



5-Year Strategic Plan

This document includes Narrative Responses to specific questions that grantees of the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership, Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS and Emergency Shelter Grants Programs must respond to in order to be compliant with the Consolidated Planning Regulations.

GENERAL

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is required. Include the objectives and outcomes identified in the plan and an evaluation of past performance.

5-Year Strategic Plan Executive Summary:

Over the next five years, the City of Sandusky intends to make a significant impact with the funds received by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Community Development Block Grant program. The City realizes the current economic hardship that its residents are struggling with from high unemployment rates, foreclosures to decreasing property values and elevated levels of homelessness. Through input and consultation from the Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee, public hearings, consolidated planning meetings, group discussions, statistical data presentations, a mission statement was developed, agreed upon and became the foundation and direction for the Consolidated Plan. The City, as a whole, intends to strive to prevent and reduce homelessness, improve housing conditions for the aging and disability community, and initiate community and economic development activities for low- and moderate-income individuals.

Note: As with any grant program the funding is not endless and there are obstacles, so the projects selected were ranked as the highest priority and greatest need in the community by the Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee so that a significant impact to sustain and stimulate the community could be executed.

The number one housing goal over the next five years will be to increase homeownership in Sandusky. The City of Sandusky has approximately a 70 percent rental rate and a 30 percent owner-occupied rate which for a healthy community, those numbers should be reversed. In order for people to want to buy homes in the community, housing standards need to be enforced to promote pride, cleanliness and sanitary conditions. Code enforcement capacity will increase to enforce those standards. Many homeowners are on the verge of losing their homes, so emphasis needs to be on programs that stabilize the community and prevent further decline. An Emergency Housing Payments & Utility Assistance Program will be implemented to enable homeowners or tenants to remain in their home instead of losing it through foreclosure or eviction due to a crisis beyond their control.

In addition, the City will offer a down payment assistance program, where eligible individuals would receive funds to purchase a home. A homebuyer counseling program will be implemented so that prospective buyers understand the responsibilities of homeownership prior to making one of the largest financial

investments of their lives. The high cost of utility bills is an economic hardship for most residents thus with the start of an energy efficiency/weatherization program more people will be able to afford to pay and make less of an impact upon the environment.

The number one community development priority will be to create a community resource center by rehabilitating an existing building in Sandusky. The community center would provide a location for increased program activities and services for youth and adults. In addition, Lions and Huron Parks will be priorities. The City will improve and expand upon their potential to be premier parks for all residents, regardless of age or disability to enjoy. The City's plan is to link the partial sections of the Sandusky Bay Pathway into one continuous path over the next five years. Streets are crumbling and have been identified as a long-term project for repairs and resurfacing throughout the duration of the grant. Although some sidewalks and sewage systems, have been repaired and modified, there is still a need in targeted areas. Energy efficient updates are planned for the Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio facility, so that it can pay lower utility bills and serve more people in need. Funds will be used to clean-up the Sandusky Cabinets site so that it can be eventually used for new development.

In partnership with the Erie County Health Department, a wellness prevention program will be developed focusing on obesity, diabetes and other preventative health issues. A smoke alarm installation program will be supported over the next five years, to address safety issues in the homes of low-and moderate income seniors and residents with disabilities. The City intends to increase its capacity of providing affordable, public transportation to low-and moderate-income individuals by offering free and reduced bus fare. In the past year, more than 8,000 arrests in the City of Sandusky occurred; hence, funding of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections Citizen's Circle would create partnerships that promote positive interaction and accountability for offenders upon release and reduce the recidivism rate.

The City of Sandusky needs to stimulate the creation of jobs for its residents. The economic development component of the grant focuses on job training and direct financial assistance to for-profits to expand or rehabilitate their businesses with low-cost deferred loans. Micro-enterprise assistance is available for low-moderate income individuals desiring to start a business but cannot obtain traditional bank financing. There will also be a Downtown Building Improvement Program which offers financial assistance to property owners or tenants seeking to renovate or restore their commercial building facades and/or to correct code violations.

It is imperative that the City, through the Community Development Block Grant, makes a concentrated, continuous effort in the areas of housing, homelessness, community, and economic development. The overall goal of the Plan is to prevent further economic hardship for its low-and moderate residents by stabilizing the community, preventing further decline and stimulating the economy. With long-term, consist programming the City expects to make an impact in Sandusky.

Evaluation of Past Performance. The City of Sandusky will complete its first five years of the Community Development Block Grant on June 30, 2009. The focus for housing has been to improve existing housing stock, reduce the number of substandard units through home rehabilitation programs, provide incentives to property owners and developers, implement stronger code enforcement, demolish

blighted structures and reduce lead paint hazards. By focusing on those factors, the City expected to see an increase in homeownership rates; however, the results have been less than favorable due to the sub-prime mortgages which spurred an incredible high number of foreclosures in the City. The City also focused on preventing homelessness in Sandusky by working with the local homeless shelter, implementing an Emergency Home Repair Program and an Emergency Housing and Utility Assistance Program. Community development focused on the development of the Sandusky Bay Pathway along with various improvements to Dorn Park Baseball Fields, Wightman-Weiber and Lions Park. Streets and sidewalks were repaired in various target areas such as Shoreline Drive, Monroe Street and Tiffin Avenue. The City set aside economic development funds for low-cost and deferred loan programs to produce incentives for for-profit businesses and developers.

Administration Note: At the beginning of FY 2007, the City's CDBG Program was administered by the City's Division of Housing and Community Development. However, in late September of 2007, City supervisory staff received a complaint from a homeowner regarding the City's owner-occupied rehabilitation program. As a result of this complaint, all housing rehabilitation program files were reviewed and multiple issues were found. An investigation by HUD Inspector General's Office was undertaken and it is still on-going as of April 2009. The Division of Housing and Community Development was temporarily shut down in November of 2007 and the City made appropriate staffing changes. A consultant was hired in June 2008 to assist the City in getting its housing programs back up and running and a new Fair Housing Intake Coordinator was designated in the Division of Code Compliance. The City also retained another consultant to train and assist City staff with HUD's IDIS system to ensure that financial and activity information was correct and that figures matched the records in the Finance Department. In August 2008, the Development Department hired a new grants administrator to update and implement corrective management processes and procedures which is still on-going. The City expects to complete a successful final year and move forward in a consistent, deliberate manner over the next five years.

Strategic Plan

Due every three, four, or five years (length of period is at the grantee's discretion) no less than 45 days prior to the start of the grantee's program year start date. HUD does not accept plans between August 15 and November 15.

Plan Time Period: July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2014

Mission: We, the Citizens of Sandusky, strive to prevent and reduce homelessness, improve housing conditions for the aging and disability community, and initiate community and economic development activities for low- and moderate-income individuals.

Vision: We, the Citizens of Sandusky, over the next five years, will reduce blight in targeted neighborhoods through infrastructure improvements. We will help our fellow neighbors by offering programs that will sustain them in a crisis. We will continue to assist in economic development projects that will stimulate community growth and create jobs. We will offer housing services for low- and moderate income individuals. The results of our efforts will lead to increased community pride and personal investment for all residents.

General Questions

1. Describe the geographic areas of the jurisdiction (including areas of low income families and/or racial/minority concentration) in which assistance will be directed.
2. Describe the basis for allocating investments geographically within the jurisdiction (or within the EMSA for HOPWA) (91.215(a)(1)) and the basis for assigning the priority (including the relative priority, where required) given to each category of priority needs (91.215(a)(2)). Where appropriate, the jurisdiction should estimate the percentage of funds the jurisdiction plans to dedicate to target areas.
3. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs (91.215(a)(3)).

5-Year Strategic Plan General Questions response:

The City of Sandusky is roughly bounded by State Route 2 to the west, by Griffing Airport to the east, by Perkins Avenue to the south and by Sandusky Bay to the north. The area includes the following Census Tracts: 0407.00, 0408.00, 0409.00, 0410.00, 0411.00, 0412.00, 0413.00. Based on the block group data from the Census Tracts, the entire City is over 51 percent low- and moderate-income. There are only a few areas which are not over 51 percent.

An ambitious, but critical component of the Consolidated Plan, is to maintain and enhance the general conditions of Sandusky's neighborhoods, so that population and property values will stabilize. The City has chosen two (2) target areas within which to concentrate its efforts under the CDBG program based on a variety of factors, including the percentage of low- and moderate-income persons living in each area. These target areas are described below. (They also correspond to the target areas for the City's Neighborhood Stabilization Program and the Conestoga Program pilot project as well).

Southside Neighborhood Target Area

The Southside Neighborhood is bounded by Hayes Avenue (State Route #4) on the east, Perkins Avenue on the south, Mills Street on the west and the mainline railroad tracks that divide the City on the north.

The rationale-reason for selecting this target area is that it is one of Sandusky's most needy neighborhoods and has a very high percentage of low- and moderate-income persons, it has a high number of vacant and tax delinquent properties, it is also a target area for the City's NSP program and City infrastructure improvements will be made in this neighborhood in the near future, slum and blight survey data already existed for this neighborhood, it is the home of the City's number one employer, Firelands Regional Medical Center, and the City is also investing heavily in the streets and underpasses in the neighborhood using federal surface transportation dollars.

Kilbourne Plat Target Area

The Kilbourne Plat Area is bounded by Meigs Street to the east, Monroe Street to the south, Shelby Street to the west and Sandusky Bay to the north.

The rationale for selecting this area is similar to the Southside Neighborhood. It contains a very high percentage (61.4%-84.9%) of low- and moderate-income persons, a high number of persons also living below the poverty level, a high number of foreclosures and sub-prime loans, a high number of vacant and blighted structures, and it is also a target area for the City's NSP Program (comprehensive slum and blight data also exist for this area). This area also surrounds the City's downtown and its central waterfront and is a key area for the City's revitalization and image. It also contains almost all of the City's historic properties which are on the National Register of Historic Places and is the original platted area when Sandusky was first settled in 1818.

Over the next five years, the City estimates that at least 25 percent or more of its CDBG funds will be used to eliminate slum and blight in these target areas.

Managing the Process (91.200 (b))

1. Lead Agency. Identify the lead agency or entity for overseeing the development of the plan and the major public and private agencies responsible for administering programs covered by the consolidated plan.
2. Identify the significant aspects of the process by which the plan was developed, and the agencies, groups, organizations, and others who participated in the process.
3. Describe the jurisdiction's consultations with housing, social service agencies, and other entities, including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and homeless persons.

*Note: HOPWA grantees must consult broadly to develop a metropolitan-wide strategy and other jurisdictions must assist in the preparation of the HOPWA submission.

5-Year Strategic Plan Managing the Process response:

The City of Sandusky, specifically the Department of Development, will be the responsible entity for implementing the plan. Partners that the City foresees as strong candidates to administer programs within the Consolidated Plan include Volunteers of America – Northwest Ohio, Erie-Huron Counties Community Action Agency, WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc., Center for Cultural Awareness, Erie County Health Department, Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity. The most significant group involved in the development process of the Consolidated Plan was the Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). Each member was individually invited to attend three established meetings. CPAC was comprised of 36 organizations representing residents, non-profit associations, social service agencies, businesses, and local and county officials. Below is the list of the following organizations and residents involved:

Erie County Regional Planning
Erie Metro Housing Authority
Erie Huron Counties Community Action
Commission, Inc.
City Commissioners
United Way 211
Main Street Association
Volunteers of America (Homeless Shelter Agency)
Sandusky/Erie County Foundation
Mental Health and Recovery Board of Erie & Ottawa
Counties
Firelands Habitat for Humanity
Erie County Job and Family Services
Erie County Metro Parks
Sandusky Planning Commission
Dan Dix - Resident
Susan Sartor - Resident

Jennifer Lorentz - Resident
Erik's Clothing for Men
Citizens Bank
Erie County Health Department
ARC of Erie County
Sandusky Bay Area Goodwill Industries, Inc.
Serving Our Seniors
City of Sandusky - Fair Housing Representative
City of Sandusky – City Manager
City of Sandusky - Recreation
City of Sandusky - Parks
City of Sandusky - Transit
City of Sandusky - Police
City of Sandusky – Development
City of Sandusky - Fire
City of Sandusky - Grants Administrator
City of Sandusky - Economic Development
City of Sandusky - Engineering
Erie County Board of MRDD
Firelands Regional Medical Center
Volunteer Center of Erie County
Sandusky Ministerial Association
Center for Cultural Awareness
Erie County Health Department

Input was gathered through statistical research data, surveys, group discussions, presentations and group breakout and report out sessions. The following is a list of statistical data sources and reports referenced to develop the Consolidated Plan: 2000 U.S. Census Data, 2005-2007 American Fact Finder Estimates, City of Sandusky Comprehensive Plan (2005 and 2008-in progress), Erie-Huron Counties Community Action Agency 2008 Annual Report, Policy Matters Ohio – Sheriff Sales in Ohio 2008, Serving Our Seniors 2008 Needs Assessment Report, City of Sandusky Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan (2007) and U.S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of Economic Analysis.

CPAC members were consulted to obtain information in order to complete the strategic components of the housing, homeless, community and economic development narratives. The City's grants administrator sought independent, specific advice and information from CPAC members regarding children, elderly persons, people with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and the homeless population. The draft of the Consolidated Plan was shared with CPAC members for final review and comment prior to the public notice release.

Citizen Participation (91.200 (b))

1. Provide a summary of the citizen participation process.
2. Provide a summary of citizen comments or views on the plan.

3. Provide a summary of efforts made to broaden public participation in the development of the consolidated plan, including outreach to minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.
4. Provide a written explanation of comments not accepted and the reasons why these comments were not accepted.

*Please note that Citizen Comments and Responses may be included as additional files within the CPMP Tool.

5- Year Strategic Plan Citizen Participation response:

Note: *Citizen Comments and Responses to the Consolidated Plan will be included as additional files within the CPMP Tool.*

As part of the Consolidated Plan planning process, the City of Sandusky must prepare and implement a Citizen Participation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that citizens, especially extremely low, very low, low and moderate income citizens, have ample opportunity to engage in developing and overseeing the implementation of the Consolidated Plan. The essential elements of the plan include the following:

- Participation:
The Plan is designed to encourage and facilitate citizen participation, especially by low, very low, and extremely low income households and those with mobility, visual, and hearing impairments. Citizens will be involved in all Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) meetings, focus groups and/or surveys.
- Access to Meetings:
Citizens will be given timely notice of upcoming meetings and information to review opportunities. Notices will be posted in such a manner to ensure widespread distribution. Citizens will be involved in all public hearings and CPAC meetings, including focus groups.
- Access to Information:
Citizens will be given ample opportunity to receive relevant information, review documents, and submit their comments for consideration. Citizens will be allowed access to information used to develop the Consolidated Plan.
- Technical Assistance:
At every public hearing or CPAC meeting, technical assistance will be provided to any low- and moderate income resident who requests assistance. Upon request, the Citizen's Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report will be made available in an accessible format for persons with disabilities. If notified in advance, the City will provide an interpreter, if there are a significant number of non-English speaking residents expected to attend the meetings and/or public hearings. Requests for technical assistance must be made in-writing and submitted to the following address: City of Sandusky, Department of Development – CDBG, 222 Meigs Street, Sandusky, Ohio 44870.
- Public Hearings:
At least two public hearings will be held at convenient times and locations for the people who might benefit from programs and funds resulting from the Consolidated Plan. These meetings are meant to

obtain views from citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties in response to proposals and comments throughout the Consolidated Plan planning process. Meeting locations will be accessible and it will be publicized in the Sandusky Register, at the Sandusky Library, City of Sandusky web site and City Hall bulletin board.

Citizen Participation

As part of encouraging citizen participation, the City of Sandusky will convene two (2) public hearings at locations which are conveniently located and accessible to all citizens. The first public hearing will discuss results of the past five years of CDBG and citizen participation as part of the upcoming five-year Consolidated Plan. **A second notice of public hearing will be posted at least 15 days prior to the actual public hearing** in the local newspaper, on the City of Sandusky's web site and at the Sandusky Public Library. The public notice will include the Executive Summary for the Consolidated Plan and state the locations of availability to review the entire formalized draft of the Consolidated Plan. The **date** of the second public hearing must be held at least 15 days before final submission to HUD to discuss the plan's contents and to allow for public comment.

The Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC)

The City of Sandusky has established the Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) to oversee the development and review progress on the implementation of the Consolidated Plan. CPAC is composed of a broad base of community representatives, from both the public and private sectors. Groups and organizations represented include local and county governments, social service agencies, private businesses, community organizations, churches, and residents. A complete list of the CPAC participants will be included in the Consolidated Plan submission.

CPAC will meet at least three (3) times in locations which are conveniently located and accessible to all residents. A focus group session will be held for CPAC members in order to ensure that each member participating has an opportunity for significant input into the Consolidated Plan. CPAC will meet to review, revise, and approve sections of the plan. The anticipated phases of the Plan that will be reviewed and commented on is as follows: 1) Needs/Market Profile, 2) Priorities and Strategies for community, economic, and housing initiatives, and (3) a one-year action plan. Finally, the CPAC will meet to approve the completed Consolidated Plan prior to submission to the Sandusky City Commission and HUD.

The CPAC participants will identify their perceptions of local homeless, housing and community development issues, needs, barriers, goals and possible solutions. The outcomes from the CPAC meetings will be incorporated into the Consolidated Plan strategy which will discuss the needs, priorities, goals, and solutions for homeless, housing and community development issues for Sandusky. A draft of the report will be distributed to CPAC participants and appropriate city officials 30 days prior to HUD submission. It will also be made available on the City's web site www.ci.sandusky.oh.us and individual copies will be available at the City of Sandusky Municipal Building, Department of Development, 222 Meigs Street, Ohio, 44870.

Information to Be Provided

It is anticipated that the City of Sandusky will receive approximately \$800,000 in HUD formula funds for housing, homeless assistance, and community development purposes. The Consolidated Plan will identify the types of activities to be undertaken, and specify the activities and the amount of funds which are targeted to benefit very low and low income households.

The Plan will identify needs/market conditions assessment, including housing needs, public housing needs, homeless needs, lead based paint concerns, fair housing needs, barriers to affordable housing, and community and economic development needs.

Based on the results of the needs/market conditions assessment, a homeless, housing and community development Strategic Plan component will be developed. The strategic plan component will include the following elements:

Homeless, Housing and Community Development Resources:

A comprehensive list of all public and private resources expected to be allocated under the Consolidated Plan.

Homeless, Housing and Community Development Objectives and Projects:

All programs and activities to be undertaken during the Consolidated Plan period, include quantitative outcomes and target dates for completion. An Anti-Poverty Strategy addressing how the Consolidated Plan programs and other programs will reduce the number of individuals living below the poverty line will be included.

Coordination:

Consolidated Plan programs which will be coordinated with other programs to maximize benefit will be discussed in this section.

After the Five-Year Homeless, Housing and Community Development Strategic Plan component is completed, a One-Year Action Plan will be developed. The Action Plan will include the following elements:

- How the Homeless, Housing and Community Development resources identified in the Strategic Plan component will be matched with specific activities
- Dollar amounts requested for each activity
- A description and location of each activity
- The entity responsible for implementation of each activity
- Timeframe for each activity
- A description of other state and federal regulations applying to each activity
- Establishment of administrative structure to carry out the One-Year Action Plan

In all cases, the Consolidated Plan will seek to minimize the displacement of residents from their homes or places of business.

Access to Public Records

Throughout the planning process, the public shall be allowed access to data, information, and records used to develop the Consolidated Plan. The City of Sandusky will make available a copy of the formalized draft Consolidated Plan **at least 30 days prior to HUD submission and allow for a 15-day comment period** at the City of Sandusky Municipal Building, Department of Development, 222 Meigs Street and at the Sandusky Public Library, 114 West Adams Street, Sandusky, Ohio.

The City of Sandusky will prepare an Executive Summary to be published in the *Sandusky Register* and on the City's web site so that citizens will have an opportunity to comment on the Plan's contents. The Executive Summary will contain the purpose of the plan and content information. The procedures for voicing comments, concerns and/or requiring technical assistance regarding the Consolidated Plan will be published with the Executive Summary.

Objections to the Consolidated Plan

Citizens may object to the City's application for federal funding under the Community Development Block Grant program. Copies of the Plan will be available at the following locations:

- Sandusky Public Library
- City Hall – Development Office
- City Web Site: www.ci.sandusky.oh.us

Objections to the Consolidated Plan will be considered on the following grounds:

- (1) Stated needs and objectives are inconsistent with available and reliable data;
- (2) Stated projects are inappropriate for meeting needs and approved objectives; and/or
- (3) Application does not comply with regulations for the Community Development Block Grant program.

Such objections must include a description of the requirements not met and relevant data to support such a claim.

All comments and concerns must be addressed in-writing and submitted to the following address within thirty (30) days of the publication which summarizes the City's Consolidated Plan to: City of Sandusky, Department of Development – CDBG, 222 Meigs Street, Sandusky, Ohio 44870.

The City will answer with a formal response to each written comment and concern regarding the Plan within fifteen (15) working days. All formally submitted comments and concerns will be reviewed and addressed by the City through the CPAC. Such comments and concerns will be considered by the CPAC and shall be addressed by revising the Plan as recommended by the CPAC. It is the intent of the City of Sandusky to avoid such issues by providing extensive, ongoing, and relevant citizen input as the Plan evolves. The public will have the opportunity to attend all CPAC meetings and public hearings. It is anticipated that citizen concerns regarding the Plan's contents will be resolved prior to City Commission and HUD approval.

Amendments

Amendments to the Plan consist of substantial changes. For the purpose of the Consolidated Plan, a “substantial change” will constitute a cumulative change equal to or in excess of 30% of the City's CDBG program year allocation. Changes in program priority not amounting to more than 30% of a program funding year will not be considered a substantial change to the Consolidated Plan; no formal amendment to the Consolidated Plan requiring public review and comment will be warranted.

Any amendment shall be preceded by a public comment period of thirty (30) days and a public hearing convened at a location convenient and accessible to citizens prior to being implemented.

Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reporting

Annual reviews of the Consolidated Plan known as the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) will involve the review of the Plan by the citizens, CPAC and Sandusky City Commission through a Public Hearing. The annual CAPER will provide for a fifteen (15) day comment period before the report is submitted to HUD. The system of comments, concerns, amendments as previously described will apply to all Plan updates.

Institutional Structure (91.215 (i))

1. Explain the institutional structure through which the jurisdiction will carry out its consolidated plan, including private industry, non-profit organizations, and public institutions.
2. Assess the strengths and gaps in the delivery system.
3. Assess the strengths and gaps in the delivery system for public housing, including a description of the organizational relationship between the jurisdiction and the public housing agency, including the appointing authority for the commissioners or board of housing agency, relationship regarding hiring, contracting and procurement; provision of services funded by the jurisdiction; review by the jurisdiction of proposed capital improvements as well as proposed development, demolition or disposition of public housing developments.

5-Year Strategic Plan Institutional Structure response:

The City of Sandusky plans to collaborate with accredited businesses, certified non-profit organizations and public institutions in order to implement CDBG programs and services. A competitive bidding process will be used, when applicable, to select the appropriate organization to achieve project or program goals. Request for Proposals will require the applying agency to collaborate with other organizations to implement a program.

The strength of the delivery system is based upon the ample amount of resources in the community and locally within the County to perform the majority of tasks to be undertaken by CDBG. The City has taken a strong initiative to build relationships and coalitions that support community development projects such as the Weed and Seed Committee which takes a proactive approach to crime, the development of a Citizens Circle to assist ex-offenders enter the community, a Sandusky Neighborhood Association to develop community gardens and a grassroots committee comprised of non-profits to select a community resource

center for Sandusky. A gap in the delivery system is the inability to offer county-wide public transportation services and weak partnerships between community agencies and law enforcement to prevent and reduce crime in the City. However, a transportation advisory committee and a grant-inspired Weed and Seed Committee are developing new inroads of communication and organization. (Note: Weed & Seed Steering Committee was formed on May 1, 2007 to develop partnerships with residents and leaders based on their strong desire to pursue the strategies of prevention, control and the reduction of criminal activity in the community).

The City has an excellent relationship with Erie Metro Public Housing Authority with a City Commissioner serving on its board. The City of Sandusky's Commissioners are involved and review capital improvements as well as proposed development, demolition or disposition of public housing developments.

Monitoring (91.230)

1. Describe the standards and procedures the jurisdiction will use to monitor its housing and community development projects and ensure long-term compliance with program requirements and comprehensive planning requirements.

5-Year Strategic Plan Monitoring response:

The City believes that monitoring is critical to the implementation and success of the Consolidated Plan. The City will monitor its housing projects by using a variety of methods including securing the services of a consultant specializing in housing rehabilitation programs to oversee the City's remaining owner-occupied rehab program funds/projects; requiring a significant amount of data from each subrecipient administering the fair housing, emergency home repair, and emergency utility and housing assistance programs to ensure compliance with program recipient requirements; reviewing all files using the monitoring checklists provided by HUD; conducting spot inspections of selected rehabilitation projects to ensure that work performed is in compliance with State of Ohio Residential Rehabilitation Standards; ensuring that building permits are pulled and the proper inspections are performed by City inspectors and evaluating progress made toward the City's goals for the number of people served at least annually.

The City will monitor its community development projects, by incorporating stricter compliance program procedures and financial policies and procedures controls through its subrecipient contracts. For each reporting period, the subrecipient will describe the status of the project with respect to each implementation task including, at a minimum, the percentage of the project which has been completed, costs incurred, funds remaining, anticipated completion date and required CDBG supporting documentation determined upon each project. The report must also describe any significant problems encountered and/or any necessary modification of the project scope or implementation schedule. Periodic site visits will be made to observe activities and examine financial records. Furthermore, the City will use the HUD Community Planning and Development Monitoring Handbook as tool to ensure that subrecipient grantees are in compliance.

Priority Needs Analysis and Strategies (91.215 (a))

1. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.
2. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

5-Year Strategic Plan Priority Needs Analysis and Strategies response:

As mentioned previously, the Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was highly influential in prioritizing community needs. A needs assessment survey was conducted based on the HUD Matrix Activity Codes. The *very important* and *important* responses were categorized and ranked within the following four groups: housing, homeless, community development needs and special populations. Members of CPAC self-selected which group to participate in and discussed the top results. Each of the groups then prioritized the top results in the category. The goals were established for each category and specific objectives were developed by the four breakout groups.

An obstacle to meeting underserved needs will be to create new programs that do not currently exist in the community. In order to reduce the risk and be more cost effective, the City hopes to partner with existing agencies that would be interested in expanding their services.

Lead-based Paint (91.215 (g))

1. Estimate the number of housing units that contain lead-based paint hazards, as defined in section 1004 of the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, and are occupied by extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families.
2. Outline actions proposed or being taken to evaluate and reduce lead-based paint hazards and describe how lead based paint hazards will be integrated into housing policies and programs, and how the plan for the reduction of lead-based hazards is related to the extent of lead poisoning and hazards.

5-Year Strategic Plan Lead-based Paint response:

Using HUD methodology, it is estimated that the number of units with lead-based paint is 8,503, or 79.4 percent of all residential units in the City of Sandusky. There are an *estimated* 613 rental units and 556 owner occupied units that are occupied by low and moderate income households that have lead based paint or hazards (See Lead Based Paint Table on next page).

City staff worked with Erie County Regional Planning Staff and the Erie County Health Department to apply for a HUD Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant in the summer of FY 2008. Erie County received the HUD Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant in the amount of \$3,000,000 to address lead-based paint in homes in February 2009. The grant would allow Erie County to eliminate or contain lead-based paint in approximately 220 homes. The target areas for this grant are primarily all in the City of Sandusky. WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc. will serve as the housing counseling agency for the program. The City's rental housing rehabilitation loan and owner-occupied rehabilitation housing

programs will conduct lead-based paint tests. Contractors selected to conduct rental housing rehabilitation projects will have at a minimum passed the Ohio Department of Health Lead-Safe Worker/Renovation Training.

The HUD Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant project activities will include the following: performing lead inspection/risk assessments; conduct lead hazard control activities; provide resources for lead-safe work practices, abatement classes and contractor training; conduct community awareness, education and outreach programs. Primary goals are to build capacity necessary to protect families, especially children less than six years from lead poisoning and eliminate lead-based paint hazards in the County's housing stock.

Doors, windows and exterior siding are common places where lead-based paint can be found. Therefore, the majority of work is expected to consist of door replacement, window replacement and exterior siding installation. Other lead hazards will be addressed based on testing. This not only reduces lead hazards but increases the value of the housing unit. It provides energy efficiency measures thereby reducing heating costs. It would eliminate the risk of lead poisoning in the home thereby reducing liability.

The table below demonstrates the potential number of units with lead-based paint that are occupied by low or moderate-income families and distinctions made for owners and renters. Furthermore, these figures indicate the number of units that may have significant lead paint hazards, with no calculation of the number of children that may be affected.

LEAD-BASED PAINT TABLE

Year Constructed	Tenure	Total Occupied Units	Percent Total Units with Lead Paint	Number Occupied Units with Lead Paint	Percent Occupied Units with Lead Hazard	Number Occupied Units with Lead Hazard	Percent Units with Hazard Occupied by LMI HHLDS	Number Units with Hazard Occupied by LMI HHLDS
Prior to 1940	Owner	2941	90.0%	2647	44.0%	1165	37.4%	436
	Renter	1655	90.0%	1490	44.0%	655	66.5%	436
1940-1959	Owner	2015	80.0%	1612	18.0%	290	35.1%	102
	Renter	1206	80.0%	965	18.0%	174	64.4%	112
1960-1979	Owner	1234	62.0%	765	9.5%	73	25.0%	18
	Renter	1653	62.0%	1025	9.5%	97	67.2%	65
	Total			5025		1528		556
	Owner							
	Total			3480		926		613
	Renter							
	Total			8503		2454		1169
	Percent of Total			79.4%		22.9%		10.9%

Furthermore, the Erie County Health Department applied for a state grant for essential housing maintenance practices for landlords which include lead-based paint issues. Healthy Homes Initiatives, sponsored by the Erie County Health Department, is another new program that will begin functioning in the City that focuses on housing safety regarding lead-based paint and other toxins found in houses.

HOUSING

Housing Needs (91.205)

*Please also refer to the Housing Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook

1. Describe the estimated housing needs projected for the next five year period for the following categories of persons: extremely low-income, low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income families, renters and owners, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, including persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, single persons, large families, public housing residents, victims of domestic violence, families on the public housing and section 8 tenant-based waiting list, and discuss specific housing problems, including: cost-burden, severe cost-burden, substandard housing, and overcrowding (especially large families).
2. To the extent that any racial or ethnic group has a disproportionately greater

need for any income category in comparison to the needs of that category as a whole, the jurisdiction must complete an assessment of that specific need. For this purpose, disproportionately greater need exists when the percentage of persons in a category of need who are members of a particular racial or ethnic group is at least ten percentage points higher than the percentage of persons in the category as a whole.

3-5 Year Strategic Plan Housing Needs response:

The current housing foreclosure crisis in the City of Sandusky has significantly impacted the manner in which housing priorities will be addressed. Overall, it is in the community's best interest to prevent additional homes from going into foreclosure. With a high 8 percent unemployment rate, it is critical that homeowners do not lose their homes, so emphasis will be placed on programs that stabilize the community and prevent further decline. Community stabilization programs will focus on individuals and families with extremely low-income, low-income, moderate-income, and middle-incomes. The programs will also focus on renters and owners, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and large families. These groups will be served under all the home stabilization programs served equally, regardless of their categorization.

The problem of the housing cost burden may be found among both owners and renters. Housing cost burden prevents households from being able to properly maintain their properties, as well as meet their non-housing needs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as that in which no more than 30 percent of gross monthly household income is required for housing expenses (i.e. total of rent or mortgage, insurance, utility payments). Therefore, a household is considered to have a housing *cost burden* when it must pay more than 30 percent of its gross monthly income for housing expenses and households which pay more than 50 percent of income for housing expenses are considered to be *severely cost burdened*.

Therefore, household income plays a significant role in the type, cost and location of housing available to a household. Higher income households are sometimes found to expend more than 30 percent of their income for housing, but by virtue of having more income, do not experience the same level of burden as lower income households. In markets where housing values are depressed, the higher income household will sometimes benefit by paying much less than 30 percent of their income for housing. When there is a lack of affordable, quality units available, households usually are forced into higher cost housing and attempting to cope with the resulting cost burden. The U.S. Census 2000 indicates that the median contract rent in Sandusky was \$387 per month. A household must have an annual income of \$15,480 to afford the median rent of \$387 per month, that is, to not be cost burdened. To achieve an annual income of \$15,480, a worker must receive \$7.44 per hour on a 40-hour per week basis. American Fact Finder 2005-2007 Estimates state that \$18,748 is the per capita income in Sandusky; hence, for an individual to afford \$468 per month one bedroom apartment based on HUD's FY 2007 Fair Market Rent Standards, one would need to make \$9.00 per hour on a 40-hour per week basis.

Cost burden is also a problem for homeowners, although the problem is not as widespread as among renters. Approximately 18.6 percent of all owners were

housing cost burdened, and those with a mortgage were more than twice as likely to be cost burdened as those without a mortgage. Notably, those without a mortgage that were severely cost burdened made up 7 percent of all owners, most likely due to utility, insurance and tax expenses. Among owners the elderly are the most likely to experience housing cost burdens. Proportionately more whites are cost burdened compared to African-Americans; however, this seems directly attributable to the disproportionately lower ownership rate among African-Americans.

Progressive transitional housing will be the City's focus over the next five years. There is such a high rate of foreclosures in Sandusky; there will be an ample number of houses available to be converted into transitional housing. The City does not have a problem with affordable rent or homes; but, it does have a problem pertaining to the quality of homes. Many homes have not been maintained and/or the houses are more than 60 years old with energy efficiency issues. Therefore, emergency home repairs and energy efficient programs will be services provided to help homeowners improve their living conditions.

Priority Housing Needs (91.215 (b))

1. Identify the priority housing needs and activities in accordance with the categories specified in the Housing Needs Table (formerly Table 2A). These categories correspond with special tabulations of U.S. census data provided by HUD for the preparation of the Consolidated Plan.
2. Provide an analysis of how the characteristics of the housing market and the severity of housing problems and needs of each category of residents provided the basis for determining the relative priority of each priority housing need category.

Note: Family and income types may be grouped in the case of closely related categories of residents where the analysis would apply to more than one family or income type.

3. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.
4. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

5-Year Strategic Plan Priority Housing Needs response:

For the purposes of the Consolidated Plan, the City will use the most current and relevant data from the Housing Needs Table to best serve the housing needs of the community. Ohio's foreclosure crisis continued to worsen in 2008, setting a new record with 85,782 new foreclosure filings, according to the annual study issued by Policy Matters Ohio. Ohio saw a 1.2 percent increase from 2007 and a 70 percent increase from 10 years ago. The latest numbers indicate that there was one foreclosure filing for every 60 housing units in the state last year. Foreclosure filings grew by an average of 4.9 percent in counties with populations of 50,000 or less, and state-wide have more than quintupled since 1995 for all counties. The report calls for more State action in resolving the foreclosure crisis that continues to hurt communities, including Sandusky.

The housing market in Sandusky has been crushed by sub-prime mortgages and the collapse of home values. Although a rescue plan is in the process of being

carried out through various Federal and State programs, studies have shown that it will be at least three to five years before the housing market begins to see any type of recovery.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of households in Sandusky decreased by 1.7 percent from 12,059 units in 1990 to 11,851 in 2000. The vacancy rate increased by 8.5 percent to 1,472 units. As of 2008, there are 250 vacant and 46 condemned properties. The 2000 Census figures in the Housing Needs Table indicate that Sandusky has a homeownership rate of 56% and a rental rate of 44 percent. However, the City of Sandusky tracks rental properties and has over 7,000 registered units. This would indicate that the actual number of rental properties is approximately 68 percent of the total housing units and 32 percent is owner-occupied.

Based on the above statistics, the number one housing goal over the next five years will be to increase homeownership in Sandusky. The City plans to offer through its grant, a down payment assistance program and a homeownership assistance program to not only financially assist prospective buyers but to educate them on the responsibilities of owning a home prior to purchasing.

The second objective is to improve the quality of affordable owner housing. In order to improve the quality of housing in the neighborhoods, an additional code enforcement officer will be hired to enforce the housing codes to ensure that property owners are maintaining their own and/or rented properties.

The third objective is to improve the quality of affordable rental housing. A rental rehabilitation loan program will be offered to landlords to improve their properties. In turn, they must offer rent at or below HUD's Fair Market Rent Levels.

Finally, the City plans to improve energy efficiency in homes. The City will provide an energy efficiency/weatherization program with an established non-profit organization, which will lead to a decrease in the utility bills for homeowners. The City, whenever possible, will promote alternative energy options and eco-friendly building and renovations projects.

To further stabilize and support housing, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grant will be implemented by the City in the spring of 2009. The City will land bank properties in order to clear and demolish dilapidated houses, decrease residential density, return land to tax productivity status and make land available for new development. All housing programs and services will be offered to any eligible, HUD income qualified person.

The Erie Metro Housing Authority will use approximately \$475,000 received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to renovate Bayshore Tower – a 139 unit public housing residence from primarily efficiencies into apartments.

The Mental Health and Recovery Board of Erie & Ottawa Counties and Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio have collaborated on the SunDown project with \$420,000 in financial support sought through the office of Capital Planning & Management under the Ohio Department of Mental Health. The funds will be used to purchase and renovate a 10-unit hotel into 11 one-bedroom units with one

being handicapped accessible. These units would be rented to mental health individuals as supportive independent living apartments.

Housing Market Analysis (91.210)

*Please also refer to the Housing Market Analysis Table in the Needs.xls workbook

1. Based on information available to the jurisdiction, describe the significant characteristics of the housing market in terms of supply, demand, condition, and the cost of housing; the housing stock available to serve persons with disabilities; and to serve persons with HIV/AIDS and their families. Data on the housing market should include, to the extent information is available, an estimate of the number of vacant or abandoned buildings and whether units in these buildings are suitable for rehabilitation.
2. Describe the number and targeting (income level and type of household served) of units currently assisted by local, state, or federally funded programs, and an assessment of whether any such units are expected to be lost from the assisted housing inventory for any reason, (i.e. expiration of Section 8 contracts).
3. Indicate how the characteristics of the housing market will influence the use of funds made available for rental assistance, production of new units, rehabilitation of old units, or acquisition of existing units. Note: The goal of affordable housing is not met by beds in nursing homes.

5-Year Strategic Plan Housing Market Analysis responses:

Demand for housing is incredibly weak because of the continuing spiral of the economy resulting in an 8.0 percent unemployment rate and a lack of job opportunities. Sandusky's housing sales and home ownership have been significantly decimated by the number of foreclosed homes. According to First American Core Logic, as of July 2008 foreclosure rates in Sandusky ranged between 2.066 percent - 2.582 percent compared to Ohio's Statewide Foreclosure Rate of 2.065 percent. As of December 2006, the City had between 401 – 800 subprime loans originations ranking it as a red zone area i.e. high risk. As of 2008, there are 250 vacant and 46 condemned properties of which the majority of them are foreclosures. The vacant and condemned properties have been slated for demolition. After putting a record 636 properties up for sale in 2006, the Erie County Sheriff's Office scheduled 716 sheriff's sales in 2007, an increase of 12 percent.

The following properties contain units which are assisted by local, state or federally funded programs in Sandusky. It is not anticipated that any of these units will be lost in the next several years.

Erie-Huron Community Action Commission: Community Plaza (low income seniors): 29 units

Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio: Corason Project (low-income persons with disabilities): 12 units

National Church Residency: Viewpoint Apartments (low income seniors): 117 units

National Church Residency: Harbourview Apartments (low income seniors and persons with disabilities): 100 units

Erie Metro Housing Authority: Bayshore Tower, 128 Perry Street (low income, near elderly, elderly and disabled persons): 139 units

Scattered Sites (single low-income family homes): 106 units

Erie Metro Housing Authority Section 8 vouchers in Sandusky: 837

AGAPE House: transitional housing for people with AIDS: 1 single family house with 3 bedrooms

As mentioned previously, there is ample affordable housing in Sandusky, but the quality and accessibility of housing for older adults or persons with disabilities is not suitable. Of the approximate 11,000 housing units in Sandusky, 80 percent (8,800) were built prior to 1949. While there is sufficient rental housing available for older adults with disabilities over the age of 55, there is limited housing available for younger people with mental and/or physical disabilities. The integration of accessibility enhancements in older rental or owner-occupied housing is important to fair housing choice.

Over the next five years, the City of Sandusky will implement an accessibility home modification program for low- and moderate-income residents. The program would be available for tenants or homeowners and it would include modifications such as installation of ramps, grab bars and handrails.

The current characteristics of the housing market will greatly influence the use of funds for emergency rental, mortgage and utility assistance to low- and moderate income residents in Sandusky. The funds will be utilized to sustain residents of the City of Sandusky. The intent of this proposed project is to prevent further housing loss by assisting those in the community to keep their current housing.

In addition, there is limited transitional housing available in Sandusky. The City will work to correct this situation by collaborating with the Volunteers of America and the Erie County Association for Retarded Citizens under the City's Neighborhood Stabilization Program to increase the number of transitional houses available. This will be done by purchasing vacant homes and working with these organizations to rehabilitate them for transitional housing. It is anticipated that at least four (4) new single-family dwelling units will be rehabilitated under this program. The City is also working with the Erie Ottawa Counties Board of Mental Health to create transitional housing for mental health clients in a former motel building on the City's west side using other programs besides CDBG.

Because there are over 7,000 rental units, a landlord rental rehabilitation loan program will be offered. Landlords meeting eligibility requirements would qualify for up to 65 percent of the cost of the rehabilitation but not to exceed \$15,000 for a one-unit project. The owner must provide, at a minimum, the other 35 percent of the necessary rehabilitation funds. The Rental Rehabilitation loan is a 0% interest deferred-declining loan. Twenty-percent of the loan amount is due upon transfer of the property. The remaining 80 percent will decline 20 percent per year over the next five years.

Note: Acquisition of property is being administered under the Neighborhood Stabilization Grant.

Specific Housing Objectives (91.215 (b))

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve over a specified time period.
2. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by the strategic plan.

5-Year Strategic Plan Specific Housing Objectives response:

The overall housing priority is to increase homeownership in Sandusky. The City plans to achieve this goal through four subsidiary goals and objectives. The first goal is to improve the quality of affordable owner-occupied housing. In order to improve neighborhood conditions, an additional code enforcement officer will be hired to enforce the housing codes to ensure that property owners are maintaining their own and rented properties.

The second goal is to offer a down payment assistance program and a homeownership assistance program, to not only financially assist prospective buyers, but to educate them on the responsibilities of owning a home prior to purchasing one. The objective is to develop a homeownership education certificate program with city down payment assistance through an organization such as the Sandusky High School Adult Education Classes. The certification would then become a component in the overall credit analysis conducted by the mortgage provider.

The third goal is to improve the quality of affordable rental housing. The city plans to achieve this goal by offering a landlord rental rehabilitation loan program a 0% interest deferred-declining loan. In turn, the landlords must offer rent at or below HUD's Fair Market Rent Levels. A code enforcement officer will be hired to assist in the overburdened rental and housing code violations back logs, and to ensure health, safety and neighborhood stability.

The final goal is to improve energy efficiency. The goal will be achieved by improving energy efficiency because the majority of houses in Sandusky were built prior to 1949. By providing an energy efficiency/weatherization program in conjunction with a non-profit organization, homeowners will make utility invoices lower and reduce the impact upon the environment. The second objective will be to promote and incorporate alternative "green" energy options for housing renovations.

Federal, State, local public and private sector resources will be used to assist in the housing priorities, goals and objectives. To further stabilize and support housing, the City has worked with Erie County Regional Planning to submit the Neighborhood Stabilization Grant. The City will be the primary recipient and plans to land bank properties in order to clear and demolish dilapidated houses, decrease residential density, return land to tax productivity status and make land available for new development. In conjunction again with Erie County Regional

Planning, the City worked with them to apply and receive the HUD Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant in the summer of FY 2008. The County received \$3,000,000 to address lead-based paint in homes from HUD. The target areas for this grant are all in the City of Sandusky and program implementation is expected in spring 2009. The City plans to work with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity to rehab homes into transitional housing and the Erie-Huron Counties Community Action Commission to provide emergency home repairs and disability accessibility modifications, the Sandusky City Schools – Adult Education Program to provide a homeownership certification program to high credit risk individuals. All housing programs and services will be offered to any eligible, HUD income qualified person.

Needs of Public Housing (91.210 (b))

In cooperation with the public housing agency or agencies located within its boundaries, describe the needs of public housing, including the number of public housing units in the jurisdiction, the physical condition of such units, the restoration and revitalization needs of public housing projects within the jurisdiction, and other factors, including the number of families on public housing and tenant-based waiting lists and results from the Section 504 needs assessment of public housing projects located within its boundaries (i.e. assessment of needs of tenants and applicants on waiting list for accessible units as required by 24 CFR 8.25). The public housing agency and jurisdiction can use the optional Priority Public Housing Needs Table (formerly Table 4) of the Consolidated Plan to identify priority public housing need to assist in this process.

5-Year Strategic Plan Needs of Public Housing response:

The City of Sandusky recognizes the importance of Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority (EMHA) as an affordable housing provider. In fact, Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority has earned HUD's "High Performer" rating. The City is fortunate to work in partnership with such excellent performance. Erie County Metropolitan Housing Authority owns 245 public housing units in Sandusky. EMHA has been issued 1047 Section 8 vouchers, of those all are active and 837 of the active vouchers are rentals in Sandusky. Also, there were 12 overall homeownership voucher cases with six currently active within the Sandusky City limits. EMHA maintains a waiting list of 334 as of March 6, 2009 for its Section 8 program.

The City Development Department and EMHA continue to develop a cooperative relationship, serving on each other's boards and committees, and developing a dialogue on their various roles in promoting affordable housing. EMHA refers landlord applicants to the City Rental Rehabilitation Program and will be referring them to the County's HUD Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Program when properties are in need of rehabilitation. Housing counseling services are available to EMHA tenants interested in becoming homeowners.

Public Housing Strategy (91.210)

1. Describe the public housing agency's strategy to serve the needs of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families residing in the jurisdiction served by the public housing agency (including families on the public housing and section 8 tenant-based waiting list), the public housing agency's

strategy for addressing the revitalization and restoration needs of public housing projects within the jurisdiction and improving the management and operation of such public housing, and the public housing agency's strategy for improving the living environment of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate families residing in public housing.

2. Describe the manner in which the plan of the jurisdiction will help address the needs of public housing and activities it will undertake to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership. (NAHA Sec. 105 (b)(11) and (91.215 (k))
3. If the public housing agency is designated as "troubled" by HUD or otherwise is performing poorly, the jurisdiction shall describe the manner in which it will provide financial or other assistance in improving its operations to remove such designation. (NAHA Sec. 105 (g))

5-Year Strategic Plan Public Housing Strategy response:

The Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority administers the Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing Programs to help serve the needs of the area's extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families. Additionally, Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority has implemented a voucher based Homeownership program and a Family Self-Sufficiency Program to expand its ability to assist these families; also, Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority operates the local Senior Center which also serves many needs of the area's elderly population. The development of a non-profit by the housing authority is also being pursued to help address these needs. A progressive use of the administration of the waiting lists for the housing programs by use of preference points and case management focused applicant review help to ensure those with the most need are served; also, ongoing inspections, annual re-certifications, fraud review, and technological upgrades aid to ensure the best use of agency resources.

Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority has implemented HUD's Asset Based Management and Project Based Budgeting initiative to maximize available funding and properly allocate resources; the coordination of efforts between management staff, maintenance staff, and inspection staff aid to ensure the ongoing viability of the housing stock. Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority has reviewed the physical needs of the public housing stock and continues to utilize available capital funding to upgrade the same; Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority has also been progressive in its use of leveraging capital fund dollars to maximize the potential and viability of its housing stock. Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority continues its partnerships with other local service providers to ensure clients' understanding of available resources in the community, including but not limited to, the Area Office on Aging, Job & Family Services, Fair Housing Offices, Departments of Development & Regional Planning, Volunteers of America, Legal Aid, and landlord associations.

In order to address the needs of public housing activities, the City will utilize its active partnership with Erie County Metropolitan Authority to offer a down payment assistance program and a homeownership assistance program to its voucher and waiting list participants. Both programs will offer financial assistance to eligible prospective buyers and educate them on the responsibilities

of owning a home prior to purchasing one. Furthermore, public housing residents would be eligible to attend a homeownership education credit improvement certification program. The certification would then become a component in the overall credit analysis conducted by the mortgage provider.

Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority has earned HUD's "high performer" rating, thus the City's Consolidated Plan is not required to provide financial or other assistance to improve its operations.

Barriers to Affordable Housing (91.210 (e) and 91.215 (f))

1. Explain whether the cost of housing or the incentives to develop, maintain, or improve affordable housing are affected by public policies, particularly those of the local jurisdiction. Such policies include tax policy affecting land and other property, land use controls, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limits, and policies that affect the return on residential investment.
2. Describe the strategy to remove or ameliorate negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing, except that, if a State requires a unit of general local government to submit a regulatory barrier assessment that is substantially equivalent to the information required under this part, as determined by HUD, the unit of general local government may submit that assessment to HUD and it shall be considered to have complied with this requirement.

5-Year Strategic Plan Barriers to Affordable Housing response:

The City of Sandusky's public policies and programs are very favorable to entities who wish to create or improve affordable housing. For example, the City recently passed a new planned unit development zoning ordinance which provides very flexible regulations related to housing types, mix of housing and commercial development, and the size of housing lots. The lot size and dwelling type regulations in the City's residential zoning districts are also favorable to the creation of affordable housing. The City allows an owner to develop a relatively small lot (4,800 sq. ft.) for a single-family dwelling with very reasonable setback requirements. The City contains large areas of residential zoning which permits two-family, three-family and multi-family dwellings. The Downtown Business District zoning district also permits multi-family units in the upper floors of downtown buildings.

The City also has tax abatement programs (Enterprise Zone and Community Reinvestment Area) which can be used for owners who build or renovate affordable housing projects. The City has also used tax increment financing in the development of a housing project in the downtown area. Although this project was not affordable housing, the same financing mechanism could be used for affordable housing projects, provided the revenues from the project could support the repayment obligations of tax increment financing. The City has no "growth limits" established to prevent the development of additional housing. The City is actively pursuing its land banking program, of which one goal is to make vacant lots available at low cost for the development of new single-family housing.

The City's Zoning Board of Appeals has the authority to remove or ameliorate negative effects of zoning policies that may serve as barriers to affordable housing through the variance process.

HOMELESS

Homeless Needs (91.205 (b) and 91.215 (c))

*Please also refer to the Homeless Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook

Homeless Needs— The jurisdiction must provide a concise summary of the nature and extent of homelessness in the jurisdiction, (including rural homelessness and chronic homelessness where applicable), addressing separately the need for facilities and services for homeless persons and homeless families with children, both sheltered and unsheltered, and homeless subpopulations, in accordance with Table 1A. The summary must include the characteristics and needs of low-income individuals and children, (especially extremely low-income) who are currently housed but are at imminent risk of either residing in shelters or becoming unsheltered. In addition, to the extent information is available; the plan must include a description of the nature and extent of homelessness by racial and ethnic group. A quantitative analysis is not required. If a jurisdiction provides estimates of the at-risk population(s), it should also include a description of the operational definition of the at-risk group and the methodology used to generate the estimates.

5-Year Strategic Plan Homeless Needs response:

Homeless Needs Summary

- New Homeless Crisis Developments: Severe economic hardships due to foreclosures and high unemployment have caused middle and lower income families to be on the brink of losing their housing and becoming homeless.
- Homelessness has consistently included low-income renters with severe cost burden, the mentally ill; those addicted to drugs and alcohol, victims of domestic violence, evicted renters and foreclosed homeowners.
- Utility costs and resulting shut offs are a major contributing cause of homelessness in Sandusky.
- There is great need for reductions in utility costs; whether by increasing energy efficiency of homes and appliances, or reductions in costs of service, and short term assistance with utility payments.
- There is a need for transitional housing with supportive services for the formerly homeless.
- There is a need for long-term supportive housing for the formerly homeless which results in permanent self-sufficiency.
- There is a need for supportive services for both the homeless and the at-risk homeless.

The Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio (VOANWO) is the only major provider of housing services to homeless individuals and families in Sandusky. The VOANWO has centralized programs that serve as an emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent housing through its Crossroads program. There are several other providers available for limited housing, counseling and other support of the homeless or those at risk of homelessness, but none as

comprehensive as VOANWO. In essence, the VOANWO is the lead agency in managing the continuum of care process.

Through a point-in-time count conducted by the VOANWO in January 2009, they estimated that Sandusky has approximately 150 individuals that suffer a chronic state of homelessness, which is 1.5 times higher than in 2003. Although there is an increasing state of chronic homelessness, the more common situation in Sandusky is that families or individuals suffer some crisis; loss of a job, high utility expenses in a season, or health crises that make it impossible to pay for or "keep" their housing. However, if there is some type of assistance and stabilization most are able to re-access more permanent housing, though some will cycle in and out of various housing situations on a regular basis.

Providers point out that quantifying the problem is difficult. Many of the homeless, depending on weather or sporadic opportunities to shelter elsewhere, do not regularly choose to stay in the shelter or access other available services. Likewise, most transitional housing programs require the client to commit to meeting self sufficiency goals that clients sometimes have trouble meeting, or even committing to. Agency owned permanent housing is much less available. There is a good supply of rental housing in the community, so that it is not too difficult to access the generally available housing, provided the client has now progressed to an appropriate state of self-sufficiency.

In general, it has always been difficult to quantify the number of homeless people residing in a community on a consistent basis. The number of homeless people is always changing, and the homeless are also quite mobile, moving to areas where assistance is readily available. Attempts are made during the Census to count the homeless in shelters and on the streets, but these figures have been called very unreliable. It is nearly impossible to locate all places where homeless people might stay. Some homeless people choose not to go to shelters, and not consistently. Homeless people sometimes "double up" with other households for brief periods of time and are usually not counted. There is evidence that many families experience some degree of housing crisis for short periods of time but do not access the network of services that have been developed, and thus their crisis is not documented.

The VOANWO supplied the administrative data for the Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulations Chart. They are the City's authority on homeless in Sandusky. Data was collected using HUD Homeless Data Collection and Reporting Standards. The data collected is an estimate of daily needs. All methods have some shortcomings, but the effort illustrates the complexity of the problem of homelessness and the factors that contribute to homelessness.

There are many factors to consider when determining community priorities and goals for addressing homelessness and the prevention of homelessness. Some homeless individuals and families suffer with the additional burden of mental disability or substance dependency but economic problems remain the major contributor to homelessness. In a 1993 study at the Ohio State University College of Social Work, it was found that, "one out of two homeless persons in the sample identified economic factors such as unemployment and problems paying rent, as the reason for their homelessness. Family conflicts were cited by three of ten homeless persons. About one of eight persons felt that he or she was homeless due to alcohol or drug problems." Thus the issue of homelessness

prevention has been recognized to require strategies to identify those “at risk of homelessness” that might benefit from interventions.

In Sandusky, basic networks of programs have evolved to begin to address the immediate housing emergency of the homeless and also the failed systems that precipitate homelessness. Therefore, it is slightly easier to estimate people at risk of becoming homeless. A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services study estimated that from “2.3 to 4.4 percent of the adult population has been homeless at some point in the five year period of 1985-1990. Households are involuntarily doubled up with friends and relatives and those who pay more than 50% of their income” are extremely vulnerable. If the U.S. HHS estimate of 2.3 percent - 4.4 percent of the adult population holds true in Sandusky, between 644 and 1,232 adults might be expected to experience homelessness at least once in a five-year period, or from 124 to 246 per year. These estimates correlate well with the number of clients seen by Sandusky’s providers of housing and services.

Households earning 30 percent or less than the median income have extremely limited resources. Any emergency, such as a health crisis, can easily lead to homelessness. Census data for 2000 indicates that nearly 17 percent (1,990) of all households in Sandusky have incomes 30 percent or less than the Area Median Household income. In addition, households with severe housing cost burden (paying more than 50 percent of their income for housing) numbered 1,187, almost 10 percent of all households.

In conclusion, it appears that the greatest needs of the homeless in Sandusky are as follows: 1) affordable, safe housing, 2) transitional housing, 3) emergency assistance with utility and rent/mortgage payments, and 4) more capacity to provide supportive services to ensure self-sufficiency. This is particularly true for mental health services and chemical dependency treatment.

Priority Homeless Needs

1. Using the results of the Continuum of Care planning process, identify the jurisdiction's homeless and homeless prevention priorities specified in Table 1A, the Homeless and Special Needs Populations Chart. The description of the jurisdiction's choice of priority needs and allocation priorities must be based on reliable data meeting HUD standards and should reflect the required consultation with homeless assistance providers, homeless persons, and other concerned citizens regarding the needs of homeless families with children and individuals. The jurisdiction must provide an analysis of how the needs of each category of residents provided the basis for determining the relative priority of each priority homeless need category. A separate brief narrative should be directed to addressing gaps in services and housing for the sheltered and unsheltered chronic homeless.
2. A community should give a high priority to chronically homeless persons, where the jurisdiction identifies sheltered and unsheltered chronic homeless persons in its Homeless Needs Table - Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.

5-Year Strategic Plan Priority Homeless Needs response:

Priorities of serving the homeless are based on demographic and economic

statistics presented by the City of Sandusky's grant administrator at the Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee meetings, a needs assessment survey, comments by the Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee and data provided by Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio (VOANWO) staff in the Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulations Chart. Note: VOANWO is mandated to report and collect information according to HUD's rules and regulations.

VOANWO is the only major provider of housing services to homeless individuals and families in Sandusky. The VOANWO has centralized programs that provide emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent housing services through its Crossroads program. There are several other providers that offer limited housing, counseling and other support of the homeless or those at risk of homelessness, but none as comprehensive as VOANWO. In essence, the VOANWO is the lead agency in managing the continuum of care process.

Currently, the United States is in an economic crisis. The U.S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of Economic Analysis reported in February 2009, that the gross domestic product - the output of goods and services produced by labor and property located in the United States – decreased at an annual rate of 6.2 percent. The sources of weakness for the gross domestic product, as reported by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, were a sharp downturn in exports, a continuing decline in consumer spending, a larger reduction in business investment and a continuing decline in housing. The meltdown of the housing market through sub-prime mortgage lending has led to an insurmountable number of foreclosures. The American car manufacturers are on the verge of bankruptcy and the banking industry has nearly collapsed and at best is still unstable. The results of this crisis has caused high unemployment rates which has led to extreme hardships for lower and middle income families, so much so that they are on the brink of losing their housing and becoming homeless.

In order to combat the crisis and prevent further decline, the City plans to partner with VOANWO to provide homeless prevention services which will include emergency rental, mortgage and utility assistance to low- and moderate income residents in Sandusky. The CDGB Funds shall be utilized only to sustain current residents of the City of Sandusky. The intent of this proposed project is to prevent homelessness by assisting those of the Sandusky community to keep their current housing. It is the City's number one priority to fight homelessness. This program will be offered to any eligible person regardless of age, ethnicity, disability, addictions, victims of domestic violence or criminal history.

The second priority is to address the insufficient availability of transitional housing for the formerly homeless. Although foreclosures, vacant and abandoned properties are at an all-time record high, the City will use this opportunity to create transitional housing for those in need. The City will create transitional housing by partnering with the VOANWO and Erie County ARC under the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Vacant homes will be purchased and rehabilitated for transitional housing units.

The third priority is to reduce utility costs for low- and moderate income individuals and families by making their housing more energy efficient. The majority of houses in Sandusky were built prior to 1949. The City plans to offer a program in conjunction with the Erie-Huron Community Action Commission energy efficient/weatherization home improvement program. The goal will be

achieved by improving energy efficiency. By providing an energy efficiency/weatherization program, homeowners will have lower utility bills and reduce their impact upon the environment.

By financially supporting community organizations, it will allow them to use other budget funds to provide supportive services for the homeless and the at-risk homeless and/or increase the number of people they are able to serve because of increased program dollars provided by the Community Development Block Grant.

Homeless Inventory (91.210 (c))

The jurisdiction shall provide a concise summary of the existing facilities and services (including a brief inventory) that assist homeless persons and families with children and subpopulations identified in Table 1A. These include outreach and assessment, emergency shelters and services, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, access to permanent housing, and activities to prevent low-income individuals and families with children (especially extremely low-income) from becoming homeless. The jurisdiction can use the optional Continuum of Care Housing Activity Chart and Service Activity Chart to meet this requirement.

5-Year Strategic Plan Homeless Inventory response:

Sandusky is currently served by one emergency shelter and two transitional housing programs both offered by Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio (VOANWO). These programs have a total of 99 beds daily. In 2008, people served totaled 324. Emergency shelter served a total of 7,078 bed days. There is no waiting list for this program as it is first-come first-served. In the winter months, when the weather is below freezing, 10 overflow mats are utilized bringing the total up to 145 percent of capacity.

The VOANWO reports that the agency serves homeless males, females and families with children who can no longer make ends meet. The facility has provided 18,200 bed days in transitional housing for 2008 bringing their total to 25,780 bed days for homeless individuals in Erie County.

The focus of Serenity House is to serve chemically dependent homeless individuals by providing long term care and treatment. It served 33 individuals in 2008 for a total of 5,928 bed days for the year. This includes six subsidized apartments that assist up to an additional 36 individuals. Serenity House has had a waiting list of 8-12 the entire year.

The VOANWO also operates a transitional housing program for veterans. This program serves eight veterans and approximately 24 individuals annually. These are single room occupancy units in transitional housing that veterans may stay in for up to a 2-year period. In 2008, 23 veterans were served with a total of 2,920 bed days. The family transitional housing unit serves six families and up to 36 individuals. In 2008, 72 individuals were served in families with 48 being children.

The VOANWO provides homeless prevention and housing placement services. With the procurement of Ohio Housing Trust Funds, the number of families served was 200 in 2008 with an additional 33 households assisted through Direct

Housing with total persons assisted being 67. A total of 233 households were prevented from being homeless.

Combining all the programs offered at VOANWO, 606 households were served in Erie County in 2008. Currently, 11 families are on VOANWO's waiting list for transitional housing and eight individuals are on the waiting list for Serenity House. On January 27, 2009, VOANWO conducted a point-in-time report and found 153 individuals living on the streets within the Sandusky City Limits. VOANWO is committed to assisting all individuals and families in need where possible in Erie County.

Other services for the homeless or at-risk homeless include Serving Our Seniors and Care and Share. Both have assisted with helping households with emergency utility payment assistance. The demand for this service is greatest in the fall and in the spring. Care and Share also assists with rental payments.

Victory Temple Soup Kitchen is a feeding program that provides mid-day hot meals Monday through Friday throughout the year. They serve an average of 1,600 meals per month. They serve anyone who arrives and have not had to turn away any. They serve single adults, families and children after school and in the summer. They observe that demand is slower at the beginning of the month, when assistance payments first come out, and picks up toward the end of the month. There is also some decline in tax season, presumably as refunds make more cash available to their usual clients. They see more school age children (unaccompanied by an adult) for lunch in the summer. Often their diners have access to food stamps, but are still unable to store food or prepare meals at their home due to utility shut offs. Thus it appears that they do not serve a large number of chronically homeless, but serve a larger population that is at-risk of homelessness.

The Erie County Health Department assists the City of Sandusky with its most common problem for AIDS patients, which is as the disease progresses and they are no longer able to work, there is a period of time where they have no income while waiting for approval for disability payments. The incidence of the disease is far greater, but most are cared for by other means during this time.

Homeless Strategic Plan (91.215 (c))

1. Homelessness— Describe the jurisdiction's strategy for developing a system to address homelessness and the priority needs of homeless persons and families (including the subpopulations identified in the needs section). The jurisdiction's strategy must consider the housing and supportive services needed in each stage of the process which includes preventing homelessness, outreach/assessment, emergency shelters and services, transitional housing, and helping homeless persons (especially any persons that are chronically homeless) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living. The jurisdiction must also describe its strategy for helping extremely low- and low-income individuals and families who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
2. Chronic homelessness—Describe the jurisdiction's strategy for eliminating chronic homelessness by 2012. This should include the strategy for helping homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing and independent living. This strategy should, to the maximum extent feasible, be coordinated with the

strategy presented Exhibit 1 of the Continuum of Care (CoC) application and any other strategy or plan to eliminate chronic homelessness. Also describe, in a narrative, relationships and efforts to coordinate the Conplan, CoC, and any other strategy or plan to address chronic homelessness.

3. Homelessness Prevention—Describe the jurisdiction’s strategy to help prevent homelessness for individuals and families with children who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
4. Institutional Structure—Briefly describe the institutional structure, including private industry, non-profit organizations, and public institutions, through which the jurisdiction will carry out its homelessness strategy.
5. Discharge Coordination Policy—Every jurisdiction receiving McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Supportive Housing, Shelter Plus Care, or Section 8 SRO Program funds must develop and implement a Discharge Coordination Policy, to the maximum extent practicable. Such a policy should include “policies and protocols for the discharge of persons from publicly funded institutions or systems of care (such as health care facilities, foster care or other youth facilities, or correction programs and institutions) in order to prevent such discharge from immediately resulting in homelessness for such persons.” The jurisdiction should describe its planned activities to implement a cohesive, community-wide Discharge Coordination Policy, and how the community will move toward such a policy.

5-Year Homeless Strategic Plan response:

The City of Sandusky’s answer to a homeless strategy is the Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio. Over the years, the City has supported the efforts of homelessness prevention and serving the needs of the homeless population by providing Community Development Block Grant funds to Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio. These funds are important to the continuum of care for the homeless population. The residents of the various shelters in Sandusky are provided access to counseling programs, life skills classes and job training. These are important as they transition to becoming viable community members and continue down the path toward self-sufficiency. Chemical dependency programs are also required, as it is a major contributor to individuals and families becoming homeless.

The Volunteers of America movement was organized to reach out and provide education and support to all people. Volunteers of America measure its success in positive change in the lives of individuals and the community as a whole. They provide transitional housing for homeless men, women, families and children at the Crossroads facility in Sandusky. Participants in the Crossroads project can stay up to 24 months and are given access to support services that include: case management, employment training/support, nursing clinic, nutrition counseling, money management, transportation, meals and links to other support services. They also manage the Serenity House facility that provides transitional housing for chemically dependent homeless men and women. In 2008, VOANWO served a total of 606 individuals and families with children.

Homeless persons move through the continuum of care system by:

1. Seeking emergency shelter or services
2. Obtaining referrals for appropriate services
3. Moving into permanent housing or transitional housing
4. Receiving follow-up services

Families with low household income and higher housing costs are at risk of becoming homeless as well. There is a continued need for homelessness prevention programs that provide the emergency assistance to families during periods of financial crisis. The Care and Share Program of Sandusky provides emergency assistance for rent, utilities, and medicine as a last resort for those individuals in a critical situation. The Erie County Department of Job and Family Services provide grants for housing related costs in emergency situations to veterans and their dependents. Victims of domestic violence can receive temporary shelter from the Safe Harbor Shelter.

An additional member of the homelessness prevention team is Erie Residential Living, Inc. This private non-profit corporation provides supported living in two 8-person units in Sandusky. The residents are developmentally disabled and receive support services with the aim to provide the tools needed for greater independence. Once it starts in FY2009, the Citizen's Circle will be another program to aid in reducing chronic homelessness. The program will provide ex-offenders the resources so that they can find appropriate housing.

VOANWO serves Erie County which includes the City of Sandusky as its primary population of service. The main focus is to provide housing for those Erie County residents whom desire to be housed reducing the number of non-housed or marginally housed (those areas not fit for habitation) into safe, affordable, permanent housing with adequate resources to maintain permanent housing.

The Continuum of Care Plan to end chronic homelessness by 2012 is outcome and focus driven. VOANWO will measure outcomes of those housed by reviewing those who obtain permanent housing and come from homelessness and measuring their outcomes 6 months out to ensure housing barriers are removed. To do this they will mainstream social services utilizing 2-1-1 to stabilize residents, meet needs and house them.

Data collected will be measured using HMIS the county data collection system that reports the homeless statistics to the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Ohio Department of Development. Outcomes and Revisions will be addressed annually measuring successes and reduction in annual Point In Time Counts. Homeless services will be coordinated with other social service agencies in the community to best serve the needs of individuals and families.

The City of Sandusky does not receive any of the following: the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Emergency Shelter Grant, Supportive Housing, Shelter Plus Care, or Section 8 SRO Program; therefore, it does not need to develop and implement a Discharge Coordination Policy.

Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)

(States only) Describe the process for awarding grants to State recipients, and a description of how the allocation will be made available to units of local government.

3-5 Year Strategic Plan ESG response:

NOT APPLICABLE.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development (91.215 (e))

*Please also refer to the Community Development Table in the Needs.xls workbook

1. Identify the jurisdiction's priority non-housing community development needs eligible for assistance by CDBG eligibility category specified in the Community Development Needs Table (formerly Table 2B), – i.e., public facilities, public improvements, public services and economic development.
2. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.
3. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.
4. Identify specific long-term (3 or more years) and short-term (3 or less years) community development objectives (including economic development activities that create jobs), developed in accordance with the statutory goals described in section 24 CFR 91.1 and the primary objective of the CDBG program to provide decent housing and a suitable living environment and expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

NOTE: Each specific objective developed to address a priority need, must be identified by number and contain proposed accomplishments, the time period (i.e., one, two, three, or more years), and annual program year numeric goals the jurisdiction hopes to achieve in quantitative terms, or in other measurable terms as identified and defined by the jurisdiction.

5-Year Strategic Plan Community Development response:

The City's non-housing community development needs eligible for assistance by CDBG categories specified in the Community Development Needs Table are as follows:

Public Facilities and Improvements (in order of importance)

1. 03K Street Improvements
2. 04A Clean-Up of Contaminated Sites
3. 03F Parks, Recreational Facilities
4. 03L Sidewalks
5. 03E Neighborhood Facilities (community center/youth)
6. 03C Homeless Facilities (not operating costs)
7. 03J Water/Sewer Improvements

Public Services (in order of importance)

1. 05H Employment Training
2. 05Q Emergency Housing Payments & Utility Assistance
3. 05D Youth Services
4. 05M Health Services (preventative)
5. 05A Senior Services

6. 05 Public Services

Economic Development (in order of importance)

4. 18C Micro-Enterprise Assistance
2. 18A ED Direct: Direct Financial Assistance to For-Profit Businesses
3. 14E Downtown Building Improvement Program

Administration

1. Fair Housing

The determination of priorities for all of the community development and economic categories were based on demographic and economic statistics presented by the City of Sandusky's grant administrator at the Consolidated Plan Advisory meetings, a needs assessment survey, input and consultation with Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee members. The greatest obstacle is that the need is always greater than the funds provided, especially now, more than ever, because of the current economic crisis.

03K Street Improvements

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-3)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: Improve Conditions of Streets

Annual Goal: 2 (Varies Based on Street Conditions and Length of Area)

Over the next five years, the City intends to use CDBG funds to repair streets based upon road condition studies conducted by the City's Engineering Department. The City will hire contractors to repair the streets such as the Hayes Avenue Corridor, First Street, Scott Street to Adams Street, Columbus Avenue, Homestead Street to Perkins Avenue, Wayne Street, Pierce Street, Pier Street, Putnam and Clay.

04A Clean-Up of Contaminated Sites

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: Eliminate at least one brownfield site

Annual Goal: 1

Because Sandusky is an aging industrial town, many factories have closed leaving behind many contaminated sites. CDBG funds will be used to clean-up the Sandusky Cabinets site so that it can be eventually used for new development.

03F Parks, Recreational Facilities

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To improve the conditions of community parks

Annual Goal: 2

Although the City has 692 acres spread among 55 separate park sites, most are run-down and lack the features that bring residents to use them. Lions Park has been designated as a community park because it is 12 acres in size and has a service area of two miles in radius with 10,000 – 15,000 residents nearby. Lions Park is located right on Sandusky Bay. The City is also developing a stronger partnership with Erie Metro Parks for future maintenance and development initiatives at the Park. Plans for Lions Park involve a new design study and then updates and developments will occur based upon it. Huron Park is a signature

park because of its close proximity to the newly, renovated ADA accessible Sandusky Greenhouse – (the only accessible greenhouse in Ohio). Plans are to expand the parks features to compliment the Greenhouse with updated playground equipment and a splash pad.

03F Parks, Recreational Facilities

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 4 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To extend the Sandusky Bay Pathway

Annual Goal: 2

Currently, the City has an intermittent recreational bike path on its 21 miles of waterfront area. The plan over the next five years is to create bike path continuity. The City is presently working on extending the Pathway from the boat launch area to Mills Street. In 2010, the next stage would be to extend the bike path from Mills Street to West Monroe to Lions Park. The following stage would be to connect the path from the Paper District on Shoreline Drive to West Water to the boat launch. If additional funding exists, the final phase would be to extend the bike path on the east side of the City from Meigs Street, First Street, Cedar Point Drive and continue onto Cleveland Road (Route 6). (Note: Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization will be using funds to complete a section of the Cedar Point Drive pathway in FY 2009).

03L Sidewalks

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Short-Term: 3 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To remove an exterior cement pedestrian stairway

Annual Goal: 1

In the past five years of the grant, the City used funds to repair the majority of the sidewalks in the city; however, there are still sections that qualify under CDBG target areas that need to be addressed including an unsafe cement pedestrian stairway on Milan Road. Those sections will be addressed by removal and/or making them accessible and safe for the residents.

03E Neighborhood Facilities

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Short-Term: 3-years

Proposed Accomplishment: To rehab an existing structure to create a community center

Annual Goal: 1 (over a 3-year period)

The City lacks a community resource center. There is not a place in Sandusky where organized community services and activities can occur, especially for youth. The City intends to work with community non-profits to select a vacant facility and rehabilitate it to make it into a community resource center for groups such as youth, adults and older adults.

03C Homeless Facilities

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Short-Term: 3-years

Proposed Accomplishment: To increase size and improve energy efficiency of the homeless facility

Annual Goal: 2

Volunteers of America Northwest Ohio is the only homeless facility in Sandusky. It behooves the City to support the facility by expanding square footage of the

property, if financially feasible. If not financially feasible, then additional funding would be used to create smaller units of housing for the homeless. In addition, making the facility more energy efficient, would allow the cost savings on utility bills to be utilized for services to help the homeless and would benefit the environment.

03J Water/Sewer Improvement

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Short-Term: 3-Years

Proposed Accomplishment: To improve the sewage system

Annual Goal: 1 (over a three-year period)

Sewer improvements are important to the health and safety of the City's residents. There are problems with the sewage system in specific neighborhoods throughout the City that need to be fixed. During heavy rains and melting snow, sewage backs up into people's homes. The City expects to address this problem by separating its sewers to manage the increased water capacity during seasonal weather conditions.

05H Employment Training*

Objective: Expanded Economic Opportunities (SL-1)

Long-Term: 4 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To improve job training resource opportunities

Annual Goal: 200

**Note: Through the American Recovery & Investment Act, the State of Ohio will be receiving a large sum of grant funds under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The three WIA grants are as follows: Adult Employment Grant, Dislocated Worker Employment & Training Grant, and Your Employment and Training Grant. All of these grants will be dispersed through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Once the grants have been announced, The City intends to collaborate with Erie County Job and Family Services to ensure appropriate allocation to Sandusky for job training assistance.*

The most important community service that the City could provide currently is employment training. As an aging, industrial town, manufacturing jobs have almost disappeared. In order to work again, new training and skill sets are required. The need is tremendous in Sandusky. There is a Job Store managed by Erie County which serves the needs of everyone in the region. Unfortunately, it is not located in the area where it is needed - Sandusky. The City would like to partner with Erie County Job and Family Services or other legitimate community organization to provide a satellite operation or an extension of its services in central Sandusky. The services provided by the agency would include but would not be limited to the following: job training and job research skills, resume assistance, independent living skills and other employment service activities.

05Q Emergency Housing Payments & Utility Assistance

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-2)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To prevent homelessness by providing emergency housing payments and utility assistance

Annual Goal: 40

The Emergency Housing Payments & Utility Assistance Program will enable homeowners or tenants to remain in their home instead of losing it through foreclosure or eviction due to a crisis beyond their control. Low-and moderate-

income people who have fallen upon hard times and are at risk of losing their homes will be eligible. The program will provide immediate short-term help for destitute families to remedy or prevent homelessness.

05E Transportation Services

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment:

Annual Goal: 25

Over the next five years, The City intends to increase its capacity of providing affordable, public transportation to low-and moderate-income individuals such as the elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental), persons with alcohol or other drug addiction, persons with HIV/AIDS, and public housing residents. Eligible low- and moderate incomes will be able to receive a discounted or no-fee bus pass to travel to their job or other places in the community. By partnering with the Sandusky Transit System, the City will be able to increase services to those in need of finding and getting to a job during this economic recession.

05D Youth Services

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 4 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To offer increased services to youth

Annual Goal: 100

Youth services are limited in the City. With the development of a community center, the City would like to see an increase of organized, functional youth services in the community.

05M Health Services

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To educate residents regarding preventive health practices

Annual Goal: 250

The cost of health care has sky rocketed; however, the impact on the health system can be reduced through prevention and education. Based on the findings of the Erie County Health Department's Community Assessment, the City of Sandusky needs to be more proactive in its approach to healthy living within the community, particularly with minorities. In partnership with the Erie County Health Department, a wellness prevention program will be developed focusing on obesity, diabetes and other preventative health issues. In addition, if the Family Health Services of Erie County receives the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant for a Federally Qualified Health Care Center, collaboration of outreach and services between the two organizations will ensue.

05A Senior Services

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To promote fire safety education through the installation of smoke alarms

Annual Goal: 100

With such a large older adult and disability (physical and mental) population, fire safety in homes is a major concern. Through public education discussions and

recent fires, the fire department has noticed a large amount of older adults and people with disabilities who have outdated smoke alarms in their homes. The City's Fire Department intends to partner with Serving Our Seniors, Firefighter's Union and Erie County Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to install 10-year lithium smoke alarms to low-and moderate income seniors and residents with disabilities.

05 Public Services (General)

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To reduce the recidivism rate of offenders upon release from prison.

Annual Goal: 25

The U.S. Census population estimates that in 2007, approximately 25,000 residents are in Sandusky and according to the 2007 Sandusky Police Report there were 8,094 criminal arrests. That is one arrest for every three people in the City of Sandusky in one year. Drugs and felonious assaults are the primary issues for law enforcement and residents in Sandusky.

Furthermore, the Erie County Adult Probation Department reports that the recidivism rate for adults is approximately 25% and the Sandusky Police Department estimates that in the past three years there were 2,383 juvenile crimes of which only 177 were one-time offenders (93% of the juveniles arrested in Sandusky were repeat offenders). In addition, the County expects that within the next five years 450 violent/serious offender adults will be released from the Erie County Jail along with 13 juveniles from various facilities of incarceration.

The funding of a Citizen Circle in the community would create partnerships that promote positive interaction and accountability for offenders upon release. Circle members address risks that contribute to criminal activity by taking ownership of the solution. It is an opportunity for citizens to communicate expectations for successful reentry and help offenders recognize the harm their behavior has caused others. Offenders are able to make amends and demonstrate their value and potential to the community. A focus on the future rather than the past, and giving back through community service and contributions are key elements for success. Offenders seek involvement with a Citizen Circle voluntarily. The Citizen Circles meet on a regular basis to discuss offender progress, review plans, interview new applicants, admit new members and to discharge both successful and unsuccessful offenders. Note: Citizen Circle is a component of the Weed and Seed Grant Strategy and Second Chance Offenders Grant. Status is pending regarding grant approval.

05 Public Services (General)

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-2)

Long-Term: 4 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To provide a homeownership certification program for low-and moderate high credit risk individuals

Annual Goal: 8

Many low-and moderate income individuals are unqualified to apply for home mortgages because of prior past credit problems. The homeownership certificate program would enable individuals to attend classes by the Sandusky High School Adult Education Program to learn about being fiscally responsible. Once fulfilling classroom requirements, the individual would obtain a certificate which would

enable them to apply for a loan with a local lending/banking company for a house.

18C Micro-Enterprise Assistance

Objective: Expanded Economic Opportunities (EO-2)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To offer small business loans to low-and moderate income persons.

Annual Goal: 2

As in the last five-year grant period, the City will continue to offer the Micro-Enterprise Loan Program. Small businesses are essential for the creation of jobs. The loan program is designed to provide access to capital for persons of low-and moderate income who are not able to secure traditional financing to start or expand a small business. A micro-enterprise is defined as a business that has five or fewer employees, with one or more actually owning the business.

18A ED Direct: Direct Financial Assistance to For-Profit Businesses

Objective: Expanded Economic Opportunities (EO-2)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To provide financial assistance (loans) to for-profits businesses to create jobs or eliminate slum and blight.

Annual Goal: 2

As in the last five-year grant period, the City will continue to offer direct loans from the revolving loan fund. The loan can be used to acquire property, clear structures, construct or rehabilitate a building and/or purchase equipment (with a class life of 5+years). To be eligible, a for-profit business must be located within Sandusky City Limits. A Revolving Loan may not exceed 50% of total project cost. All other sources of funding must be documented and in place before any City Revolving Loan Funds can be disbursed. A subrecipient consultant will screen applications and provide analysis for the Revolving Loan Fund committee. In addition, the consultant will prepare all legal loan documents, applicable contract documents and record appropriate documents at the Erie County Recorder's Office.

14E Downtown Building Improvement Program

Objective: Expanded Economic Opportunities (EO-3)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To provide loans to publicly or privately owned commercial or industrial properties to rehabilitate the exterior and/or to correct building code violations.

Annual Goal: 2

As in the last five-year grant period, The City of Sandusky Department of Development has established a Downtown Building Improvement Program, which offers financial assistance to property owners or tenants seeking to renovate or restore their commercial building facades or to correct building code violations. The low-and moderate income area to be targeted is defined as Decatur Street, East Adams Street, Hancock Street and East Shoreline Drive. The City of Sandusky may lend up to one-half of the cost of the rehabilitation but not to exceed \$40,000. Applicants must provide, at minimum, the other half of the necessary rehabilitation funds.

21D Fair Housing

Objective: Suitable Living Environment (SL-1)

Long-Term: 5 years

Proposed Accomplishment: To promote and educate residents about fair housing

Annual Goal: 250

Many Sandusky residents are unaware of their fair housing rights and how to recognize discrimination or what to do about it. People with disabilities have difficulty finding suitable and accessible housing. The City intends to promote fair housing rights, resources, trainings, seminars and counseling to affirmatively further fair housing in Sandusky.

Antipoverty Strategy (91.215 (h))

1. Describe the jurisdiction's goals, programs, and policies for reducing the number of poverty level families (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually). In consultation with other appropriate public and private agencies, (i.e. TANF agency) state how the jurisdiction's goals, programs, and policies for producing and preserving affordable housing set forth in the housing component of the consolidated plan will be coordinated with other programs and services for which the jurisdiction is responsible.
2. Identify the extent to which this strategy will reduce (or assist in reducing) the number of poverty level families, taking into consideration factors over which the jurisdiction has control.

5-Year Strategic Plan Antipoverty Strategy response:

American Fact Finder (2005-2007) estimates that 16.3 percent of families are below the poverty level in Sandusky. The City of Sandusky does not have formal jurisdiction over poverty level families. It is primarily the responsibility of the Erie County Department of Job and Family Services to provide services such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, Nursing Home Care, Child Care and Cash Assistance.

The City will give priority in its selection of applicants for its CDBG programs to those with a total household income of less than 80% of median income. In this way, it can direct non-cash housing assistance to households below the poverty level, so as to at least reduce their costs of maintaining adequate housing. It will also direct some CDBG funds to supporting the efforts of non-profit agencies in creation of affordable housing for low income and special needs population.

The City will focus on reducing poverty by offering job training and life skills classes to individuals within the community. The City will offer a housing down payment assistance and NeighborWorks America homeownership training program as well.

The City will have the most impact on poverty level families by making jobs available in the community through its economic development programs. Economic development loans are tied to job creation and the City has budgeted approximately \$700,000 of its Economic Development RLF funds to provide these loans. The City will cross-market programs, so that an individual seeking services not provided in Sandusky, can access the United Way's 2-1-1 number to be guided to the proper agency for assistance.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Coordination (91.315 (k))

1. (States only) Describe the strategy to coordinate the Low-income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) with the development of housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income families.

3-5 Year Strategic Plan LIHTC Coordination response:

NOT APPLICABLE.

NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS

Specific Special Needs Objectives (91.215)

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve over a specified time period.
2. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by the strategic plan.

5-Year Non-homeless Special Needs Analysis response:

Over the next five years, the City intends to focus on the special needs of the aging and disability community as a priority. As mentioned in the mission statement, the City plans to improve housing conditions for the aging and disability community. The City intends to do this because the majority of houses in Sandusky were built without any accessibility and safety features for older adults or people with disabilities. The City expects to collaborate with Serving Our Seniors, Erie County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Firefighter's Union and Sandusky City Fire Department, Erie-Huron Community Action Commission, in order to implement the programs.

The City will improve the accessibility in homes for the aging and disability community which will allow residents to remain in their homes, instead of seeking other accommodations. The City will implement an emergency home repair/accessibility improvement program to help low-and moderate individuals.

Another priority for the special needs population is transportation. The City of Sandusky manages the Sandusky Transit System (STS). STS is a demand responsive, curb-to curb, advance reservation, shared ride transportation service that is provided within the City of Sandusky, most of Perkins Township and within the City of Huron. The Sandusky Transit System is open to the general public including persons with disabilities. In addition, STS vehicles are wheelchair accessible.

There are no restrictions on the purpose or number of trips which may be taken on a time-and-space available basis. Riders are required to share the vehicle with

other riders who are traveling at the same time in the same direction. The number of carry-on items is limited to what the rider can comfortably carry.

The STS transportation service is funded in part by the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration and various local contributing agencies.

In August 2008, the City of Sandusky, Ohio was awarded a \$100,000 Job Access Reverse Commute Grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through the Office of Transit of the Ohio Department of Transportation. The grant allows the Sandusky Transit System to begin a deviated route through the City of Sandusky connecting with the Milan Road/Route 250 retail and commercial corridor which began in March 2009.

The grant was the result of a successful coordination effort among several local agencies. Local matching funds for the grant are being provided by the Department of Jobs and Family Services, Serving Our Seniors, and the Sandusky Erie Community Foundation. The new service will run hourly between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. It is the first evening transit service in Sandusky. It will help serve an area where evening bus service was cited as a need as well as the lack of other transportation options for area residents.

Over the next five years, the City intends to build upon the Job Access Reverse Commute Grant with CDBG funds. The City will increase its capacity of providing affordable, public transportation to low- and moderate-income individuals such as the elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental), persons with alcohol or other drug addiction, persons with HIV/AIDS, and public housing residents. Eligible low- and moderate incomes will be able to receive a discounted or no-fee bus pass to travel to their job or other places in the community. By partnering with STS, the City will be able to increase services to those in need of finding and getting to a job during this economic recession.

Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources include the following: Serving Our Seniors, Erie County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Firefighter's Union and Sandusky City Fire Department, and Erie-Huron Community Action Commission, Sandusky Transit System, Ohio Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration.

Non-homeless Special Needs (91.205 (d) and 91.210 (d)) Analysis (including HOPWA)

*Please also refer to the Non-homeless Special Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Estimate, to the extent practicable, the number of persons in various subpopulations that are not homeless but may require housing or supportive services, including the elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families), persons with alcohol or other drug addiction, victims of domestic violence, and any other categories the jurisdiction may specify and describe their supportive housing needs. The jurisdiction can use the Non-Homeless Special Needs Table (formerly

Table 1B) of their Consolidated Plan to help identify these needs.

*Note: HOPWA recipients must identify the size and characteristics of the population with HIV/AIDS and their families that will be served in the metropolitan area.

2. Identify the priority housing and supportive service needs of persons who are not homeless but may or may not require supportive housing, i.e., elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families), persons with alcohol or other drug addiction by using the Non-homeless Special Needs Table.
3. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.
4. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.
5. To the extent information is available, describe the facilities and services that assist persons who are not homeless but require supportive housing, and programs for ensuring that persons returning from mental and physical health institutions receive appropriate supportive housing.
6. If the jurisdiction plans to use HOME or other tenant based rental assistance to assist one or more of these subpopulations, it must justify the need for such assistance in the plan.

5-Year Non-homeless Special Needs Analysis response:

Using data provided by U.S. Census American FactFinder (2005-2007), U.S. 2000 Census Data and statistical data from the 2004 Consolidated Plan, the greatest need is the aging and disability community. There are 4,228 (16.4 percent) adults age 65 years and older and there are 4,757 (20.2 percent) people with disabilities in Sandusky based on an overall household population of 25,364. The numbers in the other categories are small and although important, not as significant as the aging and disability populations. Please refer to Table 1B for additional estimated numbers.

The priority housing and supportive service needs of persons who are not homeless but may require supportive housing is the aging and disability community in Sandusky. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 12.7 percent of the national population is over the age of 65. In the Sandusky, the population over 65 is 15.1 percent which is 2.7 percent higher than the national average. The American Fact Finder American Communities Survey Estimates (2005-2007) found that 20 percent or 4,757 residents reported a disability with 45 percent or 2,141 of those being 65 and older. In addition, the Special Needs (Non-Homeless) Table illustrates that the largest concentration of unmet needs are older adults, and the frail elderly along with people with physical and then developmental disabilities.

The Mental Health and Recovery Board which serves Sandusky City reports strategic initiatives in three areas: 1) Providing additional housing for persons with severe and persistent mental illness, 2) strengthening the supports for Sandusky Municipal Court's efforts to provide treatment alternatives for misdemeanants suffering from addiction, parenting, and mental health problems, and 3) reducing "incivilities" in the city's neighborhoods by adding behavioral

health treatment and prevention to traditional Community Development activities.

The additional housing will come from the renovation of an abandoned motel on the west end of the city, which will be converted into efficiency housing for clients with mental illness who have made progress with their recovery and are now able to live independently with on-site housing supports. In cooperation with the Volunteers of America, this facility will form part of a range of housing options created to support peaceful re-integration into the community.

Providing aggressive treatment alternatives to the municipal court, especially with the help of previously under-utilized funds from the Drivers Intervention Treatment Fund, is expected to ultimately increase treatment success and sharply reduce the frequency of repetitive relapses, particularly from persons coming before the court with DUI charges. This promotion of recovery is expected to also reduce the nuisances caused by over-drinking in the neighborhoods.

This involvement by the courts is also an essential element of the "Conestoga Program" being brought to Sandusky after development in an adjacent county. Its purpose is to reduced "incivilities" within a particular geographic area by saturating the population with easily available, affordable mental health and addiction treatment to all in need. With the court's involvement to ensure treatment compliance, it is expected that problem behaviors will substantially decrease, resulting in stabilized community morale and consequent improved property valuations.

Over the next five years, the City intends to specifically focus on the aging and disability community as its priority. As mentioned in the mission statement, the City intends to improve housing conditions for the aging and disability community (i.e. elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental). The City intends to do this because the majority of houses in Sandusky were built without any accessibility features for older adults or people with disabilities. By specifically allocating funds over the next five years, the City will improve the accessibility in homes for the aging and disability community which will allow residents to remain in their homes, instead of seeking other accommodations. Furthermore, this program will reduce the burden upon an already overstressed system for aging and disability housing by allowing people that currently reside in their homes to remain.

The integration of accessibility enhancements in older rental and owner-occupied housing is important to fair housing choice. The City of Sandusky will implement a handicapped accessibility program for low- and moderate-income residents for rental or owner-occupied homes to include such modifications as installation of ramps, grab bars and handrails.

The City expects to collaborate with the Erie-Huron CAC, Serving Our Seniors, the Erie County ARC, Easter Seals, the Erie County Health Department Home Health Care and Erie County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities in order to implement the program.

As with any grant program the funding is not endless, so this project was selected and ranked as the highest priority by the Consolidated Plan Advisory

Committee in order to make a significant impact to sustain and stimulate the community.

The City does not intend to use HOME or other based tenant-based rental assistance.

Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)

*Please also refer to the HOPWA Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. The Plan includes a description of the activities to be undertaken with its HOPWA Program funds to address priority unmet housing needs for the eligible population. Activities will assist persons who are not homeless but require supportive housing, such as efforts to prevent low-income individuals and families from becoming homeless and may address the housing needs of persons who are homeless in order to help homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing and independent living. The plan would identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs and summarize the priorities and specific objectives, describing how funds made available will be used to address identified needs.
2. The Plan must establish annual HOPWA output goals for the planned number of households to be assisted during the year in: (1) short-term rent, mortgage and utility payments to avoid homelessness; (2) rental assistance programs; and (3) in housing facilities, such as community residences and SRO dwellings, where funds are used to develop and/or operate these facilities. The plan can also describe the special features or needs being addressed, such as support for persons who are homeless or chronically homeless. These outputs are to be used in connection with an assessment of client outcomes for achieving housing stability, reduced risks of homelessness and improved access to care.
3. For housing facility projects being developed, a target date for the completion of each development activity must be included and information on the continued use of these units for the eligible population based on their stewardship requirements (e.g. within the ten-year use periods for projects involving acquisition, new construction or substantial rehabilitation).
4. The Plan includes an explanation of how the funds will be allocated including a description of the geographic area in which assistance will be directed and the rationale for these geographic allocations and priorities. Include the name of each project sponsor, the zip code for the primary area(s) of planned activities, amounts committed to that sponsor, and whether the sponsor is a faith-based and/or grassroots organization.
5. The Plan describes the role of the lead jurisdiction in the eligible metropolitan statistical area (EMSA), involving (a) consultation to develop a metropolitan-wide strategy for addressing the needs of persons with HIV/AIDS and their families living throughout the EMSA with the other jurisdictions within the EMSA; (b) the standards and procedures to be used to monitor HOPWA Program activities in order to ensure compliance by project sponsors of the requirements of the program.
6. The Plan includes the certifications relevant to the HOPWA Program.

3-5 Year Strategic Plan HOPWA response:

NOT APPLICABLE.

Specific HOPWA Objectives

1. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by the strategic plan.

3-5 Year Specific HOPWA Objectives response:

NOT APPLICABLE.

OTHER NARRATIVE

Include any Strategic Plan information that was not covered by a narrative in any other section.

Fair Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires each entitlement jurisdiction to certify that it is in compliance with the Consolidated Plan Final Rule, published in the Federal Register (24 CFR91.225). The Fair Housing Act of 1968 required that all HUD programs be administered in a manner that will "*affirmatively further fair housing.*"

The City of Sandusky has been hard hit by the economic downturn. With the decline of the manufacturing sector, the City is no longer as prosperous. The population in Sandusky is dwindling slowly. In 2000, there were 28,000 people living in Sandusky and now the Census Population estimates that approximately 25,000 residents remain. In 2000, foreclosures were non-existent and now the City posts the highest rate in Erie County and is ranked above the State's average. Vacancy rates and condemned homes continue to rise every year. The City has an unhealthy housing ratio of 30 percent owner-occupied and 70 percent rentals which causes additional City oversight and service problems. Graduation rates are below norm at 74.8 percent compared to the overall State rate of 86.9 percent. Unemployment has doubled to 7.9 percent and the median income is \$31,133 well below Erie County's average 42,733. Based on statistics, the following categories are identified as impediments to fair housing choice in this community:

Financial Assistance

As mentioned in this report, foreclosures are extremely high in Sandusky thus leading to a vast amount of vacant and abandoned properties. In order to stabilize the community and assist low- and moderate-income households, an Emergency Homelessness Prevention Program will be implemented. The Emergency Homelessness Prevention Program will enable homeowners or tenants to remain in their home instead of losing it through foreclosure or eviction due to a crisis beyond their control. The program will function as a grant requiring

participants to meet eligibility criteria and guidelines. The City also participates with the Erie County Foreclosure Task Force.

Lack of Accessible Housing for the Aging and People with Disabilities

The median year of the housing stock in Sandusky is 1949. While there is rental housing available for older adults with disabilities over the age of 55, there is limited housing available for younger people with mental and/or physical disabilities. The integration of accessibility enhancements in older rental housing is important to fair housing choice.

Over the next five years, the City of Sandusky will implement a handicapped accessibility program for low- and moderate-income residents for rental or owner-occupied homes to include such modifications as installation of ramps, grab bars and handrails.

Fair Housing Awareness in particular with the Aging & Disability Community

Many impediments to fair housing could be addressed if people were better informed. Individuals often times lack information on fair housing, specifically regarding their rights and their responsibilities on housing issues and/or where to find accessible rental properties. Hence over the next five years, the City will develop an effective marketing program which will entail promotion of fair housing activities and resources to the residents of Sandusky. The marketing program will create awareness, so that residents are informed about fair housing.

ACTIONS TO ADDRESS IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE

The 2009 analysis indicates that Sandusky continues to do well in avoiding systematic impediments to fair housing choice. However, the City recognizes that barriers to fair housing exist and will pursue the following steps to continue to *"affirmatively further fair housing choice."*

Financial Assistance

The City will offer an Emergency Homelessness Prevention Program to low- and moderate-income people who have fallen upon hard times and are at risk of losing their homes. The program will provide provides immediate short-term help for destitute families to remedy or prevent homelessness. The City will:

Provide grants up to \$2,500 per homeowner to be used for mortgage or rent payments because of crisis beyond the control of the homeowner. The family must be facing homeless, eviction, foreclosure or past due payments that resulted from a crisis beyond one's control such as loss of job or medical circumstances.

1. In order to provide an educated approach to financial responsibility, participants would be required to attend homebuyer counseling classes prior to receiving the grant funds.
2. The one-time grant valued up to \$2,500 for no more than three consecutive months would assist homeowners or renters that have demonstrated a crisis

- beyond one's control.
3. The grant funds will be installments sent directly to the mortgage or leasing agency.
 4. The homeowner or tenant must use the property as principal residence.
 5. The homebuyer must meet credit standards and income guidelines of the City and HUD.
 6. The property must be a single-family house, condominium, or rental unit within the limits of the City of Sandusky.

Additional household eligibility requirements:

- a) A written statement from the landlord that the household is in danger of eviction, or that eviction procedures are expected to begin, can be accepted as evidence the household is facing eviction. The statement must be signed and dated by the landlord and must contain enough information to determine if an issuance of emergency assistance will prevent eviction.
- b) The family must demonstrate how it will resolve past due payments and pay future rent, mortgage, or utility payments after resolution of the crisis.
- c) The family must have exhausted all other resources first. Note: The family is not required to provide written verification that other resources have been exhausted unless there is reason to question the customer statement or there is a question regarding a specific resource.
- d) The value of the household's assets cannot exceed \$2000.00. Countable assets are those immediately available to the family members.
- e) The homeowner or tenant must meet HUD criteria of decent, safe and sanitary living conditions at time of grant award.

Lack of Accessible Housing for the Aging and People with Disabilities

Because the housing stock is incredibly old in Sandusky and even though the Fair Housing Act allows tenants or homeowners to make physical modifications to render an apartment accessible, fixed or otherwise, limited incomes present a financial barrier to a disabled person's ability to make physical modifications, and thus, is a barrier to the creation of accessible housing in Sandusky. The City will:

1. Develop an accessible rehabilitation program for homes and rental units.
2. Accessibility improvements will be limited up to \$8,000.
3. Repairs will be limited to the following: ramps, grab bars, handrails, walkways, doorways, automated doors, and bathrooms (accessible showers and bathtubs, walk-in showers, roll-under vanities, non-porous flooring such as non-slip tile or vinyl).
4. The renter or homeowner must meet HUD income guidelines and provide medical documentation of disability.

Fair Housing Awareness in particular with the Aging & Disability Community

Many Sandusky residents are unaware of their fair housing rights and how to recognize discrimination or what to do about it. People with disabilities have difficulty finding suitable and accessible housing. In order to promote fair housing awareness and resources, the City will:

1. Promote the Ohio Housing Locator (OhioHousingLocator.org) to landlords and property management companies (for free property registry sign-up) and to citizens of Sandusky to find a place to rent. It is a searchable directory of

- affordable, accessible rental housing. Home seekers can search by city, county or zip code, as well as by cost and unit size. Listings also offer information on amenities, supportive services and accessibility features.
2. Direct consumers to the Erie County Foreclosure Prevention Program in order to obtain information about foreclosure and how to avoid it.
 3. Partner with 2-1-1 to share fair housing awareness and information.
 4. Continue to assist and track incoming fair housing phone calls through the City's fair housing intake coordinator.
 5. Continue to support consumer educational programs through first-time homebuyer counseling and on-going fair housing presentations and training.
 6. Continue to provide information to the public on the City's housing programs via the website, brochures, posters, newsletters and public events.
 7. Continue to partner with agencies that assist the homeless.
 8. Continue to provide information to the public on tenant/landlord rights and laws.
 9. Continue to make fair housing and equal opportunity information available throughout the City (Development Department, Human Relations Commission and ADA Board).