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**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
FY 2025 (HUD FY 2024) Annual Action Plan**
Year 5 of the FY 2020-2024 Consolidated Planning Period



*To be submitted to
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
by
City of Portsmouth
Community Development Department
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, New Hampshire*

Written comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on May 10, 2024 and may be submitted via email to eannunziata@cityofportsmouth.com or mailed to:

City of Portsmouth
Community Development Department
Attn: Elise Annunziata
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Executive Summary

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

1. Introduction

This Annual Action Plan (AAP) is for HUD Program Year (PY) 2024 (City Fiscal Year 2025) and is Year 5 of the City's Five-Year Consolidated Plan, which is a strategic plan for goals and objectives that the City aims to achieve during City Fiscal Years (FY) 2021-2025 (HUD PY 2020-2024). Each year the Community Development Department (CD) provides an annual update to the Consolidated Plan, which serves as an action plan for the upcoming fiscal year. Specific activities are described in later sections of this plan. Additionally, in Program Year 2024 (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) the City may utilize previously received CARES Act CDBG-CV funds to undertake activities that prepare, prevent, and respond (PPR) to the COVID-19 pandemic as requests are made and eligible activities are identified.

2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan

This could be a restatement of items or a table listed elsewhere in the plan or a reference to another location. It may also contain any essential items from the housing and homeless needs assessment, the housing market analysis or the strategic plan.

This year's Annual Action Plan includes goals and objectives for housing, public facilities, urgent needs, social services programs that assist individuals and families, and program administration. Priority needs include creating and preserving affordable housing units; helping homeowners/renters remain in their homes through temporary, interim mortgage or rental assistance; responding to urgent needs in the community; removing architectural barriers for persons with disabilities; supporting public service agencies; maintaining infrastructure; and improving access to/suitability of public facilities to better meet the needs of people who earn low and moderate incomes. As noted above, in FY 2025 (PY 24), the City may utilize previously received CARES Act CDBG-CV funds to undertake eligible activities that prepare, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Evaluation of past performance

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

The specific accomplishments of projects and programs undertaken during the previous annual plan period are provided in each year's Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). Evaluation and performance reports may be reviewed at the following weblink: <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/community/cdbg-planning-and-reporting>.

4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process

Summary from citizen participation section of plan.

There are many worthwhile and eligible programs and projects that are considered for funding each year. To assist the City in determining which projects are funded, a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), comprised of community members and Community Development (CD) staff, meets to make funding recommendations to the City Manager. CD oversees all project administration, including oversight of construction administration, invoicing, and Davis Bacon wage rates. CD also regularly meets with area service providers and community partners to ensure that the needs of partner organizations and their clients are being met.

5. Summary of public comments

This could be a brief narrative summary or reference an attached document from the Citizen Participation section of the Con Plan.

See attachment.

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

None.

7. Summary

The City of Portsmouth (City) receives funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Under this program, the City is an entitlement community. In PY 24 (the fifth year of the HUD 2020-2024 Five-Year Consolidated Plan), the City will receive approximately \$520,000 to support various eligible programs that benefit residents who earn low and moderate incomes or to address another CDBG National Objective.

CDBG funds must be used to primarily 1) benefit individuals and families who earn very low, low, or moderate incomes; 2) improve neighborhoods in which over 51% of the residents earn very low, low, or moderate incomes; and 3) improve accessibility for people with disabilities. Additionally, the City may use up to 30% of its entitlement funding to respond to HUD-eligible Urgent Needs. Urgent Need-qualified activities must meet the following criteria: 1) the existing conditions must pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community; 2) the existing conditions are of recent origin or recently became urgent (generally, within the past 18 months); 3) the grantee is unable to finance the activity on its own; and 4) other sources of funding are not available.

Throughout PY 24, the City will continue to evaluate and assess eligible uses for unexpended, previously received CDBG-CV funds, which will undertake projects and activities that prepare, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. HUD rules regarding expenditure of CARES Act CDBG-CV funds have been revised to allow for Portsmouth's spending of these funds (100%) through June 2, 2026.

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

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

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

Agency Role	Name	Department/Agency
CDBG Administrator	PORTSMOUTH	Community Development Department

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

Narrative (optional)

The Portsmouth Community Development Department (CD) oversees all project administration, including oversight of CDBG-eligible construction administration, invoicing, and Davis Bacon wage rates. CD also regularly meets with area service providers to ensure that the needs of partner organizations and their clients are being met.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

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

1. Introduction

The Portsmouth Community Development Department (CD) is the sole agency responsible for administering the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. CD is responsible for developing the Consolidated Plan, providing annual updates, reporting on activities accomplished, and documenting funds expended at the end of each program year. CD works in cooperation with public and private agencies that serve persons who earn very low, low, and moderate incomes. As a department of the City of Portsmouth, CD works closely with other municipal departments including Planning & Sustainability, Public Works, Legal, Finance, Inspection, Health, and Welfare. CD also coordinates services and public facility/accessibility improvements with the Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA). Many residents in PHA apartments are served directly or indirectly by programming and projects funded with CDBG money. CD's coordination and cooperation with various entities facilitates CDBG programming and assists in identifying community needs.

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

The City provides ongoing support and coordination with area organizations such as Greater Seacoast Community Health to promote access to medical, dental, and mental health services for individuals in need. This health organization partners directly with the PHA as well as other community organizations to bring their services to low- and moderate-income residents. Additionally, CD staff consult regularly with the Health and Planning & Sustainability Departments; the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast; Home For All, a program of Granite United Way that works to collaboratively develop and implement solutions to homelessness and housing instability; and the PHA to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and involved with emergent issues.

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

The City continues to collaborate with Home for All (the Seacoast coalition to address homelessness prevention and emergency housing issues) to ensure coordinated services for families and individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The coordinated access initiative between regional service providers helps potential clients to avoid shelters altogether and move forward directly to transitional or permanent placements that are best aligned with their needs. City staff participates as appropriate in Home for All forums and meetings to discuss challenges, needs, and potential collaborations for the homeless services community to focus on in the near term, including improvements to coordinated care with area hospitals, expansion of data aggregation and analysis, and improving the efficiency of advocacy work. CD staff occasionally participate in forums and workgroups addressing issues of chronic homelessness and coordination of services for those currently or at risk of becoming homeless.

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 jurisdiction does not receive ESG funding nor does it work with HMIS. However, CD coordinates and consults with the Continuum of Care coalition and Home for All, as described above, as well as Rockingham Community Action/Southern NH Services (RCA/SNHS), which is also engaged in the Balance of State Continuum of Care. CD staff reviews periodic publications and reports concerning homelessness including the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) annual homelessness reports and Point in Time Counts; homeless teens outreach data; the work of the New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness; and the work by relevant workgroups and forums sponsored by the Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region.

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

See following chart on next page.

Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated

1	Agency/Group/Organization	Portsmouth Housing Authority
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	PHA
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Public Housing Needs Anti-poverty Strategy Lead-based Paint Strategy Urgent Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA) is regularly consulted by City staff on many issues and emerging opportunities such as maintaining and adding affordable housing units, and improving service delivery for existing clients. This consultation will continue and provides opportunities for coordinated support in the area of housing needs. PHA staff attended the public needs hearing on 2/8/24 and the public meeting on 3/7/24 to provide comments on public housing priority needs for PY 24 (City FY 25).
2	Agency/Group/Organization	Cross Roads House, Inc.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-homeless
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Needs - Veterans Homelessness Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy Urgent Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Program Director of Cross Roads House, Sandra Beaudry, attended the public meeting on 3/7/24. The emergency shelter facility provides temporary shelter and comprehensive case management services to homeless individuals and families in Portsmouth. Challenges include an increase in elderly and/or disabled clients, longer stays, and a lack of affordable permanent housing in the city and access to mental health services.

3	Agency/Group/Organization	Greater Seacoast Community Health
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Health
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy Urgent Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Greater Seacoast Community Health staff attended the 3/12/24 public meeting. The agency meets the dental health needs of Portsmouth residents who earn extremely low, low, or moderate incomes. The clinic provides care to clients regardless of their ability to pay. Hiring/retention of dental staff has remained challenging since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the agency is still not able to serve the number of clients it served pre-pandemic.
4	Agency/Group/Organization	AIDS Response Seacoast
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Executive Director of AIDS Response Seacoast, Tamara Leibowitz, spoke at the 3/7/24 public meeting about the direct case management and medical support that is provided by CDBG grant funding. This year, ARS continues to focus on supporting clients in their basic needs as the cost of living continues to rise and as COVID-19 continues to affect those who are immunocompromised.
5	Agency/Group/Organization	New Hampshire Legal Assistance
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Service-Fair Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy

	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Continued City staff consultation with New Hampshire Legal Assistance will determine the best activities to facilitate the dissemination of fair housing information to vulnerable populations who are exiting homelessness. This will help the City to identify additional strategies and opportunities to affirmatively further fair housing in the city—including how to most directly and effectively deliver fair housing training to those who are precariously housed.
6	Agency/Group/Organization	Seacoast Community School
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Urgent Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Executive Director of the Seacoast Community School, Melissa Caldwell, attended the 3/12/24 public meeting and described the agency's work as one of the largest childcare operations in New Hampshire, explaining that they provide not only early childhood education but afterschool care for older children as well. With the help of CDBG funding, scholarships are provided to extremely low- to moderate-income families on a basis of individual need. SCS is working to address difficulties in hiring and retention by encouraging professional development for staff. Challenges include affordable housing for both school families and staff members, as well as transportation.
7	Agency/Group/Organization	Southern NH Services, Inc.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy Tenant Based Rental Assistance; Urgent Needs

	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Communications Director of Rockingham Community Action/Southern NH Services, Patte-Anne Ardizzoni, spoke at the 3/7/24 public meeting about their short-term rental assistance program. Since federal subsidies for emergency rental assistance ended during FY23, RCA/SNHS has seen an increase in need for rental assistance through other funding. Cost of living and low housing vacancy rates in the area are factors that significantly impact their programs.
8	Agency/Group/Organization	Operation Blessing
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy Urgent Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Executive Director Tammy Joslyn spoke at the 3/7/24 public meeting about Operation Blessing's Warming Center, which serves homeless persons with emergency shelter during extreme weather conditions. The Warming Center received water-sewer improvements as well as indoor toilet and shower facilities in FY 23 and has been open for the full FY 24 season. The agency continues to be in need of funding support for staffing the Warming Center.
9	Agency/Group/Organization	City of Portsmouth Welfare Department
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Other government - Local

What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Public Housing Needs Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Needs - Veterans Homelessness Needs - Unaccompanied youth Homelessness Strategy Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy Lead-based Paint Strategy Urgent Needs
Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	This year, as in prior years, the CDBG Program coordinated with the City Welfare Department to discuss social services needs and funding from the City's general fund, which comes through City Welfare funds and complements CDBG funds for public services to assist the homeless and other special needs activities
10. Agency/Group/Organization	Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels
Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Elderly
What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy
Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Director of Operations Helen Kostrzynski spoke at the 3/12/24 public meeting about Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels (RNMOW) services, including meal delivery to homebound elderly and disabled persons. In FY 24, RNMOW has seen an increase in the number of both clients and meals requested by clients. The agency hopes to add a sixth route in FY 25 to serve additional clients and ease the burden for delivery drivers.
11. Agency/Group/Organization	Granite Pathways
Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services – Adults with disabilities; recovery centers
What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy

Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Two Granite Pathways (GP) staff members—Ann Strachan, Executive Director of Seacoast Pathways (SP), and Whitney Brown, Director, Safe Harbor Recovery Center (SHRC)—spoke at the 3/12/24 public meeting about their respective GP program needs and services. SP provides peer support mental health services, and seeks funding to increase the number of clients served. SHRC provides peer support recovery services, and seeks funding to cover the cost of housing and other living expenses for those who may not be able to enter recovery otherwise due to high cost of living in Portsmouth.
12. Agency/Group/Organization	Making Classroom and Community Connections (MC3)
Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services – Youth, Child Care
What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy
Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Making Classroom and Community Connections (MC3) Director, Emma Boniche, spoke at the 3/7/24 public meeting about MC3’s proposed affordable summer program primarily for youth living in Gosling Meadows, a PHA affordable housing development.
13. Agency/Group/Organization	Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST)/TripLink
Agency/Group/Organization Type	Transportation Services
What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy Public Housing Needs Homelessness Strategy
Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	CD staff consultations with COAST Executive Director and Program Specialist regarding identifiable needs for targeted populations and for targeted neighborhoods. Several needs were raised: protected bus shelters in certain areas that serve low- to moderate-income persons; more frequent number of routes along existing routes; and transportation in and out of Portsmouth for workers who contribute to the City’s economy but who cannot afford to live here.

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

None.

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

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
Continuum of Care	Home For All; State of NH Bureau of Homeless and Housing Services; Rockingham Community Action/Southern NH Services	Typical services assisting the homeless in a Continuum of Care include case management, housing counseling, job training and placement, healthcare, mental health services, substance misuse treatment, childcare, transportation, emergency food and clothing, family violence services, education services, moving services, entitlement access assistance, referrals to veterans' services, and legal assistance. In addition to participating in the Continuum of Care, the City provides funding to agencies that make up a significant portion of the Continuum of Care system. This support is provided through the City's CDBG-funded Public Service Agency Grant (PSAG) program and through the Welfare Department, which is supported by local tax dollars.
2023 Regional Housing Needs Assessment	Rockingham Planning Commission	The Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) undertook this assessment in cooperation with the New Hampshire Office of Planning and Development (OPD). Previous to this report, the most recent housing needs assessment was completed in 2015 as part of RPC's Regional Master Plan. The goal of the assessment is to provide information about existing conditions with a special focus on income, so that municipalities can address their communities' housing needs based on data.
Portsmouth Housing Authority 5-Year Plan	Portsmouth Housing Authority	The goals of the PHA's 5-Year Plan include increasing the quality and supply of housing for families of low- and moderate-income in Portsmouth, as well as encouraging access to social services, healthcare, family support, youth programs, and senior programs for current PHA residents. The PHA has recently completed a project that provides 64 units of workforce housing in downtown Portsmouth.

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
Coastal Resiliency Initiative	Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department	The City of Portsmouth Coastal Resilience Initiative, launched in 2011, was one of the first coastal hazards vulnerability assessments completed in the region. The findings of that detailed assessment resulted in the inclusion of resilience as a priority in the City's Master Plan, subsequent vulnerability assessment work related to the City's historic resources, and the adoption of new floodplain regulations.
2014 Housing Existing Conditions Report	Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department	An analysis of the existing housing conditions in the city with a focus on future efforts to preserve existing affordable housing and encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties to provide housing that is affordable to households at or below the Area Median Income (AMI).
Portsmouth 2025 Master Plan	Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department	One of the many priorities for action identified in the Portsmouth 2025 Master Plan is supporting and maintaining a diverse community in the city, which includes promoting access to affordable housing.
Housing Market Study: Portsmouth, NH	Portsmouth Housing Authority	An analysis of the housing market in Portsmouth, NH, with a special interest in demand by income and cost burden to various demographic groups in the city.
Climate Action Plan	Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department	Report in process; draft climate action strategies received and consulted.
Places to Live Study Circle Dialogue Report Out	Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department; Portsmouth Listens	A community dialogue made up of resident-led study circles and facilitated by Portsmouth Listens, intended to define Portsmouth's housing issue(s), its top housing needs, and recommended goals and actions for housing choice in the City.
Portsmouth Housing Authority Sustainability Plan	Portsmouth Housing Authority	The PHA Sustainability Plan outlines general goals and actions for improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of PHA affordable housing, as well as the transition of PHA properties from fossil fuels to renewable energy.
Home For All Strategic Planning Exploration and Assessment Summary Memo	Home For All; Brightspot Consultants	An assessment and foundation for a strategic plan for Home For All and its partners/collaborators to prevent homelessness and housing instability in Rockingham and Strafford counties in New Hampshire and York County in Maine—including partners' desire to form action-oriented working groups.

Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts

Narrative (optional)

It is worth elaborating on the City's significant commitments to housing and climate action planning in the coming year. In PY 22, the City hired a Housing Navigator, who has been examining regulatory barriers to the preservation and production of housing—including affordable housing—in the City of Portsmouth. This position is a two-year grant-funded position through the New Hampshire Finance Authority (NHFA) and the InvestNH Housing Opportunity Planning (HOP) Grants program. In PY23, the Housing Navigator coordinated a discussion and information-finding program, facilitated by Portsmouth Listens, which is summarized in a presentation and report delivered to the Portsmouth City Council on 2/22/24.

Additionally, the City has enlisted VHB, a planning and design firm focused on sustainability, and the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) to develop a climate action plan. The draft plan has been shared with City Department heads for review and consideration of incorporation into City operations. The plan is not yet finalized.

CD staff anticipates that the continued work and outcomes of the Housing Navigator, VHB, and RPC, along with our colleagues in the Planning & Sustainability Department, will influence future Annual Action Plans.

The City has a designated Floodplain District that consists of all lands designated as special flood hazard areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as well as all extended flood hazard areas as defined by the City's Zoning Ordinance. In March 2021, the National League of Cities selected the City and its collaboration with the New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (NHCAW) as one of eight communities to participate in the Leadership in Community Resilience program. This partnership with NHCAW has provided the City, alongside other coastal communities, an opportunity to learn about how to build resilience to and an effective regional strategy for climate hazards. The City will continue assessing its Coastal Resiliency Initiative and the challenges that the City and other coastal communities face as sea levels continue to rise and weather patterns change.

CD staff continue to consult and coordinate with other City staff as well as with area agency staff. For example, CD staff collaborates with the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (NHCDFA). NHCDFA administers the statewide CDBG Program and is a member of the three-agency team that develops and implements the State's Consolidated Plan. In addition, CD staff also work with the Rockingham Planning Commission, the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, the State Bureau of Homeless Services, the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, and the State Lead Poisoning Prevention Program in the course of designing and implementing programs. The City also has liaisons between it and several local organizations including the Portsmouth Economic Development Commission, the Portsmouth Historical Society, the Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth, the Regional Economic Development Center of Southern New Hampshire, and the Tenants Association at Pease.

Also worth noting is that reliable high-speed internet access is an issue for some Portsmouth households, particularly those earning low to moderate incomes. In 2020 and 2021, the City had

extensive discussions with companies and the PHA about narrowing the digital divide. Early on in the pandemic, CD staff initiated discussions with two providers to improve and remedy technical issues, including upload and download wireless internet speeds, at individual households. While this effort did not yield a feasible solution, the City is continuing to make efforts to secure adequate internet and broadband services/connections for low- to moderate-income households and individuals, and it will monitor state/federal rule changes and funding opportunities. In PY 24, the City will continue to look for opportunities to increase internet access and provide reliable, adequate internet services to targeted communities.

AP-12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)

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

See chart below.

Citizen Participation Outreach

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
1	Public Hearing	Non-targeted/broad community	February 8, 2024 public meeting and hearing to gather public comments on community needs that could be served by the CDBG Program in FY 25 (PY 24). Several representatives from social services agencies attended and provided comments.	See attached.	None.	
2	Public Meeting	Non-targeted/broad community	March 7, 2024 public meeting to hear input from social service agencies desiring CDBG grant funds through the PSAG program to support services to low- to moderate-income persons.	See attached.	None.	
3	Public Meeting	Non-targeted/broad community	March 12, 2024 public meeting to hear input from social service agencies desiring CDBG funds through the PSAG program to support services to low- to moderate- income persons.	See attached.	None.	

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (if applicable)
4	Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/broad community	Notice of 30-day comment period on Draft Annual Action Plan and Budget. Published in Portsmouth Herald (print and online editions) on 4/10/24 and the City's website on 4/10/24.			
5	[upcoming] Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/broad community	[upcoming] Notice of public hearing on Draft Annual Action Plan and Budget. Published in Portsmouth Herald (print and online editions) on 5/6/24 and the City's website on 5/6/24.			
6	Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/broad community	Notice of 2/8/24 community needs hearing and status of current year projects published in Portsmouth Herald (print and online editions) and on the City's website.	N/A	None.	

Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach

Expected Resources

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

Introduction

See chart below.

Anticipated Resources

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
CDBG	public - federal	Acquisition Admin and Planning Economic Development Housing Public Improvements Public Services	520,000	250,000	1,178,402	1,948,402	1,150,000	PY 24 CDBG dollars will be used to fund projects and activities benefiting low- to moderate-income individuals, and to address urgent needs. \$250,000 in program income is anticipated from previous loan repayments. An estimated \$85,744 from Revolving Loan funds are planned for use toward PY 24 Housing Rehabilitation projects/activities.
General Fund	public - local	Public Improvements Public Services	250,500	0	0	250,500	260,000	City of Portsmouth General Fund dollars may be leveraged to supplement CDBG funds for social services support and other public facilities projects that are identified on an annual basis. These projects may see a cost-share with local general fund dollars, primarily through the City's capital budget. \$250,500 General Funds are in the City's FY 25 Welfare Department line-item budget.

Table 5 - Expected Resources – Priority Table

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

Matching funds are not required. However, the federal funds expended on CDBG-eligible activities leverage significant additional resources from nonprofit agency partners who receive funding for public services and for facility improvements.

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

N/A

Discussion

None further, except to note that no more than 30% of anticipated resources will be used to address the Urgent Needs National Objective. Because the rules regarding expenditure of CARES Act CDBG-CV funds have been revised, the City has a three-year extension for the use of CARES Act CDBG-CV funds through June 2, 2026.

Annual Goals and Objectives

AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives

Goals Summary Information

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Administration	2020	2024	Affordable Housing Public Housing Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development Urgent Needs	City-Wide	Administration	CDBG: \$156,000	Other: 1 Other
2	Public Facility/Infrastructure Improvements	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	City-Wide	Public Facility/Infrastructure Improvements	CDBG: \$988,195	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 1250 Persons Assisted

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
3	Housing	2020	2024	Affordable Housing Public Housing Homeless	City-Wide	Housing	CDBG: \$195,707	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 3 Households Assisted
4	Public Services	2020	2024	Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	City-Wide	Public Services	CDBG: \$100,500	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 492 Persons Assisted
5	Transportation	2020	2024	Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	City-Wide	Transportation	CDBG: \$50,000	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 125 Persons Assisted
6	Urgent Needs	2020	2024	Affordable Housing Public Housing Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development Urgent Needs	City-Wide	Housing Public Facility/Infrastructure Improvements Public Services Transportation Urgent Need Administration	CDBG: \$0	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 22,000 Persons Assisted Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 22,000 Persons Assisted

Table 6 – Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

1	Goal Name	Administration
	Goal Description	General program administration of the CDBG Program, including Housing Rehabilitation administration. Additional funding for this goal may come from the City's previously awarded CARES Act CDBG-CV grant to support the administration of projects that prepare, prevent and respond to COVID.
2	Goal Name	Public Facility/Infrastructure Improvements
	Goal Description	The City will continue accessibility and public facilities/infrastructure upgrades to locations throughout the city. Major activities include Connors Cottage Senior Housing ADA improvements and the installation and upgrade of COAST bus shelters at select PHA properties. Other infrastructure/public facility improvements and ADA accessibility projects, including transportation and rental unit rehabilitation, will be identified and are anticipated in PY 24. Additional funding for this goal may come from the City's previously awarded CARES Act CDBG-CV grant to support the administration of projects that prepare, prevent and respond to COVID.
3	Goal Name	Housing
	Goal Description	Provides loans for rehabilitation of multifamily units that house low- to moderate-income families or individuals. Housing Rehabilitation funds may be provided as grants for nonprofits providing housing to income-eligible individuals/families.
4	Goal Name	Public Services
	Goal Description	\$100,500 capped funds to fund limited clientele public services such as at-risk youth activities, medical/dental services, emergency shelters for persons who are homeless, homeless prevention and fair housing services. Additional funding for this goal may come from the City's previously awarded CARES Act CDBG-CV grant to support the administration of projects that prepare, prevent and respond (PPR) to COVID.; those PPR-designated public services activities will not count toward the Public Services Cap.
5	Goal Name	Transportation
	Goal Description	Improved transportation access and availability in areas that primarily serve low- to moderate-income persons or for services to target populations.
6	Goal Name	Urgent Needs
	Goal Description	\$0 PY 24 CDBG entitlement funds allocated to Urgent Needs at this time; however, CDBG-CV funds received in the previous Action Plan Year may be utilized up to 30% to address urgent needs, including public services and public facility improvements, to prepare, prevent, and respond to COVID-19. The City is keeping generalized the allocation of these funds and the specific activities in order to maintain the most flexibility and agility to respond to urgent needs.

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

In FY 25 (PY 24), the CDBG Program plans to make progress on a number of high priorities including public facilities upgrades and expansion of public service activities funded to address accessibility needs and needs of the senior population; assistance to nonprofit partners with public facilities improvements; and continuing interim tenant-based rental assistance and multifamily housing rehabilitation as the opportunities present. Additionally, in PY 2024, the City may utilize previously received CARES Act CDBG-CV funds to undertake activities that prepare, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City anticipates that any activities that meet the Urgent Need National Objective will continue evolving over time to meet the needs to best prevent, prepare, and respond to COVID-19. In order to be flexible to ever-changing health/crisis needs, specific budget amounts will be directed to targeted public facilities and public services activities over time.

Projects

#	Project Name
1	Program Administration
2	Public Facility/Accessibility Improvements
3	Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program
4	Public Services Agency Grant Program
5	Transportation
6	Urgent Needs

Table 7 - Project Information

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

The CDBG Annual Action Plan does not allocate resources based on geographic areas, but rather on priorities identified during the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan consultation process. At least 70% of CDBG funding for projects/activities are intended to benefit residents earning low and moderate incomes and accessing services, as well as to ensure access for people with disabilities throughout the city. In accordance with the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, the City may utilize up to 30% of CDBG and previously received CDBG-CV funds on activities that meet the Urgent Need National Objective.

The Portsmouth Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will hold public meetings and consultations throughout PY 24 to assess the underserved needs in Portsmouth and provide recommendations for CDBG and previously received CDBG-CV funding to support the priority community needs.

Obstacles to addressing underserved needs include high home prices, low vacancy rates; little developable land; decreased labor market and staff retention in nonprofit agencies serving the community; and local permitting/land use measures that do not aggressively facilitate the development of affordable housing in the city.

AP-38 Project Summary

Project Summary Information

1	Project Name	Program Administration
	Target Area	City-Wide
	Goals Supported	Administration
	Needs Addressed	Administration
	Funding	CDBG: \$190,963
	Description	General program administration of the City's CDBG Program, including the Housing Rehab Program. \$34,463 of this funding amount is allocated to Housing Rehabilitation (HR) Admin. Note that additional funds from the previously received CARES Act may be utilized for administration of CV projects.
	Target Date	6/30/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	CDBG (including HR Admin) and CDBG-CV Program Administration will support the implementation and oversight of the City's CDBG Program.
	Location Description	Citywide
	Planned Activities	General program administration of the City's CDBG Program, including the Housing Rehabilitation Program and CARES Act eligible activities.
2	Project Name	Public Facility and Accessibility Improvements
	Target Area	City-Wide
	Goals Supported	Public Facility/Infrastructure Improvements
	Needs Addressed	Public Facility/Infrastructure Improvements
	Funding	CDBG: \$1,446,195
	Description	Facility and infrastructure improvements to public buildings that primarily serve persons that earn low to moderate incomes; and removal of architectural barriers and improvements to ADA accessibility.
	Target Date	6/30/2025

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	<p>The City estimates that approximately 50 individuals who are homeless will benefit from the proposed activities at Operation Blessing, 100 households will benefit from rental unit rehabilitations, approximately 20 households will benefit from ADA accessibility improvements at Connors Cottage Senior Housing, and additional beneficiaries from other citywide projects.</p> <p>In total, approximately 1,250 individuals earning low to moderate income will benefit from other accessibility and public facility improvements across the city.</p>
	Location Description	Citywide, PHA properties, Connors Cottage Senior Housing, Cross Roads House, Operation Blessing.
	Planned Activities	<p>The City will continue accessibility and public facilities/infrastructure upgrades to locations throughout the city. Major activities include Connors Cottage Senior Housing ADA improvements and upgrades to the Cross Roads House emergency and transitional shelter main building. Other infrastructure/public facility improvements and ADA accessibility projects, including transportation and rental unit rehabilitation, will be identified and are anticipated in PY 24. An additional funding for this goal may come from the City's previous CARES Act CDBG-CV award.</p>
3	Project Name	Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program
	Target Area	City-Wide
	Goals Supported	Housing
	Needs Addressed	Housing
	Funding	CDBG: \$160,744
	Description	Provides loans for rehabilitation of multifamily units that house low- to moderate-income families or individuals. Housing Rehabilitation funds may be provided as grants for nonprofits providing housing to income-eligible individuals/families.
	Target Date	6/30/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 3 households earning low to moderate income will benefit from the proposed activities.
	Location Description	Citywide, specific to low- to moderate-income households.
	Planned Activities	Loans for rehabilitation of multifamily units that house low- to moderate-income families or individuals. Housing Rehabilitation funds may be provided as grants for nonprofits providing housing to income-eligible individuals/families.

4	Project Name	Public Services Agency Grant Program
	Target Area	City-Wide
	Goals Supported	Public Services
	Needs Addressed	Public Services
	Funding	CDBG: \$100,500
	Description	Grants to local nonprofit organizations providing public services to Portsmouth residents who earn low- to moderate-income.
	Target Date	6/30/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 492 individuals, including persons who are homeless, earning low- to moderate- household income will benefit from the proposed activities. Limited clientele. Of this number, approximately 8 households will benefit from the proposed short-term tenant-based rental activities. Limited clientele.
	Location Description	Through various nonprofit social service agencies in the city.
	Planned Activities	Funding of public services such as at-risk youth support, medical/dental services, emergency shelter for persons who are homeless, and fair housing services. Additional funds may come from the City's previously awarded CARES Act CDBG-CV grant for activities that plan, prevent, and respond (PPR) to COVID-19; those PPR activities will not count toward the Public Services Cap.
5	Project Name	Transportation
	Target Area	City-Wide
	Goals Supported	Transportation
	Needs Addressed	Transportation
	Funding	CDBG: \$50,000
	Description	To support transportation agencies or public infrastructure improvements that benefit persons or areas who earn very low to moderate incomes.
	Target Date	6/30/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	125 low- to moderate- income persons. Limited clientele or area benefit (LMA),
	Location Description	Citywide or in CDBG-eligible areas, such as near Woodbury Cooperative, public housing, or servicing areas that provide social services/shelter to primarily low- to moderate-income individuals.

	Planned Activities	Added or improved transportation access and availability in areas that primarily serve low- to moderate- income persons or for services to target populations.
6	Project Name	Urgent Needs
	Target Area	City-Wide
	Goals Supported	Urgent Needs
	Needs Addressed	Housing Public Facility/Infrastructure Improvements Public Services Transportation Urgent Need Administration
	Funding	CDBG: \$0
	Description	<p>\$0 PY 24 CDBG entitlement funds allocated to Urgent Needs; however, CDBG-CV funds received in the previous Action Plan Year may be utilized up to 30% to address urgent needs, including public services and public facility improvements, to prepare, prevent, and respond to COVID-19. The City is keeping generalized the allocation of these funds and the specific activities in order to maintain the most flexibility and agility to respond to urgent needs.</p> <p>As noted in the introduction, the grantee anticipates that any activities that meet the Urgent Need National Objective will evolve over time to meet the needs to best prevent, prepare, and respond to COVID-19. In order to be flexible to ever-changing health/crisis needs, specific budget amounts will be directed to public facilities and public services activities over time as eligible activities/needs are evaluated throughout the program year.</p>
	Target Date	6/30/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	An estimated 22,000 unduplicated persons may benefit from the proposed Urgent Needs activities that may primarily include public services or public facility improvements, or could be used to benefit other priority needs that fit the Urgent Need National Objective. The beneficiaries may not be low- to moderate-income, as Urgent Needs activities will be planned to prepare, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 health crisis.
Location Description	Citywide.	

<p>Planned Activities</p>	<p>Support to nonprofit and for-profit businesses and City government programs that provide public services and make public facility improvements to address urgent needs when no other funding sources are available and the grantee is unable to finance the activity(ies) on its own. Economic development activities may be funded under the Urgent Needs goal.</p> <p>As noted in the introduction, the grantee anticipates that any activities that meet the Urgent Need National Objective will evolve over time to meet the needs to best prevent, prepare, and respond to COVID-19. In order to be flexible to ever-changing health/crisis needs, specific budget amounts will be directed to public facilities and public services activities over time as eligible activities/needs are evaluated throughout the program year. General Funds may be used in addition to CDBG funds and previously received CARES Act funds.</p>
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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 citizen participation process, community needs, and available funding drive the geographical allocation of investments in the community. In other words, there is no pre-specified geographic targeting of resources. In PY 24, investment of community development resources is planned for throughout the jurisdiction.

Geographic Distribution

Target Area	Percentage of Funds
City-Wide	100

Table 8 - Geographic Distribution

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically

The City's Five-Year Plan does not identify any geographic concentration of resources. Public service agencies that will receive CDBG funds during this program year are scattered throughout the city, and public facilities projects occur in locations or at facilities that directly benefit those who earn low and moderate incomes or those who are presumed to earn low and moderate incomes. The City of Portsmouth has two (2) Census block groups where a majority of residents earn low and moderate incomes. Projects in these areas are undertaken based on project eligibility and funding availability. For at least the two most recent Consolidated Plans, the City has identified significant public infrastructure needs in CDBG-eligible neighborhoods. Urgent Need projects and activities will be undertaken citywide in PY 24 according to priorities described earlier in this section, and General Funds are designated for use to support social services in addition to CDBG funds.

Discussion

None further.

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

Introduction

Wages in the Seacoast New Hampshire area (the Seacoast) continue to generally be on par with state averages overall; however, average housing purchase and rental costs are the most expensive in New Hampshire by considerable margins. Unfortunately, it seems that the gap in affordability continues to grow. The Seacoast is a desirable location to live and to work, in no small part due to the abundance of services and supports that the area offers. Although many people come to the Seacoast in order to access jobs and services, it is often difficult for them to remain due to the high cost of housing.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	254
Non-Homeless	0
Special-Needs	0
Total	254

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

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	8
The Production of New Units	0
Rehab of Existing Units	103
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	111

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

Discussion

A diverse workforce is vital to a thriving regional economy and if the Seacoast region continues to become more expensive to live in, the lack of affordable housing will increase commuting distance, making it more difficult for employers to recruit workers and more costly to retain them.

In recognition of the challenges of affordable housing, in 2008 the Portsmouth City Council established the Housing Blue Ribbon Committee and charged the Committee with developing a “road map,” or guidance document, on local housing options and issues; identifying creative solutions to address those issues; and developing a shortlist of policy and action items that could be taken by the City and others to increase affordable housing options. The results of this work have been incorporated into this Annual Action Plan.

The Housing Blue Ribbon Committee has been reformed and reconvened in FY 24 to address the ongoing housing crisis that the City is experiencing. The Committee is co-chaired by the Assistant Mayor and another City Councilor, and is supported by two City staff liaisons from the Planning & Sustainability Department. The Community Development Director is also consulted in related committee

discussions/topics.

The City Council has also recently been discussing the newly-vacant City-owned South Meeting House as a potential location for an adaptive reuse project that would provide several housing units, including a Letter of Intent from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) from the March 4, 2024 City Council meeting, as well as a Spring 2024 working session concerning the property.

Additional resources concerning housing—including workforce and affordable housing—were published by City partners and collaborators during City FYs 23 and 24 (HUD PYs 22 and 23) and inform City and Community Development work.

The Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA) Housing Market Study 2022 identified the increasing cost burden of housing and its impacts on the City's workforce, as well as a significant demand for workforce and affordable housing—particularly for families.

The Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) 2023 Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), like the PHA Housing Market Study, identifies a shortage of affordable housing units for families. It also identified finding affordable housing as a particular challenge for single adults. Overall, the lack of affordable housing has been identified as a reason that adults aged 18 to 34 may not stay in the region in the coming years. Additional populations that were identified as having particular struggles with affordable housing include seniors and those with disabilities.

The CDBG Program works to maintain affordable housing by advancing fair housing through its referrals and consultation with New Hampshire Legal Assistance (NHLA). NHLA has been awarded funds through the Public Service Agency Grant Program and the organization, or other agencies providing these services and efforts, will receive funds as they continue to meet that need. NHLA's work in this area includes assisting current and prospective Portsmouth renters with fair housing concerns, as well as initiating and conducting workshops on fair housing for the benefit of landlords and direct service nonprofit providers interacting with clients.

The City is exploring providing funding support for residential accessibility improvements or other efforts to preserve, maintain, and produce affordable and workforce housing. Recent initiatives include the PHA's newest workforce housing project, Ruth Lewin Griffin Place, which was completed in 2022.

As mentioned again later in this plan, there are several public and private land opportunities that may be determined suitable for affordable and workforce housing development. Additionally, the City has hired a Housing Navigator through an InvestNH Housing Opportunity Planning (HOP) Grant, who is exploring regulatory barriers to the production of housing in the city, including affordable and workforce housing. The two-year Housing Navigator term of work will end in September 2025 and is expected to produce recommendations for addressing these regulatory barriers, which City Planning & Sustainability staff can then act on.

AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

Introduction

The Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA) works to serve the housing needs of individuals and families who have very low, low, and moderate incomes. The PHA manages several residential complexes serving the elderly, families with children, and families with disabilities. In addition, the PHA manages a tenant-based Section 8 program and waiting list. The PHA has also worked with local public safety providers to ensure effective screening policies, strict lease enforcement, and the maintenance of healthy and safe neighborhoods. The PHA provides employment and education incentives to tenants, as well as youth risk prevention services. The City of Portsmouth and the PHA have worked closely together to address the need for public housing, including retention, renovation, and development of housing units as well as improvements to livability and access to services by residents.

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

The PHA has made great strides in the past several years in areas including security, accessibility, and partnerships with the community. Challenges to address in the future include the increasing number of non-elderly disabled persons being served and expanding housing opportunities. Recently, the PHA has been required to house greater numbers of non-seniors with physical and/or mental disabilities in buildings that have traditionally provided senior housing; this creates a difficult situation to manage but one in which the PHA is confident it can continue to serve both populations through new administrative strategies and community partnerships. With over 400 families on the PHA's waiting list for a Section 8 voucher and an additional several hundred on the list for public housing, coupled with a sustained lack of affordable housing for the Seacoast's workforce, the PHA is looking for new opportunities to increase housing units through acquisition or new construction. The recent PHA project, Ruth Lewin Griffin Place, located in the downtown area, provides 64 one- and two-bedroom units of workforce housing that serve individuals who earn 70% or below Area Median Income (AMI). Approximately 24 of these units are made available for individuals earning 30% or below AMI. An additional challenge to address in the near future includes residents' perception of and neighbors' resistance to supporting affordable and workforce housing in their neighborhoods and broader communities.

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

The PHA is committed to encouraging resident participation in all of its neighborhoods in order to improve social outcomes, enhance safety, foster greater civic engagement, and assure more caring and compassionate communities. Besides working to add more programs and services for tenants, the PHA encourages residents to seek leadership roles and actively engage with the future of the community by joining Resident Advisory Boards. The PHA Resident Services team regularly invites residents to participate in conversations happening in local government and often provides transportation to public hearings as well as hosts on-site public meetings when possible.

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

The PHA is not designated as troubled.

Discussion

The PHA is an invaluable partner in addressing housing needs in Portsmouth. As noted in its Five-Year Plan, the PHA is engaged with the issue of creating additional units, preserving existing units, ensuring high-quality services, and linking with other resources in the community.

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

Introduction

The Seacoast has a robust Continuum of Care collaboration run by Home for All and the City continues to work with regional organizations to improve coordination between service providers and develop and implement strategies to expand and refine services. \$250,500 in funding from the City's FY 25 Welfare budget for social services agencies complements the \$100,500 CDBG for public services to assist the homeless and other special needs activities.

Describe the jurisdictions one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including

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

The City will continue to promote the availability of Public Service Agency Grants to shelters—including temporary warming/cooling centers and overnight stays—as well as healthcare and public welfare agencies in order to strengthen and support the already robust Continuum of Care. Beneficiary reports and annual reports from agencies provide information about homeless persons' needs for shelter and services as well as assessments of their individual needs. In particular, the agencies Operation Blessing and Cross Roads House, which are funded with CDBG public services grants, provide quarterly reports to the City about their outreach and the needs of homeless populations. Additionally, Rockingham Community Action/Southern NH Services (RCA/SNHS) hired two HUD-funded homeless outreach professionals, to supplement and enhance RCA/SNHS and 211 response and services to the homeless or the precariously housed.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

Funding services and facility improvement at emergency and transitional shelters and at housing for survivors of domestic violence continues to be a priority for the City. These types of activities generally receive among the highest levels of funding from the Portsmouth CDBG Program, as well as provide support through the funding for eligible public facilities projects. The City will for consistency with its Consolidated Plan for any. The City will also continue close cooperation with and participation in the Continuum of Care.

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

Lack of affordable housing and production of new affordable units in the city is a significant contributor to lengthy stays at emergency shelters. As part of its plan, the City will help facilitate transitions to permanent housing and independent living by exploring affordable housing opportunities and other

zoning and regulatory measures. The focus on increasing and maintaining affordable housing in the city as well as funding services for agencies that provide shelter and services to help prevent recidivism into homelessness is intended to achieve positive results in shortening periods of homelessness, facilitating access to affordable housing units, and preventing returns to homelessness.

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.

The City will help low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless through working with organizations such as Rockingham Community Action/Southern New Hampshire Services (RCA/SNHS), the Portsmouth Special Needs Fund, New Hampshire Legal Assistance, and Operation Blessing in order to provide informational, financial, and legal support for individuals and families at risk of becoming homeless. The City will also continue consulting with organizations such as RCA/SNHS, Greater Seacoast Community Health, Safe Harbor, Seacoast Mental Health Center, One Sky Community Services, and Area Home Care to support those with disabilities or substance misuse issues.

The City promotes access to preventative medical care services for individuals and families earning low to moderate income through community organizations such as Greater Seacoast Community Health and encourages residents (who are not eligible for Medicaid/Medicare) to enroll for insurance under the Affordable Care Act to minimize the amount of uncompensated care provided.

The City may also promote and/or improve access to mental health care services, by exploring the possibility of adding/extending a Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) bus route to/from Seacoast Mental Health Center.

Discussion

The City will continue to provide Public Service Agency Grants for agencies providing supportive services and will support the increase of transitional and permanent supportive housing. In terms of housing and supportive service actions for non-homeless special needs persons such as the elderly and persons with HIV/AIDS, the City's Public Services Agency Grant program provides grants to agencies that deliver services to those populations. Examples include AIDS Response Seacoast for persons with HIV/AIDS; Greater Seacoast Community Health for dental services; Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels for elderly and homebound nutrition.

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

Introduction:

As the downtown area of the city continues to expand, opportunities to address the lack of affordable housing are being identified. The City will explore additional state funding through the American Rescue Plan Act as well as other opportunities as they arise. The City will also assist with coordination and community connections to funding for the development of previously underutilized and underdeveloped sites.

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

Workforce and/or affordable housing in most circumstances is only going to be acceptable and profitable for developers, by their standards, when undertaken on a large scale or as part of a larger development project. The City is working to encourage workforce housing developments in the last remaining sections of the city's undeveloped developable land (mainly in the Gateway Mixed Use Districts). Development of workforce and/or affordable housing may largely be incentivized by allowing zoning variances on setbacks and height in exchange for developers designating a certain yet-to-be-determined percentage of units as workforce and/or affordable housing. The goal of these variances would be to increase density and promote more affordable/accessible rates.

The Zoning Ordinance has recently been updated to allow for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The allowance of ADUs—while not specifically a strategy for affordable/workforce opportunity—has the potential to help ease the housing crisis by producing more housing units.

In addition to the above-mentioned considerations of new zoning strategies, the City has also hired a Housing Navigator, which is a two-year position funded by the InvestNH Housing Opportunity Planning Grants Program. The Housing Navigator is charged with exploring and identifying regulatory barriers to the production of housing in the city—including affordable and workforce housing—and will develop recommendations for addressing these barriers, which City Planning & Sustainability staff can then act on.

Discussion:

None further.

AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction:

At least 70% of all CDBG funds will be spent in PY 24 on programs and projects benefiting residents earning low and moderate incomes as well as ensuring access for people with disabilities throughout the city. Up to 30% of all CDBG funds may be spent on activities meeting the Urgent Need National Objective.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

Community Development staff and the Portsmouth CDBG Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will continue to assess the underserved needs in Portsmouth during the program year, and provide recommendations for additional CDBG and remaining CDBG-CV funds to address those needs. Top priorities include support for activities that 1) provide emergency, transitional and seasonal shelter (with services) to persons who are homeless; 2) provide shelter to families who are homeless; 3) provide direct health care (including dental care and mental health counseling) services; and 4) provide homelessness prevention services such as temporary rental assistance in order to keep people in their homes.

In preparing the City's Housing Existing Conditions Report for the 2025 Master Plan, the planning consultants met with and interviewed various persons who are involved or interested in local housing issues. Several respondents commented that the City government presents a challenging climate for permitting new development. Permitting hurdles are especially discouraging for investment in workforce housing, as higher-end and luxury residential projects can more easily absorb the premium costs associated with building in Portsmouth. The Community Development Department (CD) has also identified a lack of data and access to educational resources on fair housing laws and protections as having a negative impact on the City's ability to encourage detection, reporting, and prevention of housing discrimination by advocates, tenants, and landlords.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the City of Portsmouth Housing Navigator has been tasked with identifying regulatory barriers to the preservation and production of housing and making recommendations that Planning & Sustainability staff may act on. One phase of this work has been completed: a dialogue of resident-led study circles intended to define Portsmouth's "housing issue," identify Portsmouth's housing needs, and recommend goals and actions for housing choice in the city. This public input will inform the Housing Navigator's remaining work and outputs. The presentation, which was used for the report out to City Council on 2/22/24, can be viewed at this link: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2024-03/Places%20to%20Live_Report-Out_2024-02-22_Final_Reduced%20Size.pdf or <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/planportsmouth/housing/places-live>.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

As the downtown area of the city continues to expand, opportunities to address the lack of affordable housing are beginning to come to light through increased potential for the development of previously underutilized and underdeveloped sites. As a well-preserved historic city, Portsmouth has a vested interest in continuing to maintain the culture and heritage of the community; this is especially true with

regard to the downtown area. While Portsmouth has historically allowed housing types that provide for a diverse range of housing options, the opportunities for producing significant numbers of housing units are currently constrained by the lack of available developable land.

The City is exploring land options on either public land—such as the Sherburne School, the South Meeting House, and Community Campus—or on private land—owned by nonprofits or churches—that may be suitable and feasible for the development of affordable housing.

As noted previously in the plan, the current Zoning Board is exploring changes to the zoning ordinance that will encourage set-aside units for affordable housing. A newly approved housing development on private land has incorporated workforce housing AMI limits at 100% for a period of 50 years.

The Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA) has already embraced exploring opportunities to increase workforce and affordable housing stock as one of its primary objectives. The City is also undertaking the promotion of increased development of affordable housing as one of its priorities. As previously mentioned, the PHA's newest workforce housing project, Ruth Lewin Griffin Place, is located in the downtown area. CDBG funds may be utilized to address accessibility barriers at the site.

It should be noted that addressing the housing crisis is one of the top priorities for Portsmouth City Council at this time.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

Portsmouth is not classified as one of the state's "higher risk" communities, largely due to its aging population; therefore, lead-based paint (LBP) is not the focus of primary prevention strategies. While LBP hazards in households with children are not as significant of an issue in Portsmouth as in other communities in New Hampshire, the City actively monitors at-risk populations and still has access to the State's substantial resources to identify and address situations if and when they occur.

The City integrates the above actions into housing policies and procedures by ensuring all LBP hazards are identified and referred to the State in order to coordinate efforts statewide. The City will only utilize contractors that have been certified for LBP removal in the Housing Rehabilitation Program and has expanded the LBP protocols in municipal operations.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

The Public Service Agency Grant (PSAG) Program will continue to support working families with childcare, dental services, youth services, and other programs to help reduce the burdens on poverty-level families. As one example, the City promotes access to preventative medical care service for individuals and families earning low and moderate income through community organizations such as Greater Seacoast Community Health and encourages residents (who are not eligible for Medicaid/Medicare) to enroll for insurance under the Affordable Care Act to minimize the amount of uncompensated care provided.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

The CD Department works with various public and private community organizations to carry out community development objectives and work with or strengthen institutional structures.

Public Institutions

The City of Portsmouth Community Development Department is the primary department responsible for the implementation of this strategic plan. CDBG funds provide the funding for many of the activities proposed in this plan.

The City of Portsmouth continues to have an active and effective working relationship with the Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA), which owns and operates affordable family and senior housing units in the City. The appointing authority for the Portsmouth Housing Authority board is the Portsmouth City Council, with the PHA having separate procurement and accounting functions.

Non-Profit and Social/Community Service Organizations

The City of Portsmouth benefits from a strong network of nonprofit organizations devoted to providing services to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Services address a range of issues including health care, childcare, homelessness, elder care, substance misuse, domestic and sexual violence, and mental illness. Many of these individual agencies also participate in coalitions to enhance services, prevent duplication, develop new services, and fill gaps.

These agencies benefit from various community supports which collectively advocate for their issues, including Granite United Way Greater Seacoast Region, which is a regional organization that conducts community assessments and convenes single-issue working groups. In addition, the New Hampshire Center for Non-Profits is a statewide association dedicated to providing programs and resources that support nonprofit organizational capacity building and long-term viability.

Many other entities also exist, which ensure no gaps or duplication in services offered. Various coalitions are organized to effectively address community development challenges. These include the regional Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT), Seniors Count, and the Seacoast Regional Public Health Network.

Private Sector

The City of Portsmouth has experienced vast economic growth since the early 1990s. The economic base continues to consist of manufacturing, commercial, retail, government, and professional business.

Several of the largest employers in Portsmouth include:

US Department of State Consular Center (Passport/visa services)
Lonza Biologics (Biotechnology)
Liberty Mutual (Insurance)
HCA Portsmouth Regional Hospital (Healthcare)
City of Portsmouth (Municipal services)
Bottomline Technologies (Software)
Service Credit Union (Banking)
WIN Waste (Waste services)
Amadeus (Software)
Highliner Foods (Food Processor)
Hospital Health Care
Liberty Mutual Insurance
Lonza Biologics Biotechnology
John Hancock Financial Services
Bottomline Technologies Electronic Payments
Thermo Fischer Laboratory Equipment
Alpha Flying/Plane Sense Passenger Air Transport
LabCorp Health Care
Newmarket International Database Software-

(Source: [New Hampshire Employment Security—New Hampshire Community Profiles: Portsmouth](#))

In addition to offering an employment base, many of these businesses have a strong philanthropic commitment to the City. Local businesses grant funds to public service agencies, support the arts, and provide volunteers for projects at public service agencies. Local businesses are represented through the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce, the West End Business Association, the Downtown Business Association and the Pease Tenant Association. The City's Economic Development Commission provides a critical link to these business interests.

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

The City of Portsmouth and its residents benefit from a robust network of social services to assist those in need in Portsmouth. This is due in part to Portsmouth's role as an economic, cultural, and social hub of the region. Many larger nonprofits are located in Portsmouth but have service areas beyond the city's borders. In addition, the leading agency in Portsmouth for housing, the PHA, is heavily involved in the area's constellation of nonprofit service providers and participates extensively in regional efforts to address substance use disorder and homelessness issues. Most of the city's publicly- and privately-assisted housing developments are served by regional transportation, though access from public housing to transportation stops (e.g., sidewalks), sustainability of facilities, and bus shelters have been noted as areas for improvement.

Discussion:

None further.

Program Specific Requirements

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

Introduction:

An estimated 95%, and no less than 70%, of all CDBG and CDBG-CV funds will be spent in PY 24 on programs and projects benefiting residents earning low and moderate- incomes as well as ensuring access for people with disabilities throughout the city. Up to 30% of all CDBG and CDBG-CV funds may be spent on urgent needs in order to prepare, prevent and respond to COVID-19; those activities will be prioritized for public facility improvements and public services, and will be identified and determined during the program year to maintain flexibility for emergent needs.

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
2. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income. Overall Benefit - A consecutive period of one, two or three years may be used to determine that a minimum overall benefit of 70% of CDBG funds is used to benefit persons of low and moderate income. Specify the years covered that include this Annual Action Plan.	95.00%

As mentioned above, the amount allocated to specific urgent need activities is to be determined. No more than 30% of CDBG and no more than 30% CDBG-CV funds shall be used to fund activities under the Urgent Need National Objective.

Attachment: Citizen Participation Comments

Public Comments during Public Participation Process for PY 2024 (CFY 2025) Community Development Block Grant Program

February 8, 2024 Public Hearing on Community Development Needs in FY 2025 – Public comments received in person, as follows:

Lissa Gumprecht (Director of Development and Communications, Cross Roads House (CRH)) discussed CRH's needs as an emergency and transitional shelter. CRH offers client services, meals, pantry and shelter – including for families and individuals. Ms. Gumprecht stated that the shelter building, which was completed in 2009, was starting to show its age. She shared projects that would be ready for immediate undertaking—HVAC rooftop unit replacement, a water mixing valve replacement, and the installation of a safety and access system for CRH's congregate dorm spaces—as well as mentioned that there would be additional necessary facility improvement projects in the near future. She also shared that CRH would like to expand their existing rooftop solar array.

Mark Lentz (Facilities Director, Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA)) discussed the agency's current and upcoming needs. PHA manages numerous public housing units, some of which include playgrounds and community centers, throughout the city. They have a list of projects for facility improvements for FY 24 through FY 28. Mr. Lentz mentioned some specific projects, such as the stairwells at the Margeson Apartments that need handrails on the interior side of the stairs. Mr. Lentz said he would deliver the facility improvements project list to the Community Development (CD) staff for review by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and that he would attend the March 7 public meeting to discuss this list.

Tammy Joslyn (Executive Director, Operation Blessing (OB) and Resident Services Coordinator, Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA)) spoke as a citizen. She shared her observations concerning the lack of a bus stop on Holiday Drive for youth residents of Wamesit Place, as well as the limited ability of disabled and neurodivergent youth residents to enjoy existing playgrounds due to their design. There was a question about a potential roof improvement and/or solar array project for Operation Blessing from CD Staff. Ms. Joslyn was interested in these potential projects.

March 7, 2024 Public Meeting—Public comments received in person as follows:

Tamara Leibowitz (Executive Director, AIDS Response Seacoast (ARS)) discussed the case management services that ARS provides to persons living with HIV/AIDS. The cost of living (housing, food, utilities, transportation) has increasingly become a challenge to ARS clients. As COVID-related support through other entities has ended, ARS has responded by expanding its services to include, for example, food pantry access.

Emma Boniche (Director, Making Classroom and Community Connections (MC3)) discussed the summer program that MC3 hopes to offer, targeting youth at Gosling Meadows public housing.

MC3 offers an affordable youth enrichment program during the summer, which includes transportation, meals and snacks, clubs and field trips. Challenges discussed included the rising cost of materials and services to provide programming.

Tammy Joslyn (Executive Director, Operation Blessing (OB)) described the Warming Center activities that OB manages. The OB Warming Center offers homeless persons a place to safely spend the night in events of winter weather and extreme cold. Additionally, after a CDBG facility improvement grant for plumbing last spring, the Warming Center provides indoor toilet and sink and offers homeless guests the opportunity to shower. Ms. Joslyn observed that the Warming Center has sheltered more women as well as a few elderly couples this year, which was a change from previous years.

Sandra Beaudry (Program Director, Cross Roads House (CRH)) described the emergency shelter, transitional shelter, and housing services that CRH provides to homeless persons. Ms. Beaudry observed that CRH has sheltered more elderly folks this year compared to previous years. Challenges to CRH clients discussed include waiting lists for bottom bunks and accessibility as more disabled and elderly persons shelter at CRH; successfully navigating Medicaid and assisted living placement for disabled, sick, and elderly persons; and housing placement and availability in general.

Patte-Anne Ardizzoni (Director, Community and Strategic Initiatives, Rockingham Community Action/Southern NH Services (RCA/SNHS)) discussed the short-term rental assistance subsidies, as well as other wraparound services, that RCA/SNHS provides to low- to moderate-income and precariously-housed persons. Challenges to RCA/SNHS clients discussed include the effects of the end of federal COVID-related support and the cost of living, which has in turn significantly increased the demand and need for short-term rental assistance.

Mark Lentz (Facilities Director, Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA)) provided a list of potential capital projects, estimated costs, and the year in which PHA expects project completion in their public housing properties.

March 12, 2024 Public Meeting—Public comments received in person as follows:

Jim Avrett (Executive Director, Greater Seacoast Community Health (GSCH)) described the health services that GSCH provides, including the dental services for which the organization has requested funding. Challenges for GSCH clients include affordability of healthcare. A particular challenge for GSCH as an agency is the recruitment and retention of dental staff, which impacts their ability to provide dental services at a capacity that meets the community's needs.

Melissa Caldwell (Executive Director, Seacoast Community School (SCS)) described the childcare and related services the school provides, as well as the scholarship (tuition assistance) program for low-income families for which SCS has requested funds. Challenges for SCS families discussed included housing and transportation. Housing was also mentioned as an issue for SCS staff, as was recruitment and the early childhood education professional pipeline.

Helen Kostrzynski (Director of Operations, Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels (RNMOW)) discussed the services that RNMOW provides, including the meal delivery services to homebound elderly and disabled persons. RNMOW has experienced an increase in clients and in number of meals requested by clients in the last year. The agency hopes to add a sixth route to their Portsmouth delivery services. Challenges for RNMOW clients and the agency discussed include the cost of living and, in particular, the increased cost of food.

Ann Strachan (Director, Granite Pathways - Seacoast Pathways (SP)) and Whitney Brown (Director, Granite Pathways - Safe Harbor Recovery Center (SHRC)) discussed the services provided by their respective programs. SP offers peer support mental health recovery services and SHRC offers peer support substance use disorder recovery services. Challenges for SP as an organization discussed include the inability to be reimbursed for peer support services. Challenges for SHRC clients discussed include covering routine costs (rent, childcare, etc.) for the duration of recovery treatment.

Attachment: Notice of Public Comment Period

**LEGAL NOTICE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)
FY 2025 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET**

Notice is hereby given that a 30-day public comment period regarding the FY 2025 Annual Action Plan (AAP) and Budget will begin April 11, 2024 and end May 10, 2024.

HUD provides the City with CDBG funds to benefit low- to moderate-income residents or for other national objectives including urgent needs. The AAP describes the activities planned with CDBG funds to meet the City's housing and community development needs as described in the City's Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

The Draft FY 25 AAP will be available on the Community Development webpage (www.cityofportsmouth.com/community) or by request during the public comment period. Comments or questions should be directed to Elise Annunziata, Community Development Director, at eannunziata@cityofportsmouth.com or 603-610-7281. Written comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on May 10, 2024 and may be submitted via email or mailed to:

City of Portsmouth
Community Development Department
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

The following is a summary of the Draft FY 25 AAP CDBG allocations and is subject to change until the final AAP is submitted to HUD:

PROJECTS/PROGRAMS	TOTAL
Public Service Agency Grant Program	\$100,500
Housing Rehabilitation (HR)	\$160,744
Public Facility Improvements	\$988,195
Transportation	\$50,000
Accessibility/Remove Barriers	\$458,000
Administration (including HR Admin)	\$190,963
TOTAL BUDGET	\$1,948,402

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