

City of Kingston, NY

Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Strategy and Plan

Five Year Plan / Annual Plan
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2023



Steven T. Noble, Mayor

**Prepared by:
Office of Economic & Community Development
Brenna L. Robinson, Director**

Executive Summary

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

1. Introduction

This Five-Year Consolidated Plan ("Con Plan") provides a basis and strategy for the use of federal funds granted to the City of Kingston by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).

The purpose of developing a Con Plan involves three primary goals which are defined by HUD: to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities principally for low and moderate income persons. The primary means to this end is to extend and strengthen partnerships among all levels of government and the private sector, including for-profit and non-profit organizations, in the production and operation of affordable housing.

This Con Plan covers the period beginning July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2023, including five CDBG program years. Programs and activities described in this Plan are intended to primarily benefit low and moderate income residents within the boundaries of the City of Kingston, neighborhoods with high concentrations of low and moderate income residents, families, racial minorities, and individuals with special needs. The City will also use this Con Plan to coordinate with other federal and state grant and loan programs and County of Ulster initiatives.

A completed draft of this Plan was made available for public review, and the final public meeting was held on April 23, 2019. The final draft Con Plan is available on the City's website www.kingston-ny.gov and in print form at the Community Development Office.

2. Summary of the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan Needs Assessment Overview

The Priority Needs outlined in this plan include: Decent Housing, Neighborhood Stabilization, Expanding Economic Opportunity, and addressing Homeless Needs in the Community.

The following objectives are contained in the elements of each of the coordinated planning documents and were used in developing the priorities of the 2019-2023 Con Plan:

- Provide additional supply of safe, sanitary housing at price and rent levels appropriate to the varied financial capabilities of City of Kingston residents, and provide for diversity in type, density and location of housing with special emphasis on maintaining and improving neighborhood stability.

- Facilitate the retention of existing housing for low and moderate income households throughout the community.
- Facilitate the development of multi-family housing for various income levels and populations especially low-and moderate income and persons with disabilities and special needs.
- Develop eviction prevention programs within the City of Kingston.
- Develop and maintain adequate public services, and facilities to preserve, protect and enhance the overall quality of life in the City of Kingston.
- Foster a diverse economy that will minimize the impacts of cyclical economic downturns on the City and its residents.
- Create living wage jobs in the City.
- Promote and support job training and education programs designed to offer enhanced access to employment by low and moderate income or unskilled persons.
- Foster a positive business climate in Kingston and promote the City as a desirable place to live, work and visit.

Funding determinations will be allocated for programs in the following areas:

1. Affordable Housing Assistance;
2. Housing Rehabilitation and Accessibility Improvements to Housing Units;
3. Reduction of Slum/Blight conditions in targeted neighborhoods;
3. Youth and Community Public Service Programs;
4. Business Facade and Sidewalk Improvements;
5. Economic Development Programs;
6. Public Facilities and Infrastructure;
7. Community Policing and Public Safety Initiatives;
8. Parks and Recreation Improvements;
9. Lead Hazard Prevention and Improvements

The objectives and desired outcomes outlined in this document are based on assumptions about future funding levels for federal programs. In all cases, the City used the presumption of level funding of the CDBG program. Because these programs are subject to annual Congressional appropriations as well as potential changes in funding distribution formulas or the number of communities eligible to receive entitlement grants, the accomplishment projections and planned activities are subject to change with availability of funding.

As we address Kingston's priority community development needs, the City strives to meet the Community Development Block Grant Program's statutory goals and regulatory requirements. These include increasing the number of housing units, providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for extremely low, low and moderate income City residents.

3. Evaluation of past performance

Each year, the City of Kingston prepares a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) which identified several areas that call for improvements to oversight over regulatory compliance, the need to better assess the capacity of subrecipients to undertake CDBG-sponsored projects, and meeting projected housing goals established by the Con Plan. Greater efforts are and will continue to be made to properly administer the CDBG program by maintaining the timeliness of program expenditures, appropriately planning for project completion, sufficiently monitoring subrecipients' use of CDBG funds and effectively targeting program dollars where they are most needed.

During the past five years of the 2014-2018 Consolidated Plan, the City managed approximately \$3,486,025 in funds that were utilized to develop and improve affordable housing, address vital infrastructure needs, provide approximately 15% of each annual allocation for public service programs targeted to youth and at-risk individuals, and supported economic development programs working with our partner agencies.

4. Summary of citizen participation process and consultation process

This Plan is the product of public outreach, community meetings, public hearings, and consultations with housing, community and economic development providers providing housing and delivering services in the City of Kingston.

Consultations began in the fall of 2018 with a public meeting being held in October for the City's upcoming 2019 CDBG program. Direct planning for the consolidated plan included phone and in person meetings, and surveys with service providers, business and civic leaders, and other governmental agencies charged with addressing the needs of low and moderate income families and individuals by programs and service, employment opportunities, and housing needs. In particular, the leadership of

the Ulster County Continuum of Care and RUPCO Inc. were essential to providing statistical data to back up discussions with many agencies and service providers.

5. Summary of public comments

The Citizen Participation Plan attached to this document outlines the many organizations and individuals that were consulted through public surveys, stakeholder interviews, community information tabling, and public meetings. Some of the comments were focused on support for specific programs or activities provided by organizations rather than general feedback. Service providers advocated for more affordable and accessible housing, funding for public service programs and infrastructure improvements. The Kingston Housing Authority provided additional and corrected information regarding its entire tenant base.

Kingston residents submitted comments or expressed concern during various public engagement efforts, highlighting the need for better tenant-landlord relationships and more affordable housing options. Two additional themes of comments were improved communications and coordination between organizations and the City of Kingston and the need for investment in Midtown Kingston which is addressed in the Midtown Revitalization Strategy Area. All written comments received have been compiled and are attached to this Consolidated Plan. Though not responded to directly, relevant, accurate and appropriate comments and suggestions were incorporated into this document.

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

During the planning process all comments were accepted.

7. Summary

The 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan is a working document that expresses the needs and priorities of the residents and leadership of the City of Kingston. This "snapshot" is intended to be comprehensive and shall serve as a roadmap for activities to be strategically undertaken to address the needs of low and moderate income families and neighborhoods. The plan however cannot forecast the availability of funding to undertake each project and activity in an environment of precarious budgets, wellbeings of partner agencies that will be responsible for undertaking many of the programs identified in this document, and the changing nature of public priorities and needs over time.

The key activities of the Consolidated Plan, informed by the data and analysis contained herein, includes the retention and creation of decent housing, neighborhood stabilization and fostering a suitable living

environment, expanding economic opportunities, and addressing the needs of the homeless, at-risk, and special needs populations.