact areas such as housing and homelessness;
- Engage 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 on ensuring coordination of stakeholders. The city has established strong partnerships over the last two years aimed at coordination between public and private housing and social services. The city is currently working with the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation on new housing construction in both a proposed NRSA and other neighborhoods. One facet of the discussions has focused on linking social service agencies to assist families currently living within these neighborhoods. The city has set aside \$40,000 in its FY22 Action Plan for public service activities, a portion of which can be directed towards social services which can service both public and private housing. In addition, the city still maintains an activity related to first-time homebuyers within its toolbox, but whether this program is initiated in FY22 will be based on market conditions.

Discussion:

The city is building strong ties and relationships to address housing affordability and supply, services for the underserved, reduce lead-based paint, develop and strengthen institutional structure, reduce poverty and work with public and private housing and social service agencies.

Program Specific Requirements

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

Introduction:

The city of Bessemer only receives CDBG funding as part of its HUD allocation. The city does not receive HOME or ESG funding. All funds mentioned in this Action Plan are derivatives of CDBG entitlement funds, or CDBG-related program income. The city has made a reimbursement to its CDBG funds as of June 2022. Those funds have been added to this plan for a total scope of funding for FY22.

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	85,000
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	208,466
5. The amount of income from float-funded activities	0
Total Program Income:	293,466

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%

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It is expected that the overall benefit of 70 percent of CDBG funds to benefit low-to-moderate persons will be realized in FY22 under the FY2020-24 Consolidated Plans. All programs are designed to have a primary benefit to low-to-moderate income individuals residing within the jurisdiction.

