

Will County Illinois
HUD Consolidated Plan
For Program Years 2020-2024
Summary

Will County Land Use Department
Community Development Division



Introduction

Will County receives annual grant allocations from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).

Two communities within the County, the City of Joliet and the Village of Bolingbrook, are entitled to receive funding directly from HUD but choose to jointly administer HUD grants with the County. The City of Joliet administers its own CDBG allocation and plays an administrative role for HOME-funded projects within the City. The Village of Bolingbrook plays an administrative role in CDBG-funded projects within the Village and does not play a role in the administration of the HOME Program.

The Community Development Division of the Will County Land Use Department is the lead entity for the Joliet-Will County HOME Consortium, the Urban County CDBG allocation and the ESG allocation and has oversight from the CDBG/HOME Advisory Board. As the lead entity, the Community Development Division is responsible for the development of the Consolidated Plan and the on-going administration of the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs on behalf of the County. The County administers some programs internally and uses subrecipients and contractors to administer others. The County works closely with financial institutions, contractors, developers, businesses, non-profit agencies, volunteers, the local Continuum of Care, and other governmental units and agencies to effectively administer the funding and carry out the goals and objectives of the Consolidated Plan.

The County’s jurisdiction differs slightly for each program. For CDBG and ESG, Will County includes the entire county except for the City of Joliet, which receives its own CDBG allocation. The Village of Bolingbrook qualifies for its own CDBG allocation but has elected to form a joint agreement that allows the County to act as the administrator for its allocation. Some communities, listed in the table below, have opted not to participate in the CDBG Urban County program. For the HOME program, the County partners with the City of Joliet to form the Joliet-Will County HOME Consortium. While the County serves as the lead entity, the City of Joliet plays an administrative role for HOME-funded projects within the City. The HOME Consortium serves the entire county.

Participating Communities			Opted Out
Beecher	Godley	Peotone	Braceville
Bolingbrook*	Homer Glen	Plainfield Village	Diamond
Braidwood	Joliet*	Rockdale	Lemont
Channahon	Lockport	Romeoville	Orland Park
Coal City	Manhattan	Shorewood	Park Forest
Crest Hill	Minooka	Symerton	Steger
Crete	Mokena	University Park	Tinley Park
Elwood	Monee	Wilmington	Naperville
Frankfort	New Lenox	Woodridge	Aurora

Grant Administration Framework

Community Development Division local priorities, strategies, and objectives are articulated in the current Consolidated Plan for a five-year period and Annual Action Plan for each program year. These planning tools are made available on the Will County Land Use website at: willcountylanduse.com

In administering grant funds during the current plan 5-year HUD Consolidated Plan (2020-2024), Will County Community Development Division within the Land Use Department, is committed to supporting the Fair Housing Act and the Department of Housing and Urban Development mission and aspires to **“build strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all”**

Guiding Principles

- **Strong** – A strong community is resilient and has functioning infrastructure, measures and processes in place to prevent, prepare, and respond to emergencies, natural disasters, and climate change.
- **Sustainable** – A sustainable community is fiscally responsible and integrates housing, transportation, economic and environmental goals to realize their vision for a more prosperous future.
- **Inclusive** – An inclusive community is equitable and welcoming to diverse groups of people. It creates safe space for all members to live with dignity, engage actively, and contribute to their community.

Funding Strategy

Aligning resources with priorities found in:

HUD Consolidated Plan 2020-2024

- preserving and expanding the supply of safe, decent, and diverse housing stock to increase affordable housing options in Will County;
- supporting water, sewer and drainage infrastructure improvements in identified low income areas of the County;
- promoting fair housing and equal access in communities;
- supporting programs, initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and revitalization efforts in areas with Neighborhood Redevelopment Plans, particularly Fairmont and Sugar Creek.

Will County Continuum of Care serving Will, Kendall and Grundy Counties

- supporting programs, initiatives and efforts to reduce homelessness and at-risk populations;

Will County Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) Collaborative

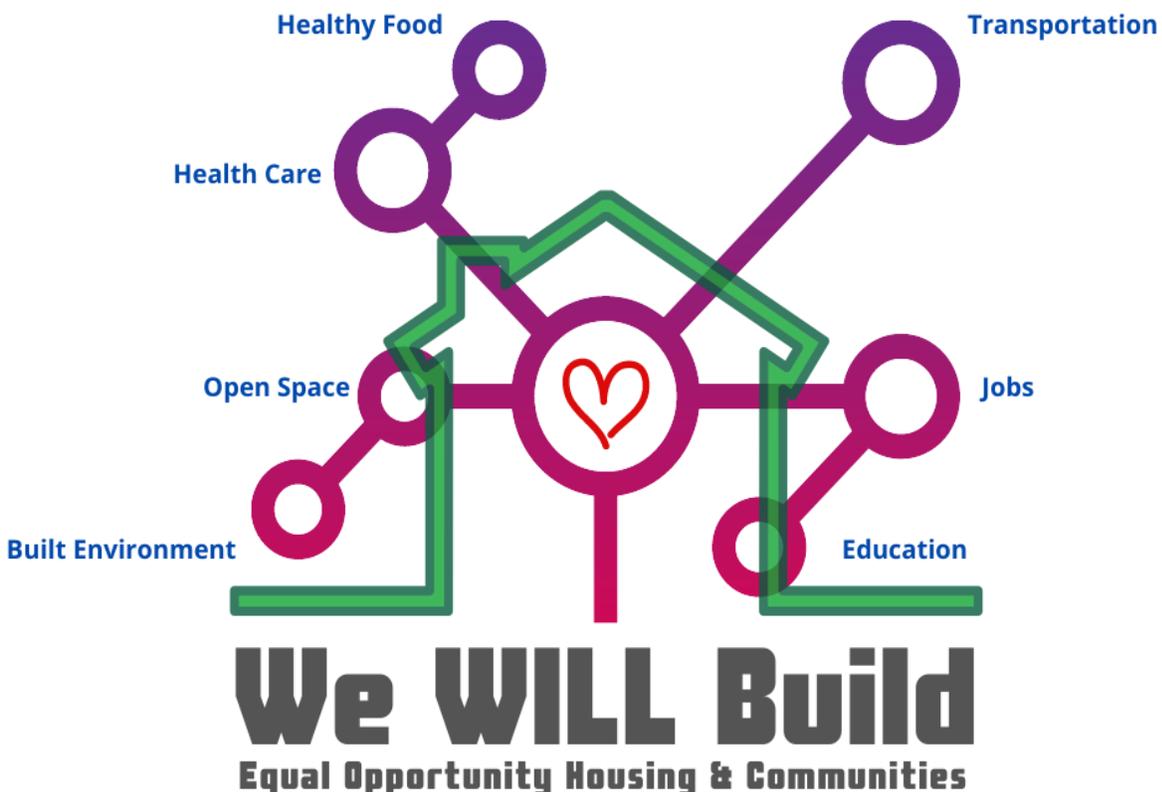
- supporting programs and initiatives in reducing food insecurities, health disparities and access inequities;

The priorities outlined above are supported by County funds and the following grants:

- The HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program, which supports the creation of housing opportunities for low-and moderate-income families;
- The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which supports a range of community development needs, including the construction of capital improvements and public facilities as well as the administration of public services; and
- The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program, which assists people in quickly regaining stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness.
- Abandoned Properties Program, which supports the demolition and clean-up of abandoned properties that add to blight in a community

Impact Strategy

The Division utilizes a fair housing initiative called **We WILL Build Equal Opportunity Housing & Communities** for community development education and outreach. Strong, sustainable and inclusive communities include diverse housing options, grounded in a safe built environment and connected to a network of healthy food options, health care, education, jobs, transportation, and open space. By focusing on housing, the mission is aligned with HUD, which seeks to utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life.



Objectives

The overarching purpose of these CDBG, HOME and ESG programs is to assist low- and moderate-income families and households, which are those that earn less than 80% of the area median income. The funds are used to pursue three goals:

Providing Decent Housing covers the wide range of housing activities that could be undertaken with CDBG funds. This objective focuses on housing activities where the purpose is to meet individual family or community housing needs.

Creating Suitable Living Environments relates to activities that are designed to benefit communities, families, or individuals by addressing issues in their living environment. This objective relates to activities that are intended to address a wide range of issues faced by LMI persons, from physical problems with their environment, such as poor quality infrastructure, to social issues such as crime prevention, literacy, or elderly health services.

Creating Economic Opportunities applies to activities related to economic development, commercial revitalization, or job creation.

Outcomes

The CPD Outcome Performance Measurement System utilizes the following three outcomes:

Availability/Accessibility applies to activities that make services, infrastructure, public services, public facilities, housing, or shelter available or accessible to LMI people, including persons with disabilities. In this category, accessibility does not refer only to physical barriers, but also to making the basics of daily living available and accessible to LMI people where they live.

Affordability applies to activities that provide affordability in a variety of ways to LMI people. It can include the creation or maintenance of affordable housing, basic infrastructure hook-ups, or services such as transportation or day care. Affordability is an appropriate objective whenever an activity is lowering the cost, improving the quality, or increasing the affordability of a product or service to benefit a low-income household.

Sustainability applies to activities that are aimed at improving communities or neighborhoods, helping to make them livable or viable by providing benefit to persons of LMI or by removing or eliminating slums or blighted areas, through multiple activities or services that sustain communities or neighborhoods.

In order to receive the CDBG, HOME, and ESG allocations from HUD, the County must carry out a planning process to identify the scope of housing and community development needs in its jurisdiction and how the available funding can best be used to meet those needs. This document, the County's Consolidated Plan, is the result of that planning process. The period for this plan begins on October 1st, 2020 and ends on September 30th, 2025. This time period covers Program Years 2020 through 2024. The contents of the plan are guided by the federal regulations set forth by HUD in 24 CFR Part 91. The full Consolidated Plan includes the following sections:

- **Process**

Outreach is a key component of any planning effort. This section describes the County's efforts to gather input from residents, especially those that may benefit from the plan, and from service providers, non-profits, and other government agencies that work within the areas of affordable housing and community development.

- **Needs Assessment**

The Needs Assessment details the County's levels of need for affordable housing by household type, income level, and race and ethnicity. It also includes a review of the needs of public housing, the homeless population, non-homeless populations that require supportive housing and services, and non-housing community development needs such as public facilities, public services, and infrastructure.

- **Market Analysis**

The Market Analysis reviews the current condition of the local housing market and economy. This information will help the County formulate the types of programs that will be effective given the current market conditions.

- **Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan describes how the County will use the resources available to meet the most pressing needs identified through the planning process. It includes a summary of the County's priority needs, an estimate of available funding, a summary of who will be undertaking the actions called for in the plan, and a set of numeric goals the County hopes to accomplish over the course of the five year plan.

- **FY2020 Annual Action Plan**

The first year Annual Action Plan is included in the first year of the Consolidated Plan and describes the resources available and the planned actions that the County will undertake in the first year of the plan.

HUD Consolidated Plan goals - Program Years 2020-2024

Provide decent, affordable housing

1. Improve Condition of Housing Stock

The County will use available federal resources to support the improvement of existing housing stock. This may include comprehensive rehabilitation programs or programs targeted to address a specific issue or clientele. This includes but is not limited to emergency repair programs, minor repair, and accessibility improvements for seniors and disabled populations.

2. Create New Affordable Housing

The County will use available federal resources to subsidize the development of new affordable housing units. Eligible projects may include new construction or the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing properties. Housing may be rental or homebuyer. The County will also provide support to tenant-based rental assistance programs with the goal of making existing, market rate rental properties affordable to low- and moderate-income populations.

3. Increase Homeownership

Homeownership is a traditional path for households to build equity and wealth and to invest in their community. The County will use available federal resources to provide down payment and closing cost assistance to income-eligible homebuyers. The County will also support counseling and educational programs to help low- and moderate-income households navigate the home buying process and prevent foreclosure.

Create suitable living environments

4. Reduce Homelessness

The County will use available federal resources to reduce the levels of homelessness in the community through prevention, re-housing, and support of existing emergency and transitional housing resources. The County will coordinate closely with the Continuum of Care, its member agencies, and other community stakeholders to prevent homelessness when possible and to reduce its impact on families and households when it does occur.

5. Eliminate Blighted Conditions

The County will use available federal resources to demolish and clear blighted structures to eliminate factors that contribute to neighborhood decline and make private investment and redevelopment more feasible.

6. Improve Neighborhood Infrastructure and Facilities

The County will use available federal resources to subsidize the rehabilitation or development of neighborhood facilities and infrastructure in order to improve the sustainability of older, low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Potential projects include streets, sidewalks, flood drainage, water lines, and sanitary sewer improvements. The County will also invest in neighborhood facilities that provide access to crucial services for residents.

7. Improve Public Services

The County will use available federal resources to increase access and availability of crucial social services to low- and moderate-income persons. Eligible public services include those targeted to specific populations, such as homeless, at-risk youth, young families (childcare), seniors, and the disabled. They also include programs aimed at increasing access to economic opportunity, such as job training and supportive services, and improving community health, such as programs that increase access to health care, mental health, and healthy food.

8. Planning, Administration, and Capacity Building

The County will use available federal funds to comply with the planning, administrative, and reporting requirements associated with the HUD grants. This goal includes actions to affirmatively further fair housing, conduct neighborhood planning efforts, and increase capacity of local stakeholders through technical assistance. A portion of funds may be granted to non-profit housing developers actively working on development projects to cover a portion of their operating costs.

9. Advance Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

This goal includes actions to affirmatively further fair housing and advance equal opportunity. Fair housing activities may include education, outreach, planning, and support for fair housing advocates. The County will support projects to reduce racial disparities in housing, health, education, and other areas that affect quality of life and access to opportunity in high need areas.

Expand economic opportunities.

10. Increase Economic Opportunities

The County will use available resources to programs and projects that create economic opportunity and access to suitable living environments. Funds will be used to help local businesses to respond to the on-going issues arising from COVID-19. Potential projects and programs include small business assistance programs, microenterprise programs, job training, and other supportive services to assist low- and moderate-income households.