



City of Bessemer 2023 Annual Action Plan for the Community Development Block Grant CDBG Program

PREPARED BY THE CITY OF BESSEMER
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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The following document is available for inspection in the Economic and Community Development Department Suite, at Bessemer City Hall, 1700 Third Avenue North.

An online link is available at <https://www.bessemeral.org/community-development-reports-and-action-plans>.



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 (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 FY23. An Annual Action Plan must be prepared for each year of the Consolidated Plan. The following includes the proposed FY2023 Action Plan. The Plan outlines the City of Bessemer's needs and strategies relative to CDBG entitlement funds for the FY2023 period beginning on June 1, 2023 and ending on May 31, 2024.

The Economic and Community Development of the City of Bessemer serves as the lead agency in the development of the Action Plan. The Action Plan was adopted by the Bessemer City Council on April 4, 2023.

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 FY2023 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 within the jurisdiction. In addition, various other agencies such as the Continuum of Care, public and private agencies that address housing, health, social services efforts, agencies committed to broadband expansion and several other agencies were consulted at different 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 FY23 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 FY23 Plan.

The FY23 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 1990 and 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 exceeding 60 percent, according to data from the U.S. Census figures and HUD. An Emergency Housing Grant program was established and has assisted senior residents in need of repairs to their homes. The city 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 was offered to residents who could not secure loan funding from banking institutions. While these two programs are no longer being utilized by the city, the programs helped 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 city parks. 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 with some form of disability reside within the city. 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 an aged city vehicle and maintain a fire protection rating which ensures lower insurance premiums for businesses and residents. CARES Act funding was allocated in recent years to programs aimed at emergency rental and utility assistance, microenterprise

stabilization and assistance, and meal delivery services for senior residents. Finally, the city used CDBG funds in FY22 to begin a resurfacing project on several city streets located within lower income neighborhoods.

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 2020. 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 a public hearing on February 22, 2023 to solicit feedback from residents and interested parties on potential programs and activities to include in the FY23 program year. 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 offered an opportunity to contact the Community Development Department at least 48 hours prior to the meeting start date in order for accommodations to be made. Finally, a meeting notice was posted at both City Hall, at the city's Public Library and on the city's website. The city's website 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 1 to provide written or verbal feedback on proposed Action Plan activities for FY23. 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. HUD formally announced the city's FY23 on February 27, 2023.

The city is committed 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 and Health Equity Research Center, the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation, the Bessemer Industrial Development Board and many others in developing potential programs and activities. In addition, departmental staff expanded connected with other agencies in discussing potential projects and

activities using CDBG resources. One of the goals of the consultation 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.

Stakeholders generally voiced support for existing programs and activities and inquired about whether additional programs could be supported with CDBG funds. In particular, continued improvement to streets, code enforcement and public service activities were of greatest interest.

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

Any and all comments and views were accepted and taken into consideration in the creation of the FY23 Action Plan.

7. Summary

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)

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

A copy of the Action Plan is available in the Economic and Community Development Department, Suite 202, Second Floor, Bessemer City Hall, 1700 Third Avenue North.

The plan can also be viewed online throughout the program year at [www.bessemeral.org/community development](http://www.bessemeral.org/community%20development).

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

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

1. Introduction

The city of Bessemer's Economic and Community Development Department consulted with public and private agencies at various levels to develop the FY2023 Annual Action Plan.

Bessemer has a limited number of public service agencies and non-profits within its jurisdictional boundaries 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-Hoover metropolitan region which 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 City of Bessemer has formed a partnership with the Bessemer Public Housing Authority that has proven successful in bringing better housing opportunities and services to residents of Bessemer.

The City 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 FY22 in order to identify needs in the development of this Action Plan. The city coordinated with One Roof on a Point in Time Homeless count in the city in January 2023. 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 has partnered with the CoC each year for the Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Competition Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Finally, the department reviews annual reports on homeless students within the city of Bessemer school system to gauge the number of students within the system who are experiencing homelessness or are at-risk of homelessness.

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

The city of Bessemer does not receive ESG funds. However, the city continues to work with organizations such as 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 FY23 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	Agency/Group/Organization	Bessemer Public Housing Authority
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing PHA Services - Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Public Housing Needs Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The city and the BESHHA communicate on housing needs related to low income households. The Bessemer Housing Authority shares with the city its Annual Plans and goals and remains in contact with the city 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. The outcome of such coordination will be better housing choices for lower income residents.
2	Agency/Group/Organization	GREATER BIRMINGHAM HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Greater Birmingham Habitat for Humanity coordinates with the city of Bessemer in developing and expanding affordable housing opportunities. The city and Habitat have consulted on identifying areas for new housing and potential clients for the Habitat program. Habitat has been instrumental in de-concentrating poverty with its housing initiatives in consultation with the city. In addition Habitat has offered to assist the city with rehabilitation of homes due to limited CDBG funds. The expected outcome is an expansion of affordable housing within the city limits of Bessemer.

3	Agency/Group/Organization	United Way of Central Alabama
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Housing Services-Elderly Persons Service-Fair Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Anti-poverty Strategy Senior Services
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The United Way of Central Alabama has coordinated with the city in areas such as fair housing and providing Meals on Wheels delivery to seniors in Bessemer during the pandemic. The agency has been a partner with the city on informational sessions dedicated to Fair Housing, finance and budgeting and opportunities for landlords and property managers. The outcome of the coordination is expected to be a more informed public, especially LMI families.
4	Agency/Group/Organization	Cahaba Medical Care
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Elderly Persons Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-Health
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Health Services
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Cahaba Medical Care is a Community Health Center (FQHC), with locations throughout central Alabama, including a clinic in Bessemer. The city coordinates with Cahaba Medical Care 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.

5	Agency/Group/Organization	UAB Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Elderly Persons Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-Health Health Agency
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Health Services
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	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 agency is also working with the city on developing initiatives tied to reducing crime and its impacts on the health of minority communities. The proposed outcome will be a reduction in health disparities among minorities in the Bessemer area and healthier communities.
6	Agency/Group/Organization	Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services-Employment Neighborhood Organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Economic Development
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation is a non-profit operating within the city of Bessemer dedicated to providing new housing and neighborhood revitalization. The agency communicates with the city on housing strategies and neighborhood revitalization efforts. The outcome of this consultation is a better understanding of housing needs in the city and improved efforts to bring revitalization and new housing opportunities to distressed areas of the city.

7	Agency/Group/Organization	ONE ROOF
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-homeless
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Needs - Veterans Homelessness Needs - Unaccompanied youth Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The city has consulted with One Roof on identifying and assisting the homeless and at-risk populations within Bessemer. Consultations have included identifying numbers of homeless individuals. 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.
8	Agency/Group/Organization	ADECA
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Broadband Internet Service Providers Services - Narrowing the Digital Divide
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Economic Development Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The city of Bessemer partnered with ADECA as part of an effort to identify and address broadband needs and expansion of broadband services in Bessemer. The outcome of the coordination is expected to be better and expanded broadband services in the city.
9	Agency/Group/Organization	Bessemer Industrial Development Board
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Planning organization Business and Civic Leaders
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Market Analysis Economic Development

	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Bessemer IDB works with the city on industrial and commercial development within Bessemer. This area of coordination can include recruitment and retention of industry in Bessemer. The expected outcome of the coordination is an expansion of the city's economic base and opportunities for job creation, especially for those individuals deemed low-and-moderate income.
10	Agency/Group/Organization	Bessemer Stormwater Department
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Agency - Managing Flood Prone Areas Grantee Department
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Planning
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Bessemer Stormwater Department works to address flood prone areas of Bessemer. The agency works with the Economic and Community Development Department and other city departments on identifying and addressing stormwater needs, especially as it relates to the impacts of climate change. The outcome of the coordination will be better planning and coordination of flood prone areas of Bessemer.
11	Agency/Group/Organization	Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Agency - Managing Flood Prone Areas Agency - Emergency Management
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Emergency Management
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency is the first line of official public responsibility for emergency management activity in Jefferson County. As such, the EMA is charged with planning efforts for the county, including Bessemer. This includes developing and maintaining an ongoing program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The outcome of the coordination will be better identification of where resources can be used to address emergency issues within the city.

12	Agency/Group/Organization	Bessemer Historical Preservation Commission
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Planning organization Historic Preservation
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Economic Development
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Bessemer Historical Preservation Commission works to preserve Bessemer's history. The Historical Commission identifies historic properties within Bessemer, especially within the Downtown Historic District. The outcome of the coordination is the preservation of Bessemer's historic resources and expanded economic development.

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	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. The Continuum of Care's goals align with those of the city in providing shelter and resources to these disadvantaged groups.

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 a public meeting on the afternoon of February 22nd which allowed residents an opportunity to provide input on programs and activities for the 2023 Action Plan. A 30-day public comment period commenced on March 1 and ended on March 31, 2023.

Stakeholders are notified of the public meetings 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. When necessary, the city communicates plan 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.

Citizen Participation Outreach

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 Meeting	Non-targeted/broad community	<p>The city advertised the February 22 Public Meeting 15 days prior to the meeting date as required by the Citizen Participation Plan. In addition, officials from partnering agencies were invited to attend. A separate posting was made on the city's social media page to reach even more potential people. Only two attendees, both city officials, attended the meeting at City Hall.</p>	<p>Comments were received regarding the level of funding from HUD and how CDBG funds could be disbursed into the community by way of various activities.</p>	<p>All comments were accepted.</p>	<p>https://www.bessemeral.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/FY23-Public-meeting-announcement.pdf</p>

2	Newspaper Ad	<p>Minorities</p> <p>Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: Spanish</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 the public meetings prior to the February 22 meeting in two local newspapers with general circulation within the city. The newspapers contacted were The Birmingham News/AL.com and The Western Star. 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 FY23 Action Plan through notice in three newspapers of general circulation within the city for a 30-day period</p>	<p>No comments were received via newspaper publication.</p>	<p>No comments were received via the newspaper ad.</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)
			beginning on March 1 and culminating on March 31. The three newspapers were The Western Star, The Birmingham Times (a minority-targeted newspaper) and Hispanic Alabama's Latino News (a Spanish-language newspaper).			

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	Non-targeted/broad community	The city advertised for both its public meeting and the 30-day comment period for the FY23 Action Plan via the city's website through the Community Development page. Notice of the public meeting was announced 15-days prior to the meeting and the Action Plan was posted to the website for 30 days, beginning on March 1. In addition, the city posted notice of the public meeting on its social media platform.	No comments were received.	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	Bulletin Board Postings	Non-targeted/broad community	The city posted notice of its FY23 Action Plan at both City Hall and the Bessemer Public Library for a 30-day period between March 1, 2023 and March 31, 2023.	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 anticipates using a combination of federal resources, program income, and reimbursed funds to address priority needs and objectives outlined in this FY23 Action Plan.

Sources for FY23 funding will include the annual CDBG allocation, program income derived from repayments made to local revolving funds (Economic Development and Housing Rehabilitation) and a reimbursement for prior monitoring findings. No other sources of funding have been identified to address the areas outlined in this plan.

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	625,648	70,000	208,466	904,114	0	The increase in grant funding in FY23 will allow the city greater flexibility to address areas outlined in the Consolidated Plan and the AAP. In addition to grant funds received for FY23, the city expects to continue expending prior year grant funds to address Consolidated Plan projects and activities.

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 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.

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 does not expect to use publically owned land or property located within the jurisdictions to address needs identified in this plan.

Discussion

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	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Bessemer, Alabama	Public Facilities (EN)	CDBG: \$400,000	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 15000 Persons Assisted
2	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)	2020	2024	Affordable Housing	Bessemer, Alabama	Housing Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$214,114	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 18 Household Housing Unit
3	Program Administration	2020	2024	Administration	Bessemer, Alabama	Housing Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN)	CDBG: \$200,000	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 15000 Persons Assisted Public service activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 35 Households Assisted Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 18 Household Housing Unit
4	Delivery Costs	2020	2024	Affordable Housing Non-Housing Community Development	Bessemer, Alabama	Housing Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$90,000	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 18 Household Housing Unit

Table 6 – Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

1	Goal Name	Public Improvement
	Goal Description	
2	Goal Name	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)
	Goal Description	The city uses a combination of emergency housing grants for seniors and the disabled in conjunction with its strategic plan goals. A portion of funds set aside in this category is directed at lead-paint testing in eligible households.
3	Goal Name	Program Administration
	Goal Description	The city uses CDBG funding for Program Administration, in conjunction with its strategic plans. In addition, Program Administration oversees the use of Public Service funds set aside in the AAP.
4	Goal Name	Delivery Costs
	Goal Description	

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

The city of Bessemer has identified the following projects as part of its FY23 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 FY23 grant, program income and funds repaid to the line of credit. The priority projects for FY23 were identified as public improvements and housing. Approximately 44% of all funds for FY23 will be designated to activities listed as public improvements. Another 34% of funding in FY23 will be targeted towards housing-related activities. Combined, these two projects will comprise some 78% of all funding in FY23. The remaining 225 of funds will be allocated towards program administration and public service projects. All projects are expected to primarily benefit the city's low-to-moderate income population. Bessemer has a population of 25,615 based on the most recent Census estimates. Of this, HUD estimates some 65% of Bessemer residents fall into the category of low-to-moderate income.

Projects

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

Table 7 - Project Information

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

The city identified has identified the following areas based on public surveys and feedback from the Bessemer community. No obstacles are expected to be encountered in addressing the needs of the underserved. The city is 70 % African-American and the majority of the allocation

priorities identified will benefit the majority population, many of whom are concentrated in Census tracts around the city core.

Program Administration will allow the city to retain staff to develop and implement programs designed to benefit all residents, but especially the LMI population. The Housing Delivery Costs allocation will allow the city to retain staff to provide and implement the Emergency Housing Grant program.

The Emergency Housing Grant program is targeted towards seniors and the disabled, many of whom have no resources for which to make needed repairs to their homes. Lead-paint testing will allow the city to meet its regulatory requirements under the housing grant program. The city is targeting public services to assist in meeting a variety of needs, but is focused in FY23 on providing some form of emergency assistance to families at-risk of homelessness. Public improvements is a high priority in the city based on the age of its infrastructure. The FY2020-24

Consolidated Plan and the city's 2040 Vision Statement both identified Public Facility and Improvement upgrades as high priority areas.

AP-38 Project Summary
Project Summary Information

1	Project Name	PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Emergency Repair Grants (EN) Public Improvement Delivery Costs
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$130,000
	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	5/31/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 15,000 families, 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.
2	Project Name	HOUSING DELIVERY COSTS
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Emergency Repair Grants (EN) Delivery Costs
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$90,000
	Description	The city of Bessemer will use a portion of its FY23 allocation towards the delivery of its senior and disabled housing grant program.
	Target Date	5/31/2024

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that anywhere from 20 to 25 low-to-moderate income senior households are expected to benefit from delivery of the housing grant program. The city anticipates accepting additional enrollees into the program in FY23 and delivery costs will be used to assist needed seniors and disabled in enrolling into the program for future assistance.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer (city-wide).
	Planned Activities	This activity will provide for the delivery of the city's housing program, in particular the emergency housing repair grant program.
3	Project Name	EMERGENCY HOUSING GRANTS FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$200,000
	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	5/31/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 18 to 20 families are expected to benefit from this program in FY23.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer. The project is available on a city-wide level.
	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 seniors and disabled individuals who are low-to-moderate income may remain safely in their homes.
4	Project Name	LEAD PAINT TESTING
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Emergency Repair Grants (EN) Delivery Costs
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN)

	Funding	CDBG: \$14,114
	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	5/31/2024
	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, city-wide.
	Planned Activities	Funds will be used to pay the costs associated with lead-based paint testing associated with the city's Senior and Disabled Emergency Housing Repair Grant program.
5	Project Name	PUBLIC SERVICES
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	
	Needs Addressed	
	Funding	CDBG: \$70,000
	Description	The city is setting aside a portion of its FY23 allocation to conduct public service activities eligible under the CDBG program.
	Target Date	5/31/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 35 families, primarily low-to-moderate income, are expected to benefit from this activity.
	Location Description	City of Bessemer.
	Planned Activities	The city of Bessemer is providing a portion of its FY23 funding towards public service activities. Public service activities identified for potential FY23 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 summer/fall of 2023.
6	Project Name	PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS
	Target Area	

Goals Supported	Public Improvement
Needs Addressed	Public Facilities (EN)
Funding	CDBG: \$400,000
Description	The city of Bessemer is allocating \$400,000 in funds to address public facilities and improvements in the city in FY23.
Target Date	5/31/2024
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 of the city as a part of public improvement activities in FY23. 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. It is estimated that anywhere from 5,000 to 17,000 persons within these areas will benefit from planned activities.
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, improvements to city parks, upgrades to city facilities and streetscape and roadway improvements. A final decision is expected in the summer/fall of 2023. Street improvements ranked highly among Bessemer residents in various surveys and the city's 2040 Vision statement.

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 are still plagued by high poverty rates and aging structures. Bessemer's low-to-moderate income population is estimated at 65%. However, many Census Tracts, especially those concentrated near the city core, have higher LMI populations and poverty rates. There are high rates of minority, low-to-moderate income, disabled, and female head of households within these Census tract areas.

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 near 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 (Northside community).

Several public housing communities are located within the city's urban core, contributing to the higher rates of poverty. The city has generally followed a policy of targeting entitlement funds and activities within the urban core in order to maximize impacts to its LMI population. This plan of action for FY23 will continue targeting funds to these areas. The Senior and Disabled 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 FY23. Public service activities are expected to be used primarily within these areas as well.

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. In addition, the city will need to partner with non-profit and other agencies to deliver public services. 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 in FY23 and the remaining Consolidated Plan 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. However, the city plans to implement programs in FY23 which will benefit the homeless, non-homeless and special needs populations. The city provides an emergency repair assistance program which is used to make repairs to the homes of seniors and those with permanent disabilities. In many cases, these repairs maintain the affordability of the home through critical repairs such as roof replacements, plumbing and electrical and heating and cooling. 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. 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 and the partnership will continue into FY23. The city is also allocating \$70,000 in public service funds available, a portion of which can be directed to agencies which specialize in addressing homelessness and assisting families who may be at-risk of homelessness. Finally, the city has applied 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 affordable housing goals within a specified area.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	5
Non-Homeless	18
Special-Needs	3
Total	26

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

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	5
The Production of New Units	0
Rehab of Existing Units	18
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	23

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 due to limited CDBG funds. Partners include the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham, and the Bessemer Housing Authority. CDBG funds will be directed in FY23 to the emergency repair grant program aimed at seniors and their family members with special needs. It is

anticipated that between 18 and 20 individuals and households will benefit directly from this program. The city will implement public service activities in FY23 to address needs related to the homeless, especially those families who are at-risk of homelessness. Funding is limited and it is anticipated that as many as 5 families could expect a direct benefit. 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 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 among its goals for FY23, the following:

1. Expand the supply of assisted housing.
2. Increase assisted housing choices.
3. Decrease unit turnaround time .
4. Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of assisted households

The city also is pursuing paving projects in 2023 with non-federal funds 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.

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 FY23, 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 will continue collaborations which provide services to residents of public housing and expand affordable housing opportunities within the city, while encouraging self-sufficiency through job creation and public-housing related programs. Residents are eligible to participate in CDBG-funded programs offered by the city.

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 ESG funding. 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 FY23. The city has set aside approximately \$70,000 for public service projects for FY23, 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 identifying resources and funding to address 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

The city of Bessemer has partnered within the past year with agencies dedicated to counting and identifying the needs of homeless persons within the jurisdiction. The city participates with the Continuum of Care in identifying resources which benefit the homeless. This effort will continue into FY23 through identifying where homeless persons, especially the unsheltered, are residing within the city and identifying partners who will assist in addressing the needs of the city's limited homeless population.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The city has limited access to emergency shelters and transitional housing needs for homeless persons within its jurisdiction. Efforts in FY23 will include identifying emergency shelter and transitional housing within the region which can assist in addressing the needs of homeless persons, especially those which may include small children.

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, including those with children and veterans and their families, find affordable housing units. A goal in program year

2023 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. The city will maintain and monitor trends in data from the Bessemer City School system, which will help the city understand the level of homelessness and those which impact families with children and potentially other areas such as veterans and their families and unaccompanied youth. The city will seek a partner agency in FY23 to assist in emergency assistance which is expected to assist families which meet this criteria.

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 has continued to shed light on the level of at-risk families with children who reside within Bessemer. This data is 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 CDBG funding to partner agencies dedicated to addressing 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. The city will seek additional 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 and identify methods of funding assistance with CDBG funds, if such funds are available due to limited funding.

Discussion

As stated, the city has set aside a portion of its FY23 allocation towards Public Service projects aimed at assisting the homeless and those at-risk of homelessness. Funds are limited, but the city will maximize even small funding in order to address the needs of homeless within the 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 \$102,200, based on the most recent Census figures. This is less than the averages for the state and county. This means a family can find a reasonably priced home in Bessemer when compared to other 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 and the income of the residents and their ability to maintain their homes. 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 and is being considered.

In addition, the city of Bessemer promotes fair housing and has certified its intentions to “affirmatively further fair housing within the jurisdiction. An Analysis of Impediments done in 2020 found no evidence of local policies impacting housing choice and residential development. 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 affordable 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 continues to monitor its local policies to determine what, if any, impacts they may have on affordable housing choices.

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. There continues to be modest growth in the city in terms of residential housing choice, but even new homes under construction typically fall below the average costs for homes at the county, state and even the national average. In addition, renovations of homes for sale and rent are on-going within the city. There are currently no obstacles to home renovations, which ensures there is a supply of affordable housing

available for both buyers and renters.

The city continues to work with non-profit agencies and developers to ensure there is an adequate supply of affordable housing within the jurisdiction.

AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction:

The city of Bessemer remains committed to meeting the needs of its underserved populations, 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. Bessemer has a high number of residents who would meet the federal definition of underserved. The biggest obstacle to meeting the needs of the underserved population in Bessemer is a lack of resources. These are both financial and institutional. There is a lack of institutions, such as non-profits, within the city with the capacity and resources to assist the underserved areas. The city has a high rate of LMI households and high minority concentrations within several of its Census tracts.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

The city has established relationships with non-profits outside of its jurisdiction in an effort to meet the needs of the underserved and plans to foster and seek to build the capacity of organizations located within the city. However, limited funds can hinder this effort. The city will maintain partnerships with organizations such as the Continuum of Care, the United Way of Central Alabama, and others as it moves forward with addressing the needs of the underserved. In addition, the city maintains a relationship through board membership on the Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama to ensure residents have access to programs offered by the agency such as weatherization and energy assistance. Public service funding has been set aside in the FY23 Action Plan to fund additional services which will be aimed at addressing the needs of the underserved within the program year.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

The city of Bessemer is a relatively affordable community in terms of affordable housing 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 its supply of affordable housing. The city plans to maintain its relationship with non-profits which focus on building new residential homes for purchase or rent. The city will continue to work with developers on identifying areas for new developments and will maintain local policies which will ensure there are no additional costs added to the construction of homes. Local policies will remain under review in the program year to ensure there are no barriers to affordable housing being constructed within the city limits. In addition, the city will continue its senior and emergency grant program and fund it at \$200,000 in FY23 to assist seniors in maintaining safe and healthy living conditions, a factor which can influence housing affordability. The city plans to work with the local housing authority to identify properties for renovation or construction under housing authority

programs, such as the family self-sufficiency program.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

The city of Bessemer has limited funds to remove and abate lead hazards in homes. However, the city does offer an emergency grant program aimed at seniors and will continue to test structures for lead-based paint when minors are present in the homes of those who qualify under the program.

Approximately \$14,000 in FY23 have been set aside for this effort. The city will distribute lead-based paint information to homeowners in structures where testing takes place in conformity to federal regulations aimed at reducing lead-based paint hazards. Part of the effort is aimed at educating homeowners of the potential dangers of lead-based paint to children.

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 28.8 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 8,000 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 Bessemer Library maintains a workforce kiosks which is connected directly to the State employment agency and is accessible to all residents of Bessemer seeking employment. 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 plans to continue working with the local transit authority to maintain bus service within its jurisdiction, as transportation has been linked to employment outcomes.

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 plans to onboard new staff in FY23 to assist in grant coordination and build additional partnerships within the region. The city has managed over the past years to build relationships with several organizations such as 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 plans to build better coordination with the Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce and the Bessemer Industrial Development

Board to increase economic outcomes within the city. The city plans in FY23 to:

- Expand 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 of Bessemer plans to maintain partnerships created since 2020 with public and private housing and social services. The city is currently working with the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation on new housing construction in some of its older neighborhoods. In addition, the city plans to use CDBG funds for public services which may be administered by social service agencies. The city has set aside \$70,000 in its FY23 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 FY23 will be based on market conditions.

Discussion:

The city plans to continue 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 allocation from HUD. The city does not receive any additional HUD funding, such as HOME or ESG funding. All funds mentioned in this Action Plan are derived from CDBG entitlement funds, or CDBG-related program income. The city will make a reimbursement to its CDBG funds as of June 2023. Those funds have been added to this plan for a total scope of funding for FY23.

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	70,000
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:	278,466

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%

It is expected that the overall benefit of 70 percent of CDBG funds to benefit low-to-moderate persons will be realized in FY23 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.

