



First Program Year Action Plan

The CPMP First Year Annual Action Plan includes the [SF 424](#) and Narrative Responses to Action Plan questions that CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, and ESG grantees must respond to each year in order to be compliant with the Consolidated Planning Regulations. The Executive Summary narratives are optional.

Narrative Responses

GENERAL

Executive Summary

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

Program Year 1 Action Plan Executive Summary:

The City Lawrence through its Community Development Department (CDD) seeks to create a healthy, vibrant city that stimulates balanced growth through economic development, housing options, neighborhood redevelopment, and support for Lawrence residents. CDD's four-pronged strategic approach includes:

- ***Strategic Investment.*** Pursue opportunities for planning, leveraging, utilizing and expanding resources at all levels.
- ***Asset Building.*** Pursue opportunities for wealth creation at all levels.
- ***Neighborhood Improvement.*** Pursue opportunities for preservation, development and improvements that create healthy, diverse neighborhoods.
- ***Household Stability.*** Pursue opportunities to support Lawrence residents to reach their full potential

To accomplish these goals, the CDD directly administers a variety of programs to serve the community's housing, neighborhood development, and economic development needs. Additionally, CDD provides grant funding to various agencies and non-profit organizations.

Highlight of the 2010-2011 Action Plan include:

- Implementation of Park Improvement Plan
- Historic Renovation of Lawrence History Center
- Provision of Homebuyer Education and Foreclosure Prevention Counseling
- Investment in Youth Leadership and Mentoring Programs
- Creation of the Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area
- Continuation of the Small Business Project

The goals and objectives of the Community Development Department are to create decent affordable housing, create suitable living environments, and provide economic opportunities. To that end, this plan outlines a strategy to undertake housing rehab, deleading, and affordable housing development exceeding \$1,290,000 and invest over \$176,500 in Infrastructure and Public Facility improvements; \$180,000 in Economic Development activities, over \$275,000 in Public Service activities; \$465,000 in park improvements in low-income areas.

The Year One Action Plan has a renewed focus on community engagement. Self help and volunteerism has become one of the City's long term initiatives under the just completed new Consolidated Plan. One project that will become a prototype for implementation of this approach is the Small Business Responsibility Project, which was funded under the 2010 CDBG Program (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010) from reprogrammed public service funds. The program goal is to help Small Businesses along neighborhood commercial corridors to grow and continue to be important providers of goods and services and stable influences in the low and moderate income neighborhoods they serve.

The complete list of funded activities as recommended by the Mayor and approved by City Council is found below and detailed activity sheets in the HUD prescribed format are included in the Appendix.

Appl. #	ORGANIZATION	PROJECT	FY11 AWARD
N/A	Community Development Dept.	FY11 Parks Improvement Plan	\$465,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Infrastructure Improvements	\$126,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Lead Abatement Match	\$225,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	CDBG Rehabilitation	\$100,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Storefront Improvement	\$80,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	SEC 108 Loan Payment FTI	\$36,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Admin. (20% cap)	\$340,000
Public Facilities			
FY11-23	German Old Folk's Home	Security System	\$6,000
FY11-27	Lawrence History Center	Historic Renovation	\$44,500
Public Service			
FY11-2	Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence	Learning Center	\$20,000
FY11-3	Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc	Project Senior	\$10,000
FY11-4	Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc	Roberto Clemente Youth Academic & Sports Instruction	\$25,000
FY11-5	Asian Center of Merrimack Valley	Developing Academic Skills of Asian Youth	\$10,000
FY11-7	Esperanza Academy	Graduate Support Program	\$10,000
FY11-8	Neighbors In Need	Elder Food Pantries	\$10,000
FY11-10	Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc	L/MCC Neighbors In Action	\$10,000
FY11-15	Merrimack Valley YMCA	Music Clubhouse	\$10,000
FY11-15	Greater Lawrence Community Boating Program Inc	Youth Boating Opportunities	\$7,500
FY11-17	Food for the World	Support for Food Pantry	\$25,000
FY11-19	Food for the World	Feeding the Homeless Project	\$10,000
FY11-20	Groundwork Lawrence	Green Team	\$10,000
FY11-24	Lawtown Boxing Gym Inc	Boxing Program	\$15,000
FY11-28	Lawrence Family Development & Education Fund	Language Barrier Assistance/Civics Education	\$10,000
FY11-29	Arlington Community Trabajando Inc	Foreclosure Prevention Partnership	\$40,000
FY11-30	Arlington Community Trabajando Inc	FTHB and Post Purchase Workshops	\$10,000
FY11-31	Lawrence CommunityWorks Inc	Movement City (not subject to PS cap)	\$15,000
FY11-32	Lawrence Council on Aging	Wellness Program	\$20,000
FY11-34	Northeast Independent Living Program	Lawrence Access in Motion Program	\$10,000
CDBG TOTAL			1,700,000

HOME Projects		
Housing Rehabilitation Programs		\$122,000
First Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance		\$200,000
CHDO Operating /Capacity set aside		\$25,000
CHDO Projects set Aside		\$167,400
Administrative Costs (10% cap.)		\$111,600
Housing Development Projects		\$500,000
HOME TOTAL		\$1,126,000

In the months leading up to this Year One Action Plan, CDD made tremendous progress in securing resources necessary and implementing programs and projects to address existing community needs. CDD was awarded its fifth and sixth Parkland Acquisition and Renovation for Communities (PARC) grant, its second Community Action Development Grant (CDAG), and a significant Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Grant. These funds will be essential in complementing activities proposed within the upcoming Annual Action Plans. CDD has been able to build internal capacity through the retention of qualified professional staff, by implementing improved management and monitoring systems, and participating in HUD technical assistance trainings. A number of significant projects were additionally completed including Essex Street improvements, Gateway Redevelopment and Brownfield remediation.

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 during the next year. Where appropriate, the jurisdiction should estimate the percentage of funds the jurisdiction plans to dedicate to target areas.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The City of Lawrence has seen an increasing number of residents in the past twenty years. As of the 2000 Census, Lawrence is home to 72,043 residents, compared to 70,207 in 1990. The American Community Survey estimates the City is now home to 72,388 residents. While Lawrence has been viewed as an “immigrant city” for many

years, this is especially true today. Lawrence is an ethnically and culturally diverse city.

Yet, the most significant change is the number of residents who live in poverty. The median income of the City has not kept pace with that of the region or of the Commonwealth.

Lawrence Population

	1980	1990	2000
Lawrence Population	63,175	70,207	72,043

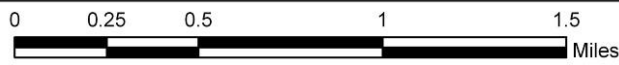
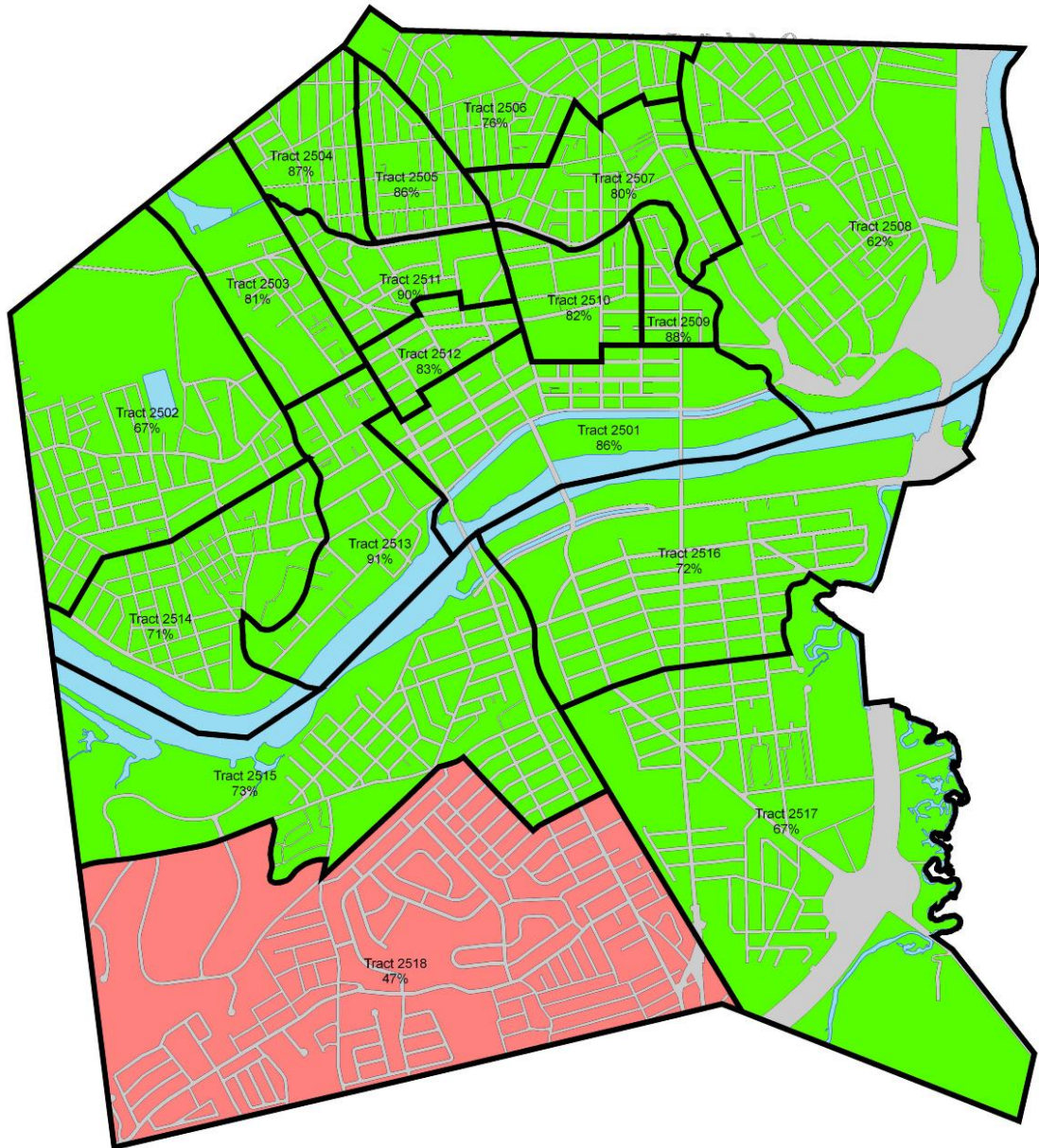
Median Family Income	1980	1990	2000
Lawrence	\$7,367	\$26,398	\$31,809
Essex County	\$9,141	\$45,794	\$63,476
Massachusetts	\$21,166	\$44,367	\$61,664
% of Essex County	80.6%	57.6%	50.1%
% of Massachusetts	34.8%	59.5%	51.6%

Per Capita Income	1980	1990	2000
Lawrence	\$3,198	\$9,686	\$13,360
Essex County	\$3,490	\$17,586	\$26,358
Massachusetts	\$7,459	\$17,224	\$25,952
% of Essex County	91.6%	55.1%	50.7%
% of Massachusetts	42.8%	56.2%	51.5%

This increase in the number of families living below the poverty level has resulted in most of the City being comprised of low and moderate income areas as defined by HUD. Of the 18 census tracts in Lawrence, 17 are entirely CDBG eligible. Only Tract 2518.00 is not eligible on a low/moderate income area basis.

Minority concentrations (greater than 50%) exist in 13 census tracts. The City expects to implement the programs that serve low income residents across all eligible census tracts.

Lawrence, MA Low/Mod Percentage (by census tract)



GIS Services:
Lawrence IT Department
Mayor William Lantigua

The City proposes to predominately expend its CDBG allocation within these eligible census tracts. Furthermore, the City has prioritized eligible projects within its' two Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSA), the Arlington Neighborhood and the North Common NRSA. CDD plans to undertake a Community Gardens program in both NRSAs. Playing field lighting and a public facility will be completed with PARC funding at the Howard Playstead in the Arlington NRSA. CDD will continue the Garden/Newbury REO rehabilitation in the North Common NRSA. NSP-funded activity will take place in both NRSAs.

2. Describe the basis for allocating investments geographically within the jurisdiction (or within the EMSA for HOPWA) (91.215(a) (1)) during the next year and the rationale for assigning the priorities.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

These public investments will be in direct response to priority needs that are detailed at length throughout the Consolidated Plan. The needs were identified through a collaborative process with the Lawrence Housing Authority, the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, which is the recognized anti-poverty agency, the Continuum of Care for Homeless, the City's Health Task Force, and numerous other local agencies. Consultations were conducted with leadership within these organizations as well as the Regional Transportation Agency, the Regional Planning Agency, and the Regional Employment Board. Non-profit and public agencies at the state and city level were additionally consulted.

The City contacted adjacent governments to share the findings of the regional consultations and to gain input on opportunities for regional coordination.

The Annual Action Plan process adhered to the approved Citizen Participation Plan which includes outreach through both consultations and public hearings. The process included:

- A web based citizen survey of Lawrence residents and those employed in the City
- Needs assessment surveys distributed by human service agencies at key points of service delivery
- Stakeholder/key person interviews
- Round table focus groups conducted with Public Housing Residents and Head Start Parents
- A 30-day public comment period commencing on April 8, 2010

Research sources included the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, Policy Map, Warren Group Foreclosures, the housing reports generated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, MassHousing and the Massachusetts Public Health Department.

CDD implemented a public solicitation process by which programs are considered for inclusion within the Annual Action Plan. As part of the review process, the City's eight-member Community Development Advisory Board (CDAB) evaluates and makes recommendations to the Mayor on funding requests.

The investment of CDBG funds will be based on whether the activity falls within a City of Lawrence funding priority, whether the service is an eligible activity, and whether the service or need meets a national objective. In addition, the activity must meet one of the following CDBG objectives: (1) provide a suitable living environment; (2) provide decent housing; and (3) provide economic opportunity

Additionally, resources will be allocated to maximize the benefits to residents within target areas. While public infrastructure, parks, open space, and public facility type projects will be exclusively within targeted areas, other strategic investments will be made for the benefit of low and moderate income residents. For meeting the high priority needs of the community such as job creation and economic development may result in public investment outside low/moderate census tracts.

HOME Investment Partnership Funds (HOME) will be utilized city-wide to directly assist homebuyers, provide rehabilitation assistance to existing homeowners, support abatement of Lead-Based Paint Hazards, and produce and/or preserve affordable housing.

Production and preservation of affordable housing will be undertaken by development entities, including non-profit Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), which may receive capacity building assistance

3. Describe actions that will take place during the next year to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

Through the Consolidated Plan process, a number of obstacles to meeting needs were identified. Each identified obstacle along with actions to overcome is listed below.

Obstacle: *The tremendous increase in demand due to the current economic crisis. More and more families are struggling to “make ends meet” relying more heavily on public*

services and programs. This challenge is compounded by a reduction in existing service programs in recent years.

Action: CDD has provided public service funding to support vulnerable populations and will seek to strengthen existing networks of human service providers.

Obstacle: *the limitations of traditional housing resources within “Weak Markets”.*

Weak Markets are defined in part as housing markets where the cost to develop housing exceeds the after improved value as well as the ability of a moderate income households to afford monthly housing costs. Existing affordable housing resources are designed to produce or preserve affordable housing, often with the unintended results of concentrating families living in poverty. The absence of funding for neighborhood revitalization in cities with weak or distressed housing markets, while partially attributable to resource scarcity, is an ongoing challenge.

Action: CDD through its DHCD Gateway Action Plus activities will advocate for revisions to the Commonwealth’s housing and neighborhood revitalization strategies. CDD will advocate for the Commonwealth to dedicate of housing resources that are effective in revitalizing weak market neighborhoods through the creation of market-rate units and economically diverse neighborhoods.

Obstacle: The depth of housing abandonment and foreclosures has impacted municipal tax revenue thereby compromising the City’s ability to deliver basic services. Healthy neighborhoods require an appropriate level of Municipal services. When lacking these services, spiraling disinvestment and deferred maintenance leads to further decline.

Action: CDD has dedicated significant resources towards public infrastructure and parks/open space projects with a goal of creating healthy neighborhoods where people choose to live, work, and recreate. Additionally, CDD will operate housing rehabilitation and lead abatement programs that assist owners who are financially unable to maintain/improve their properties.

Obstacle: 32.3% of Lawrence residents are foreign-born and traditionally underserved. Recent immigrants have complex needs. They must cope with learning English, adapt to a new lifestyle, find employment and develop job skills, introduce children to a new education system, and adjust to other challenges of acclimation

Action: CDD has funded programs to support foreign-born and speakers of languages other than English.

4. Identify the federal, state, and local resources expected to be made available to address the needs identified in the plan. Federal resources should include Section 8 funds made available to the jurisdiction, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and competitive McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act funds expected to be available to address priority needs and specific objectives identified in the strategic plan.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The City designates CDD to administer the CDBG and HOME programs. In addition to the two formula grants, the City currently receives additional federal funds including: McKinney-Vento Homeless funds, Economic Development (EDA), Section 108, and EPA funds. CDD also administers to competitive HUD grants, the Neighborhood Stabilization Grant program awarded by the Commonwealth’s Department of Housing and Community Development and the Lead Based Paint Hazard Control Grant.

In addition, CDD will be the single point of contact with HUD for the two one-time American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 grants, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-R) and Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) as well as the Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA) of 2008.

The following tables provide the summary of the funds to be utilized by the City in the implementation of its community development and housing efforts

Annual HUD Grants	Planned Funding	Planned Uses
CDBG	\$1,898,296	Detailed in Appendix
HOME	\$1,112,648	Detailed in Appendix
McKinney-Vento	\$536,814	Homeless Programs
Stimulus Funds		
CDBG-R	\$464,372	Public Infrastructure and Improvements
HPRP	\$710,503	Homeless Services and Re-housing Support
HUD Competitive Grants		
NSP 1 Grant (thru State)	\$1,750,000	Acquisition , rehab, demolition, development
Lead Based Paint Hazard Control Grant	\$3,000,000	Lead Abatement
Other Federal Grants		
EPA Brownfields	\$800,000	Remediation activity
EDA	\$2,000,000	Union Crossing Infrastructure

Community Development Block Grant

The Community Development Block Grant is authorized by Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The CDBG program provides annual grants to

states, large cities and counties for a broad range of activities that preserve and develop viable urban communities. The program’s principal beneficiaries are low- to moderate-income households that are at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI). The purpose of the Community Development Block Grant, as set out in the law, is to “develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low- and moderate- income.”

- Projects must be eligible under the program regulations available under CDBG and are subject to the requirements of the amended CDBG regulations and;
- Projects must meet one of three National Objectives of the CDBG program established by Congress, which require that activities must:
 - Provide a benefit to low- and moderate-income people (70% of all CDBG funds spent by a city must provide benefit to low and moderate income people)
 - Reduce slums and blight
 - Address urgent community development needs

HOME Program

The HOME program provides formula grants to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy and/or rehabilitate affordable homes for rent or purchase by low- to moderate-income people. HOME is the largest block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households.

A number of special conditions apply to the use of HOME funds. Most Participating Jurisdictions must match every dollar of HOME funds but Lawrence is exempt because of its high poverty rate. Participating Jurisdictions must insure that HOME funded housing units remain affordable in the long term. Participating Jurisdictions have two years to commit funds and five years to spend funds. The HOME program requires that 15% of HOME funds be committed for activities performed by Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO).

Other Federal Funds

McKinney-Vento Act Funds

The City of Lawrence works with more than 55 non-profits, social service agencies, housing developers, and faith-based groups throughout the year to implement a

Continuum of Care strategy to address homelessness in Lawrence. Federal McKinney-Vento Act funding for HUD's FY '09 is \$536,814.

CDBG-R funds in the amount of \$464,372 were awarded based upon an application submitted to HUD on May 20, 2009. CDD funded a number of projects with *CDBG-R* including:

- *Demolition of Truell Building*

The City of Lawrence funded the demolition of the building located at 372-386 Essex Street, commonly known as the Truell Building. The building had been abandoned for many years and had been condemned as an unsafe structure. The demolition was part of phase II of the Essex Street Redevelopment and will create new space for the continued expansion of new and existing business in this vital area.
- *Essex Street Parking Expansion*

The City of Lawrence has constructed new parking areas on city owned vacant lots located at 122-124 Essex Street and 158-160 Essex Street. The construction included the grading and resurfacing of the lots with asphalt and appropriate planting of trees and shrubbery. With the opening of new service businesses relating to the anticipated opening of the new citizenship and immigration facility in this area, accompanied by a significant increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic, there will be greatly increased congestion and a shortage of parking capacity.
- *Senior Center*

The City of Lawrence continued the expansion of the Lawrence Senior Center located on Haverhill Street by adding computer and job training rooms, and exercise and health maintenance facilities

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program Funds

The strategic use of HPRP funds will further two goals – ending chronic homelessness and creating permanent housing solutions. Six non-profit organizations will provide a range of services including temporary financial assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services to homeless families.

Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant

The City of Lawrence received a three-year, \$3,000,000 Lead Based Paint Hazard Control Grant in 2007. The grant is set to expire in 2010 but the City intends to apply for additional funds. The City has established a partnership with the Greater Lawrence

Community Action Council which provides community outreach for the project, and is overseen by the Lawrence Lead Abatement Program. When appropriate, CDBG or HOME funded housing rehabilitation follows many of the units treated for lead to further increase the quality of housing stock.

EPA Brownfields

The City continues to receive excellent support for Brownfields assessment and remediation. Since 1996, Lawrence has received a total of \$1.7M in EPA Brownfields grants, including \$800,000 in 4 Brownfields grants funds for FYs 2007 - 2010. (One of these grants included a first-time \$200k petroleum grant). In 2009, through the efforts of the City’s Brownfields project officer (who organized a community Brownfields team to provide local input), a prioritized Brownfields site inventory was completed and is currently being implemented for assessment and clean-up work.

State and Local

The City utilizes several non-federal sources of funding to address the priority need of the City as identified in the ConPlan. Those funds are summarized below.

Non-Federal Resources		
State Stabilization Funds	\$1,000,000	Rehab of Foreclosed Properties
MHIC	\$2,000,000	Rehab of Foreclosed Properties
State CDAG	\$2,000,000	Union Crossing Infrastructure
Leveraged Funds - Union Crossing	\$20,000,000	Affordable Housing Development
Leveraged Funds - Sacred Heart	\$12,700,000	Affordable Housing Development
Leveraged Funds - Heritage Common	\$5,000,000	Affordable Housing Development
Leveraged Funds - Saunders School	\$4,250,000	Affordable Housing Development
Public Health Grants	\$102,000	Mayor's Health Task Force
DCR/PARC	\$905,385	Park improvements
New Market Tax Credits	\$445,069	Union Crossing Infrastructure
DCR Recreational Trails	\$50,000	Spicket River Greenway
State Transportation Programs	\$2,000,000	Mill district infrastructure
Transportation Bonds	\$1,000,000	Mill district infrastructure

State Housing Agency Funds

Financing for Lawrence’s HOME and other development programs are supplemented by state funds administered through the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. New affordable housing developments in the City are supported by City HOME funds in combination with other public and private funding resources. Housing projects in the City are also able to access funding from the Massachusetts Housing Innovations Fund and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston. In Program Year 1 the CDD will serve as a “local rehab agency” (LRA) for the Massachusetts Housing Partnership. This will allow the city to provide more housing purchase and rehab products.

Low-Income Housing Tax credits allocated by DHCD are available for the construction and rehabilitation of housing. Several projects are using this source of financing in Lawrence, with support from the City in the form of HOME funds, infrastructure improvements, and planning and zoning revisions or approvals. Examples of these housing developments recently completed include: Scarito Homes (10 units); Blakely Building (46 units); Union and Mechanic (9 units); and a substantial rehabilitation of the Washington Mills (155 units). The City saw the start of the Heritage Common renovations in the North Common NRSA, and the redevelopment of Sacred Heart School and the Saunders School on the south side of the City. In the new Year One we plan to begin redevelopment at Union Crossing (the former Southwick factory on the East Island). Support from the *Department of Housing and Community Development* for 2 million in infrastructure improvements will assist with the revitalization and mixed used development of the East Island in the Mill District.

The City also receives considerable support from the state Department of Conservation Services (DCS) for our Park Improvements Program, through a variety of programs, including Parkland Acquisition and Renovation for Communities (PARC), Urban River Visions, and Recreational Trails programs. Projects currently underway supported by these include: redevelopment of Cronin Park in the Arlington neighborhood, new equipment in Costello Park in South Lawrence, continued work on a former Brownfields site in the Arlington Mills district and planning for the next phase of the Spicket River Greenway project. In Year One of the new Five-Year Plan we will be undertaking lights and a public facility construction at Howard Playstead in the Arlington NRSA and developing Community Gardens on city-owned land.

The City continues to administer the Section 108 Loan Guarantee funding within the “Lawrence Gateway” project that is receiving significant Massachusetts Department of Transportation funding. Remediation, demolition, and planning have been completed.

Managing the Process

1. Identify the lead agency, entity, and agencies responsible for administering programs covered by the consolidated plan.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

In accordance with 24 CFR 91.200 (b), institutional structure, coordination of resources, and citizen participation for the Annual Action Plan are the same as described in the Consolidated Plan.

The Community Development Department (CDD), a Department of the City of Lawrence, is the lead agency for the development of the Consolidated Plan and the implementation of Community Development Block Grant, HOME, McKinney-Vento, Lead Based Paint Hazard Control funds, American Recovery & Reinvestment Act funds, and various federal and state housing and community development funds. The Director of the Community Development Department reports directly to the Mayor, who is elected in a City-wide election every four years.

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.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

CDD Staff, members of the Community Development Advisory Board and the Lawrence City Council are involved throughout the year in public meetings and hearings. This participation provides them the opportunity to address specified needs through the prioritization of goals, objectives, programs, activities and funding allocations.

The plan is developed through a collaborative process with the Lawrence Housing Authority, the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, which is the recognized anti-poverty agency, the Continuum of Care for the Homeless, the Mayor's Health Task Force, and numerous other local agencies. Consultations were conducted with leadership within these organizations as well as the Regional Transportation Agency, the Regional Planning Agency, and the Regional Employment Board. Non-profit and public agencies at the state and city level were additionally consulted.

The staff of CDD has regular contact with citizens, businesspersons, community institutions including higher education, service providers, housing developers, and faith based organizations. Through this daily involvement in the community, CDD is aware of

the full spectrum of housing and community development needs and have been able to respond programmatically to these community needs.

Among others, the following agencies, groups, non-profits and government entities were consulted in the formulation of the Plan:

Lawrence Housing Authority
Greater Lawrence Community Action Council
Lawrence CommunityWorks
ValleyWorks
Lawrence Senior Center
Fidelity House Human Services
Windsor House
The Psychological Center (Women’s View, Pegasus)
Greater Lawrence Family Health Center
Lazarus House Ministries (Corpus Christi, Bethany House)
Northeast Independent Living Program Inc.
The Lawrence/Methuen Community Coalition
Lawrence Neighborhood Associations
Planning Board – City of Lawrence
Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce
Groundwork Lawrence
The Merrimack Valley YMCA
U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Northeast Center for Healthy Communities
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
United Way of Merrimack Valley
YWCA of Greater Lawrence
Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council
Northern Essex Community College
Lawrence Public Schools

In addition to the consultations list above, the Planning process included:

- A web based citizen survey of Lawrence residents and those employed in the City
- Needs assessment surveys distributed by human service agencies at key points of service delivery including targeted outreach to HeadStart Parents
- Stakeholder/key person interviews
- Direct input from Public Housing Residents through roundtable discussions

The Action Plan also incorporates data collected from a variety of sources including the U.S. Census, the housing reports generated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, MassHousing and the Massachusetts Health Department among others.

To assist with the development of the Annual Action Plan, the City assembles an advisory panel of diverse community stakeholders to review applications received during the RFP process for CDBG funding each year. This entity leverages a broad range of public participation in the development of the Annual Action Plan and includes elected officials, residents, leaders of community organizations, and other community leaders.

The CDAB reviewed all proposed projects and made recommendations to the Mayor to put before City Council. A final Public Hearing is ordered prior to full City Council approval of those projects and programs submitted to HUD for the Annual Action Plan.

3. Describe actions that will take place during the next year to enhance coordination between public and private housing, health, and social service agencies.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

CDD aims to provide local and state leadership on affordable housing and community development issues. CDD continue to coordinate and maintain relationships with neighborhood groups, policy groups, and service providers. In addition to serving on numerous committees, the City takes every opportunity to involve broad public input in planning efforts, including the Consolidated Plan

Citizen Participation

1. [Provide a summary of the citizen participation process.](#)

Program Year 1 Action Plan Citizen Participation response:

The City of Lawrence through its Community Development Department designed a process that seeks to encourage the participation of low and moderate income residents, members of minority groups, persons with limited English, and persons with disabilities. Recent successful community engagement efforts include the Gateway Planning Grant, an Open Space Plan and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP).

CDD held two meetings to discuss and solicit input from the public. The meetings were advertised in Siglo21 (Spanish newspaper), The Eagle Tribune, on the local government access cable channel and on a local radio stations. Organizations working with or who have contacts with ethnic/racial minorities, non-English speaking persons, and people with disabilities were encouraged to participate. Flyers advertising the public meetings

were widely distributed to various public housing developments and community development agencies, including several email lists. In addition to the flyer, a public notice of all meetings was published in the newspaper.

Advertised public hearings were held on the following dates:

- December 8, 2009: To provide information about the Community Development Block Grant and priorities of the ConPlan, and to gather input regarding community needs.
- January 21, 2010: To provide information specific to the RFP process and to answer questions and give guidance to potential applicants.
- February 18, 2010: To provide a public forum for all applicants for CDBG funding to present their projects to the Advisory Board and the public
- April 20, 2010: Public Hearing at City Council to review and approve CDBG and HOME funding for 2010-2011 projects

Organizational consultations were conducted with non-profit housing developers, homeless service providers, the Anti-Poverty Agency, and human service entities serving youth, disabled, elders and non-English speaking persons. CDD further sought input through its network of existing neighborhood associations as well as through the Faith-based Community.

A web-based survey was posted on the City web site as well as sites of various community partners. The survey was available in English and Spanish. Community-based organizations sent email blast to members. Hard copies of surveys in both English and Spanish were collected at various GLCAC intake sites, YWCA, Council on Aging, and CDD. Over 900 households responded to the survey to gather their perceptions of need in their neighborhoods and for the City overall.

The City Council was provided the draft Action Plan for review and comments. The City Council is required to vote on the proposed funding allocations contained within the Annual Action Plan.

The draft plan was posted at the Lawrence Main Public Library, the City Clerk's Office in Lawrence City Hall, and the CDD Office. The draft plan was additionally posted on the city's web site. A notice inviting the public to comment on the proposed plan was published in the Eagle Tribune and RUMBO (Spanish newspaper). The public was given 30 days to comment on the plan.

[2. Provide a summary of citizen comments or views on the plan.](#)

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The Action Plan was available for public comment from April 8, 2010 through May 10, 2010 at the City Clerk's Office, Public Library and at the Community Development Office, as well as on the City's web site. There were no citizen comments. The Public Hearing at City Council invited further public comment. The minutes of this hearing including all comments received are included within the Appendix.

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.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

Several steps were taken in an effort to broaden participation. CDD released a web-based survey available in both English and Spanish to obtain direct input from residents. The surveys were additionally available at numerous community locations. The use of the internet and the supportive partnership with non-profit human service providers resulted in 903 resident responses. The survey resulted in a respondent demographic that closely resembled the City's ethnic profile. Five hundred and sixty (560 - 62%) respondents self-declared as Hispanic.

All public notices are published in both English and Spanish newspapers. Translation services were available at all public hearings. The needs of Spanish speaking persons were met through the availability of translation services.

Additionally, the City assembles an advisory panel of diverse community stakeholders to review applications received during the RFP process for CDBG funding each year. This entity leverages a broad range of public participation in the development of the Annual Action Plan and includes elected officials, residents, leaders of community organizations, and other community leaders.

4. Provide a written explanation of comments not accepted and the reasons why these comments were not accepted.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

No Comments Received to Date

Institutional Structure

1. Describe actions that will take place during the next year to develop institutional structure.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The City of Lawrence’s Community Development Department (CDD) is the City department specifically responsible for achieving housing and community development goals. CDD proposes housing and community development policy, applies for and administers public funds, and serves as a source of funds and technical assistance to other entities within the community who work in the housing and community development field. CDD provides the fiscal and regulatory oversight of all CDBG, HOME, Lead Based Paint Hazard Control grant funds, and McKinney –Vento funds.

In the upcoming year, CDD will continue its long history of partnerships with the public (Non-profit agencies, institutions, etc) and private sector. Communication and cooperation between CDD and partner agencies and organizations that administer activities is strong and effective.

Monitoring

1. Describe actions that will take place during the next year to monitor its housing and community development projects and ensure long-term compliance with program requirements and comprehensive planning requirements.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

Community Development

The Community Development Department (CDD) has developed a monitoring protocol that is detailed within its Consolidated Plan and is compliant with HUD guidance. Most community development projects are implemented by the CDD, with internal monitoring via the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) project reports. For these projects, and others implemented by City departments (such as public works), the CDD staff fully understands and incorporates program requirements. The CDD also undergoes an annual performance audit, to insure compliance with HUD regulations.

A comprehensive system has been developed by the CDD for sub-recipients in order to insure compliance with program and budget requirements. As follows, these sub-recipients are usually implementing a social service or housing program.

First, a contract is drafted and signed. The contract spells out program and reporting requirements. The contract also specifies the project and specific outcomes as well as a budget.

Second, an ongoing monitoring system is put into place. The monitoring system includes at a minimum three elements:

Quarterly reports on project outcomes

Payment requests

On-site monitoring visits

Within 30 days of the on-site monitoring visit, the Project Manager will prepare a formal written letter that describes the results of the visit, providing recognition of the sub-recipient's strengths and weaknesses. If the sub-recipient is experiencing problems or a failure to comply with regulations, these should be outlined in the letter and recommendations or requirements to address the issues should be included. If a *concern* or a *finding* is found, a deadline must be set forth in the letter for the issue to be addressed/corrected. At this time the Project Manager will schedule the sub-recipient for a follow up on-site visit.

If a sub-recipient fails to take corrective actions for any *concerns* or *findings* within the time period set forth in the formal letter they received from the CDD, the sub-recipient will be placed on probationary status and their funds placed on hold (director approval required).

CDD undertakes several other steps during the program year to insure compliance and progress on the project. Verbal communication takes place as needed. Meetings are often scheduled, particularly if there is concentrated project activity

CDD staff responds to issues as part of the CDD monitoring, with different approaches, depending on the severity of the issue. CDD staff is particularly vigilant for any early warning signs, for instance with the following indicators: late quarterly report, late payment request or slow performance as indicated in either the payment request or the quarterly report

Depending on the severity of the situation or the repetition of the problem, this is put into writing and shared with the agency in question. Additional site visits are scheduled to put the project on track. Final measures for a chronic non-performer include reduced or rescinded funding. Legal action is a final extreme measure.

The City also considers the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) a monitoring tool. The CAPER is prepared annually and submitted to HUD. The CAPER is a summary document, reporting on the year's activity and an important monitoring tool. It is a valuable tool that assesses the overall progress of the Consolidated Plan.

CDBG, HOME and Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control:

1. The City's monitoring policy requires unit inspections and tenant rent and income certifications of Federally-assisted properties every year. All rental units subsidized with CDBG, HOME and Lead Based Paint Hazard Control funds must be recertified to determine that the rent and/or income remains in compliance with the HUD rent and/or income limits for the project and that the units are occupied by income-eligible tenants. In addition, every Federally-assisted unit is inspected to determine compliance with HUD's Housing Quality Standards.
2. A housing rehabilitation staff member notifies the homeowner of the monitoring visit via a letter. The notification includes tenant rent and income certification forms and instructions to contact the office to schedule an inspection and provide tenant income and rent certifications for all assisted units in the properties.
3. The housing rehabilitation staff member conducts a Housing Quality Standards inspection of the property. A detailed report is placed in the file for that property.
4. If the unit complies, then it is not inspected again until the required interval, or until the Deed Restriction is to be discharged or expires. If the unit does not comply, the inspector reports the deficiencies to the owner and allows thirty days for compliance and re-inspection (unless there is an immediate health and safety issue, which is handled on a case-by-case basis).

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5. If the owner fails to bring the unit into compliance, CDD will refer the file to City Attorney's Office to demand repayment of the subsidy or loan because they have failed to comply with the stipulations in the Deed Restriction. According to Federal Requirements, the City will not release affordability restrictions when they expire or subordinate any HOME or CDBG loan for any unit that is not in compliance.
 6. Owner units will be inspected annually and proof of residency will be required from the homeowner during the HOME Affordability Restriction phase.

Lead-based Paint

1. Describe the actions that will take place during the next year to evaluate and reduce the number of housing units containing lead-based paint hazards in order to increase the inventory of lead-safe housing available to extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families, and how the plan for the reduction of lead-based hazards is related to the extent of lead poisoning and hazards.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Lead-based Paint response:

The City of Lawrence has been declared one of the high-risk communities by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' as Lawrence meets the high-risk criteria of adjusted 5-year incidence rate for BLL \geq 20ug/dL that is greater than or equal to the state's comparable rate.

The *2000 U.S. Census*¹ indicates that forty percent (40%) of the housing stock in Lawrence, Massachusetts was built before 1940. Children living in Lawrence are among the most likely to be at risk of lead poisoning because the housing stock in the city is older, denser and more deteriorated than most communities statewide. As the area's housing stock ages, its condition continues to deteriorate due to lack of maintenance and normal wear and tear over decades. This can lead to hazardous conditions, such as chipping and peeling lead paint as the majority of the 21,415 homes in the City built prior to 1980 contain lead paint.

The City of Lawrence provides residential deleading through a Lead Based Paint Hazard Control Grant received from HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control (OHHLHC). The three million dollar grant was awarded in

November 2007 and has a program performance period of November 1, 2007 through October 31, 2010.

The City has made great strides at coordinating its housing rehabilitation and lead abatement efforts. Activities undertaken to achieve this coordination include community outreach, intake and income verification, lead paint inspections, lead paint soil sampling, pre-abatement wipe sampling, clearance wipe sampling, risk assessments, HQS inspections and recently updated construction standards. Defective physical conditions identified through inspections for code compliance and housing quality standards (HQS) will be corrected concurrently and funded through housing rehabilitation loans from HOME, CDBG or other sources.

During the program year, the following actions are anticipated to be taken:

- Hazard reduction for a total of 50 housing units
- Conduct lead clearance testing on 50 units
- An education/outreach program that will continue to provide the community with information on lead hazards
- Lead screening on over 200 children under the age of 6
- Assist 30 families with the temporary relocation during lead abatement work

The program outcomes include:

- A better informed population will lead to safer household practices and fewer poisoned people
- Reduction of lead poisoning rate
- Increase number of lead safe housing units
- Improved cleaning habits and less risk of lead poisoning for those households

HOUSING

Specific Housing Objectives

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

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve during the next year.
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 this Action Plan.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

HOME Projects		
First Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance	15 Residents will benefit from increased availability of affordable housing	\$200,000.00
Housing Rehabilitation	Residents will benefit from increased availability of rehabilitated affordable housing	\$119,486.00
CHDO Operating/Capacity set aside	Operating funds for one or more certified CHDOs	\$25,000.00
CHDO Projects Set Aside	Funds for a development project by a certified CHDO	\$166,897.00
Admin. (10% cap)	n/a	\$111,265.00
Housing Development Projects	Funds to be used as a match to state housing development funds	\$500,000.00
	HOME ENTITLEMENT TOTAL	\$1,112,648.00
	ANTICIPATED PROGRAM INCOME	\$10,000.00
	TOTAL	\$1,122,648.00

Needs of Public Housing

1. Describe the manner in which the plan of the jurisdiction will help address the needs of public housing and activities it will undertake during the next year to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The City of Lawrence is served by a public housing authority, the Lawrence Housing Authority (LHA). The LHA’s mission is to promote adequate and affordable housing, economic opportunity, and a suitable living environment free from discrimination. The LHA describes its role as to assist low-income families with safe, decent, affordable housing opportunities as they strive to achieve self-sufficiency. The LHA is the largest landlord in the City of Lawrence with a total of 1,578 Public Housing units (1,056 developed through HUD and 522 developed through the State). These housing units serve families and the elderly throughout the City in eight developments.

The LHA works closely with its residents to achieve the agency's stated goals. With initiatives to improve the lives of residents for both public housing residents and mobile voucher households, LHA seeks to promote economic opportunities to enable households to become increasingly self-sufficient.

The LHA is committed to a homeownership initiative that includes organizational support for the development efforts of Bread and Roses Housing, Inc., which undertakes single family infill housing. The LHA looks to have residents purchase the properties under a first-time homebuyer program. During the upcoming program year, CDD and the LHA will work to further the development of homeownership opportunities and to increase the organizational capacity of Bread and Roses Housing, Inc.

The LHA partnership with the Boys and Girls Club is an agency-wide initiative that provides safe and healthy after-school programming that addresses both educational and recreational needs. The program is aimed at youth between seven and eighteen years and will provide academic support, planned activities and counseling. CDD has provided public service funding to the Boys and Girls Club in support of the after-school programming.

2.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 during the next year.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The Lawrence Housing Authority has not been designated as troubled by HUD.

Barriers to Affordable Housing

1. Describe the actions that will take place during the next year to remove barriers to affordable housing.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

When compared to surrounding communities, housing in the City of Lawrence is relatively affordable. However, for a number of reasons, many low-income persons still cannot find quality, affordable housing to meet their needs.

Major barriers to providing affordable housing and specific actions to be taken include:

Barrier: *Housing* is not affordable to many of Lawrence’s residents. Many low-income potential homebuyers lack the down payment to buy a house, thus presenting another barrier to obtaining affordable housing. In fact, the lack of down payment funds has been cited as a major barrier for first-time homebuyers.

Action: CDD will operate a number of programs to increase the affordability of housing for Lawrence residents. HOME funds will be utilized to support additional affordable rental housing production, creation of first-time homebuyer properties, and down payment assistance for eligible homebuyers.

Barrier: *Three- and four-unit properties present challenges for both investors and new homebuyers.* From a traditional property management perspective, maintaining a portfolio of this stock is not as cost-effective as larger rental properties. For first time homebuyers, the “triple decker” stock is often seen as an attractive option—combining the advantages of homeownership while providing rental income to reduce the owner’s housing cost. While this stock is therefore enticing to this segment of potential buyers, initial down payment requirements, mortgage underwriting, and ongoing maintenance costs can make these properties difficult ownership opportunities for households. The “triple decker” also proves challenging to this homebuyer segment because they generally aren’t equipped with the skill set or knowledge base required to become a successful landlord. To operate successfully, an owner must have knowledge of Massachusetts Rental Laws, Fair Housing Laws, State Sanitary Code and Local Building Codes.

Action: CDD will contract for homebuyer education programming to better prepare potential homebuyers. CDD will also operate a First Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance Program providing downpayment and closing cost assistance to eligible buyers.

Barrier: *Lawrence’s housing stock is old and many of the units are considered to be substandard.* A significant portion of the housing units in Lawrence was built before 1950, which indicates the need for lead hazard control and significant rehabilitation work.

Action: CDD will operate both the Housing Rehabilitation program and Lead Based Paint Hazard Control grant program as a response to the existing condition of Lawrence’s aged housing stock.

Barrier: *Perceived lack of public support impacts development efforts.* During consultations, organizations involved or seeking to be involved in affordable housing development identified the lack of a clear, affordable housing agenda as a barrier. In

times of scarce resources and compelling needs, organizations are often unwilling to expend predevelopment resources on activities where public support is uncertain.

Action: CDD will seek to educate elected officials and neighborhood residents on the benefits of affordable housing development.

HOME/ American Dream Down payment Initiative (ADDI)

1. Describe other forms of investment not described in § 92.205(b).

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

HUD allows participating jurisdiction such as the City of Lawrence to invest HOME funds as equity investments, interest-bearing loans or advances, non-interest-bearing loans or advances, interest subsidies consistent with the purposes of this part, deferred payment loans, grants, or other forms of assistance that HUD determines to be consistent with the purposes of this part. CDD does not anticipate investing HOME funds in any other form.

2. If the participating jurisdiction (PJ) will use HOME or ADDI funds for homebuyers, it must state the guidelines for resale or recapture, as required in § 92.254 of the HOME rule.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The City of Lawrence has a First Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance Program, funded by HOME and, when available, ADDI funds. The City utilizes a recapture mechanism as permitted under the HOME rule. Specifically, the HOME funds are available for downpayment and closing cost assistance, in the form of a non-accruing, deferred, forgivable loan. If the applicant/borrower occupies the home as a principle place of residence for a period of five years the loan is forgiven. one fifth (1/5) of the loan is forgiven on each anniversary date of the closing.

If during this period, the property is refinanced for the purpose of a mortgage rate reduction or to access equity for necessary home improvements, the HOME loan may be subordinated to a new first mortgage. If the homeowner sells the home before the Affordable Deed Restriction expires, the loan must be paid upon sale.

3. If the PJ will use HOME funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily housing that is that is being rehabilitated with HOME funds, it must state its refinancing guidelines required under § 92.206(b). The guidelines shall describe the conditions under which the PJ will refinance existing debt. At a minimum these guidelines must:

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- a. Demonstrate that rehabilitation is the primary eligible activity and ensure that this requirement is met by establishing a minimum level of rehabilitation per unit or a required ratio between rehabilitation and refinancing.
 - b. Require a review of management practices to demonstrate that disinvestments in the property has not occurred; that the long-term needs of the project can be met; and that the feasibility of serving the targeted population over an extended affordability period can be demonstrated.
 - c. State whether the new investment is being made to maintain current affordable units, create additional affordable units, or both.
 - d. Specify the required period of affordability, whether it is the minimum 15 years or longer.
 - e. Specify whether the investment of HOME funds may be jurisdiction-wide or limited to a specific geographic area, such as a neighborhood identified in a neighborhood revitalization strategy under 24 CFR 91.215(e) (2) or a Federally designated Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community.
 - f. State that HOME funds cannot be used to refinance multifamily loans made or insured by any federal program, including CDBG.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

While the City does not anticipate the use of HOME funds to refinance existing debt during this program year, such use will only be considered under the following conditions:

- Rehabilitation is the primary eligible activity as documented by a level of rehabilitation per unit in excess of \$25,000
- A review of management practices demonstrates that disinvestments in the property has not occurred; that the long term needs of the project will be met including serving the housing needs of any targeted population.
- The new investment will maintain the current affordable units; create additional affordable units, or both.
- A minimum period of affordability of 15 years or longer.

HOME investment meeting these criteria will be considered on a city-wide basis and can be used to refinance multi-family loans with any federal program, including CDBG.

4. If the PJ is going to receive American Dream Down payment Initiative (ADDI) funds, please complete the following narratives:
 - a. Describe the planned use of the ADDI funds.
 - b. Describe the PJ's plan for conducting targeted outreach to residents and tenants of public housing and manufactured housing and to other families assisted by public housing agencies, for the purposes of ensuring that the ADDI funds are used to provide down payment assistance for such residents, tenants, and families.

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- c. Describe the actions to be taken to ensure the suitability of families receiving ADDI funds to undertake and maintain homeownership, such as provision of housing counseling to homebuyers.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

When implementing these programs to provide affordable housing, funded by CDBG and HOME, the City takes specific action for minority outreach. The efforts will include minority representation on staff, critical bilingual communication and word-of-mouth marketing. Several positions in the homeownership program and lead/rehab program are filled by bilingual minorities. As part of due diligence review, staff will insure that any housing containing five or more HOME-assisted units will follow an affirmative marketing plan.

HOMELESS

Specific Homeless Prevention Elements

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

1. Sources of Funds—Identify the private and public resources that the jurisdiction expects to receive during the next year to address homeless needs and to prevent homelessness. These include the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act programs, other special federal, state and local and private funds targeted to homeless individuals and families with children, especially the chronically homeless, the HUD formula programs, and any publicly-owned land or property. Please describe, briefly, the jurisdiction’s plan for the investment and use of funds directed toward homelessness.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

In addition to the McKinney-Vento funds and the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) funds, the majority of resources utilized to support homeless programs are directly contracted with homeless service providers. These funds include private human service funding available from the Commonwealth. Private foundations, volunteers, donations, and fundraising are also resources.

The City will consider the use of publicly owned land for redevelopment as affordable and/or supportive housing. The disposition of publicly owned property is governed by MGL 30b.

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2. Homelessness—In a narrative, describe how the action plan will address the specific objectives of the Strategic Plan and, ultimately, the priority needs identified. Please also identify potential obstacles to completing these action steps.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The Lawrence CoC has established clear performance benchmarks to assess the progress towards ending homelessness. The CoC benchmarks are in accordance with the criteria established by HUD. The CoC has established the following performance objectives:

Objective 1: Increase percentage of homeless persons staying in permanent housing over six months to at least 77 percent

Action: The CoC will seek to increase the availability of mainstream services that can immediately respond to a problem, provide ample supportive services, and restabilize participants before they are at risk of losing their housing.

Objective 2: Increase percentage of homeless persons moving from transitional housing to permanent housing to at least 65 percent.

Action: The CoC has worked hard over the past year to increase the number of persons going from TH to PH. To maintain this accomplishment over the next 12 months, the CoC will track progress on this goal through HMIS on a monthly basis. At each monthly CoC meeting, there will be an HMIS report on progress and specific cases or outliers will be highlighted and assessed to determine how to improve/address.

Objective 3: Increase percentage of persons employed at program exit to at least 20 percent.

Action: The CoC will continue to create linkages to mainstream employment training and support programs. The CoC will have a monthly HMIS report on progress toward this goal at each CoC meeting.

Objective 4: Decrease the number of homeless households with children.

Action: Since the lack of affordable housing is the primary barrier to getting and staying out of homelessness, the CoC will work to ensure that affordable housing resources are allocated in a way that will ensure a viable pipeline of units that are affordable to low income families. The CoC will seek priority points in the state's

Qualified Allocation Plan for the distribution of LIHTCs to projects that will serve homeless families. The CoC will work with the PHA to prioritize homeless families for Housing Choice Vouchers and public housing units. The CoC will also work with the PHA to apply for any new housing resources that are made available.

3. Chronic homelessness—The jurisdiction must describe the specific planned action steps it will take over the next year aimed at eliminating chronic homelessness by 2012. Again, please identify barriers to achieving this.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

CDD will continue to focus efforts on furthering the Permanent Housing Bonus with the inclusion of the Saunders School permanent supportive housing development in its Continuum of Care application. CDD issued a commitment of \$300,000 in NSP resources to support the redevelopment of a long-abandoned building in a neighborhood with substantial foreclosures.

For long term success in creating units for CHI, the CDD intends to initiate a two prong approach. First to increase the capacity of current homeless housing and service providers to create housing and operate housing by initiating a series of trainings and capacity building workshops. Secondly, to interest the larger affordable housing community in the development of service enriched housing appropriate for Chronically Homeless persons.

4. Homelessness Prevention—The jurisdiction must describe its planned action steps over the next year to address the individual and families with children at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The City received \$710,503 in for Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The CoC created a formal HPRP Subcommittee to ensure coordination and seamless planning with HPRP resources and programs. During the upcoming year, the subcommittee meets monthly on the same day as the CoC meetings and reviews HPRP program progress, identifies gaps in utilization and new needs, and makes recommendations for how changes in the HPRP resources can be completed to enhance overall performance. In addition the subcommittee will ensure that there is not duplication of resources and that all homeless needs are met by the MV and HPRP funds.

5. Discharge Coordination Policy—Explain planned activities to implement a cohesive, community-wide Discharge Coordination Policy, and how, in the coming year, the community will move toward such a policy.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The City of Lawrence complies with the federal McKinney-Vento (MV) program requirements regarding discharge planning. The McKinney-Vento Act requires that State and local governments have policies and protocols developed to ensure that persons being discharged from a publicly-funded institution or system of care are not discharged immediately into homelessness. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has implemented formal discharge planning protocols for foster care, health care, mental health discharge, and corrections discharge. The City of Lawrence will continue to monitor the operation of these protocols and their impact on services and housing.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**Community Development**

*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), public facilities, public improvements, public services and economic development.

Central themes for projects contained within the Year One Action Plan are one of collaboration, community engagement, and volunteerism. Examples of this program approach are:

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- The Small Business Responsibility Project, which brings together staff from the Mayor’s Office, Department of Inspectional Services, and Community Development Department in effort to engage business owners and managers one-on-one and in small groups to share information regarding strong commercial establishments. The City will emphasize sustaining a clean environment and the importance of recycling with the distribution of brooms and related equipment under the slogan, “Lawrence, PICK IT UP.”
 - Business Facade Improvement Program will be expanded with the goal to improve “curb appeal” and create jobs by expanding business in targeted neighborhood commercial corridors. The program will provide focused assistance in the form of improvements to the physical conditions and the provision of technical assistance to businesses located or seeking to expand.
 - Coordination with the already established neighborhood associations. The process will include interdepartmental meetings to sustain specific business corridor strategies that result from the initial outreach and discussions.
 - Pocket Lots Program to utilize smaller undevelopable vacant lots and alley ways for the creation of neighborhood amenities including Community Gardens, pocket parks, and off street parking.
 - Promote an environment that encourages entrepreneurship, strengthens existing businesses and expands economic opportunities particularly within neighborhood commercial corridors. As part of this effort, promote Lawrence as a regional hub of economic development activities and promote Lawrence’s role as a primary regional resource.

Improve and enhance the utilization of Lawrence’s rich history and cultural diversity as an engine for economic development.

2. Identify specific long-term and short-term 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.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

FY11 CDBG Projects and Activities

Appl. #	ORGANIZATION	PROJECT	FY11 AWARD
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Park Improvements	\$465,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Infrastructure Improvements	\$126,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Lead Abatement Match	\$225,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Housing Rehabilitation	\$100,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Storefront Improvement	\$80,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	SEC 108 Loan Payment FTI	\$36,000
N/A	Community Development Dept.	Admin. (20% cap)	\$340,000
Public Facilities			
	German Old Folks Home	Security System	\$6,000
	Lawrence History Center	Renovations	\$44,500
Housing			
	Greater Lawrence Community Action Council	Project Senior	\$10,000
Public Service			
	Boys & Girls Club	Learning Center	\$20,000
	Greater Lawrence Community Action Council	Roberto Clemete Youth Academic & Sports Instruction	\$25,000
	Asian Center of the Merrimack Valley	Strengthening Asian Families	\$10,000
	Esperanza Academy	Graduate Support Program	\$10,000
	Neighbors in Need	Elder Food Pantries	\$10,000
	Greater Lawrence Community Action Council	L/MCC Neighbors in Action	\$10,000
	Merrimack Valley YMCA	Music Clubhouse	\$10,000
	Greater Lawrence Community Boating	Youth Boating Opportunities	\$7,500
	Food for the World	Food Pantry	\$25,000
	Food for the World	Feeding the Homeless	\$10,000
	Groundwork Lawrence	Green Team	\$10,000
	Lawtown Boxing Gym	Boxing Program	\$15,000
	Lawrence Family Dev. and Education	Language Barrier Assistance and Civics Education	\$10,000
	Arlington Community Trabajando	Foreclosure Prevention Training	\$40,000
	Arlington Community Trabajando	FTHB and Post Purchase Workshops	\$10,000
	Lawrence CommunityWorks	Movement City	\$15,000
	Lawrence Council on Aging	Wellness Program	\$20,000
	Northeast Independent Living	Lawrence Access in Motion	\$10,000
CDBG TOTAL			\$1,700,000

Antipoverty Strategy

1. Describe the actions that will take place during the next year to reduce the number of poverty level families.

Program Year 1 Action Plan Antipoverty Strategy response:

Poverty is an issue facing 24.3 percent of Lawrence's residents. The City is known as “the Immigrant City”; a community that offers stepping-stones for those new to the country. The number of young and fragile families, often with one or more children, is growing. Rising unemployment rates caused by the current downward trend of the economy are further exacerbating the poverty rates.

The City of Lawrence’s anti-poverty strategy strives to prevent additional families from falling into poverty while reducing the number of families that are currently in the financial status of poverty. These City goals will be undertaken both through direct program implementation and in partnership with non-profit partners.

CDD has established three strategies to address poverty within the City. In the upcoming year, the CDD and its partners will take the following actions within each of the strategic areas:

Strategy 1: Decreasing Housing Costs of Low and Moderate Income Persons

A key part of the strategy is to provide a range of housing at affordable levels

Actions:

- Affordable Housing Development Funds will be expended to produce affordable housing for both homeowners and renters.
- Housing Rehabilitation. By improving the condition of housing, the Community Development program keeps families in affordable housing.
- Lead Based Paint Hazard Control Program. The effects of lead poisoning on children can be devastating to the child’s health and the family’s finances. By making housing units lead safe, the Community Development program prevents this catastrophe from occurring.

Strategy2: Increasing Incomes of Persons in Need

The City has identified and will pursue support of economic development strategies that improve income, job expansion and job accessibility.

Action: Funds will be expended to improve commercial corridors and streetscapes to promote small business expansion and create neighborhood-based employment.

Strategy 3: Employment & Workforce Development including education and literacy

Many low-income residents lack the skills needed to obtain employment that will pay a living wage and/or offer opportunities for career advancement. Many low-income adults lack the education and English language proficiency needed to support their efforts to attain self-sufficiency.

Action: Funds will be expended to promote literacy and job readiness. The funding places a high priority on youth development, mentoring, and leadership as a method to increase educational attainment and thereby future employment opportunities for youth.

NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Non-homeless Special Needs (91.220 (c) and (e))

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

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve for the period covered by the Action Plan.

Program Year 1 Action Plan response:

The persistent economic pressure on families with children is a defining factor in their needs for human services. According to human service providers working with families and children, key human service needs include: Housing, Support for Basic Needs (including assistance with housing/rent, food, utilities, heating fuel, and transportation costs), transportation, assistance with childcare, and Preventive Programs (parenting and domestic violence). Employment at living wages is also a constant theme.

According to 2008 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census, there were approximately 5,425 persons over the age of 65 living in Lawrence in 2008, representing about 7.5 percent of the total population. Frail elderly are defined for the purposes of this report as individuals age 65 and older with a self-care disability. In 2008, over 600 non-institutionalized seniors age 65 and older were estimated to have a self-care disability and can be considered “frail elderly,” representing about 11% of this age group.

The Administration on Development Disabilities (ADD) estimates there are nearly four million Americans, or 1.4 percent of the total population, with a severe developmental disability. Applying this percentage to the City of Lawrence’s 2008 population, approximately 1,005 residents would have a developmental disability.

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 this Action Plan.

Available public resources are detailed within various sections of the Action Plan. Additionally, Public Service sub-recipients utilize human service funding, donations, volunteers, and agency resources to support their programs.

Other Narrative - NRSA

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA)

Based upon the positive impacts of the targeted investment made within the North Common Neighborhood, the City is proposing the creation of a second NRSA encompassing the Arlington Neighborhood. The goals of a NRSA are to implement a focused, coordinated revitalization strategy that can bring about clear measurable results within a reasonably short-time frame. The revitalization goals for the Arlington Neighborhood are a direct outcome of planning completed under the Commonwealth’s Gateway Plus Action Grant program and of input from neighborhood residents.

The Arlington neighborhood meets HUD’s NRSA regulations – primarily residential; 51% low-and moderate income; and contiguous.

Abandoned houses, vacant lots, and foreclosed properties comprise nearly 25% of the Arlington properties. The Arlington neighborhood typifies what analysts refer to as a “weak market neighborhood.” Weak Market neighborhoods are where values are below the cost of construction and appreciation is uncertain. These are markets where families with housing choice are hesitant to buy; thereby limiting private investment often exposing the housing stock to abandonment and blight. Further weakening the market position is the lack of: attractive open space, a vibrant community center, and well maintained streets and sidewalks.

One of the fundamental challenges to long-term revitalization and stabilization in weak markets is the ability to initiate and complete complex projects that require sustained local effort and focus. Sustaining this focus is difficult in midsize cities like Lawrence

where competing needs and limited resources are constant diversions. The goals established for the Arlington neighborhood provide direction for revitalization efforts while maximizing the programmatic response to accomplish these goals; thereby enabling Lawrence to respond effectively to changing environments and to available resources.