

ACTION PLAN

Fiscal Year 2023-2024



**City of Decatur, Alabama
Community Development Department**

Executive Summary

2023-2024 Action Plan Narrative

The City of Decatur’s Five-Year Consolidated Plan goes into great detail outlining the needs of the community. Specifically, Tables 2A and 2B show that the proposed activities in our 2023 – 2024 Action Plan were all given a “High” Priority Need Level (2020 – 2025 Consolidated Plan, Appendix A), thus justifying our **Allocation Priorities**, activities 1-5 listed below.

The City of Decatur will allocate investments geographically within our jurisdiction during the next year (4/1/22– 3/31/23) to the following priority projects (Consolidated Plan, pg 87).

1. Program Administration	\$82,663
2. City Wide Public Services	\$61,997
3. Housing – Down Payment Assistance	\$60,000
4. CAPNA (Single Family Rehab)	\$60,000
5. Everyday Sunshine Park	<u>\$148,657</u>
Total Budgeted Amount	\$413,317

The estimated amount of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low- and moderate-income for this program year is 95% - (\$420,513). Last program year 98% of our CDBG funds were used to benefit this same population. An evaluation of our performance last year showed that we met the majority of our objectives.

The City has constructed a home in the Seville subdivision in partnership with the Decatur Community Development Partnership (CBDO) if the Decatur Community Development Partnership CBDO sells the constructed home these funds will be program income and will be reallocated back to the CBDO for another home. These funds will not be budgeted in this year’s budget because we have two constructed homes and one that is about to start that are unsold. If the home will we constructed were to sell during this program year we will reallocate only the program income back into constructing another home during this program year.

Program Administration

This activity involves the general administrative activities required by the CDBG program in maintaining accountability for the expenditure of CDBG funds by the City of Decatur. The City proposes using these funds toward the salary and benefits for three positions in the Community Development Department. Supplies, professional services, vehicle expenses, training and seminars will also be paid for out of this activity. The City is proposing budgeting \$82,663 for this activity (20% of our Grant).

City Wide Public Services

This activity consist of funds totaling \$61,997 (15%) of our Grant going to Public Service providers whose main focus is that of assisting low and moderate income. All of the Public Service Providers selected are carrying out activities that address our Community Development Needs as outlined on Table 2B in our Consolidated Plan (Appendix A). Our providers will be addressing Health Services (High), Other Public Service Needs (Medium), Youth Services (High), Other Youth Programs (High), and Senior Services (High). Desired accomplishments for these activities are located on Table 2B (2020 - 2025 Consolidated Plan,).

Housing - Down Payment Assistance (Affordable Housing) \$60,000

As outlined in our Consolidated Plan, Homeownership Assistance, in the form of Down Payment Assistance to home buyers, was one of our goals. Our goal for 2023-2024 is to provide assistance to 15 families in obtaining a home (Table 2A, 2020 - 2025 Consolidated Plan – Appendix A).

The Down Payment Assistance Activity will benefit low and moderate income residents citywide, with priority being given to persons locating in neighborhoods with 50% or less homeowner occupancy (2021– 2025 Consolidated Plan). The reason for giving priority to these neighborhoods is due to the fact that the majority of our Code Enforcement complaints come from the Northwest and Goodyear/Grant Street Target Area. These areas also have the lowest number of owner occupied housing in the City. Our strategy for addressing the goal of increasing homeownership in these areas will hopefully decrease the amount of Code Enforcement violations in the Target Area and increase the potential for residential investments in these neighborhoods. This Activity meets our Housing Priority #1 – Promote Homeownership listed in the Consolidated Plan Executive Summary.

Over the past 17 years, the City of Decatur has allocated more than \$1,361,964.00 for our Down Payment Assistance Program we have named – Decatur H.O.M.E. (Home Ownership Made Easy). During this time period we have assisted over 400 families in reaching the American Dream of homeownership throughout the City Limits. Since the City of Decatur does not receive HOME funds, we decided to use a portion of our CDBG grant annually for this worthwhile activity. We will give grants up to \$4,500 toward one-half the required down payment or all of the reasonable closing cost for qualified first-time home-buyers.

Our one-year goal for the number of homeless, non-homeless, and special needs households to be provided affordable housing is 20. We estimate the total number of minority households expected to be assisted in becoming homeowners to be 15 during the 2022-2025 Action Plan time period.

Everyday Sunshine Park \$148,657

Everyday Sunshine Park will be a park in the Southeast section of Decatur in the Goodyear Target Area. This park will benefit all residents of the area with a section of the park for children with disabilities.

Resources

The federal resources and private and non-federal public resources expected to be available to address the priority needs and specific objectives identified in the 2023 Action Plan are as follows:

2023 Community Development Block Grant	\$413,317
2022 Program Income	\$ 0
2023 Total Available Resources	\$413,317
Decatur General Fund Support (Target Area Code Enforcement Officer Salary)	\$32,994

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

As outlined in our Consolidated Plan, and in our Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) Plan, Northwest Decatur is a predominately African-American community (75%) that has been a CDBG Target Area since we became an Entitlement City. The majority of our activities will either take place in the Northwest Target Area (Area Benefit), or benefit citizens living in this Target Area. City Wide Public Services benefiting our L/M Income residents; City Wide Down Payment Assistance to first time home buyers – with priority being given to person buying homes in neighborhoods with less than 50% homeowner occupancy. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the residents living in the Northwest Target Area are low-to moderate income.

The geographic area of the City of Decatur which includes our low income and/or racial/minority concentration in which assistance will be directed during this program year is bounded by Market Street, NW, Highway 20, 2nd Ave., NW, 3rd Street, SW, and the CSX Railroad (red North/South line), also known as Railroad Street, NW. This area is shown graphically on the fifth from the last page of this document. This page is a map with the title “CDBG Target Areas”. The area described above is the large area highlighted in yellow on this map.

This year we anticipate facing the same obstacles to addressing underserved needs in this target area of rental assistance needs (rent and utility assistance) and affordable housing needs. We are proposing activities that will address both of these issues in this Action Plan. We estimate dedicating 62% of our funds to the Northwest Target Area this program year.

HOMELESS AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS ACTIVITIES

The City of Decatur, along with the United Way of Morgan County, the Morgan / Lawrence County Chapter of the American Red Cross and Crisis Services of North Alabama are members of the North Alabama Coalition on the Homeless (NACH) (see Consolidated Plan, NACH Chart). Currently, a member of the Decatur Delegation serves on the Executive Committee, and all members attend monthly meetings on a regular basis. NACH is charged with homeless prevention activities throughout North Alabama, and we are actively working toward the Elimination of Chronic Homelessness.

The City of Decatur is not proposing any emergency shelter or transitional housing activities assisting with the transition to permanent housing and independent living in this Action Plan, but will continue to support these activities through NACH. Supportive housing activities addressing the housing needs of person who are not homeless are proposed in the Action Plan

through a partnership with the Salvation Army. The City and the Decatur – Morgan County Salvation Army are preparing to apply for an Emergency Solution Grant during the 2023 Action Plan Year. We will also continue to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies such as NACH, the United Way of Morgan County, the Volunteer Center of Morgan County, and Parents and Children Together (PACT) to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs and the action steps needed to end chronic homelessness.

The City of Decatur certifies that we have established a policy for the discharge of persons from publicly funded institutions or systems of care in order to prevent such discharge from immediately resulting in homelessness for such persons.

The City of Decatur does not receive HOPWA Funds, but does work with NACH to ensure that those individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS in need of housing assistance and put in contact with agencies in North Alabama that provide these kinds of services.

OTHER ACTIONS

The City of Decatur is committed to fostering and maintaining affordable, decent housing through our Down Payment Assistance Program and by the City's continued financial support of Code Enforcement Activities in both the Target Areas and City Wide.

The City of Decatur does not propose to fund any public housing improvements, but does meet with public housing residents monthly at the District One Community Meeting. This meeting takes place at the Turner-Surles Community Resource Center which is in close proximity to several public housing developments. The Decatur Housing Authority and the City of Decatur work together on several projects and supports each other's efforts in making Decatur a better place to live for all.

Community Development Staff members visually inspect all homes that first time homebuyers select for purchase in an attempt to evaluate and reduce lead-based paint hazards in our City. Staff has been trained to be able to detect potential lead-based paint hazards, and they advise the potential homebuyers of any concerns before a contract is signed. If detected problems are not corrected by the seller, federal funds are not used toward the purchase of questionable properties.

The City of Decatur works with the Decatur Business Incubator and the Decatur/Morgan County Chamber of Commerce Work Force Development Board to find ways to encourage businesses to not only locate in our community, but to hire persons from our Target Areas in an effort to reduce the number of poverty-level families in Decatur. The Decatur Business Incubator is committed to providing space, at a reduced rate, to persons wanted to start micro-enterprise businesses with the condition that they make every attempt to employ residents from our Target Areas.

The City of Decatur continues to work with the Building Department and Planning Department, and local builders/rehabilitation specialist, to improve the quality of the housing stock in our Target Areas, and develop institutional structure between these agencies when working on housing that will be affordable for our residents. The Community Development Department's Code Enforcement Staff works very closely with Building Inspectors in making sure that

International Codes are followed using practices that insure the integrity of our housing stock while using affordable practices when practical.

The Decatur Housing Authority is not a troubled public housing agency and the City of Decatur will address the needs of public housing with our local Housing Authority.

MONITORING STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

The City of Decatur currently receives only CDBG funds direct from HUD. The Department of Community Development has the responsibility for administering these program dollars. The specific nature of that responsibility involves documenting the needs, developing plans and carrying out approved program, projects and activities in compliance with state and federal regulations. This responsibility also includes ensuring that sub-recipients of funds carry out their program according to applicable laws and regulations.

The monitoring procedures and process is designed and implemented to assure the following:

- The projects are developed and implemented according to all applicable local, state, federal laws and procedures;
- The project funded through sub-recipients follow all local, state, federal policies and regulations;
- Charges against projects are eligible cost and in accordance to applicable regulations and the grant agreement.
- Projects are managed and carried out in a timely manner;
- Programs have procedures in place to protect against fraud;
- Sub-recipients remain capable of fulfilling the scope of their agreements; and
- All other applicable laws are being adhered to.

Management of Monitoring Activities

The monitoring procedures implemented involve both internal administrative monitoring and field monitoring.

To assure that the City fulfills the goals of the Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plan, internal administrative monitoring involves review and analysis of the following:

1. Approved application
2. Grant agreements and contracts
3. Environmental and historic significance reviews
4. Drawdown request for reimbursement
5. Budget updates or changes
6. Litigation matters
7. Citizen complaints
8. Audit reports
9. Monthly project update reports
10. Annual CAPER
11. Monthly review of Goal and Objective status per activity
12. Monthly review of the timeliness of the overall grant and approved activities

Field monitoring involves the City conducting:

- Periodic on-site monitoring of project and program activities
- Neighborhood site reconnaissance, specifically target neighborhoods
- Visits for all sub-recipients (at least once during the program and once after completion of the sub-recipient program)

The internal and external management and monitoring activities will cover the following:

Review and Monitoring Activities

- Applicant meeting threshold criteria
- Grant or regulatory agreement, to include compliance requirements
- Environmental review (including flood insurance, historic preservation)
- Local record keeping requirements
- Review of drawdown of funds
- Real property acquisition
- Labor standards (wage decisions/payroll/reviews/employee interviews)
- Housing rehabilitation (program guidelines, housing quality standards, write up/cost estimates, inspections)
- Review of operations/maintenance, essential services and homeless prevention services cost.
- New Housing Construction
- Fair Housing/EEO
- Close out report (review)
- Financial and compliance audits

2023-2024 CDBG Public Service Sub-recipients

The agencies that are provided funds as sub-recipients are vital to the delivery of services to our target resident populations. The procedures that guide the City’s sub-recipient process are based on and consistent with the standards and procedures provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development document, “Managing CDBG :A Guidebook for Grantees on Sub recipient Oversight”, March 2015. The management and monitoring process includes:

a) Selection of Sub-recipients

Use established Pre-Award Evaluation Criteria to help:

- decide which of several prospective sub-recipients to select for a particular activity;
- identify early training and technical assistance that is needed to support potential sub-recipients lacking previous CDBG experience;

b) Hold Pre-Award Meeting

- Outline and review with sub-recipient special conditions in the written Sub-recipient Agreement that make initial or continued funding contingent on the agency's correcting particular deficiencies by a mutually agreed-on date; and identify special monitoring procedures, such as more frequent on-site visits or special audits, to assure the sub-recipient organization is achieving its goals.
- A copy of the standards, procedures and requirements of the agreement will be provided to sub-recipients with notice given that the sub-recipients will be monitored for based on adhering to and maintaining compliance with these.

c) Conducting On-Site Visits, Performance Evaluations and Follow-up steps

- The Director of the Department of Community Development will meet with the director and appropriate staff of each sub-recipient agency to discuss performance measures, activities and finances associated with the agreement
- The information gathered during the site visit will be used to complete and evaluate the extent to which the sub-recipient is fulfilling the agreement. The agency will be provided with a copy of the evaluation and a follow-up meeting held if necessary

d) Financial Accountability

- The financial records of each sub-recipient will be reviewed by the Department of Community Development at established times.
- Each sub-recipient will be given written notification of any irregularities found and given the opportunity to correct any problems.
- The lack of correction of irregularities could be cause for termination of funds. If this decision is arrived at by the Department of Community Development, immediate notification will be given to the agency.

e) Post Award Compliance Procedure

- Each sub-recipient agency will be monitored to determine if the funds provided to the organization are expended appropriately.
- Monitoring will continuous and ongoing to determine the appropriateness of expenditure of CDBG funds awarded to the agency

P.A.C.T. – (Parents and Children Together) works to prevent child abuse and neglect by providing family strengthening programs to Decatur residents by providing transportation assistance to families enrolled in their Welfare to Work Program.

Funding Amount: \$2,000.00

Program

The Caring Car Program

This program will assist in repairing 10 donated cars to low income Decatur residents enrolled in their Welfare to Work Program for transportation to and from work.

Decatur Department of Youth Services - provides youth in the City of Decatur with safe after school and summer enrichment activities.

Funding Amount: \$30,697

Program

Decatur Youth Services Programs

These programs will assist approximately 350 youth through activities including Educational Enrichment Programs such as tutoring, computer lab assistance, performing arts and educational field trips, vocational training, workforce development and summer recreational activities. The workforce development places 120 teens in jobs thru the summer preparing them for the work place. 102 of these youth are low income assisting with our section 3 plan.

Decatur Youth Enrichment - provides educational, cultural and psychological enrichment for Decatur youth and senior citizens.

Funding Amount: \$1,800

Program

Decatur Youth Enrichment Programs

These programs will assist approximately 100 youth through activities including a read to me program for Spanish Speaking youth and an educational field trip.

Mental Health Association of Morgan County – provides services for mentally ill residents in the City of Decatur.

Funding Amount: \$4,500.00

Program

Alzheimer’s Patients and Family Project Care

This program will provide incontinence products, nutritional supplements, and respite care to 15 low income families caring for Alzheimer family members.

Volunteer Center of Morgan County – meets critical community needs by mobilizing volunteers and providing assistance to families in need.

Funding Amount: \$5,000

Program

Senior Citizen Emergency Relief Program

Construction of Wheel Chair Ramps for the Disabled

The Senior Citizen Emergency Relief Program will provide elderly disabled individuals with 5,000 BTU air conditioning window units and wheelchair ramps if deemed necessary by their primary care physician. The Wheel Chair Ramp Construction Program identifies disabled residents in need of this amenity and pays for the material and labor, in some cases, for these structures.

Decatur Police Department A.C.E.S. Program - provides safe summer alternatives for Decatur youth.

Funding Amount: \$3,000.00

Program

ACES (Alternative Choices)

This program will provide 350 at risk youth with summer activities over a 5 week period.

Morgan County Commission on the Aging

Funding Amount: \$15,000.00

Program

Provide funding for the operation and maintenance of the Turner-Surles Community Resource Center.

Citizen Participation

All public comments received at Public Hearings on. All of the Public meetings were advertised in the Decatur Daily, per our Citizen Participation Plan, and held on the Council Chambers of

City Hall. The minutes from these meetings are also included at the end of the Action Plan – Citizen Participation. The 2023-2024 Action Plan was available for public review and comment from, June 6th 2022 - July 8th 2022 at the Decatur Housing Authority, and the Community Development Department Office. This information was advertised in the Decatur Daily on June 5th 2022 the comments our department received are included at the end of this document, in Appendix A, and are addressed in our proposed activities –we will make every effort to make the time to accomplish all of the things we are proposing in this Action Plan. We accepted all of the comments and views recorded at our public meetings. This plan was adopted and approved by the City Council of the City of Decatur on June 20th 2022.