

Prepared by the City of Bessemer
Economic and Community Development
Department

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

for the Community Development
Block Grant (CDBG) Program

2024



City of Bessemer
1700 Third Avenue North,
Bessemer, AL 35020

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 (CDBG) Program, which provides annual grants on a formula basis to entitlement cities and counties. This plan allows these communities to focus on developing viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. The benefits predominantly go to those persons and households classified as low-and moderate-income.

This document encompasses the planning and submission process for the City of Bessemer's CDBG allocation for FY24. An Annual Action Plan must be prepared for each year of the Consolidated Plan. The proposed FY2024 Action Plan outlines the City of Bessemer's needs and strategies relative to CDBG entitlement funds for the FY2024 period, beginning on June 1, 2024, and ending on May 31, 2025.

The Economic and Community Development Department of the City of Bessemer serves as the lead agency in the development of the Action Plan. The Action Plan was adopted by Bessemer's City Council on Thursday, May 23, 2024, after completing its citizen participation requirements. It was submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on June 7, 2024 for review.

The Consolidated Plan rules developed by HUD require all jurisdictions to consult and coordinate with appropriate agencies and among their own departments. The plan ensures that the Consolidated Plan is a comprehensive document addressing statutory purposes.

To meet the requirements in developing the FY2024 Action Plan, the Economic and Community Development Department consulted with agencies regarding public and assisted housing needs, including the Bessemer Housing Authority. The department also consulted with other city departments to identify areas of need within the jurisdiction. Additionally, various agencies such as the Continuum of Care, public and private agencies addressing housing, health, social services efforts, agencies committed to broadband expansion, and several others were consulted throughout the year. This aimed to identify city needs and develop goals relative to the creation of this Action Plan. Citizen participation occurred during the preparation and drafting of the plan for FY24 through public hearings and opportunities for the public to comment on the proposed plan.

These efforts, coupled with feedback from previous years' plans, contributed to the development of the FY24 Plan, which seeks to address housing, improvements to public facilities and infrastructure, and investments in 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 has established the following goals and objectives through consultation and its citizen participation process:

- 1- Devote CDBG funds to improve public facilities and make enhancements benefiting all residents, particularly those in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods.
- 2- Stabilize neighborhoods by addressing blight and slum conditions through housing programs, assisting seniors with housing improvements, and fostering partnerships with private and public entities to expand the city's housing stock, promoting homeownership among LMI individuals.
- 3- Invest in the city's human capital through public service programs targeting critical need areas to benefit LMI individuals.

These initiatives aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- 1- Improved delivery of services and amenities to residents through investments in public facilities and improvements.
- 2- Clean, safe, affordable, and vibrant neighborhoods with accessible decent housing options, especially for LMI individuals.
- 3- Enhanced access to services for LMI individuals facing critical needs.

The 2020-24 Consolidated Plan serves as the city's strategic plan for federal entitlement grant resources. It incorporates data gathered from stakeholder feedback in public meetings and through vehicles like an online community needs assessment. The City is committed to ongoing efforts to secure federal, state, local, and private funding for community-wide improvements in the identified areas.

3. Evaluation of past performance

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

An evaluation of past performance helped guide and select goals or projects. The City of Bessemer, an entitlement community since 1990, has utilized CDBG resources to facilitate homeownership and housing rehabilitation, invest in economic growth and job creation, and make necessary improvements to public infrastructure and facilities.

With a population exceeding 60 percent of low and low-to-moderate-income residents, according to U.S. Census and HUD data, Bessemer has sustained an Emergency Housing Grant program for almost 20 years. This program assists senior residents and those with disabilities in need of home repairs. The city previously operated an Economic Development Revolving Loan program to stimulate job growth, particularly in distressed neighborhoods, along with a housing rehabilitation revolving loan program. Its purpose was to offer funds to residents unable to secure funding from banking institutions. The loan programs have not operated since 2019 but have previously helped address a decline in distressed neighborhoods.

The city utilized CDBG funds to improve various public facilities, including the Bessemer Public Library, the Bessemer Recreation Center, and city parks. These investments have provided improved access to amenities for residents, including an estimated 6,600 persons with disabilities within the city. CDBG funds were allocated to build a new "Welcome to Bessemer" sign in the heart of the city's commercial business district and Opportunity Zone off Interstate 20/59. In FY21, funds were reallocated to purchase a new Aerial Fire Engine, replace an aged city vehicle, and maintain a fire protection rating for lower insurance premiums which would benefit LMI homeowners. Recent CARES Act funding supported emergency rental and utility assistance, microenterprise stabilization, and meal delivery services for senior residents. In FY22, CDBG funds were allocated to resurface several city streets in LMI neighborhoods. FY23 funds were used to assist housing grants for seniors and public service activities, including childcare, legal services for LMI residents, and afterschool and educational program for LMI youth.

To equitably allocate CDBG funds to ensure short and long-term benefits for its low-to-moderate-income population is the goal. These efforts will continue into the current plan year.

4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process

Summary from citizen participation section of plan.

In 2020, the Bessemer City Council adopted an updated Citizen Participation Plan in compliance with federal regulations found at 24 CFR 91.105. This plan aims to provide residents, especially those with low-to-moderate income, an opportunity to participate in the development, implementation, and assessment of programs and projects.

A public hearing took place on February 22, 2024, at Bessemer City Hall's Multipurpose Room to gather feedback on potential programs and activities for the FY24 program year. Public and private agencies were invited to participate in the centrally located meeting. The Community Development Department offered assistance to residents needing support to attend the meeting upon request. Meeting notices were posted at City Hall, the Public Library, and on the city's website, which supports information access in multiple languages.

Attendees received an overview of the program and were given the opportunity to:

- Identify housing and community development needs
- Review proposed fund uses
- Comment on the city's past program performance

A 30-day comment period outlining proposed activities for FY24 began on March 1, allowing residents to provide feedback prior to submission of the plan. The proposed Action Plan was posted in City Hall's lobby and at the Bessemer Public Library, published in local newspapers, and posted on the city's website. The Plan notified the public that HUD had not released final CDBG allocations at the time, but any additional funding would be designated for housing grants and public facilities and improvements. No comments were received. HUD formally announced the city's FY24 allocation on May 7, 2024, and activity budgets were adjusted based on the FY24 allocation with additional funding dedicated to the Housing Grant program as outlined in advertisements.

The city remains committed to consulting with various agencies, such as the Bessemer Housing Authority, One Roof, the United Way of Central Alabama, Bessemer City Schools, UAB Minority Health and Health Equity Research Center, the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation, and the Bessemer Industrial Development Board among others. The pool of partnerships has expanded to include new agencies through funding of public service activities. City staff collaborates with these agencies to discuss potential projects and activities using CDBG resources, with the goal of leveraging funds for a more significant impact in the Bessemer community. This collaborative approach will continue throughout the current plan year.

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.

During the public meeting, only one individual, a homeowner, attended. This participant expressed support for the City's existing programs and prospective initiatives. Specifically, she inquired about the availability of small business loan funds and programs, as she has a keen interest in starting a business in Bessemer. She sought information on whether such ventures could be supported with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

Throughout the meeting, the attendee gained insights into the nature of CDBG, understanding its applications and permissible uses of funds. She also received information about the proposed budget, anticipated funding, as well as various grants and programs available. This knowledge will contribute to the enhancement of the overall quality of life within the community, aligning with our mission and objectives.

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

All comments and perspectives were acknowledged and carefully considered during the formulation of the FY24 Action Plan.

7. Summary

The City of Bessemer, Alabama, as an Entitlement Community under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, focuses on enhancing viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities, primarily benefiting low-and moderate-income individuals and households. The FY2024 Action Plan outlines Bessemer's strategies to address community needs, stabilize neighborhoods, and invest in human capital through public service programs. These initiatives aim to improve public facilities, address blight, expand housing options, and enhance access to critical services for low-to-moderate-income individuals. The Plan incorporates stakeholder feedback, citizen participation, and consultation with various agencies, ensuring a comprehensive approach to community development. The Citizen Participation Process, including public meetings and a comment period, allowed residents to provide input on proposed activities. Although only one individual attended the public meeting, expressing support for existing programs and prospective initiatives, all comments and perspectives were carefully considered during the formulation of the FY24 Action Plan, contributing to the city's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for its residents.

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, Alabama, as an Entitlement Community under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, focuses on enhancing viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities, primarily benefiting low-and moderate-income individuals and households. The FY2024 Action Plan outlines Bessemer's strategies to address community needs, stabilize neighborhoods, and invest in human capital through public service programs. These initiatives aim to improve public facilities, address blight, expand housing options, and enhance access to critical services for low-to-moderate-income individuals. The Plan incorporates stakeholder feedback, citizen participation, and consultation with various agencies, ensuring a comprehensive approach to community development. The Citizen Participation Process, including public meetings and a comment period, allowed residents to provide input on proposed activities. Although only one individual attended the public meeting, expressing support for existing programs and prospective initiatives, all comments and perspectives were carefully considered during the formulation of the FY24 Action Plan, contributing to the city's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for its residents.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

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

1. Introduction

The Economic and Community Development Department of the City of Bessemer engaged in consultations with a diverse array of public and private agencies to formulate the FY2024 Annual Action Plan.

Bessemer faces limitations in terms of public service agencies and non-profit organizations within its jurisdictional boundaries with the capacity to deliver services and meet federal regulations. These challenges are particularly evident in areas such as assisted housing, homelessness, health services, social services, services for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with HIV/AIDS. To address this issue, the department has taken proactive measures, seeking to bridge the service gap by establishing connections with non-profits and agencies based in the Greater Birmingham-Hoover metropolitan region. Through this collaborative effort, Bessemer can access services similar to those provided in other parts of Central Alabama and build rapport with agencies with strong capacity and additional resources needed to deliver needed services. This approach ultimately enhances the support available to Bessemer's residents.

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 established a productive partnership with the Bessemer Public Housing Authority, resulting in successful outcomes for enhancing housing opportunities and services for residents.

To demonstrate its commitment to community health, the City has strengthened collaboration with two prominent medical providers: the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center and Cahaba Medical Care. This coordination involves actively seeking input and feedback on community plans related to health, mental health, and other health-related services. Furthermore, Cahaba Medical has facilitated the department's access to contact information for various health-related services agencies which are then shared with the general public. The City also collaborates with UAB MHRC on other federal funding opportunities dedicated to enhancing community development within Bessemer.

The City continues to maintain its relationship with Medical West Hospital, aligning services with the evolving needs of hospital clients. Notably, Medical West is currently in the process of constructing a new hospital just outside Bessemer's city limits, with an anticipated opening in August 2024. Subsequently, discussions have taken place regarding the potential conversion of its current facility

within the city into a new health facility dedicated to community health. This strategic partnership underscores the City's ongoing dedication to comprehensive community well-being.

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.

Throughout Fiscal Year 2023, the City of Bessemer consistently engaged in proactive communication with the Birmingham/Jefferson, St. Clair, and Shelby County Continuum of Care. This collaborative effort aimed to discern essential needs pivotal for the formulation of the city's comprehensive Action Plan.

In alignment with our commitment to addressing homelessness, Bessemer partnered with One Roof for an annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count in January. The primary objective was to ascertain the extent of homelessness, with a particular focus on the unhoused population residing within the city limits.

The Point-in-Time Count placed strategic emphasis on four distinct groups:

1. Veterans
2. Youth aged 18-24
3. Families
4. Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, particularly those grappling with mental health issues or disabilities and enduring more than 12 months of street residence.

An integral facet of our collaborative approach involves annual participation in the Continuum of Care Competition Homeless Assistance Grant Competition application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This ongoing partnership underscores our dedication to securing vital resources for homelessness alleviation.

Furthermore, our commitment extends to the Bessemer school system, where the city's department annually reviews yearly system data on homeless students. This rigorous assessment serves to gauge the prevalence of homelessness and identify at-risk students within the educational system, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by our community's youth.

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, it actively collaborates with organizations like the Continuum of Care to identify needs, funding, and strategies for combating homelessness within its jurisdiction. Ongoing consultations are strengthened by recent Point-in-Time survey efforts, and funds have been allocated for Fiscal Year 2024 to support Public Service-related activities that

contribute to these efforts. This underscores Bessemer's commitment to addressing homelessness comprehensively and proactively fostering positive change within the community.

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 of Bessemer and the Bessemer Housing Authority (BHA) maintain active communications regarding housing needs for low-income households. BHA regularly shares its Annual Plans and goals with the city, ensuring alignment and collaboration on programs and services beneficial to housing residents. Additionally, both entities consult on new housing developments and strategies, including scattered site housing and the redevelopment of existing housing developments owned by the PHA. This coordinated effort aims to provide better housing choices for lower-income residents, demonstrating a commitment to addressing community needs and improving housing accessibility and quality.
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 meal delivery to homebound 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 and those who provide housing to them.
4	Agency/Group/Organization	Cahaba Medical Care
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children 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?	The UAB Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center has forged a partnership with the city of Bessemer to address the disparities in health services, particularly focusing on minority residents. This collaboration extends to developing initiatives and seeking funding aimed at reducing crime and its adverse effects on the health of minority communities. The envisioned outcome of this joint effort is a tangible reduction in health disparities among minorities in the Bessemer area, leading to an overall healthier community. This partnership underscores a commitment to improving the well-being of all residents and signifies a proactive approach to tackling complex societal issues through collaborative action.

6	Agency/Group/Organization	Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - 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 Other government - State
	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 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 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 Agency - Management of Public Land or Water Resources 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 Regional organization Planning organization
	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 Historic Preservation
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)

The City of Bessemer aimed to consult with a broad array of organizations in order to formulate this plan.

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 in accordance with HUD rules and regulations. The Economic and Community Development Department now conducts an annual review of the plan to identify strengths and weaknesses in its citizen participation efforts. Throughout the year, the city welcomes comments from residents to aid in goal-setting.

Two public meetings were held on February 22nd (morning and afternoon), providing residents with an opportunity to offer input on planned activities for the 2024 Action Plan. Following the meeting, a 30-day public comment period began on March 1st and concluded on April 2, 2024.

Stakeholders are notified of public meetings through various channels, including the city's website, local newspaper advertisements, and postings in public buildings like City Hall and the Bessemer Public Library. These diverse forms of notice aim to overcome generational barriers to information access and the digital divide within the city. Additionally, when necessary, the city ensures plan proposals are communicated in multiple languages, such as providing notices in both English and Spanish at City Hall and offering translation services on the city's website. The City has a growing Spanish-speaking population and annually reviews data to inform language access. Efforts are made to reach individuals who may require additional assistance to participate 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)
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1	Public Meeting	Non-targeted/broad community	<p>The city advertised the February 22 Public Meeting 15 days prior to the meeting date in a newspaper of general circulation as required by the Citizen Participation Plan, and on the City's website along with a posting in public buildings. In addition, officials from partnering agencies were notified and invited to attend. A separate posting was made on the city's social media page to reach even more potential people. Only one participant came</p>	<p>Comments were received regarding the level of funding from HUD and how CDBG funds could be disbursed for economic opportunities for small businesses.</p>	<p>All comments were accepted.</p>	<p>https://www.bessemeral.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Public-Hearing-AP-2024.pdf</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)
			to the meeting at City Hall.			

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
2	Newspaper Ad	Minorities Persons with disabilities Non-targeted/broad community Residents of Public and Assisted Housing	The city ran advertisements for the public meetings before the February 22 meeting in a local newspaper with general circulation within the city. The newspaper contacted was The Western Star. The city's Citizen Participation Plan called for advertisements to start at least 15 days before the meeting date. In addition, the City announced its proposed Action Plan and provided notice of the 30-day comment period via the newspaper.	No comments were received via newspaper publication.	No comments were received via the newspaper ad.	

3	Internet Outreach	<p>Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: Spanish</p> <p>Non-targeted/broad community</p>	<p>The city advertised for both its public meeting and the 30-day comment period for the FY24 Action Plan via the city's website through the Community Development page. Notice of the public meeting was announced 15 days before the meeting and the Action Plan was posted to the website for 30 days, beginning on March 1. The city's website allows information to be translated into select languages, including Spanish. In addition, the city posted a</p>	No comments were received.	No comments were received.	<p>https://www.bessemeral.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Public-Hearing-AP-2024.pdf</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)
			notice of the public meeting on its social media platform.			
4	Postings in Public Buildings	Non-targeted/broad community	The City posted both the announcement for the February public meeting and the 30-day comment period in the following public buildings: Bessemer City Hall and the Bessemer Public Library. No comments were received.	No comments were received.	No comments were received via the postings in public buildings.	

Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach

Expected Resources

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

Introduction

The City of Bessemer plans to utilize a combination of federal resources, program income, and reimbursed funds to address priority needs and objectives outlined in the FY24 Action Plan. Funding for FY24 will primarily come from the annual CDBG allocation, along with program income generated from repayments to local revolving funds (Economic Development and Housing Rehabilitation), and reimbursement for prior monitoring findings. No additional 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	631,219	98,071	0	729,290	0	Grant expenditures for FY24

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

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

The City will rely primarily on CDBG funds and RLF/PI funds to address areas outlined in the plan. Local funds are generally limited to assist in execution of the plan objectives. The City continues to seek partnerships with private sources to assist in carrying out plan objectives, when those private fund dollars are consistent with plan goals.

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	Program Administration	2020	2024	Administration	Bessemer, Alabama	Economic Development Grants (EN) Economic Development Loan (RL) Housing Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN)	CDBG: \$145,614	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 3360 Persons Assisted Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 150 Persons Assisted Facade treatment/business building rehabilitation: 2 Business Homelessness Prevention: 5 Persons Assisted Businesses assisted: 2 Businesses Assisted
2	Delivery Costs	2020	2024	Affordable Housing Non-Housing Community Development	Bessemer, Alabama	Housing Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$70,518	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 20 Household Housing Unit

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
3	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)	2020	2024	Affordable Housing	Bessemer, Alabama	Housing Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$164,701	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 20 Household Housing Unit
4	Public Facilities (EN)	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Bessemer, Alabama	Public Facilities (EN)	CDBG: \$175,000	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 3360 Persons Assisted
5	Historic Facade Grants (EN)	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Bessemer, Alabama	Economic Development Grants (EN)	CDBG: \$35,000	Facade treatment/business building rehabilitation: 2 Business
7	Public Services	2023	2024	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	Bessemer, Alabama	Public Facilities (EN)	CDBG: \$60,000	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 150 Persons Assisted

Table 6 – Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

1	Goal Name	Program Administration
	Goal Description	The City will use CDBG funds to administer plan, implement and oversee various CDBG projects and activities to ensure effective management, compliance and delivery.

2	Goal Name	Delivery Costs
	Goal Description	Delivery costs will assist in providing delivery of housing grants to at least 20 households in FY24.
3	Goal Name	Emergency Repair Grants (EN)
	Goal Description	Funds are allocated to address Emergency Housing Grants. The program provides emergency home repair and improvement assistance to elderly, low-to-moderate income homeowners or disabled low-to-moderate homeowners, regardless of age, and dependent resident family members who are disabled. Provides up to \$12,500 per household. Participants must be 62 years of age or older or permanently disabled. Priority will be given to repairs directly related to a certified disability or threats to the health and safety of the occupants, ensuring a safe and sanitary living environment.
4	Goal Name	Public Facilities (EN)
	Goal Description	The City of Bessemer is allocating \$175,000 in FY24 funds to address Public Improvements across the City. These funds may be used to address public facility and improvements with a priority given to those activities which will have greatest impact within a specified neighborhood or area of Bessemer.
5	Goal Name	Historic Facade Grants (EN)
	Goal Description	The City plans to sponsor a Historic Facade Grant program to assist property owners and businesses within the Downtown Bessemer National Historic District or any newly developed historic district authorized by the City.
7	Goal Name	Public Services
	Goal Description	

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

The City of Bessemer has outlined a series of projects in its FY24 Action Plan, selected and prioritized through a comprehensive process involving consultations, public participation, data review, and assessment of past performances and prior year Action Plans. These projects were further determined based on the availability of funding from the FY24 grant and program income. Notably, the priority projects for FY24 are public improvements and housing initiatives. Approximately 24% of the total funds allocated for FY24 will be dedicated to public improvements, with an additional 32% earmarked for housing-related activities. Collectively, these two project categories will constitute roughly 56% of all funding for FY24. The remaining funds will be directed toward program administration and public service projects. It is anticipated that all projects will predominantly benefit the city's low-to-moderate-income population, underscoring Bessemer's commitment to fostering community development and equitable resource distribution.

Projects

#	Project Name
1	Administration & Planning
2	Housing Delivery
3	Public Services
4	Public Facilities/ Improvements
5	Elderly and Disabled Emergency Housing Grants
6	Historic District Facade Grant
7	Revolving Loan Funds

Table 7 - Project Information

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

The city has identified specific areas for focus based on public surveys and feedback from the Bessemer community. Anticipated obstacles in addressing the needs of the underserved are minimal. With a demographic makeup of 65 percent LMI, the majority of allocation priorities are geared towards benefiting this population, many of whom are concentrated in Census tracts around the city core.

Allocations for Program Administration will enable the city to hire and retain staff to develop and implement programs designed to benefit all residents, with a particular emphasis on the low- to moderate-income (LMI) population. Similarly, funding for Housing Delivery Costs will support staff or subrecipient implementation of the Emergency Housing Grant program, which targets seniors and the

disabled lacking resources for necessary home repairs.

In addressing public services, the city aims to meet various needs, ranging from youth services to homelessness prevention. Furthermore, public improvements rank high on the city's priorities due to the aging infrastructure. Both the FY2020-24 Consolidated Plan and the city's 2040 Vision Statement have identified upgrades to public facilities and improvements as high-priority areas among residents. These initiatives collectively underscore the city's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all residents, particularly those in underserved communities.

AP-38 Project Summary
Project Summary Information

1	Project Name	Administration & Planning
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Emergency Repair Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN) Historic Facade Grants (EN) Program Administration Delivery Costs Public Services
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN) Public Facilities (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$145,614
	Description	Administration funds will cover administrative costs associated with the planning, implementation, and oversight of various community development initiatives to ensure effective management and coordination of CDBG programs and activities.
	Target Date	5/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	The City estimates some 3500 residents will benefit from proposed activities, with the majority benefitting through public facility and improvement activities.
	Location Description	The local of activities will be City-wide.
	Planned Activities	Activities under administration will focus on improvements to public facilities and infrastructure, public service programs aimed at LMI residents, facade improvements to businesses in the historic downtown district, rehabilitation to housing units and homelessness prevention through public service agencies.
2	Project Name	Housing Delivery
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Emergency Repair Grants (EN) Delivery Costs
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$70,518
	Description	The delivery costs will cover the delivery of the City's Housing Grant Program.
	Target Date	5/31/2025

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 20 low to moderate income households will benefit from this activity, including several with female head of households.
	Location Description	The activity will be City-wide.
	Planned Activities	The City administers a housing grant aimed at assisting seniors and permanently disabled with repairs to the home. The delivery of the activity, whether thru City staff or a subrecipient, will be funded through this portion of the grant.
3	Project Name	Public Services
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Public Services
	Needs Addressed	Public Facilities (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$60,000
	Description	The public services funds are used to address critical needs and enhance the quality of life for its residents to support a services and programs that benefit low-to-moderate-income individuals, families, and communities.
	Target Date	5/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	The City anticipates a broad range of families will be assisted through its public service activities, including female head of households and those with disabilities. An estimated 150 to 200 households are expected to benefit from public service activities.
	Location Description	City-wide.
	Planned Activities	The City will set aside funding for public service activities in FY24. It is expected that public service activities will mirror those funded in FY23, or even be expanded to incorporate other forms of public service. Prior year public services have included funding for food banks, afterschool programs, summer camps, legal services for LMI residents (including homelessness prevention) and youth mentorship. The city will partner with subrecipients to deliver the public service programs.
4	Project Name	Public Facilities/ Improvements
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Public Facilities (EN)
	Needs Addressed	Public Facilities (EN)

	Funding	CDBG: \$175,000
	Description	PF/PI funds will be used to make improvements to public facilities and infrastructure such as sidewalks, streets, curbs and gutters, playgrounds, libraries, schools, jails, water and sewer lines, aesthetic improvements to public property such as trees and sculptures, temporary shelters for persons having special needs, etc.
	Target Date	5/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated some 3500 households will benefit from public improvements and facility activities in program year 2024. The vast majority of these are expected to be LMI residents.
	Location Description	City-wide.
	Planned Activities	The City of Bessemer will use CDBG funds for activities related to Public Facilities and Improvements, including infrastructure improvements, community centers, and overall area improvements in FY24. A final decision on activities was anticipated in Q1 of PY24.
5	Project Name	Elderly and Disabled Emergency Housing Grants
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Emergency Repair Grants (EN) Delivery Costs
	Needs Addressed	Housing Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$164,701
	Description	The Senior Housing Repair Grant program assists low-to-moderate-income homeowners, particularly the elderly or disabled, with essential home repairs and maintenance. The maximum grant amount is \$12,500 per homeowner. Eligible repairs may include addressing safety hazards, code concerns, or deferred maintenance of the home.
	Target Date	5/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 20 senior households are expected to benefit from this activity.
	Location Description	The activity will be City-wide, but it is expected that the majority of those assisted will reside in the City's historical neighborhoods located near the City core.

	Planned Activities	The city has administered a housing grant program for seniors and the disabled for more than a decade. The activity will continue in 2024 due to a high demand for the activity, the City's high LMI population, and the age of Bessemer's housing stock.
6	Project Name	Historic District Facade Grant
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Historic Facade Grants (EN)
	Needs Addressed	Economic Development Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$35,000
	Description	The City of Bessemer plans to offer a Facade Improvement Grant Program to support aesthetic and functional upgrades for active small business spaces and associated building exteriors visible from the public right-of-way in the Downtown Historic District.
	Target Date	5/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	The City of Bessemer expects 2-3 businesses to benefit from the facade grant in FY24, but the impacts would benefit the entire city through revitalization within the Downtown district.
	Location Description	Downtown Bessemer.
Planned Activities	The City seeks to launch a facade improvement program for Downtown Businesses located within the National Historic District. The grant would be a matching grant for business owners.	
7	Project Name	Revolving Loan Funds
	Target Area	Bessemer, Alabama
	Goals Supported	Program Administration
	Needs Addressed	Economic Development Loan (RL) Economic Development Grants (EN)
	Funding	CDBG: \$78,457
	Description	These funds provide accessible financial assistance to support various community development initiatives and projects to stimulate economic growth, foster entrepreneurship, and enhance the quality of life for its residents.
	Target Date	5/31/2025

<p>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</p>	<p>The City estimates at least two businesses will be supported in FY24 through re-introduction of the Economic Development Loan program.</p>
<p>Location Description</p>	<p>City-wide.</p>
<p>Planned Activities</p>	<p>The City plans to reintroduce its economic development loan program in FY24, pending approval from HUD. The City will make economic loans to spur job creation and economic activity within distressed areas.</p>

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, located in southwest Jefferson County in Central Alabama, was founded on the iron and steel industry but suffered from its demise in the United States during the late 1970s and 1980s. The City experienced further population loss in the 1990s. As a result, several areas of Bessemer were severely affected, characterized by high poverty rates and aging infrastructure as tax dollars dwindled due to population and job losses. The city's low-to-moderate income (LMI) population is estimated at 65%, with many Census Tracts, particularly those near the city core, evidencing poverty rates exceeding 20-25%.

Numerous tracts within Bessemer qualify as Qualified Census Tracts, where at least 50% of households earn less than 60% of the area median gross income. Additionally, several of these tracts have poverty rates exceeding 25%. Identified low-income and high-poverty Census tracts include Tracts 101, 102, 103.01, 103.02, 104.1, 133 (with a small portion within Bessemer), and 138.01. However, it's important to note that while these areas are focal points, lower income households and housing exists beyond these tracts.

With a population that is 72% black, Bessemer's minority residents are primarily concentrated in neighborhoods around the urban core. Moreover, the aforementioned tracts have black populations ranging from 67% in Tract 102 (the Downtown area) to 93% in Tract 101 (Northside community). These same Census tracts are currently experiencing a growth in the Hispanic population, although levels have not reached such that language access is required.

The city's urban core hosts several public housing communities, contributing to higher rates of poverty. Bessemer has historically directed entitlement funds and activities toward the urban core to maximize impact on its LMI population. This approach will persist in FY24, with the Senior and Disabled Emergency Housing Grant program primarily benefiting homeowners within the urban core, though eligible households outside this area will also benefit. Anticipations suggest over 85% of housing grants will originate within the lower income census tracts, as this is where housing stock is oldest and owned by seniors. Furthermore, public improvement/facility projects and public service activities will be primarily directed into these areas during FY24.

Geographic Distribution

Target Area	Percentage of Funds
Bessemer, Alabama	100

Table 8 - Geographic Distribution

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically

One of the city's goals is to reduce poverty and its impacts on neighborhoods, including addressing slum and blight conditions, maintaining adequate housing through repairs and rehabilitations, and creating activities and projects that benefit low-to-moderate-income individuals and address social needs. The identified geographic areas align with these goals, enabling the city to effectively pursue them.

Discussion

There is a pressing need for housing and public facilities/improvements across Bessemer. Moreover, the city will need to collaborate with non-profit and other agencies to deliver public services to address social issues. The bulk of the allocated funds will be directed towards areas of the city with high concentrations of low-to-moderate-income (LMI) individuals. Given the general geography of the city, which includes a concentration of LMI census tracts near the city's core, along with high minority concentrations, program efforts will be concentrated in this area for FY24 and the subsequent Consolidated Plan years.

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

Introduction

The City of Bessemer receives limited CDBG funds, which it can allocate towards affordable housing programs. However, in FY24, the city plans to implement programs benefiting homeless, non-homeless, and special needs populations. One such program is emergency repair assistance, aimed at seniors and those with permanent disabilities. These repairs, including roof replacements, plumbing, electrical, and heating/cooling repairs, often preserve the affordability of the home, ensuring safe and stable living environments. Despite funding constraints, the city collaborates with agencies to provide affordable housing opportunities.

A partnership with the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham has already resulted in affordable housing for two special needs households, with plans to continue in FY24. Additionally, the city will allocate \$60,000 in public service funds, some of which can be directed to agencies specializing in addressing homelessness or assisting at-risk families.

Furthermore, the city has applied to HUD for a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) designation, which would allow it to partner with other agencies and leverage funds to address affordable housing goals within a specified area.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	5
Non-Homeless	15
Special-Needs	1
Total	21

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 maintains its collaboration with partner agencies to tackle affordable housing needs, acknowledging the constraints posed by limited CDBG funds. Key partners include the Bessemer

Redevelopment Corporation, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham, and the Bessemer Housing Authority. In FY24, CDBG funds will be directed towards the emergency repair grant program, specifically targeting seniors and individuals with special needs within their families. It is estimated that between 15 and 20 individuals and households will directly benefit from this initiative. The City estimates at least 5 families will be assisted with homelessness through provision of public services and provision of the housing grant. Within the housing grants and public services offered, it is expected at least one special needs household will be assisted.

Public service activities will be implemented in FY24 to address homelessness, particularly focusing on at-risk families. Given the funding limitations, it is anticipated that up to 5 families may receive direct assistance. The city remains committed to collaborating with other agencies to explore avenues for leveraging public and private funds, with the aim of expanding affordable housing options to accommodate homeless individuals, non-homeless individuals, and those with special needs. At least 1 special need household on average is assisted each year through the housing grant program. This concerted effort underscores the city's dedication to addressing housing challenges and enhancing the well-being of its residents.

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 and housing development. The BHA has among its goals for FY24, 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 2024 with non-federal funds which will benefit the residents of public housing. The City and BSHA are also collaborating on redevelopment of public housing units at

Southside Homes. The City is providing some non-financial support to this effort. The City is also considering a proposal to construct a community center for public housing residents and may decide to financially support the effort. A final decision was expected in Q1 of the PY24. 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

The Board of Commissioners of the BHA comprises five members, one of whom must be a recipient of housing assistance. Additionally, the BHA convenes a Resident Advisory Board, engaging with BHA staff on a monthly basis.

The BHA operates a Family-Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program, which is voluntary for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) recipients, public housing residents, and multifamily property tenants. This program is geared towards empowering participants to secure gainful employment and accumulate wealth to move towards self-sufficiency and potential home ownership.

In line with its self-sufficiency objectives for FY24, the BHA aims to increase both the number and percentage of employed individuals within assisted families. It also seeks to provide or attract supportive services to enhance the employability of assistance recipients, as well as establish partnerships that offer additional training opportunities for assisted families.

Furthermore, the BHA and the city are collaborating to identify vacant lots suitable for acquisition by the BHA with the goal of constructing new homes and fostering a culture of 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 facing any significant issues or challenges at present.

Discussion

The City and the Bessemer Housing Authority will sustain their collaborative efforts, delivering essential services to residents of public housing and advancing affordable housing opportunities within the city. These partnerships prioritize fostering self-sufficiency through job creation and programs specifically designed for public housing residents. Additionally, residents are eligible to participate in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-funded programs offered by the city, further enhancing access to

crucial resources and support. Through ongoing coordination and mutual commitment, both entities aim to empower residents and strengthen community resilience in Bessemer.

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

Introduction

The city of Bessemer maintains a relatively small homeless population, as indicated by estimates and homeless counts. Notably, the city does not receive Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding. The city closely monitors economic trends that could potentially affect the prevalence of homelessness among families and individuals within its jurisdiction.

In an ongoing effort to address homelessness effectively, the city is enhancing its coordination with local agencies dedicated to providing services for homeless individuals. These collaborative endeavors are slated to continue into FY24, underscoring the city's commitment to proactive measures.

For FY24, the city has allocated approximately \$70,000 for public service projects, with a portion earmarked to support agencies dedicated to serving the homeless and families at-risk of homelessness. Through ongoing consultations with homelessness agencies throughout the year, the city aims to identify resources and funding to bolster emergency shelters and transitional housing initiatives. This comprehensive approach underscores the city's dedication to mitigating homelessness and supporting vulnerable populations within its community.

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

Over the past year, the city of Bessemer has formed partnerships with agencies focused on counting and assessing the needs of homeless individuals within its jurisdiction. The city collaborates with the Continuum of Care, to actively identify resources aimed at benefiting the homeless population. This collaborative effort will persist into FY24, with a focus on pinpointing the locations of homeless individuals, particularly those who are unsheltered, within the city. Moreover, the City will seek out partners to aid in addressing the needs of its relatively small homeless population.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The city faces challenges in accessing emergency shelters and meeting the transitional housing needs of homeless individuals within its jurisdiction. Initiatives in FY24 will focus on identifying emergency shelter and transitional housing options available within the region. These efforts aim to address the needs of homeless individuals, particularly those with small children who require specialized support.

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 collaborates closely with the Bessemer Housing Authority to support families, including those with children and veterans, in securing affordable housing units. In program year 2024, a key objective is to explore avenues for aiding individuals and families at-risk or grappling with homelessness, including chronically homeless individuals, families, and unaccompanied youth.

To achieve this goal, the city will maintain a vigilant watch over trends in data obtained from the Bessemer City School system. This data analysis will offer insights into the extent of homelessness and its impacts on families with children, as well as potentially affecting other demographics such as veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth.

In FY24, the city will seek out a partner agency to provide emergency assistance, specifically targeting families meeting the aforementioned criteria. This collaborative approach underscores the city's commitment to addressing homelessness and providing crucial support to vulnerable populations within the community.

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, continues to shed light on the level of at-risk families with children residing within Bessemer. This data is crucial for the city to determine the level of homelessness and at-risk families 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. Additionally, the city collaborates with Medical West and Cahaba Medical Care to identify potential individuals and families in need of assistance from medical care institutions. The city will also seek additional data on the number of individuals in the jurisdictions who have been discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care such as mental health facilities, foster care and youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions. If such funds are available due to limited funding, the city aims to identify methods of funding assistance with CDBG funds. The City partnered with Legal Services of Alabama in FY23 to provide legal assistance to at-risk households and will aim to continue such services to address homelessness and at-risk households in

PY24.

Discussion

As previously noted, the City has allocated a portion of its FY24 budget towards Public Service projects dedicated to aiding the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. While funds are limited, the City is committed to maximizing even modest resources to effectively address the needs of the homeless population within its jurisdiction. The Bessemer City Council currently funds agencies dedicated to assisting abused and battered youth while public service funds from CDBG are targeted to programs aimed at providing legal services to LMI households that may be in danger of homelessness. Finally, the City maintains communications with health care agencies, youth facilities and other agencies who provide assistance for housing, health, social services, education and youth needs.

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. Based on the most recent Census figures, the median value of an owner-occupied house is \$118,600, which is less than the averages for the state and county, but maintains a trend of increased value of homes in the area. A family can find a reasonably priced home in Bessemer compared to other jurisdictions in the Birmingham-Hoover metropolitan area. 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 burden of 45%, according to HUD estimates. This may be related in part to the age of housing within Bessemer, 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 before 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. In addition, the City of Bessemer promotes fair housing and has certified its intentions to "affirmatively further fair housing within the jurisdiction.

The Analysis of Impediments conducted in 2020 found no evidence of local policies impacting housing choice and residential development. However, the jurisdiction identified potential non-policy barriers such as affordability, supply of affordable housing, education on fair housing, and transportation to employment as possible barriers to affordable housing. 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 that 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 that 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. The city continues to work with developers and non-profits to expand the supply of affordable housing and reduce housing costs for lower-income residents. The city is also pursuing public facilities and improvements that can assist it with assisting families in need of public transportation. The city currently funds a public bus system and a non-profit dedicated to transportation from its general fund budget.

In addition, renovations of homes for sale and rent are ongoing within the city. There are currently no obstacles to home renovations, which ensure there is a supply of affordable housing available for both buyers and renters. The city will continue 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 steadfast in its commitment to addressing the needs of its underserved populations. This includes prioritizing initiatives such as fostering and maintaining affordable housing, evaluating and reducing lead-based paint hazards, and working towards reducing the number of poverty-level families. The city is also focused on developing institutional structures and enhancing coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies.

To achieve these goals, specific actions have been outlined in this plan with additional strategies being developed through partnerships and consultations with relevant agencies. It's worth noting that Bessemer has a significant number of residents who meet the federal definition of underserved, highlighting the critical importance of these efforts. However, the biggest obstacle faced by the city in meeting the needs of its underserved population is a lack of resources. This includes both financial resources and institutional support. Particularly concerning is the scarcity of institutions, such as non-profits, within the city that have the capacity and resources to assist underserved areas effectively.

Moreover, Bessemer also grapples with a high rate of low- to moderate-income households and significant minority concentrations within several of its Census tracts. These demographic realities further underscore the pressing need for targeted interventions and collaborative efforts to uplift marginalized communities and promote equitable development.

Despite these challenges, the City of Bessemer remains determined to take action. Through strategic planning, resource mobilization, and partnerships with stakeholders, the city is working diligently to overcome barriers and make meaningful progress towards creating a more inclusive and vibrant community for all its residents.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

The city has actively cultivated partnerships with non-profit organizations beyond its jurisdiction to effectively address the needs of its underserved populations. Additionally, there are plans in place to nurture and enhance the capacity of local organizations within the city. However, the city acknowledges that limited financial resources may present challenges to these efforts.

To ensure ongoing support for underserved communities, the city will maintain collaborations with key organizations such as the Continuum of Care and the United Way of Central Alabama. Additionally, the city maintains a close relationship with the Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama through board membership, facilitating access to crucial programs like weatherization and energy assistance for residents.

Recognizing the importance of protecting vulnerable populations, the city has allocated a portion of its

General Fund non-profit funding to programs dedicated to aiding abused and neglected children. This funding will be accessible during the FY24 plan year.

Furthermore, the city has earmarked public service funding in the FY24 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plan to support additional services aimed at meeting the needs of underserved communities within the program year. These proactive measures underscore the city's ongoing commitment to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by its underserved populations and striving for equitable outcomes for all residents.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

The City of Bessemer prides itself on being an affordable community, particularly in terms of housing, when compared to neighboring communities in Jefferson County. The median cost of an owner-occupied home in Bessemer is notably lower than metropolitan, county, and state averages. Similarly, the median gross rent in Bessemer is lower than municipal, county, and state averages, highlighting its affordability compared to surrounding areas. Despite this, the city remains proactive in fostering and maintaining its supply of affordable housing. The city will continue to collaborate with non-profit organizations dedicated to constructing new residential homes for both purchase and rent.

Ongoing efforts involve working closely with developers to identify suitable areas for new developments, all while ensuring that local policies do not impose additional costs on home construction. Continuously reviewing and refining local policies is a priority for the city to ensure there are no barriers hindering the construction of affordable housing within its limits.

Furthermore, the city is committed to supporting its senior residents through initiatives like the senior and emergency grant program. With a funding allocation of \$160,000 in FY24, this program aims to assist seniors in maintaining safe and healthy living conditions, thereby positively influencing housing affordability. Collaboration with the local housing authority is another integral aspect of Bessemer's approach to affordable housing. The city aims to identify properties suitable for renovation or construction under various housing authority programs, such as the family self-sufficiency program by working closely with the housing authority. These concerted efforts underscore Bessemer's commitment to ensuring that affordable housing remains accessible and available to its residents, contributing to the overall well-being and stability of the community.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

The City of Bessemer acknowledges its limited funds for the removal and abatement of lead hazards in homes. While this year we do not plan to allocate funds specifically for this purpose, the city does provide an emergency grant program targeting seniors. Additionally, we will continue to conduct lead-based paint testing in homes where minors reside, for those who qualify under the program. As part of

our efforts to mitigate lead-based paint hazards, the city will distribute information to homeowners in structures where testing occurs, in compliance with federal regulations. This educational initiative aims to raise awareness among homeowners about the potential dangers of lead-based paint, particularly to children.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

The poverty rate in the city of Bessemer, as per the most recent Census, stands at 28.8 percent, surpassing county and state averages. City leaders have been proactive in addressing this issue by focusing on job creation and economic development opportunities to reduce the number of poverty-level families. In recent years, Bessemer has successfully attracted over 8,000 jobs, with many offering a minimum wage of \$15 an hour.

Moving forward, the city intends to maintain its collaboration with agencies such as Jefferson County and the State of Alabama to facilitate access to employment opportunities for Bessemer residents. Notably, the Bessemer Library provides a valuable resource through its workforce kiosk, directly linked to the State employment agency, accessible to all residents seeking employment.

Bessemer maintains a strong partnership with Lawson State Community College, which offers specialized programs in industries such as automotive, among others, contributing to workforce development efforts. The city plans to continue its collaboration with the local transit authority to ensure the continuity of bus services within its jurisdiction, recognizing the crucial role transportation plays in employment outcomes. These concerted efforts underscore Bessemer's commitment to improving economic prospects and enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

The City's Economic and Community Development Department holds primary responsibility for managing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and coordinating efforts to address the needs outlined in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The department is presently staffed by three individuals: a Director, a Grants Management Coordinator, and an Administrative Assistant. However, the city still lacks a Principal Housing Specialist.

Over the years, the city has successfully cultivated relationships with various organizations, including the Continuum of Care, the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, One Roof, and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham, the non-profit Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation, and public institutions such as the Bessemer Housing Authority and city departments. These relationships will be maintained over the next 12 months, with efforts directed towards expanding partnerships to include other agencies capable of assisting in areas such as housing, homelessness, and community development.

Furthermore, the department aims to enhance coordination with the Bessemer Area Chamber of

Commerce and the Bessemer Industrial Development Board to drive economic outcomes within the city.

In FY24, the city plans to:

- Expand departmental capacity and staffing
- Create or expand partnerships with agencies to support the city's objectives
- Establish coalitions, including at the neighborhood level, to address issues like housing and homelessness
- Engage private industry employers on matters related to housing and community development

These strategic initiatives underscore the city's commitment to fostering collaboration, increasing capacity, and driving positive economic and community development outcomes in Bessemer.

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

The City of Bessemer is committed to maintaining partnerships established since 2020 with both public and private housing and social services. Currently, collaborative efforts are underway with the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation to facilitate new housing construction in some of the city's older neighborhoods. Furthermore, the city plans to utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for public services, which may be administered by social service agencies.

To support these endeavors, the city has allocated \$60,000 in its FY24 Action Plan for public service activities, a portion of which can be directed towards social services benefiting both public and private housing. Additionally, the city retains an activity related to first-time homebuyers within its toolkit. However, the initiation of this program in FY24 will depend on prevailing market conditions.

Discussion:

The City of Bessemer remains committed to cultivating robust ties and relationships to address various critical areas, including housing affordability and supply, services for the underserved, lead-based paint reduction, institutional structure development, poverty reduction, and collaboration 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 solely receives Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding as part of its allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It does not receive any additional HUD funding, such as HOME or Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funding. All funds outlined in this Action Plan originate from CDBG entitlement funds or CDBG-related program income.

As of June 2024, the city plans to make a reimbursement to its CDBG funds. These funds have been incorporated into the plan, contributing to the total scope of funding for FY24

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	98,071
2. The amount of proceeds from section 108 loan guarantees that will be used during the year to address the priority needs and specific objectives identified in the grantee's strategic plan.	0
3. The amount of surplus funds from urban renewal settlements	0
4. The amount of any grant funds returned to the line of credit for which the planned use has not been included in a prior statement or plan	0
5. The amount of income from float-funded activities	0
Total Program Income:	98,071

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%

The City expects to receive approximately \$98,000 in program income through repayments to its revolving loan funds in FY 2024.

