



ACTION PLAN FINAL 2024

City of Wausau

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Executive Summary

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

1. Introduction

2024 represents the final year of the City of Wausau's 5-year Consolidated Plan. The year 2020 and onward has had some unique challenges, including the impact of the pandemic, unprecedented construction costs, and the difficulties to secure contractors who can get projects done quickly. Economic Development activities faced hurdles as new businesses hesitated to move forward. Real estate saw a crazy couple of years with bidding wars and increased prices. This made it very difficult for low to moderate income households to acquire a home. Then interest rates increased which caused a notable slow down. Will all these issues, we found our Downpayment Program has seen an historic low over the past couple of years.

A comprehensive safety audit conducted by Wausau's insurance company highlighted deficiencies in ADA compliance for numerous sidewalk curb cuts. In response, we allocated Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to prioritize upgrades in lower-income areas, facilitating faster improvements to sidewalks. Additionally, CDBG funds were utilized to enhance crosswalk safety and provide ADA-assisted crossing, ensuring the safety of disabled citizens at busy intersections.

Wausau is actively pursuing several potential larger housing developments. Utilizing CDBG funds for clearance and demolition of buildings to pave the way for developments has been successful. Efforts to develop a stronger partnership with Marathon County for properties affected by tax delinquencies is on-going. Many of these parcels are vacant and deteriorating and in need of attention. CDBG funds can be utilized for purchasing such properties with the purpose of redevelopment.

Timeliness continues to cause us panic. To date, we have been successful in meeting timeliness by the eleventh hour. Delays in the federal budget approval process places additional pressure on grantees to push projects along faster once funding is released. Collaborative endeavors with Senator Baldwin and her staff to aim in excluding revolving loan funds from timeliness began late 2023. In surveying other grantees across the country, many have not meet timeliness just because additional, unexpected loan repayments were received. Reprogramming these extra revolving loan funds into other activities can address the timeliness issue; however, it could hinder our revolving loan fund balance and the ability to assist homeowners when the loan repayments slow down.

This is another year of several new public service agencies seeking funding. Staff actively collaborates with these entities, enhancing their likelihood for success and in turn, become successful at securing ongoing funding. It is exciting to watch new organization develop and grow to meet the on-going needs of our community.

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

The identified objectives and outcomes outline in the 2024 Action Plan are consistent with the identified needs in the City's 5-Year Consolidated Plan. We continue to strive to assist the lowest income category in housing, neighborhood resources, and public service activities.

The Housing Rehabilitation Program continues to move forward. Three additional contractors have been approved to assist with completing projects quicker. It's doubly exciting to see younger people enter the construction field. Keeping these partnerships is a priority so homeowners on our waiting list will see assistance faster. The City is in its third year of the Lead Safe Homes (LSH) program through the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services. In many cases, as risk assessments are performed, additional safety needs and/or non-code compliant issues are discovered. Since families qualifying for the LSH program also income-qualify for the City's rehab program, all necessary repairs can be completed (i.e., electrical, heating, plumbing, roofing, etc.).

Due to increased costs to reconstruct city streets and less CDBG funds being awarded to the City, both Engineering and Community Development staff determined that street reconstruction would not be the best use of CDBG funds.

The focus has now shifted to replacing non-ADA compliant sidewalk curb cuts, particularly targeting those in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods first.

The need for additional housing units has been identified as a huge priority. Not only housing units, but affordable housing units. Additional funding was allocated toward the acquisition of parcels and the clearance of blight parcels to make way for housing projects. Some projects will be managed internally, while others will involve collaboration with developers through the Request for Proposals process.

Several repeat non-profit organizations have applied for assistance; however, only Faith in Action – Support for Seniors, was chosen for ongoing funding beyond the typical number of awarded years. Wausau Free Clinic was chosen for a second year which continues our partnership and assists them with being able to assist more patients who are uninsured or under-insured. Two new non-profits were welcomed this year, Children’s Imaginarium and the Granite House, both bringing fresh opportunities to provide low-to-moderate-income households with new opportunities.

3. Evaluation of past performance

Housing is always high on the City’s priority list. The Homeowner Rehabilitation Loan Program plays a key role in assisting low-moderate-income households to improve their homes energy-efficiency and repair safety hazards and non-code compliant issues. Every year the waiting list has challenges. The past few years, the list has grown due to a lack of contractors to bid projects because they are so busy with private work. However, this past year we developed relationships with three new contractors and are hopeful they will continue bidding on our projects and getting them completed much quicker.

The issue of homelessness persists. Wausau has several providers that work with the homeless population in different capacities. The city continues to engage with them in other ways than just funding. However, not all providers who sought financial assistance this year were funded due to past performance issues related to their agreement with the City, while others didn’t request funding. We will continue to provide ongoing education to the homeless providers on how CDBG can assist our most vulnerable population.

Affordable housing is a huge priority for the City with the urgent need for an additional 500+ housing units by the end of 2024. The City has partnered with several developers on different projects. Unfortunately, CDBG funds cannot be used for actual construction costs associated with the development of affordable housing, they can be used to acquire and remediate parcels that will result in the development of affordable housing units.

Street Reconstruction was a popular public facility for many, many years. However, it was determined that it is no longer economically feasible to utilize CDBG funds due to the increased cost. The street that received funding in 2023 incurred double the expected expense; therefore, the need to request additional funding from the City in order to complete the project. Consequently, the focus shifted to address non-ADA compliant curb cuts in crosswalks, with a priority on low-to-moderate-income neighborhoods with schools in the vicinity to enhance safety for students to walk or bike to school.

4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process.

The Community Development Citizens’ Advisory Committee consists of thirteen citizens who are appointed by the Mayor, one of which, is a City Council Member. This committee is responsible for the Block Grant application process and for making funding recommendations to the City’s Common Council. In preparation of each program year, two public hearings are held to receive comments regarding Community Development Block Grant and Public Housing concerns (three if the actual allocation is more or less than 10% of what was initially estimated).

Upon receiving comments, the committee reviews applications and formulates recommendations for funding for the coming year. The recommendations are forwarded to the City’s Finance Committee for approval and then Common Council for final approval. The proposed plan is advertised in the Wausau Daily Herald and posted on the

City's website to accept comments, prior to being presented to the Council for the final vote. Any comments received are passed on to the appropriate body and added to the proposed Action Plan for that program year.

This year, two properly advertised public hearings were conducted with virtual attendance no longer being an option. Using an estimated allocation amount, the Citizen's Advisory Committee made their recommendations. The initial Action Plan was prepared and is available for public comment. Once the actual allocation amount is disclosed, if the variance is 10% more or less than what was estimated, another public hearing will be held to reallocate as necessary. Those decisions will be made available to the public as staff presents the recommendations to both Finance Committee and Council for their approval. Directly after approval, the Plan will be submitted to HUD.

5. Summary of public comments

During the public hearings, programs to assist the homeless population, educational programs for children, economic and financial education for adults, and programs for seniors and individuals with disabilities were presented. In addition, City staff emphasized the need for upgrades to infrastructure, housing rehabilitation programs and the need for additional housing units through acquisition, demolition and/or clearance activities.

The draft Action Plan, outlining a proposed allocation of \$600,000, was made available for public comment as of January 19, 2024, through February 20, 2024. A notice was published in the Wausau Daily Herald on January 19, 2024, informing the public of the availability of the plan. Furthermore, it was published as an announcement on the City's website with a link to the plan. City Finance Committee members receive information on the proposed allocations and how to comment on any initial recommendations. Hard copies were placed in the lobby of City Hall and in the Community Development office.

The public will also have an opportunity to make comments when the plan is brought to the City's Finance Committee as well as when it moves onto the Common Council for approval. If any comments are made during this time, this section will be updated before submitting to HUD.

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

(Any comments that will be received during the public comment period will be added to this section.)

7. Summary

Sixteen applications for funding were submitted and discussed during the public hearings. Organizations ranged from homelessness providers, the Hmong American Center for entrepreneurial and financial education programs, programs for children, the elderly, the disabled, as well as housing and public facility activities.

The Citizen's Advisory Committee faces annual funding challenges each year, particularly with the public service activities. All presenting agencies have such valuable programs that assist the entire community. This year the committee struggled with not funding a couple of homeless providers due to discrepancies in their past performance, but staff is committed to working with those agencies to help strengthen their programs and, hopefully, be able to fund them in the future.

The decision-making process for funding is always challenging with no one leaving the working session 100% happy, but funding new agencies is always exciting as staff is able to work with them to help them be successful while also watching them grow.

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

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 Grant Management	City of Wausau	Community Development Department

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

Narrative (optional)

The City of Wausau’s Planning, Community and Economic Development Department is the lead agency for the Community Development Block Grant Funds. Throughout the year, the department collaborates with their subrecipients throughout the year to achieve the various goals by both the department and the funded organizations.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

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Community Development Department
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FINAL

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

1. Introduction

The Community Development Department maintains a close and collaborative relationship with all non-profit organizations throughout the City of Wausau and Marathon County. This year the Community Foundation again forwarded information to its mailing list regarding this opportunity! Additional phone calls and e-mails were received from non-profits we hadn't ever worked with before. They educate us on their organization's goals and objectives and we, in turn, educate them on what CDBG can be utilized for.

Ongoing collaboration with all these agencies helps all of us do a better job understanding the needs of our community and how working together can tackle the tough issues. Some examples are lack of public transportation, need for living wage jobs, workforce development, additional affordable housing units, and the ever-increasing homeless population to name a few.

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 actions that will take place in 2024 are as follows:
 - Continue to partner with Marathon County Health Department and the State of Wisconsin's Lead Safe Homes program to derive ways to decrease the number of children affected by lead based paint poisoning and the number of housing units that might have lead hazard within them. The need for additional contractors is higher than ever in this area and both agencies are trying to find ways to encourage additional contractors to become State certified, lead abatement contractors. This is a very hard up-hill battle.
 - Continue working with our Community Development Authority (CDA). As of January 1, 2024, the Community Development Authority took over ownership of the Fulton Street apartment building that the City developed with Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds. The CDA is a better choice as owner as they operate the Housing Choice Voucher program and 46 units of public housing. They will continue to house disabled individuals that is affordable and safe.
 - Try to develop a relationship with North Central Health Care or any other similar agency with transitional housing opportunities for persons coming out of rehabilitation either for substance abuse or mental health issues.
 - Continue working in partnership with the Community Development Authority to turn public housing and Housing Choice Voucher tenants into homeowners.
 - Work with the newer non-profit – Community Partners Campus – which houses several non-profits who work with the homeless, near homeless, and extremely low clientele. By putting all the providers under one roof, a client can be assisted by several agencies on the same day and work together to better assist those who really need it.
 - Work with the new non-profit – Granite House. In the fall of 2022, North Central Health Care shut the doors of the Community Corner Clubhouse. The program provided a safe environment for those impacted by mental illness and/or substance abuse to receive support from others who share the same struggles and encouraged building meaningful relationships while also receiving other supportive services. When Community Corner Clubhouse closed, members had nowhere to go. The director of the Clubhouse was a firm believer in the impact the clubhouse provided its members that he created his own non-profit based on the clubhouse foundation, found a space and is now open to bring the members back together.

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 Community Development Department partners with Catholic Charities with several of their homeless programs – the Warming Shelter and Beyond Shelter. With the assistance of ARPA funds, this year they are opening a Day Center for the homeless population to go during the daytime. All programs provide safe shelter and case management to assist clients identify and overcome hurdles so they can find long term housing solutions.

Staff will continue to work with North Central Community Action Program (NCCAP) with the new construction of a six-unit apartment complex that will be available to lower-income families. These families will be identified by NCCAP, who will also manage the building. This will allow 6 more families with an affordable rent option. NCCAP is also the lead agency for central Wisconsin’s Continuum of Care.

A common theme across these programs is the recognition that in-depth case management is key in helping individuals and families transition out of homelessness. Most clients find having someone who they are accountable to – someone to encourage necessary changes, to assist in developing goals, and to follow through on those goals - is critical to achieve long-term success.

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

The City does not receive ESG funds.

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.

1	AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	NORTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing Needs Assessment •Homeless Needs (Chronically Homeless) •Homeless Needs (Families w/Children) •Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	<p>North Central Community Action works with a variety of housing issues including security deposits, rent payments, homelessness. They also provide case management to assist clients in identifying any ongoing needs and work on addressing them. Community Development is proposing to partner with them on the development of a 6-unit workforce housing complex.</p>
2	AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	CATHOLIC CHARITIES
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing •Services (Housing) •Services (Homeless) •Services (Education)
	What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing Need Assessment •Homeless Needs (Chronically Homeless) •Homelessness Needs (Veterans) •Homelessness Strategy

Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Catholic Charities operates the local Warming Shelter and new Day Center for homeless adults. They also operate the Beyond Shelter program which provides housing and case management for extremely chronic homeless males. They collaborate with NCCAP on their housing programs.
3 AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	FAITH IN ACTION OF MARATHON COUNTY
Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Services (Elderly Persons) •Services (Person's w/ Disabilities) •Services (Housing)
What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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?	Faith in Action serves the elderly population to provide free supportive services to assist seniors in improving their quality of life and remain independent. Services include transportation for medical appointments, shopping, deliveries, and friendly visits.
4 AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	UNITED WAY OF MARATHON COUNTY
Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Regional Organization •Foundation
What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing Need Assessment •Public Housing Needs •Anti-Poverty Strategy •Homeless Needs (Chronically Homeless) •Homeless Needs (Families w/ Children) •Homelessness Needs (Veterans, Unaccompanied Youth) •Homelessness Strategy •Non-Homeless (Special Needs) •Economic Development
Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	United Way of Marathon County provides crucial information in their annual Life Report which illustrates unmet needs of the community. They developed a Housing and Homeless Coalition to address homelessness in Marathon County.
5 AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	MARATHON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing •Other Government (County)
What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing Need Assessment •Lead-Based Paint Strategy
Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Marathon County Health Department and Community Development partner on the Lead Prevention Program and hold regular collaborative team meetings. The team determines ways to identify lead hazards in homes and elimination tactics, so children remain safe from lead dangers.
6 AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	WAUSAU COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PHA •Grantee Department
What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Public Housing Needs •Market Analysis •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?

Community Development Authority operates the Housing Voucher program, 46-scattered sites for public housing (now 52 after taking over ownership of Fulton Street apartments), Riverview Towers and Riverview Terrace (elderly and disabled housing for income-eligible households). Staff works diligently on affordable housing issues and the housing needs of the community

7	AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF WI COMMUNITY SERVICES
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Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Services (Children) •Services (Health) •Services (Education) •Child Welfare Agency
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What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Anti-Poverty Strategy •Needs of Youth
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Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin operates the Head-Start and In-Home Parenting Skills programs throughout Marathon County. The programs focus on in-house parenting and children's education from birth to age 4. The programs help ensure children are school-ready once they enter pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. Community Development has assisted with funding for these programs for Wausau clients.

8	AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	HMONG AMERICAN CENTER
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Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing •Service (Fair Housing) •Service (Children)
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What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing Need Assessment •Economic Development •Anti-Poverty Strategy •Needs of Youth
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Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?

Hmong American Center works with Hmong/Laotian citizens in Marathon County. Their client-focused needs consist of education, English as a Second Language (ESL), workforce development, housing, and youth programs. Community Development worked with them to translate the Fair Housing pamphlets into Hmong and collaborated with them on housing/rehabilitation projects, code enforcement and fair housing issues.

9	AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	GRANITE HOUSE
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Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Service (Disabled)
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What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Needs of the Disabled
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Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?

Granite House is a newly formed non-profit. Their focus is to provide a safe place for people impacted by mental illness to receive services and to feel like they belong to the community.

10	AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION	CHILDREN'S IMAGINARIUM
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Agency/Group/Organization Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education •Service (Children)
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What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Needs of Youth •Anti-Poverty Strategy
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<p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>The Children’s Imaginarium is a new non-profit children’s museum that provides hands-on engagement in science, technology, engineering, and math. Funding will go towards scholarships for lower-income households and for specific field trips for Title 1 grade schools. This provides an opportunity of which those families may not be able to afford to do on their own.</p>
<p>11 AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>WAUSAU CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC</p>
<p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Service (Children)
<p>What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs of Youth • Anti-Poverty Strategy
<p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>Wausau Conservatory of Music operates the Musical Story Time for the children in the Head Start Program which allows children of lower-income households the ability to access music opportunities. It provides story books about music, the ability to see and hear musical instruments and the opportunity for possible scholarships to learn a particular instrument.</p>
<p>12 AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>HOMME HEIGHTS, INC</p>
<p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility • Service (Elderly)
<p>What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs of the Elderly • Accessibility
<p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>Homme Heights, Inc. is a non-profit that provides specialized housing for the elderly. Residents may receive as much, or as little support as needed. Support services range from independent living to supportive assistance. The outcome is to replace an old, poorly functioning, and non-ADA compliant elevator with a new elevator that meets ADA guidelines which will better serve their residents.</p>
<p>13 AGENCY/GROUP/ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>MARATHON COUNTY LITERACY COUNCIL (MCLIT)</p>
<p>Agency/Group/Organization Type</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services (Homeless) • Services (Education)
<p>What section of the Plan was addressed by consultation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs of the Homeless • Accessibility
<p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>Mclit assists individuals who cannot read and/or write, cannot read//write/speak English, or need some guidance with finding housing, employment or any other potential roadblocks that may prevent them from being self-sufficient.</p>

Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated.

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?
LIFE Report	United Way of Marathon County	The LIFE report identifies gaps in Marathon County related to affordable housing, homelessness, education, and alcohol and/or drug use disorders.
City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan	City of Wausau	The need for economic development, housing, and transportation.
Outdoor Recreation Comprehensive Plan	Marathon County Parks Department	Need for upgrading local parks for safety and to meet ADA standards.
Public Housing Comprehensive Plan	Wausau Community Development Authority	Need for affordable and safe housing and needs of the elderly.
City of Wausau Housing Affordability Report	City of Wausau Housing Affordability Report	The housing report discusses the different types of housing in Wausau, what the gaps are and how to address them.
Greater Wausau Regional Housing Study	North Central Regional Planning of WI	The housing report reviews current housing opportunities in the greater Wausau area (which includes surrounding smaller municipalities) and where the gaps are for types of housing.

Table 3 – Other Local / Regional / Federal Planning Efforts

Narrative (optional)

As the above charts reflect, Community Development staff works with many agencies throughout the greater Wausau Area to better identify the needs of our community. Working together not only identifies those needs, but also ensures less duplication of services. While there can never be enough funding to solve all problems, working together can help identify and address the greater needs year by year.

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

There are no groups or agencies that were purposely not consulted.

AP-12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)

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

This program year no formal Informational Sessions were held. We found during COVID-19 one-on-one consultation works better. Agencies are more apt to discuss their programs and potential funding requests if no other agencies are there to listen. Instead, agencies and/or individuals were encouraged to call staff directly to discuss their programs to see if they would meet CDBG requirements. Staff encourages meetings with organizations any time during the year – not just during the actual funding times. Mailings and e-mails were sent to all non-profits who received funding in the past and those that had expressed interest throughout the year, providing them with dates and deadlines to submit funding applications. Local foundations were notified about our funding cycle and they, in turn, reach out to those on their distribution lists. This created many more organizations to inquire about funding. Staff spoke individually with several organizations, answering their questions, and guiding them through the steps involved throughout the application process. Close collaboration with organizations ensures they are ready for the application process and understood the reporting requirements if they received funding.

Two public hearings were held on October 19th and October 23rd, 2023, to accept public comments on the proposed plan, public housing, and the needs of the community. Advertisements of these public hearings were posted on the City of Wausau's website as well as in the Wausau Daily Herald on both October 5 and October 10, 2023. Sixteen applications were received for funding. As usual, applications for public service activities received more requests than were able to approve due to the 15% cap.

This draft 2024 Annual Action Plan was advertised in the Wausau Daily Herald on January 19, 2024. The Plan will be available for review/comment on the City's website with hard copies available in the lobby of City Hall and in the Community Development Department. The comment period is left open until February 20, 2024. *(Any comments will be added here.)*

Once the actual allocation is released from HUD, necessary adjustments will be made according to our Citizens Participation Plan. IF the City receives more or less than 10% of the proposed allocation, then another public hearing will be held prior to sending the recommendations to the Finance Committee and then onto Common Council. If the allocation is less than 10%, staff can decide whether to add or deduct that amount before it is presented to Finance and Common Council and subsequently onto HUD for final approval.

Citizen Participation Outreach

Mode of Outreach	Target Outreach	Summary of Response/Attendance	Summary of Comments Received	Summary of Comments Not Accepted and Reasons	URL (If applicable)
Direct Mailings/ Emails with Date/Time of Public Hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All local non-profits 	Unable to determine the number of attendees this outreach method prompted but, we assume it is the most effective method because it is more personable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 organizations attended one of the public hearings to present their programs and proposed outcomes. A range of programs were presented addressing adult / youth homelessness, education, public facility needs, housing, and disabled individuals. 	<p>N/A</p> <p>No comments received, were not accepted</p>	N/A
One-on-One Informational Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All local non-profits – no official targeted area 	Spoke with several agencies by phone to discuss their program and address any concerns or questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments received 	<p>N/A</p> <p>No comments received</p>	N/A
Public Hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minorities Disabled Persons Non-Targeted/Broad Community Homeless & Housing Providers 	13 organizations attended one or both Public Hearings. All requested Community Development Block Grant Funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for additional resources for public service activities. Funding for neighborhood activities 	<p>N/A</p> <p>No comments received, were not accepted</p>	www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/CommunityDevelopment/CommunityDevelopmentBlockGrantOverview.aspx
Newspaper Ad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minorities Disabled Persons Non-Targeted/Broad Community Public / Assisted Housing Residents 	Unsure how many organizations attended Informational Sessions or Public Hearings due to the newspaper notice. Most came because of the direct invite by staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional comments received other than those from the Public Hearings 	<p>N/A</p> <p>No comments received</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>No URL for printed paper</p>
City of Wausau Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as above 	Unable to determine number of attendees based on city website posting. Most attendees were due to direct invite by staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional comments received other than those from the Public Hearings 	<p>N/A</p> <p>No comments received</p>	www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/CommunityDevelopment/CommunityDevelopmentBlockGrantOverview.aspx

Expected Resources

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

1. Introduction

The City of Wausau continues to recycle HOME funds originally received from the State of Wisconsin through their competitive grant cycles. These funds are used for down payment assistance loans, new construction or rehabilitation of single-family homes and rehabilitation of rental properties. These funds have been recycled over and over allowing additional clients to be served. This year we are anticipating utilizing HOME funds to assist with the new construction of a 6-unit apartment complex that will be made available to income-qualified households.

The City of Wausau has not received Neighborhood Revitalization Funds (NSP1) since 2009. The last project was completed in fall of 2023. Staff will work with the State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration to officially close out this contract of which the remaining funds will become CDBG program income funds and will be used for the development of additional housing units.

Wausau is on its third year of the Lead Safe Homes Grant through the State of Wisconsin, Department of Health Services for grants to assist residential properties for lead abatement work. The grant will eliminate lead hazards that ensure the long-term safety for young children.

Wausau received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Community Development staff requested \$500,000 of those funds be assigned to the construction of a six-unit apartment complex for which North Central Community Action will manage and make available to income qualifying households. Additionally, staff requested another \$600,000 to assist with the building of several single-family homes on current City-owned vacant lots. These houses will be sold to income-qualified homebuyers. ARPA funds have been assisting with a \$500 grant for income qualified homebuyers who go through the City’s Homebuyer Education program BEFORE writing an offer to purchase. The grant is given at the time of closing to assist with the closing costs to purchase their Wausau home. These funds must be committed with a signed contract by the end of 2024 with the funds expended prior to the end of 2026.

Anticipated Resources

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Available Amount Expected Remainder of ConPlan	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation:	Program Income (PI):	Prior Year Resources:	Total:		
CDBG	HUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Admin/Planning •Public Facilities •Housing •Public Services 	\$600,000	\$100,000	\$562,000	\$1,262,000	\$1,262,000	Annual allocation Of CDBG PI is from RL funds

Table 4 - 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.

Non-profit organizations receiving Community Development Block Grant funding effectively leverage other funds for their programs – such as foundation funds and fundraising activities. Every dollar of CDBG funding is matched ten times through the non-profits’ local funding and fund raising.

The City of Wausau must match 25% of the HOME funding utilized. This is easily achieved through Federal Home Loan Bank’s Downpayment Plus program and local lenders internal down payment assistance programs for income qualifying new homebuyers. HOME funds are also leveraged through the first mortgage and the homebuyer’s contribution in purchasing the home. Matching funds come through the partnership with local employers who have partnered with the Live It Up Downpayment Assistance Program. This year the addition of ARPA funds will assist with the construction of single-family homes and a six-unit apartment complex.

CDBG does not require matching funds, but through the fund raising and local contributions, CDBG tends to be easily matched ten times over the amount given towards projects.

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

1019 W. Bridge Street A vacant lot due to a house fire. The lot is being marketed for the construction of a single-family home.

Property Purchases The City purchased several properties using local foundation and TIF funds along Bridge Street, Short Street, and 3rd Street – 1st Street corridor. The properties were primarily vacant rental properties that the landlords no longer wished to maintain. This area is part of a redevelopment plan. The city has a development agreement with Blenker Construction who completed Phase I in 2019, Phase II in 2021 with Phase III near completion with new units to be sold. Two parcels along N. 2nd Street will be sold to Habitat for Humanity who will place two houses and award them to approved Habitat families by fall of 2024. The City also purchased 1514 N 2nd Street in 2023 with CDBG funds. The building will be utilized as a training burn for our Fire Department and their new recruits this spring. Then the parcel will be part of a Request for Proposals for additional housing or economic development opportunities.

415 S. 1st Avenue Gorman and Co. was able to secure Housing Tax Credits and will develop approximately 50 rental units. Details are being finalized with the intent to purchase the property from the City by mid-2024.

Riverfront Properties City purchased and cleaned up the contaminated soils. Redevelopment to date includes a wharf, a restaurant/family entertainment site, a new playground/park area, and a new housing complex that opened mid-2020. Through the Request for Proposals process another developer will be building a larger apartment complex and will start in 2024.

1408 Bissell Street The city has owned this parcel for over 40 years. We partnered with North Central Health Care to provide housing for up to eight severely handicapped males. However, the partnership was severed in mid-2023, and the property is up for sale.

208, 210 & 214 Wyatt Street These parcels were purchased over a decade ago due to having major contamination from an auto repair shop previously located there. After years of remediation and meeting EPA and DNR regulations, this parcel was combined with the hope to redevelop it by the City. It was the goal to build a six-unit apartment complex to be managed by North Central Community Action to provide affordable housing for low to moderate income individuals/families. The rezoning was approved through Plan Commission but unfortunately City Council denied the project due to several residents speaking out against it during the rezoning public comment period.

Discussion

The City of Wausau is concentrating on reducing the number of parcels it owns, selling parcels for redevelopment purposes to get them back on the tax roll. Some parcels take longer than others to find the right fit and developer. Parcels that have income restrictions attached to them can be even more difficult to redevelop.

Annual Goals and Objectives

AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives

Goals Summary Information

Table 5 – Goals Summary

Order	Goal Name	Start Yr.	End Yr.	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Administration	2024	2027	Administration & Planning	N/A	N/A	\$100,000	Ensure the smooth operation of programs.
2	Acquisition	2024	2026	Acquisition & Blight Remediation	Citywide	Blight Reduction	\$150,000	Identify 2-3 parcels for acquisition that will lead to housing opportunities for income-qualified households.
3	Housing Rehabilitation	2024	2026	Housing	Citywide	Housing	\$75,000	Provide support to 4-5 income-qualified homeowners through a low-interest loan to assist in providing essential home repairs. More households will receive help as Revolving Loan Funds are replenished.
5	Sidewalk Ramp Reconstruction	2024	2024	Public Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott / 2nd St • Jefferson / 3rd St • Jefferson / 4th St • Oak / 4th Ave 	Sidewalk Ramp Reconstruction	\$100,000	Support reconstruction of four curb ramps in low-moderate-income census tracts, to be ADA-compliant and foster a safe and walkable community for pedestrians.
6	Blight Elimination	2024	2026	Public Facility	Citywide	Slum/Blight	\$100,000	Assist in the demolition or remediation of three blighted properties.
7	Public Service Activities	2023	2023	Public Service	Citywide	Elderly, Disabled, Youth Education, Job Training, Free Health Care	\$85,000	Four public service activities benefiting low-to-moderate income persons resulted in assistance to 1,885 households.

Goal Descriptions

Goal 1	CD Administration
Description	Support administrative expenses related to program operations.
Goal 2	Acquisition
Description	The program will involve acquiring properties to aid in providing affordable housing units for income-qualified residents, including both renters and homeowners.
Goal 3	Housing Rehabilitation
Description	The program will support the enhancement of owner-occupied houses through a low-interest, low-repayment loan, enabling homeowners to make essential repairs to maintain their residences.
Goal 4	Blight Elimination
Description	Funds allocated to facilitate inspections, clearance, and potential demolition of blighted properties, making the parcels available for redevelopment.
Goal 5	Sidewalk Ramp Replacement
Goal Description	Funding designated to support the reconstruction of sidewalk ramps, ensuring ADA compliance at four identified crossings in income-qualified census tracts and near schools, enhancing pedestrian safety and accessibility.
Goal 6	Public Service Activities
Description	In the 2024 Block Grant program year, \$85,000 is allocated for Public Service Activities, supporting programs such as Faith in Action's Support for Seniors, Wausau Free Clinic, Granite House, and Children's Imaginarium.

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

The City of Wausau will utilize Block Grant allocations for the following projects in the 2024 year. All projects fall under the goals and objectives set forth in its 2020 – 2024 5-Year Consolidated Plan.

Projects

NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	FUNDED AMOUNT
1	CD Administration	\$100,000
2	Acquisition	\$145,000
3	Housing Rehabilitation	\$70,000
4	Sidewalk Curb Ramp Reconstruction	\$100,000
5	Blight Elimination	\$95,000
6	Faith in Action – Support for Seniors	\$15,000
7	Granite House - Clubhouse	\$25,000
8	Children’s Imaginarium – Access for All	\$25,000
9	Wausau Free Clinic	\$25,000

Table 6 - Project Information

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

CD Administration Allocating funds to administration is necessary so programs can be staffed and managed to ensure projects/expenditures meet all federal regulations along with meeting all reporting requirements.

Acquisition Funding will assist in the purchase of identified properties to assist with affordable housing for either tenants or homeowners. Properties can be located throughout the City of Wausau.

Housing Rehabilitation Funding assists with the rehabilitation of existing owner-occupied properties. Loan funds help provide necessary home repairs for income qualified homeowners. The loan has a low monthly payment so homeowners can continue to afford living in their homes.

Sidewalk Ramp Reconstruction Funding will assist with the installation of ADA approved upgrades to current sidewalk ramps in low to moderate income neighborhoods. There tends to be a higher number of pedestrians/bicyclists in low to moderate income neighborhoods than higher income neighborhoods, so addressing these areas will assist in keeping more people safe on busy streets.

Blight Elimination Funding assists with testing, clearance, and possible demolition of blighted properties to make the parcels desirable for redevelopment. The parcels will then be made available for either housing or economic opportunities for income qualified households.

Wausau Free Clinic Funding will assist with healthcare needs for income qualified individuals who are uninsured or underinsured. This alleviates emergency room visits for people who do not have a primary physician.

Children’s Imaginarium Funding will provide free or reduced-price memberships to low to moderate income families and free admission for Wausau Elementary School Title I Programming which includes students and one adult. This effort helps reduce barriers for those who might not otherwise be able to attend allowing them the opportunity to experience hands-on STEM focused activities at the museum.

Faith In Action Funding will assist in providing the elderly population with free supportive services which improve their quality of life and allow them to remain living in their homes. Services include transportation for medical appointments, shopping, deliveries, and friendly visits.

Granite House Funding will assist with providing a safe environment for people impacted by mental illness to receive support through a range of services including opportunities for friendship, employment, housing, education, and access to medical and psychiatric services.

FINAL

AP-38 Project Summary

Project Summary Information

1	PROJECT NAME	FAITH IN ACTION – Support for Seniors
Target Area		Citywide
Goals Supported		Public Service Activities
Needs Addressed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Concerns
Funding		CDBG: \$15,000
Description		Funding will support administration costs associated with coordinating supportive services for seniors including transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping/food pantries as well as friendly home visits, light cooking/cleaning, etc. The program is provided at no cost and helps prevent isolation and allows seniors to continue living independently.
Target Date		05/01/2024
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities		Approximately 250 seniors
Location Description		Faith in Action is located at 630 Adams Street, Wausau
Planned Activities		Activities encompass volunteers offering transportation for eligible seniors to medical appointments, grocery shopping, local food pantries, along with providing wellness
2	PROJECT NAME	CHILDREN’S IMAGINARIUM – Access for All
Target Area		Lincoln, Hawthorn, Grant & Franklin school districts
Goals Supported		Public Service Activity
Needs Addressed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth
Funding		CDBG: \$25,000
Description		Support for income-qualified households to engage in hands-on learning opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math for families with children attending Title I Schools. This initiative aims to provide opportunities for families who might not afford access to the Children’s Museum, ensuring equal opportunities for all children.
Target Date		05/01/24
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities		About 1,000 individuals with low to moderate income will have the chance to experience learning at the Imaginarium.
Location Description		195 N 2 nd St, Wausau
Planned Activities		The Children’s Imaginarium provides hands-on activities designed to ignite interest in science, technology, engineering, and math fields.
3	PROJECT NAME	WAUSAU FREE CLINIC
Target Area		Individuals and families facing health issues with no insurance or financial means to pay for services.
Goals Supported		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Service Activities
Needs Addressed		Healthcare
Funding		CDBG: \$25,000
Description		Financial support will enable volunteer doctors and nurses to provide free healthcare services for those unable to afford medical assistance.
Target Date		5/01/2024
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities		Around 600 individuals, including those facing homelessness and from minority communities, lack access to health insurance and cannot afford it.
Location Description		360 Grand Avenue, Wausau

Planned Activities	Funding will support medical evaluation, management, and treatment of chronic medical conditions, limited lab testing, medication prescribing and management, linkage to support services, and assistance in applying for public/marketplace health insurance and other forms of support.
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4	PROJECT NAME	GRANITE HOUSE
Target Area	Citywide	
Goals Supported	Public Service Activities	
Needs Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services for the disabled 	
Funding	CDBG: \$25,000	
Description	Funding will support programming for individuals impacted by mental illness in the community, providing a safe space for individuals to interact with others who share similar obstacles, fostering a sense of safety and community inclusion.	
Target Date	05/01/24	
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Approximately 25 members daily.	
Location Description	The center is located at 820 S 8 th Avenue, Wausau	
Planned Activities	Activities encompass aiding in the development of life skills, establishing a secure environment for individuals to enhance social skills, build confidence, and nurture a sense of self-worth.	

5	PROJECT NAME	ACQUISITION
Target Area	Citywide	
Goals Supported	Housing	
Needs Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable Housing 	
Funding	CDBG: \$145,000	
Description	Acquiring parcels will expand affordable housing opportunities.	
Target Date	05/01/24	
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Approximately 6 – 8 low-income housing units	
Location Description	Currently Undetermined	
Planned Activities	Funds will support the acquisition of parcels to enhance affordable housing options.	

6	PROJECT NAME	BLIGHT ELIMINATION
Target Area	Citywide	
Goals Supported	Slum & Blight/Housing	
Needs Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blight Concerns Housing Concerns 	
Funding	CDBG: \$95,000	
Description	Funding will aid in the assessment, abatement, clearance, and potential demolition of blighted properties.	
Target Date	5/1/24	
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Eliminating blight in an area will lead to improvements for approximately 200 households. Following this, the redevelopment of the parcel will benefit 4-5 income-qualified households.	
Location Description	Citywide – Currently Undetermined	
Planned Activities	Activities may include testing, asbestos and lead paint abatement, clearance, and potential demolition of blighted properties.	

7	PROJECT NAME	SIDEWALK RAMP RECONSTRUCTION
Target Area	Scott & N 2 nd Street; Jefferson and N. 3 rd St; Jefferson and N. 4 th St; Oak St and 4 th Ave	

Goals Supported	Public facility installation
Needs Addressed	•Neighborhood/Safety Concerns
Funding	CDBG: \$100,000
Description	Installation of ADA approved ramps in low-income areas
Target Date	7/1/2024
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	These updates are expected to benefit around 1000 residents.
Location Description	Scott & N 2 nd Street; Jefferson and N. 3 rd St; Jefferson and N. 4 th St; Oak St and 4 th Ave
Planned Activities	This activity involves removing damaged ramps and installing ADA ramps in low-income neighborhoods to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings.

8	PROJECT NAME	HOUSING REHABILITATION
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Target Area	Citywide
Goals Supported	Affordable Housing
Needs Addressed	•Neighborhood Concerns •Housing Concerns
Funding	CDBG: \$70,000
Description	Funding to assist with the rehabilitation of owner-occupied properties
Target Date	6/01/2025
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	4 – 6 low-to-moderate income households will receive funding to assist with necessary home repairs.
Location Description	Currently undetermined, Wausau
Planned Activities	Funds to support the rehabilitation and/or weatherization of owner-occupied properties.

9	PROJECT NAME	CD ADMINISTRATION
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Target Area	N/A
Goals Supported	N/A
Need Addressed	N/A
Funding	CDBG \$100,000
Description	Administrative costs associated with program operations include, but are not limited to, salaries, travel, supplies, and other related expenses.
Target Date	1/1/2026
Planned Activities	Funds will assist in salaries and benefits for employees, travel expenses, and daily office administration activities.

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 geographic area for the City of Wausau is its corporate limits.

The public facility upgrades are in income-qualified census tracts but are not linked to any neighborhood associations.

See attached map of the low-moderate-income census tracks throughout the City of Wausau.

Geographic Distribution

Target Area	Percentage of Funds
N/A	

Table 7 - Geographic Distribution

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically.

The City does not “target” areas for funding. Community Development Block Grant funds assist all residents citywide. There are no priorities that we use to evaluate projects – only if they meet the current income guidelines and all other HUD requirements; projects are evaluated based on availability of funding and the needs of the community.

Discussion

As indicated above, there are no targeted areas for Community Development Block Grant Funds to be allocated to. We will continue to work with Neighborhood Associations located in low to moderate income census tracts but without identified needed projects, funding cannot be allocated.

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

Introduction

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	0
Non-Homeless	21
Special-Needs	0
Total	21

Table 8 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	415
The Production of New Units	6
Rehab of Existing Units	10
Acquisition of Existing Units	11
Total	438

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

Discussion

The housing programs Community Development Department offer are:

Downpayment Assistance Low interest loans to assist income qualified homebuyers a down payment and/or closing costs of purchasing a home. The loan amount is between \$6,000 and \$10,000 and is determined by the lender based on the client's gap financing needs. The home purchased must in the City of Wausau's limits and clients must contribute at least \$1,000 of their own funds towards the purchase. The program is funded through HOME and HCRI (Housing Cost Reduction Initiative).

Housing Rehabilitation Program Low interest loans to assist with deferred maintenance items on owner-occupied properties. Clients must fall under HUD's income guidelines and the home must be in Wausau's corporate limits. The program is funded through Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds.

Rental Rehabilitation Loan Program Low interest loans assist landlords with necessary repairs to rental properties located in the City of Wausau. Landlords guarantee they will keep the rental units available to income qualifying households and charge no more than HUD's determined annual fair market rents. The program is funded through recycled HOME funds.

Lead Safe Homes Program Funding to assist both rental and owner-occupied units with children who qualify for Medicare/BadgerCare for lead paint abatement activities in their homes. Lead-based paint education is provided to the occupants to ensure the safety of any potential children who enter the home. The program is funded through the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Rental Assistance is provided by Wausau Community Development Authority. All public housing/RAD unit rents are calculated so clients only pay 30% of their adjusted gross income for rent. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program assists approved tenants with rent for a privately-owned unit. A rental unit must pass inspection to qualify.

American Rescue Plan Funds The City will utilize ARPA funds to construct a six-unit apartment complex to be managed and maintained by North Central Community Action. Units will be affordable for households based on where their income falls per HUD's income limits. The City will also utilize ARPA funds to build several new single-family homes this coming year. The homes will be sold to income qualified households and will be owner occupied.

AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

Introduction

The role of the Wausau Community Development Authority (WCDA) is to administer housing programs for lower-income persons and households as well as assist with the redevelopment needs of the City of Wausau. The WCDA operates Riverview Towers LLC, a 149 unit, mixed-finance (LIHTC layered with Public Housing) project, available to income qualifying elderly, near-elderly, and handicapped individuals. This development was recently converted to project-based voucher HAP funding via HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). In addition, the WCDA owns and operates Riverview Terrace, which prior to fall of 2023 was a 26-unit Residential Care Apartment Complex (RCAC) for income-qualifying, frail elderly. This designation was dropped just in 2023. Now it is considered a Project Based Voucher assisted apartment complex for income-qualified elderly. Finally, the WCDA owns and operates 52 units of scattered site public housing as well as administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Recently they took over ownership of 703 Fulton Street from the City of Wausau. They will continue to maintain those units for lower-income households that need some special assistance. SUCCEED Independence provides in-house care for these households.

Actions planned during the next year to address the need to public housing.

The WCDA will continue to lease, manage, and maintain its public housing units and look for ways to prolong the useful life and affordability of those units. 2024 will mark the fifth and final year of the WCDA's 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan. This plan outlines the strategic use of its capital funding and the projected improvements planned for 46 of their 52 scattered public housing units. Those improvements for 2024 include kitchen modernization and upgrading all the public housing units with smoke detectors to meet the newly approved NSPIRE regulation.

The WCDA will continue to market its HCV program to private landlords to increase owner acceptance of the program. To maintain program integrity, the WCDA will continue to effectively screen applicants and approve rental units meeting housing quality standards and rent reasonableness. This will ensure safe and affordable housing units within the City of Wausau. The high cost of rents in the past year has created a burden on tenants finding landlords that will not charge more than HUD's designated fair market rents to those enrolled in this program. Outreach will continue to find better/more landlord partners to assist this population.

The WCDA will continue to affirmatively further fair housing by taking meaningful actions to address historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, and foster a community that is free from discrimination. With any potential discrimination complaint, they are familiar with the City's ordinance and how to make a complaint.

In an effort to further promote its mission, the WCDA has taking action by using unrestricted funds to further expand housing opportunities in a variety of formats; 1) Submitted an RFP for a voucher-based housing project in 2023 and partnered with Gorman and Associates for these vouchers to be attached to a recently completed LIHTC project; 2) took over ownership of the Fulton Street apartments from city-owned to WCDA and keep it as an affordable rental complex for low to moderate income households. The WCDA is better equipped to be landlords and has the maintenance on staff to address issues once they arise; and 3) Form a redevelopment committee to review potential opportunities for acquiring properties from the county or city for redevelopment purposes.

Two items they continue to pursue: 1) assist nonprofit partner organizations in their mission of providing housing options for those who are homeless or in housing transition with a low-interest, deferred loan; and 2) explore the feasibility of constructing additional housing units specifically for disabled individuals.

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

The WCDA educates their public housing residents on the Downpayment Assistance Program the Community Development Department (CDD) offers. The residents are encouraged to speak with CDD staff to discuss homeownership and homebuyer education.

The WCDA encourages tenants to become more involved and are encouraged to attend regular resident meetings as well as participate through the Resident Advisory Board. The Wausau Community Development Authority's board includes one resident commissioner.

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

N/A – The WCDA is not a troubled PHA.

Discussion

The access to affordable, safe housing is a high priority for the City of Wausau. Riverview Towers, Riverview Terrace, the Scattered Sites and Housing Choice Voucher programs are essential for Wausau's residents who cannot afford market rents. If these programs are eliminated, these families will not be able to afford safe housing and may end up homeless - which would only add to the increasing homeless situation.

FINAL

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

Introduction

Community Development staff is a part of the United Way of Marathon County's Housing and Homeless Coalition. This coalition consists of all local housing agencies that work with homeless and housing issues in general. In working together, agencies better understand each other's goals and how their clients can be better assisted. Staff will continue in this coalition to work towards an end to homelessness and find ways for more affordable housing options.

Describe the jurisdiction's one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including.

- To work with North Central Community Action to find other apartments that will better house the Hand-in-Hand program's clients.
- To work with North Central Community Action to construct a six-unit apartment complex to house households that are struggling with affording housing.
- To continue to work with the United Way's Housing and Homeless committee to find additional avenues to assist the ever-growing homeless population in Wausau.
- To continue to work with Catholic Charities with their Warming Shelter and Beyond Shelter programs which address the needs of the homeless population. In addition, the end of 2023, Catholic Charities, with the assistance of the City's ARPA funds, has opened a Day Center for the homeless population. Starting as a soft opening – they will be open two days a week for 4 hours each day, until they can hire an additional person and find more volunteers to be open more often – especially during the winter months.
- To continue working with Salvation Army to address their needs for additional beds for families at their current location or at another location.

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

All local shelters provide in-depth case management with each of their clients. They connect their clients with other programs that can assist them to meet their goals – whether it is applying for social security disability, additional education to learn a trade, addressing alcohol and/or drug behaviors, etc. All these obstacles take time to overcome. It is imperative that shelters work with transitional housing organizations so clients coming out of the shelters have other housing options if their goals are going to take longer than 90 days to accomplish. Wausau needs longer stay transitional housing units in order for more to become successful.

The Salvation Army has a program called Street Outreach. This program assists those individuals who do not qualify to stay in the shelter – typically due to drug and/or alcohol addiction. The services offered are the same as those that can stay at the shelter – case management, transportation vouchers, clothing, meals, showers, etc. Case management tries to connect them with agencies that can help towards recovery, but the clients need to want those services.

The Warming Shelter, operated through Catholic Charities, provides a warm place to stay overnight. It also provides two hot meals, the ability to take a shower and to do one's laundry. Staff work on gaining the client's trust so they will be more open to case management. As discussed above, the ability to provide case management is huge so the client can understand the obstacles they face, to develop a plan, and work towards that plan so they can find and afford suitable, long-term housing. As of the very end of 2023, Catholic Charities has committed to hosting a Day Center for the homeless population who desires structure and to get out of the cold. Services are starting with a soft open being open only two days a week for 4 hours each day. As additional staff and volunteers are lined up, they hope to be open longer.

The Women's Community, a prior sub-recipient of Block Grant funding, provides a safe and friendly environment for victims of domestic violence. Each room has its own bathroom and provides more privacy for the individuals/families. Even though this facility can house more clients than their previous location, it is also at capacity. Clients receive in-depth case management because typically they are dealing with more issues than just homelessness.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

All local shelters provide in-depth case management with each of their clients. They connect their clients with resources that can assist them to meet their goals – whether it is applying for social security disability income, gaining additional education to learn a trade, addressing alcohol and/or drug abusive behaviors, financial education, etc. All these obstacles take time to overcome. It is imperative that the shelters work with transitional housing organizations so clients coming out of the shelters have other housing options if their goals are going to take longer than 90 days to accomplish. The need for additional transitional housing options is huge in Wausau and staff are working with potential other providers to help develop additional units. Hand-in-Hand Housing is a collaboration program with the City of Wausau, North Central Community Action, Salvation Army, and Catholic Charities. North Central Community Action works with local landlords to identify potential units so tenants can stay for a longer term. The rent for the initial 6 months is paid by a local foundation. The tenant will then be weaned into paying the full rent, ensuring that they can afford it in the long run. This will provide more stability in the family – not having to uproot them and, in some cases, the need to change school districts for the kids once again.

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.

Catholic Charities' Beyond Shelter program provides housing for the most chronically homeless men. The program is mirrored after the Housing First model and works with clients on their individual needs. Many have addiction disorders they are working to overcome. Clients will not lose their housing if they fall back into bad habits, instead they are re-lifted and encouraged to move forward in their goals. There are no set timelines for how long a client can stay and may stay as long as needed in order to be successful. Since the pilot project began, Catholic Charities has been able to secure another building to assist another three clients. The future goal is to purchase another building that will house chronically homeless women.

Hand in Hand Housing, operated through North Central Community Action, assists homeless or near-homeless families with free housing for up to six months. Clients must work with a case manager to identify the reason(s) they became homeless and develop a plan to become self-sufficient. North Central Community Action has several local landlords willing to assist with the housing component. In theory, the "temporary" housing they move into may turn into their permanent housing which will help with stability for the family.

The Community Partners Compass (which just received the Audrey Nelson award – a national award through National Community Development Association) opened their doors in the fall of 2022. This is a co-opting space that houses many of the non-profit agencies who typically see the same clients. This will not only help the client get from one agency to another, but it will also assist agencies know who is already helping a client and who may need more services. This partnership has been in the works for over ten years, and we are so excited to see it come to life!

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.

Public Housing units and Housing Choice Voucher programs must continue to receive federal funding to assist the very low and extremely low-income households. Affordable housing units are in great demand and connecting these clients to them can be difficult. The Wausau Community Development Authority (WCDA) has started a new program working with young adults coming out of foster care to provide a voucher to assist them with housing and not become homeless. This has been slow-going with only one success so far, but one is always a positive.

Foreclosure prevention is another program where additional funds are needed to assist households who face losing their home due to loss of income, divorce, death in the family, medical reasons, etc. that have caused them to fall behind on their mortgage. The sooner these clients can be reached and assisted, the better chance they have in succeeding. Unfortunately, many individuals wait until the Sheriff Sale is imminent before they reach out for help. By then, it is too late to assist.

Wheels to Work and Project Step Up are two programs that assist low-income clients. Both programs require budget and financial counseling. Wheels to Work assists clients with the ability (after successfully completing the financial education portion) to receive an automobile at a discounted price and a zero percent interest loan. This will allow the client to obtain or keep a job which will, in turn, allow them to afford housing.

Open Door of Marathon County aids recently released individuals from the Marathon County jail system. Inmates are released at 5:00 A.M., making it difficult to accomplish anything until businesses open. Many are released with the clothes they were arrested in and may not have the attire needed for the season they are released. Open Door opens at 5:00 A.M. and provides breakfast and weather-related clothing. The assistance of a case manager is offered to aide in working through issues which may include housing, employment opportunities and even addiction issues. If clients have someone to be accountable to, they have an increased chance of overcoming hurdles and not reoffending.

The Joseph Project partners with local employees with previously incarcerated individuals who are looking to secure a long-term job. Program volunteers assist recently released inmates by providing necessary job skills to secure and hold a long-term job and matches them with a mentor who holds them accountable. This program is looking for additional employers to partner with to give more individuals the tools they need to be successful.

The Hagar House is a newer non-profit that assists with longer term housing for women of domestic violence and with children transitioning out of the Women's Community Shelter. In depth case management is provided with no timeline needed to be met. The Hagar House will take them in for as long as it is needed to get back on their feet. They have secured a building that can house up to 5 families. We are excited to see this program make a huge difference in these families' lives.

Discussion

Marathon County's Homeless Coalition is a strong coalition that works together to fight homelessness. Many of the partners are housed at the new Community Partners Campus. This initiative involves all the housing providers working together instead of against one another. Marathon County has dedicated non-profit agencies that continue to work together to better their community rather than having to worry about "stepping on each other's toes". All the homeless providers have been changing their programs to require clients to go through in-depth counseling and develop plans that will enhance their ability to find and maintain permanent housing. Of course, the additional counseling costs equates to additional funding constraints for these agencies.

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

Introduction

The City of Wausau's Analysis of Impediments (AI) to Fair Housing was updated in early 2016. We are in the process of updating this but are also waiting to see what the new guidance HUD will be releasing. The identified impediments were lack of education of what fair housing means and how to report it, the fear of submitting a complaint, language barriers and outreach to non-English speaking residents, and the then cumbersome City's Fair Housing Ordinance. Ways to overcome those barriers and other affordable housing barriers are listed below:

Barriers to affordable housing persists. Updated code changes are great for safety but continue to drive up the cost of rehabilitation and new construction. The lead-based paint regulation on renovations significantly adds to the cost of rehabilitation work.

All contractors who work in renovations are required to have the State of Wisconsin's Lead Safe Renovator's License, at a minimum, in addition to their Contractor's Licenses. Since continuing education is required for all contractors in maintain their contractor's licenses, lead based paint education should be part of the required classes – not a separate license that must be paid separately to maintain. We have found several contractors are letting their certification expire because there is no policing of this requirement. Only agencies working with federal funds require the certification - making it more difficult for our agency to maintain a contractor list that meets the necessary certifications.

Zoning and tax credits are key factors in redevelopment projects and the reuse of properties for affordable housing. Many times, the zoning request for a new construction, multi-family rental units that are deemed "affordable" are turned down by the neighbors complaining "Not In My Back Yard!" Tax credit projects also receive extra points if the proposed development is in a qualified census tract, based on geography and population. This increases the density of low and moderate-income instead of locating in other areas of the city.

The ability to afford broadband in low-to-moderate income housing is difficult. Families with school age children are required to provide the ability for their children to access their homework via the internet. This is not always feasible as to the high monthly fees associated with this service. Even though there are ways to access free Wi-Fi: through the local libraries, coffee shops, and the schools themselves, transportation for these families can be a barrier and the time of day in which these free services are available may not always fit into the family's schedule.

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.

The city will continue to be proponents of Tax Credit projects and try to educate everyone that affordable housing does not equate to bad tenants. With the prior tax credit projects Wausau was fortunate to receive, their tenants are almost all hard-working families but cannot afford higher rents along with utilities, day care, health care and food expenses.

Recently, the City's Attorney's office was able to re-write and receive approval of our Fair Housing Ordinance to make it less cumbersome. Since that time, we have only received three complaints. However, none of them were deemed legitimate. But the process went smoother with less hurdles to pass before an investigation could begin.

The City's Planning and Zoning Divisions recently updated the City's zoning ordinances. As part of the process, the previous zoning ordinances were analyzed for possible fair housing discrepancies. Staff worked with the consultants to remove any possible ordinances that posed negative effects or hindered the development of affordable housing. As with all ordinances, we continue to evaluate and propose changes to promote the development of additional affordable housing units.

In 2023, several new housing developments have been voted down due to zoning change requests. The Plan Commission approved all the developments as the proposed projects met all requirements necessary to approve the requested zoning; however, since many of the neighbors came out again these projects, City Council sided with the neighborhoods and voted them down. This does not help our housing deficit. We will continue working with the City Council to enhance their understanding of the need for these developments and dispel concerns about their perceived negative impact on neighborhoods.

Discussion

The City of Wausau prides itself on promoting affordable housing throughout the city. We will continue to listen to our constituents to see where we might be falling short and to educate those that feel that low-income housing is not a priority in Wausau. Staff will work with the Hmong American Center to collaborate on a fair housing ad to run on the Hmong radio station educating on what housing discrimination looks like and how to report it. We strive to reach out to our Hispanic community and other more recent immigrants to see how they have been treated when trying to find housing.

The City of Wausau will continue to educate the community on fair housing issues. The rental and fair housing brochures have been updated to reflect newer legislation and they are available to all housing partners and public areas. The brochures are available in English, Spanish and Hmong. We will continue to print and distribute these brochures as the supply is depleted. Re-printing these does cost a lot; therefore, we anticipate the expense for this year to only be approximately \$500.

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AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

The past couple of years, the Community Development Block Grant funds have seen a slight increase in funding. However, in 2022 there was another bigger decrease with 2023 at the same lower level. For 2024, we are planning for consistent funding but allowing for a decrease due to the way the federal lawmakers continue to disagree about the budget. Funding used to be between \$800,000 - \$900,000 – now it is hovering around the mid/low \$600,000 mark. This decrease impacts the amount of funding non-profits can utilize to assist the very-low-income population. It forces a municipality to make tough decisions as to which programs can no longer be funded. With the increase of federal regulations and decrease of funding, it is difficult to operate important programs that assist low to moderate income households. We will continue to educate our state and federal representatives as to the importance of these state and federal programs and the impacts these funds have on low-income households and the importance of streamlining procedures.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing.

The past couple of years the housing market has boomed. This has caused the price of housing to significantly increase which makes it harder for low to moderate income households to afford housing.

The city will:

- Continue to offer the Down Payment Assistance Program for income qualifying households which will reduce their first mortgage, lower their monthly mortgage payments, and will make the home affordable. We updated our funding amount from between \$2,000 - \$6,000 per household to \$5,000 - \$10,000. We hope this will entice homeowners to move forward with our program so we can better educate and offset the higher costs of obtaining a mortgage.
- Utilize ARPA funds to promote Homebuyer Education. If a potential homebuyer goes through our Housing Counseling and Home Buyer Educational programs PRIOR to writing an offer, ARPA funds will go towards a \$500 grant to assist with the closing costs IF they purchase a home within the City of Wausau. By providing education early, new homebuyers will better understand the process and will be more mindful in making choices in the house they purchase and the loan product they choose. Statistics show that homeowners who go through these types of programs have a lower foreclosure rate than those who don't.
- Continue the Homeowner Rehabilitation Loan program which offers a low interest loan to income qualifying households for necessary repairs. This allows the homeowner to keep their home affordable and safe for them to live in. This past year the guidelines were changed slightly to allow any testing fees (lead, asbestos, mold) to be considered a grant for the homeowner. These testing costs can be high, which decreases the amount of funding available for the actual rehab work. This change will provide extra funding towards the true work that needs to be completed. We also increased the maximum loan amount from \$25,000 to \$35,000 due to the high construction/materials costs. This will allow for more repairs to be completed than the previous \$25,000.
- Continue to offer the Rental Rehabilitation Loan Program for landlords so they can make necessary improvements that will allow them to keep their units rentable. The low interest loan will offer low monthly payments that should not create a financial burden for which result the landlord in increasing the rent.
- Utilize ARPA funds, along with HOME program income funds, to assist with the new construction of a six-unit apartment complex to house lower-income households. North Central Community Action manages the complex because they are familiar with households that could use a hand up.

- Utilize ARPA along with HOME program income funds to build additional single-family homes on City-owned lots that will be made available to income-qualified households. The homes will be sold at reduced rates and receive down payment assistance to make the first mortgage affordable.
- Work with our local Habitat for Humanity chapter to utilize city-owned vacant lots to build new, single-family homes for their approved recipients. Another home will be completed in fall of 2023 with two new ones in the process for two other city owned lot this coming fall.
- Work with the State of Wisconsin Lead Safe Homes Program which provides grants to remove lead hazards in income-qualified homes. Lead abatement is expensive, and the grant allows families to stay in their homes and remove hazards that could make their children sick.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards.

- Continue to perform lead risk assessments on properties built prior to 1978 to identify and correct lead-based paint hazards as a part of the necessary renovations during both the Homeowner Rehabilitation Loan and the Rental Rehabilitation Loan Programs.
- Continue to educate new homebuyers of the hazards of lead-based paint in older homes. This education is provided during the Homebuyer Education classes and then during the inspection process of the new home they are planning to purchase.
- Continue to hire lead safe renovators, at a minimum, to complete all renovation projects on residential properties built prior to 1978. This is getting difficult as many contractors are not maintaining their lead licensing since only federal programs follow up on this requirement.
- Continue to work with the Marathon County Health Department to address Lead Hazard Reduction needs in the community.
- Continue to utilize the Lead Safe Homes Program, funded through the State of Wisconsin, Department of Health Services, to abate lead hazards in housing in which income eligible families reside. If the program is successful, the city will continue to apply for additional funding.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families.

- Continue collaboration with Get Smart Wausau Coalition to provide financial education.
- Continue homebuyer education classes to educate clients in making wise choices on when it is the right time to purchase a home and what it means to be a homeowner.
- Support and promote the Community Partners Campus which houses several agencies who assist very low-income households with case management, financial education, budgeting classes, goal setting, etc. so they can become self-sustaining. In working together and being under the same roof, agencies can provide better/quicker services to those in need rather than having them find a way to travel between each one.
- Apply for the Mayors for Guaranteed Income – a pilot program which provides a stipend to qualified households for 15–18 months to better their situation in hopes they can develop strategies to self-sufficient. We continue to struggle with this program because IF the chosen resident is on any type of assistance (food share, HCV, public housing, Medicaid, etc.) that extra income is added to their monthly income and their assistance is decreased. This does not help anyone get ahead.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure.

Community Development staff will work together to make sure the plan is carried out according to the needs of the community. Staff will continue to work with community agencies and leaders to identify ever-changing needs and to adapt accordingly.

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

The City of Wausau (and Marathon County as a whole) has great agencies. They all work together to address the needs of their clients. There are no agencies that “step on other’s toes” or try to “outdo” other agencies. We have been told that our community agencies are like no other within the state.

A recent addition to this collaborative effort is the Community Partners Campus, a new non-profit designed to bring together various local non-profits under one roof. This campus provides shared space for non-profits serving similar clienteles, streamlining services for clients who can access multiple services in one location, minimizing the need for transportation to multiple sites. The campus facilitates efficient information sharing, reducing service duplication and enhancing communication between agencies. The shared use of common spaces and office equipment contributes to cost savings. The building was acquired in 2021, with remodeling and non-profit move-ins commencing in the fall of 2022, and the remaining agencies completing their moves in early 2023.

Discussion

As mentioned above, as funding decreases, the ability to assist income-qualifying families also decreases. Many more families are "falling through the cracks" or need to wait a long time on waiting lists before they can receive assistance. Long waiting lists or no ability to apply for funding due to shortages only adds to the stress level of families in poverty.

FINAL

Program Specific Requirements

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

Introduction

For the past couple of years, the City of Wausau has maintained a larger-than-normal Homeowner Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund. For several years, funds are needed to be reprogrammed from this account to assist with other qualifying projects. This helps reduce the Revolving Loan Fund to help meet our timeliness factor in addition to assisting great projects along the way. However, that fund is rebuilding quickly as the housing market continues to be strong and people are selling their homes and paying off the loans. We are working with a couple of non-profits of which we might have the ability to reprogram some of these funds in the near future to assist with their needs.

With the anticipated close out of the NSP contract with the State of Wisconsin, we do anticipate those funds to be turned into CDBG program income. We anticipate whatever that amount is, we be utilized towards costs associated with the building of the six-unit apartment complex or the single-family homes.

The City does not have a Section 108 loan guarantee, any urban renewal settlements, unused drawn funds nor any float-funded activities. The city also did not have any funding allocated towards a specified “urgent need”.

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	\$-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-
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