

Columbus
GEORGIA
We do amazing.

COLUMBUS CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

2025 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

June 2025



Executive Summary

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

1. Introduction

The City of Columbus's 2025-2026 Annual Action Plan outlines a strategic approach to utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the 2025 program year. This plan details project completions, funding allocations, key activities, and expected beneficiaries. As the fifth and final phase of Columbus's 2021-2025 Five-Year Consolidated Plan, it reinforces long-term priorities for HUD fund distribution. In 2025, Columbus remains focused on critical needs, including housing affordability, strengthening public services, upgrading public facilities and infrastructure, advancing fair housing, supporting homelessness services, and enhancing program administration. By pursuing these priorities, the City aims to maximize HUD funds for sustainable community growth and improved quality of life for residents.

2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan

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

Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply

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

Housing Rehabilitation

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

Housing Assistance and Navigation

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

Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements

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

Public Services

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

Fair Housing

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

COVID-19 Response

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

Expanding the Availability of Homeless Services and Housing

Support agencies that provide services and housing to persons that are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

Program Administration

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

3. Evaluation of past performance

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

4. Summary of citizen participation process and consultation process

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

During the preparation of this Annual Action Plan, the City held a formal public hearing on January 9, 2025, to gather input from interested stakeholders. A second Public Hearing was held on July 2, 2025, to gather feedback on the draft. This input is summarized in the Participation section of this document. Public comments on the draft Annual Action Plan were received throughout a 30-day public comment period from June 15, 2025, to July 15, 2025. No comments were received during the comment period.

5. Summary of public comments

The City did not receive any comments relevant to the 2025-2026 Annual Action Plan during the Public Comment Periods or at the Public Hearing held on July 2, 2025.

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

Not applicable; the City has not received any comments.

7. Summary

During the 2025-2026 program year, the City of Columbus will use its CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds to address priorities identified in its 2021-2025 Five-Year Consolidated Plan. Specifically, Columbus will fund affordable housing creation, public services and public facility and infrastructure improvements, fair housing, homelessness services and housing, and program administration.

The Process

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

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

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

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

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

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

Narrative

Columbus falls under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's CDBG, HOME and ESG programs as an entitlement community. The Annual Action Plan outlines projects slated for funding during the 2025 program year, spanning from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

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

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

1. Introduction

In the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan development, Columbus involved 94 residents and stakeholders through meetings, focus groups, interviews, and a survey. The findings were outlined in the Community Participation section of the Consolidated Plan. Additionally, for the 2025 Annual Action Plan Community Reinvestment received input from The Housing Authority of Columbus Georgia.

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

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

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

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

The City of Columbus is represented on the executive committee of the Columbus-Muscogee/Russell County Continuum of Care. Through monthly participation on the executive committee, city staff provide input on strategies to address homelessness in the region. The City also supports several homelessness agencies, including Home for Good, the Salvation Army, and Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministries among others as they provide direct services to the chronically homeless and families transitioning out of homelessness.

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

In May 2024, the City of Columbus was awarded an ESG entitlement grant. During a phone interview conducted in August 2024 staff from the Continuum of Care lead agency Home for Good recommended allocating ESG funds towards homelessness prevention (e.g., rental assistance), as this service need was identified as having the least amount of funding. In its execution of ESG funding, Home for Good staff recommended that the City will utilize performance standards and evaluation techniques from Home for Good's Data Quality Management Plan to ensure low data quality error rates. Performance standards provide a measure for ESG grantees to evaluate the effectiveness of each ESG service provider in the areas of (a) targeting those who need assistance most; (b) reducing the number of people who are homeless or in emergency shelters; (c) reducing the time people spend in homelessness, and (d) reducing clients' housing barriers or housing stability risks. Lastly, Home for Good staff recommended that the City support the operation and administration of HMIS by covering expenses related to use of the system, including flat fees for licenses and other administrative costs.

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

	Agency/Group/Organization Name	Type	Section of the Plan Addressed
1	Chattahoochee Valley Libraries	Services - Education	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
2	City of Columbus, City Council	Other – Elected Officials	Economic Development Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
3	City of Columbus, Community Reinvestment	Other – City Staff	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs

4	City of Columbus, Fire & EMS	Agency – Emergency Management	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
5	City of Columbus, Parks and Recreation	Services - Children	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
6	City of Columbus, Planning Department	Other – City Staff	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis
7	Coldwell Banker KPDD	Housing	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
8	Columbus 2025	Business and Civic Leaders	Economic Development Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
9	Columbus-Phenix City MPO	Other – Transportation	Market Analysis Non-homeless Special Needs
10	Habitat for Humanity	Services - Housing	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis
11	Home for Good	Services - Homeless	Homeless Needs – Families with Children Homeless Needs – Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness Strategy Market Analysis
12	Homeless Resource Network	Services - Homeless	Homeless Needs – Families with Children Homeless Needs – Unaccompanied Youth Homeless Needs - Veterans Homelessness Strategy Market Analysis

13	Hope Harbour	Services – Victims of Domestic Violence	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis
14	Housing Authority of Columbus, GA	Public Housing Authority	Public Housing Needs
15	MercyMed	Health agency	Housing Needs Assessment Market Analysis Non-Homeless Special Needs
16	NeighborWorks	Services - Housing	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis
17	Paz Amigos	Services - Homeless	Homelessness Strategy Non-homeless Special Needs

Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated

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

During the Consolidated Plan process, a wide variety of community stakeholders throughout the City of Columbus were consulted. A total of 61 professionals were invited to participate in a stakeholder interview. Invitations to participate were emailed to stakeholders or offered by phone. Stakeholders invited to participate represented the following fields: housing developers, real estate agents, public housing authorities, colleges and universities, homeless services, domestic violence services, school districts, non-profit organizations, health service providers, workforce development organizations, businesses, faith-based coalitions, ethnic group organizations, mental health providers, senior services, transit authorities, elected officials, city staff, libraries, emergency management agencies, legal services providers and regional planning organizations. No agency types were excluded from outreach efforts.

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

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
2025 Annual Moving to Work Plan	Housing Authority of Columbus, GA	Goals of the 2025 Annual Moving to Work Plan Year, includes the continuation of the RAD/Section 18 Blend conversion process for the remaining 424 public housing units throughout the city. The creation of additional units for low-income households overlaps with the Strategic Plan goal to expand affordable housing supply.
Columbus 2025 Plan	Greater Columbus, GA Chamber of Commerce	The guiding principles of the Columbus 2025 Plan include "increasing prosperity, improving quality of life and reducing poverty." Quality of life goals described in the Columbus 2025 overlap with the Strategic Plan's goals of infrastructure and public facility improvements and expansion of affordable housing supply.
Columbus Consolidated Government 2038 Comprehensive Plan	Columbus Consolidated Government	Some of the goals highlighted in the 2038 Comprehensive Plan include expanding opportunities for walking, biking, and transit, growing and expanding businesses, and improving access to affordable, quality housing. These goals, along with others listed in the Comprehensive Plan, align with the Strategic Plan goals to rehab housing, expand affordable housing supply, provide public services, and improve infrastructure and public facilities.
Columbus – Muscogee County Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024-2029	Columbus Consolidated Government	Goals of the city's Hazard Mitigation Plan include reducing/eliminating community exposure to natural and manmade events and reducing loss to public and private property. These goals indirectly relate to the Strategic Plan's overall goals of

		maintaining and expanding affordable housing and protecting and improving infrastructure and public facilities.
River Valley Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)	River Valley Regional Commission	The goals of the CEDS Plan include assisting the workforce of the region, improving infrastructure and improving housing stock – which align with the Strategic Plan goals of housing rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements.

Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts

Narrative (optional):

N/A

AP-12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)

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

The City held a public meeting on January 9, 2025, to review the city's 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan priorities. At the workshop staff described eligible activities, provided an estimate of PY 2025 funding, and explained the city's subgrantee application process. A formal public hearing was held on Wednesday, July 2, 2025, to discuss the proposed activities to be funded in the program year.

Summarize citizen participation process and how it impacted goal setting

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
1	Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/Broad community	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Internet Outreach	Non-targeted/Broad community	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	Public Hearing	Non-targeted/Broad community	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

4	Public Comment Period	Non-targeted/Broad community	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach

Expected Resources

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

Introduction

The City of Columbus receives annual allocations of CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds to support housing construction, housing rehabilitation initiatives, public services, public facilities and infrastructure improvements, and other eligible activities. These funding sources have been available throughout the five-year term of the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan. The table below outlines the City's estimated CDBG, HOME, and ESG allocations for the 2025-2026 program year, including resources carried over from previous years. As this is the fifth and final year of the Consolidated Plan, no new funding is anticipated.

Anticipated Resources

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 5				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	$1,690,979	$0	$0	$1,690,979	$-	Block grant from HUD to address housing, community development and economic development needs in the City.

		Housing Public Improvements Public Services						
HOME	Public - federal	Acquisition Homebuyer down payment assistance Multifamily rental new construction Multifamily rental rehab New construction for ownership Tenant Based Rental Assistance	$933,059.11	$0	$0	$933,059.11	$-	Grant from US Department of Housing and Urban Development to address affordable housing needs in the City.
ESG	Public - federal	Administration Emergency Shelter	$149,543	$0	$0	$149,543	$-	Grant from US Department of Housing and Urban Development to

		Homelessness Prevention Rapid Re-housing HMIS						address homelessness needs in the City.

Table 2 - Expected Resources – Priority Table

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

Nonprofit organizations receiving CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds from the City supplement their financial resources through state funding and tax credits, foundation support and private donations, extending the impact of City-sponsored programs. To further strengthen these initiatives, the City encourages organizations to seek additional public and private funding in alignment with the Consolidated Plan. Federal funding empowers these organizations to expand services for low- to moderate-income individuals.

The HOME Program mandates a 25% match from non-federal sources. Similarly, the ESG Program requires a 100% match. Match requirements for both the HOME and ESG programs are verified through the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) submitted to HUD.

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

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

Annual Goals and Objectives

AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives

Goals Summary Information

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply	2025	2026	Affordable Housing	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply	HOME: $839,753.20	Rental units constructed: 0 housing unit Homeowner Housing Added: 5 housing units
2	Housing Rehabilitation	2025	2026	Affordable Housing	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Housing Rehabilitation	CDBG: $0	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 0
3	Blight Removal	2025	2026	Affordable Housing	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Blight Removal	CDBG: $0	Buildings Demolished: 0

4	Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements	2025	2026	Non-Housing Community Development	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements	CDBG: $1,099,136.35	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/ Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 4,871 persons assisted
5	Public Services	2025	2026	Non-Housing Community Development Homelessness Non-Homeless Special Needs	Citywide South Columbus NRSA	Public Services	CDBG: $253,646.85	Public service activities other than Low/ Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 10,484 persons assisted
6	Fair Housing	2025	2026	Other: Fair Housing	Citywide	Fair Housing	CDBG: $0	Public service activities other than Low/ Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 0 persons assisted
7	COVID-19 Response	2025	2026	Other: COVID-19 Response	Citywide	COVID-19 Response	CDBG: $0	Public service activities other than Low/ Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 0 persons assisted
8	*Expanding the Availability of Homeless*	2025	2026	Homelessness	Citywide South Columbus	Homelessness	ESG: $138,326.28	Homeless overnight shelter: 40 persons assisted

	Services and Housing				NRSA			
8	Program Administration	2025	2026	Other: Program Administration	Citywide	Program Administration	CDBG: $338,195.80 HOME: $93,305.91 ESG: $11,215.72	N/A

Table 2 – Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

Goal 1: Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply

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

Goal 2: Housing Rehabilitation

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

Goal 3: Housing Assistance and Navigation

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

Goal 4: Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements

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

Goal 5: Public Services

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

Goal 6: Fair Housing

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

Goal 7: COVID-19 Response

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

Goal 8: Expanding the Availability of Homeless Services and Housing

Support agencies that provide services and housing to persons that are homeless, or at risk of homelessness

Goal 9: Program Administration

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

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

The projects listed below represent the activities Columbus plans to undertake during the 2025 program year to address the goals of providing decent safe and affordable housing, promoting a suitable living environment, and encouraging investment in infrastructure.

Projects

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

Table 3 – Project Information

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

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

Many projects are facing significant material and construction delays, making it difficult to select and implement CDBG-PF projects within the Action Plan year. Our First Come, First Ready, First Serve process will allow us to plan construction projects over longer and more realistic timeframes. While the City does not anticipate any obstacles to completing the projects identified for the 2025-2026 program year, it remains prepared to address any challenges that may arise.

AP-38 Project Summary

Project Summary Information

1	**Project Name**	CDBG Administration
	Target Area	Citywide
	Goals Supported	Program Administration
	Needs Addressed	Program Administration
	Funding	$338,195.80
	Description	CDBG Program Administration
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	N/A
	Location Description	Department of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, 420 10th Street, Columbus, GA 31901
	Planned Activities	Salaries, office supplies, advertising, travel, appraisals, printing, cost allocations, etc.
2	**Project Name**	Public Service Grants

	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Public Services
	Needs Addressed	Public Services
	Funding	$253,646.85
	Description	Provision of broad public services covering health, education and homelessness.
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	10,484 persons assisted
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Education and career development, healthcare programming, rapid re-housing, financial and wealth building, mentoring, virtual learning programs, CoC and homeless programs, tutorial program, trade-skill training, and similar programs and services designed to benefit LMI persons
3	**Project Name**	Demolitions
	Target Area	Citywide

		South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Blight Removal
	Needs Addressed	Blight Removal
	Funding	$0
	Description	Demolition of dilapidated structures
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	0 Units
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Demolition
4	**Project Name**	Infrastructure and Public Facilities
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Infrastructure and Public Facilities Improvements

	Needs Addressed	Infrastructure and Public Facilities Improvements
	Funding	$1,099,136.35
	Description	Improvements to recreational facilities in low-to-moderate income census tracts.
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	4,871 persons assisted
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Sidewalks, Street Improvements, Public Facility Improvements
5	**Project Name**	Housing Rehabilitation Program
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Housing Rehabilitation
	Needs Addressed	Housing Rehabilitation
	Funding	$0

	Description	Rehabilitation of homeowner housing to benefit extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Provision of accessibility upgrades to income eligible households. Provision of lead-based paint testing to income eligible households.
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	0 household housing units
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Rehabilitation of homeowner housing to benefit extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Provision of accessibility upgrades to income eligible households. Provision of lead-based paint testing to income eligible households.
6	**Project Name**	HOME Program Administration
	Target Area	Citywide
	Goals Supported	Program Administration
	Needs Addressed	Program Administration
	Funding	$93,305.91

	Description	HOME Program Administration
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	N/A
	Location Description	Department of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, 420 10th Street, Columbus, GA 31901
	Planned Activities	Salaries, office supplies, advertising, travel, appraisals, printing, cost allocations, etc.
7	**Project Name**	Affordable Housing
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Needs Addressed	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Funding	$649,794.34 (HOME: $649,794.34)

	Description	Development of affordable single-family rental and homeowner units. Down-payment assistance.
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	5 household housing units
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Development of affordable single-family rental and homeowner units. Down-payment assistance.
8	**Project Name**	Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Reserve
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Needs Addressed	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Funding	$139,958.86
	Description	Acquisition and/or rehabilitation of homebuyer properties

	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	1 household housing unit
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Acquisition and/or rehabilitation of homebuyer properties
9	**Project Name**	Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Operating Costs
	Target Area	Citywide South Columbus NRSA
	Goals Supported	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Needs Addressed	Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply
	Funding	$50,000
	Description	Salaries, wages, and other employee compensation and benefits; employee education, training, and travel; rent; utilities; communication costs; taxes; insurance; equipment; materials; and supplies.
	Target Date	June 30, 2026

	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	1
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	Salaries, wages, and other employee compensation and benefits; employee education, training, and travel; rent; utilities; communication costs; taxes; insurance; equipment; materials; and supplies.
10	**Project Name**	ESG Program Administration
	Target Area	Citywide
	Goals Supported	Program Administration
	Needs Addressed	Program Administration
	Funding	$11,215.72
	Description	ESG Program Administration
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	N/A

	Location Description	Department of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, 420 10th Street, Columbus, GA 31901
	Planned Activities	Salaries, office supplies, advertising, travel, appraisals, printing, cost allocations, etc.
11	**Project Name**	ESG
	Target Area	Citywide
	Goals Supported	Strategies to Adress Homelessness
	Needs Addressed	Homelessness Strategy
	Funding	$138,327.28
	Description	Funds will be used to support ESG eligible services in emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, and HMIS.
	Target Date	June 30, 2026
	Estimate the number and type of persons that will benefit from the proposed activity	Approximately 50 residents will be provided ESG eligible services in emergency shelter, rapid rehousing and/or homelessness prevention.
	Location Description	Citywide

Planned Activities	Emergency Shelter, Rapid Rehousing, Homelessness Prevention, and HMIS.

AP-50 Geographic Distribution – 91.220(f)

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

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

Geographic Distribution

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

Table 4 - Geographic Distribution

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically

Aligned with the goals and regulations of the federal CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs, the City of Columbus will prioritize funding in neighborhoods predominantly composed of low- and moderate-income (LMI) households with significant needs related to housing quality and affordability, public facilities, infrastructure, and economic development.

The criteria for project selection are based on the following key factors:

- Compliance with statutory requirements of the CDBG program
- Addressing the needs of LMI residents
- Prioritizing investment in the South Columbus NRSA
- Targeting LMI areas or neighborhoods
- Coordinating and leveraging resources
- Responding to community-identified needs

- Ensuring sustainability and long-term impact
- Demonstrating measurable progress and success

CDBG funding will primarily target areas where at least 51% of residents are LMI.

Discussion

The South Columbus NRSA is located west of Interstate 185, roughly bound by Brown Avenue and Lumpkin Road on the west, State Spur 22 in the north, and Fort Moore in the south. The portion of the NRSA east of Interstate 185 is generally bound by Old Cusseta Road on the north and east and by Fort Moore in the south. The area is comprised primarily of residential neighborhoods and neighborhood commercial shopping centers. Neighborhoods in the NRSA include Wynnton, Willett, and Avondale Heights.

According to HUD's Low/Moderate Income Summary Data based on the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS), nearly three-quarters (72.0%) of residents in the South Columbus NRSA had low or moderate incomes. While the 2016-2020 ACS data has since been released, HUD's updated LMI Summary Data suggests that this percentage remains high, reaffirming the need for targeted community reinvestment efforts. In comparison, approximately 39.9% of the overall Columbus population was classified as low- or moderate-income in the 2015 ACS, indicating that economic hardship is significantly more concentrated in the NRSA than in the city as a whole.

Further, 2019-2023 ACS Fiv Year estimates report that Columbus, GA, has a median household income of $56,622, with 18.8% of residents living in poverty. These figures highlight ongoing economic challenges for many residents and reinforce the need for programs that support workforce development, affordable housing, and small business growth within the NRSA. Given these conditions, the strategic initiatives outlined in this Annual Action Plan aim to address income disparities and promote economic stability in South Columbus.

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

Introduction

Over the next program year, the City of Columbus plans to assist 5 homebuyers through the production of affordable for-sale units. The City of Columbus also intends to assist 10 households through homelessness prevention activities.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	10
Non-Homeless	5
Special-Needs	0
Total	**15**

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

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	10
The Production of New Units	5
Rehab of Existing Units	0
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	**15**

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

Discussion

The estimates in the tables above are derived from the anticipated PY 2025 CDBG, HOME, and ESG projects and activities.

AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

Introduction

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

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

During its 2025 Moving To Work Plan Year, the HACG plans to continue the RAD/Section 18 Blend conversion process for the remaining 424 public housing units throughout the city. Under this conversion process, the conventional public housing units at Warren Williams + Rivers Homes and Elizabeth F. Canty Homes will become project-based Section 8 voucher units. Once converted there will be no more conventional public housing properties in Columbus, GA.

In 2024, HACG began construction of 90 new mixed-income housing units. The new senior development called BTW South will contain 80 units for low-income seniors earning no more than 60% AMI, and 10 market rate units. This project will be funded utilizing 9% LIHTC, along with other funding sources such as HUD MTW funds, HOME and CDBG. As part of the RAD/Section 18 Blend conversion of Warren Williams + Rivers Homes, the property will be substantially rehabilitated through the use of 4% LIHTC and private activity bonds allocated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). All 182 units at Warren Williams and Rivers Homes will be reserved for low-income families earning 60% or below AMI and project-based Section 8 voucher holders earning no more than 50% AMI. All current residents will be temporarily relocated during construction and relocated back to the site once construction is complete.

The HACG was also selected to receive 4% Housing Tax Credit/Bonds funding for the Providence Pointe project. Providence Pointe will be a multifamily rental property with 102 apartments for Housing for Older Persons (ages 55 and over). This project will be co-developer with NeighborWorks Columbus as part of their Elliot's Walk master planned community.

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

Public housing residents are encouraged to become involved in management with the HACG. The housing authority provides a placement for an HACG resident to serve as a commissioner on the HACG leadership team. Residents are also invited to participate in hearings regarding its Annual Moving To Work Plan and year-

end report. The HACG collects and replies to resident comments on these plans. Resident comments are recorded in the final version of the annual plan.

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

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

Not applicable.

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

Introduction

Columbus actively participates in the Columbus-Muscogee Continuum of Care, fostering a unified community effort to eliminate homelessness. This collaboration brings together partner agencies to improve program access and effectiveness. The City remains committed to working with the Continuum of Care and local service providers to achieve its homelessness response goals.

For the 2025-2026 program year, Columbus will allocate $145,932 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) entitlement funding to support eligible services, including emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, HMIS, and ESG program administration.

Describe the jurisdiction's one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including: Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs

Expanding homeless services and housing has been a key priority in the City's 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan. Funded activities under this initiative may include outreach to unsheltered individuals. Local service providers, such as the United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley and The Salvation Army, play a vital role in these efforts by offering food, clothing, and essential resources to those in need.

In the 2025 program year, the City will support homeless outreach efforts by:

- Providing funding to the Continuum of Care for homeless outreach services.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

Through the City's HOME-ARP funding, , Columbus will invest $1,167,947 in developing 17 family shelter units operated by the Columbus Salvation Army. An additional $50,000 in HOME-ARP funds will support Hope Harbour, the region's domestic violence emergency shelter.

Columbus may also allocate ESG funding to emergency and transitional housing providers, including The Salvation Army and Hope Harbour. These organizations will continue to provide critical housing and support services for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Actions to address emergency shelter and transitional housing needs in the 2025 program year include:

- Funding through ESG for emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, and HMIS
- Funding through HOME-ARP to support development of 17 new family shelter units
- Funding supportive services for victims of domestic violence
- Conducting rapid re-housing for homeless families

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

The City of Columbus and the Columbus-Muscogee CoC embrace the Housing First model, which prioritizes permanent housing while providing case management and supportive services. This approach aligns with the CoC's goal of expanding access to affordable and permanent supportive housing.

Actions to assist residents experiencing homelessness in making the transition to permanent housing in the 2025 program year include:

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

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

Housing and service providers in Columbus collaborate to prevent homelessness among vulnerable and at-risk populations. These include extremely low-income individuals and families, those exiting institutions, and individuals receiving housing, health, social services, education, or youth assistance. Local organizations, such as The Salvation Army, help by providing rent and utility assistance.

Additionally, the City will use its ESG funding to support Home for Good's administration of the HMIS system. This digital management system will track clients who seek resources and help refer them to local agencies that can provide services.

Actions to prevent homelessness in the 2025 program year include:

- Support the local Continuum of Care's administration of the HMIS system.

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

Introduction:

A major barrier to affordable housing identified by stakeholders is the city's property tax structure. Columbus homeowners currently benefit from a homestead exemption tied to the year of purchase, which freezes the assessed value of their properties and locks in a fixed tax payment for as long as they own the home. This tax structure, in place since 1983, results in property taxes only adjusting upon sale, improvement, or tax rate changes. While this exemption has provided stability for some homeowners, it has been highlighted as a barrier to affordable housing, as it can limit the property tax revenue available for road and park maintenance and other public service provision.

Recent changes in Georgia's property tax laws, such as the November 2024 constitutional amendment capping property tax increases due to inflation, further underscore the complexity of addressing affordable housing through tax policy. Many local jurisdictions, including Columbus, are currently weighing whether to opt out of this cap to avoid potential revenue shortfalls. The City is currently engaging with stakeholders to develop strategies that balance fiscal sustainability with the need for more inclusive, affordable housing solutions.

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

Instead of continuing to explore additional adjustments to property taxes, Columbus introduced a new proposal: a 1% increase in sales tax, which was approved by voters in November 2021. This raised the local sales tax rate from 8% to 9%. The revenue generated from this Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) is being allocated toward financing a new judicial building and enhancing the city's public safety budget. The SPLOST is set to remain effective for a duration of 9 months, providing the community with the necessary funds to address urgent infrastructure and safety needs without placing additional burdens on property owners.

The City of Columbus will continue to evaluate the impact of the sales tax increase and adjust its approach as needed to ensure it effectively meets the community's needs.

AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction:

This section outlines the City of Columbus's holistic strategy to ensure residents have access to safe, affordable housing, while also focusing on underserved populations, alleviating poverty, strengthening institutional frameworks, and enhancing collaboration between public and private sector partners involved in housing and community development efforts.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

Throughout the Consolidated Plan planning process, residents and stakeholders raised concerns about the significant shortage of accessible, well-maintained affordable housing. They identified key barriers, including:

- High development costs,
- The need for subsidies to support new affordable housing projects, and
- The deterioration of existing affordable housing due to rising rents and aging infrastructure requiring renovation.

Additionally, residents and stakeholders emphasized the urgent need for expanded facilities and services for low-income individuals and homeless populations. These services include job creation, vocational training, entrepreneurial support, childcare, and case management.

In response, the City of Columbus plans to allocate funding toward a range of initiatives aimed at addressing these unmet needs in housing, services, and infrastructure. The goal is to reduce the affordable housing gap while strengthening support systems for vulnerable populations, ultimately enhancing community resilience and promoting sustainable growth.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

To strengthen and expand the city's affordable housing stock, the City aims to collaborate with nonprofit housing organizations and private sector partners, with a primary focus on increasing the availability of affordable housing options. These partnerships may include engaging Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) developers or other entities interested in housing projects within the city. Additionally, the City will explore funding opportunities and grants that can be utilized to inject new capital into affordable housing initiatives or programs.

Building on its commitment to enhancing housing affordability, the City will continue to advance a variety of ongoing initiatives. These include the homebuyer down payment assistance program and homeowner-

occupied rehabilitation efforts, which provide essential repairs and improvements such as HVAC systems, roofing, flooring, plumbing, electrical updates, windows, and exterior doors.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

Over the past decade, HUD has placed a strong emphasis on addressing lead-based paint hazards, a priority shared by numerous jurisdictions nationwide. The federal Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, which amends the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act of 1971, regulates the presence of lead-based paint in federally funded housing. These laws, along with subsequent regulations set forth in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's guidelines (24 CFR, part 35), aim to protect young children from lead exposure in housing that receives federal financial assistance or is involved in federal transactions.

When rehabilitation projects are undertaken, the City of Columbus will assess properties to identify any lead-based paint hazards. If lead is detected, the City will follow the provisions of the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992. In line with its commitment to safeguarding public health, the City of Columbus will ensure that all pre-1978 housing units receiving federal grant funds through its housing programs are tested for lead and undergo mitigation as necessary.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

Columbus's strategy to combat poverty focuses on improving the economic standing of low-income households, ensuring they rise above the poverty threshold. Currently, educational and employment initiatives aimed at reducing poverty are managed by organizations such as the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Development Board, WorkSource Georgia, Columbus State University, Columbus Technical College, Goodwill, Better Work, and local nonprofits.

In collaboration with community stakeholders, a Vice President of Poverty Reduction with the United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley has been appointed. This role will lead to efforts to build strategic partnerships throughout the region and develop a ten-year, actionable plan to reduce poverty in Columbus and the Chattahoochee Valley. The Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition, which secured $1 million in start-up funding from the American Rescue Plan, will oversee the initiative's first three years and work on establishing long-term funding sources.

Economic development strategies at both the municipal and regional levels are closely tied to poverty alleviation and workforce development. The River Valley Regional Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, updated in 2022, prioritizes equipping the local workforce with the skills and knowledge needed for 21st-century jobs. Key objectives include ongoing engagement with local employers

to align workforce training programs with industry needs, promoting educational initiatives in local schools, supporting military-to-civilian job transitions, and encouraging youth apprenticeships and internships.

Similarly, the Columbus 2025 plan, a part of the Regional Prosperity Initiative, emphasizes the need for a skilled and educated workforce to boost regional competitiveness. The plan's goals include creating a cradle-to-career partnership that integrates education, training, business, and social services, expanding access to early childhood education and family support services, raising awareness of educational and career pathways, strengthening mentoring programs for at-risk students, launching adult education campaigns, and fostering collaboration between businesses and educational institutions to align programs with industry demands.

Additionally, numerous nonprofit organizations in Columbus offer emergency assistance to those in need. These collective efforts underscore the city's commitment to addressing poverty through a comprehensive approach, combining educational, employment, and social support initiatives to uplift vulnerable communities and promote inclusive economic growth.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

In October 2024, the Community Reinvestment Department held a mandatory training course for all CDBG Public Service sub-recipients. The training covered the department's CDBG-PS policy manual, and included such topics as client eligibility, eligible activities, reimbursements, beneficiary information, monthly reports, and monitoring. The department has also updated its HOME policies and internal financial management and procurement policies. The department will continue its sub-recipient monitoring in PY 25, including on-site monitoring for the highest risk sub-recipients. Finally, starting in PY 24, the department implemented its "first in, first ready, first out" process for CDBG Public Facilities. Using this process, the department is accepting public facilities applications on a rolling basis. Many projects are facing significant material and construction delays, which makes it difficult to select and implement CDBG-PF projects within the Action Plan year. The alternative process will allow us to plan construction projects over longer and more realistic timeframes. In addition, the Community Reinvestment Department held mandatory training for all potential CDBG Public Facilities sub-recipients. The training covered the department's CDBG-PF policy manual, and included such topics as client eligibility, eligible activities, reimbursements, beneficiary information, monthly reports, procurement, Davis-Bacon and monitoring.

In the 2024 program year, the City worked with existing partners and coalitions, such as the Continuum of Care, to meet homeless service needs. Continuing this work in PY 25, the Columbus Consolidated Government will also continue to consult with the CoC and various housing, homelessness, social service, elderly and disability resource agencies in homeless services and utilize ESG funding for eligible services.

Lastly, the Community Reinvestment Department will hold mandatory training for all potential HOME nonprofit and for-profit developers, as well as those administering our Sweet Home Columbus down payment program, to update these partners on administrative changes in the various HOME Programs. The training will cover several topics including, but not limited to, client eligibility, eligible activities, reimbursements, reporting requirements, contractor procurement, match requirements, and monitoring.

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

The City of Columbus remains actively engaged in the Columbus-Muscogee Continuum of Care, a collaborative initiative that brings together nonprofit, governmental, and business leaders in a unified effort to combat homelessness. This partnership includes a broad spectrum of members, ranging from providers of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing to nonprofit social service organizations and government agencies.

Program Specific Requirements

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

Introduction:

This section describes program specific requirements for CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income over the 2025 Program Year period is 70.00%.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Reference 24 CFR 91.220(l)(1)

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

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

Other CDBG Requirements

1. The amount of urgent need activities	$0

2a. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income. Overall Benefit – A consecutive period of one, two or three years may be used to determine that a minimum overall benefit of 70% of CDBG funds is used to benefit persons of low and moderate income.	70%
2b. Specify the years covered that include this Annual Action Plan.	2025 Program Year

HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)

Reference 24 CFR 91.220(l)(2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

Reference 91.220(l)(4)

1. **Include written standards for providing ESG assistance (may include as attachment) the City of Columbus will focus on the two eligible populations that can be assisted with funds: persons at risk of becoming homeless and persons who are literally homeless. While these are the targeted populations, it is important to give assistance to eligible participants who are in the most need of funds.**

   Eligibility for Assistance

   Each individual or family who is receiving assistance must first meet with a case manager or intake personnel who can determine the appropriate type of assistance to meet their needs. The household must be at or below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI). Both income and assets are counted to determine AMI eligibility. AMI is prospective and only counts income generated at that particular time. The household must be either homeless or at risk of losing its housing and meet both of the following circumstances: (1) no appropriate subsequent housing options have been identified; AND (2) the household lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to obtain immediate housing or remain in its existing housing

   Homelessness Prevention Assistance

   Although there are minimum requirements, HUD encourages grantees and subrecipients to target prevention assistance to individuals and families at the greatest risk of becoming homeless. The target population for the City will have the following risk factors:

   • Sudden and significant loss of income
   • Eviction within two weeks from a private dwelling
   • Severe house cost burden (greater than 50% of income for housing costs)
   • Pending rental housing foreclosure
   • Credit problems that preclude obtaining housing

   Rapid Re-Housing Assistance

   Rapid re-housing assistance is available for persons who are homeless according to HUD's definition of homeless. The target population for the City's rapid re- housing program will have the following risk factors:

Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs)
- Is exiting an institution where an individual has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

The purpose of these funds is to assist eligible program participants to move into permanent housing and achieve housing stability. Therefore, the City's subrecipients providing assistance will utilize a process to assess the level of service needed for all potential program participants, other resources available to them, and the appropriateness of their participation in the rapid re-housing assistance portion of ESG.

Coordination

The City will coordinate with the Continuum of Care (CoC) by attending and participating in the bi-monthly Continuum of Care meetings and monthly steering committee for the CoC. The Continuum includes several emergency shelter providers, essential service providers, homeless prevention and rapid re-housing assistance providers, other homeless assistance providers, mainstream service, and housing providers. In addition to bi-monthly meetings, there are several committees that also meet on a monthly basis to coordinate and establish policies. These committees include the Emergency Action Team and the Emergency Housing Team meetings.

Determining and Prioritizing Eligibility

The City and its providers within the Continuum recognize that individuals and households must be prioritized to ensure that funding is distributed to best serve the needs of those who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Subrecipients will perform intake and evaluate each individual and household on a case- by-case basis. They recognize that each case is different, and that the demographics throughout the City are so different so as to not be able approach potential clients with a "one size fits all strategy." To best prioritize those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless for rapid re-housing or homeless prevention funds, those who are at-risk of becoming homeless will need to show that they will become homeless if they do not receive ESG Homeless Prevention funds, and they must have also suffered an economic hardship to become at risk of losing their home.

Subrecipients may choose to prioritize homeless individuals and households who have been involved with their particular program for Rapid Re-housing assistance, although each individual and household will be evaluated before being able to receive funding.

In addition to the household income being below 30% AMI and the household currently experiencing homelessness or being at imminent risk of becoming homeless, there must be documented evidence in the client files that determine:

- There is a lack of financial resources.
- There are no other housing options.
- There are no support networks.

Client share of rent and utilities costs

When a provider determines that a household is a priority for either Homeless Prevention or Rapid Re-housing rental assistance, they will be eligible to receive up to 100% rental assistance for no more than the full amount of the rent, as stated on the lease.

Short Term and Medium-Term Rental Assistance Duration

The City will require short-term and medium-term rental assistance to allow individuals and families to remain in their existing rental units or to help them obtain and remain in rental units they select. A lease must be in place in the program participants name for them to receive assistance.

Short-term rental assistance can only be used for three (3) months while medium-term rental assistance ranges from four (4) to 24 months. No program participant may receive more than 24 months of assistance under ESG, and each program participant must be evaluated every three (3) months to determine the amount of assistance needed.

Rental assistance may also be used to pay up to six (6) months of rental arrears for eligible program participants; however, the six (6) months count towards the 24 month total. The rental assistance paid cannot exceed the actual rental cost, which must be in compliance with HUD's standard of "rent reasonableness." This means that the total rent charged for a unit must be reasonable in relation to the rents being charged during the same time for comparable units in the private unassisted market and must not be in excess of rents being charged by the owner during the same time period for comparable non-luxury unassisted units.

Rental assistance payments cannot be made on behalf of eligible individuals or families for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another federal, state or local housing subsidy program. Cost types are the categories of eligible HPRP financial assistance: rent from the client

portion or the subsidy; security deposits, utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and hotel/motel vouchers.

2. **If the Continuum of Care has established a centralized or coordinated assessment system that meets HUD requirements, describe that centralized or coordinated assessment system.**
   United Way Home for Good Continuum of Care has not formally developed a coordinated assessment system; however, the City – in conjunction with the Balance of State CoC – and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs are utilizing the same ESG forms as a first step towards developing an outreach and intake system.

3. **Identify the process for making sub-awards and describe how the ESG allocation available to private nonprofit organizations (including community and faith-based organizations).**

   The City of Columbus Community Reinvestment Department publishes a notification of funding availability in the Ledger Enquirer, the local paper of record, to announce the availability of program funds. Application notices are also emailed to the Community Reinvestment Department's wide network of stakeholders and posted on the Community Reinvestment Department's website and social media for organizations to download and apply for funding. These applications are then reviewed by an application rating committee for conformance with the program requirements, qualifications of applicants, availability of matching funds, and other factors. The applications committee makes recommendations to the Columbus City Council for final approval of funding allocations.

4. **If the jurisdiction is unable to meet the homeless participation requirement in 24 CFR 576.405(a), the jurisdiction must specify its plan for reaching out to and consulting with homeless or formerly homeless individuals in considering policies and funding decisions regarding facilities and services funded under ESG.**

   The City of Columbus Community Reinvestment Department requires subrecipient organizations to include homeless or formerly homeless individuals or other equivalent policymaking entity. Non-profit organizations recommended for PY2025 funding have procedures in place for homeless or formerly homeless persons to be involved with the program design and implementation.

5. **Describe performance standards for evaluating ESG.**

   Performance standards provide a measure for the City to evaluate the effectiveness of each ESG service provider in the areas of: (a) Targeting those who need assistance most; (b) Reducing the number of people living on the streets or in emergency shelters; (c) Reducing the time people spend homeless; and,

(d) Reducing clients' housing barriers or housing stability risks. A complete listing of ESG written standards can be found attached as an appendix.

The City of Columbus will evaluate each ESG service provider's performance based on the following standards:

1. Subrecipients will develop and adhere to priorities for service delivery by need.
2. Subrecipients will assist clients in rapid movement to permanent housing from shelters or from the street.
3. Subrecipients will ensure that clients have easy access to services
4. Subrecipients will provide comprehensive case management to address a spectrum of needs for each client.

Appendix A:

Participation Record

Appendix B:

SF-424s and Certifications

Appendix C:

HOME Program Resale/Recapture Provisions