

**CITY OF LANCASTER, OHIO
CONSOLIDATED PLAN 2003 - 2007**

**EXECUTIVE CITIZEN
SUMMARY**

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Citizen Participation

The consolidated planning process established by the city utilizes several methods to facilitate community involvement. The Community Development Department functions as the lead agency to coordinate and manage the planning process.

The city has adopted a *Citizen Participation Plan* which outlines the consolidated planning process and encourages participation of the general public, public and private housing and social service agencies, and civic and non-profit organizations. The city makes a special effort and encourages active participation to include low and very low income segments of the community in the planning process.

The Community Development utilizes its newsletter, *CDBG Activities*, to communicate with members of City Council, City Department Managers, the news media, and interested citizens regarding the planning process as well as the accomplishments obtained through the use of CDBG funds. The Community Development Department provides information concerning housing and community development activities and programs via the Internet at: <http://www.ci.lancaster.oh.us>.

Housing and Community Development Needs Survey

A principal means of involving the community in assessing and prioritizing the affordable housing and non-housing community development needs within the community was the use of housing and community development needs survey. Extensive outreach within the community included distribution of approximately 1,100 needs survey, outlining the consolidated planning process. The survey was designed to encourage participation in the planning process.

The CD staff was interviewed on a local cable television talk show entitled, *A Town and County with Stan Robinson* regarding the Community Development Block Grant Program. The update of the Consolidated Planning Process was presented and the housing and community needs survey was discussed.

Distribution of the housing and community development needs survey included the following groups:

- American Red Cross
- Banks and Financial Institutions
- Community Action Lancaster-Fairfield County
- Community Economic Development
- Family Adult and Children First Council
- Family Y of Lancaster and Fairfield County
- Fairfield Center for Disabilities and Cerebral Palsy
- Fairfield County Board of Commissioners
- Fairfield Christian Academy
- Fairfield County Health Department
- Fairfield County District Library
- Fairfield County Extension Service
- Fairfield County Jobs and Family Services
- Fairfield County MRDD
- Fairfield County Mental Health & Recovery Services
- Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission
- Fairfield Industries
- Fairfield Medical Center
- Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Fisher Catholic High School
- Foundation Dinners & Shelters
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hospice Health Services
- Information and Referral Services for Fairfield County
- Lancaster Area Board of Realtors
- Lancaster Black Interest Group
- Lancaster Board of Education
- Lancaster City Council Members
- Lancaster City Employees
- Lancaster City Planning Commission
- Lancaster Downtown Business Alliance
- Lancaster-Fairfield County Chamber of Commerce

- Lancaster City Schools
- Lighthouse Shelter for Domestic Violence
- Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio
- Maywood Mission
- Meals on Wheels
- New Horizons Youth and Family Center
- Ohio University/Lancaster Campus
- Olivedale Senior Center
- Salvation Army
- Southeastern Ohio Legal Services
- St. Vincent DePaul Society
- West After School Program
- United Way of Fairfield County

Approximately 350 surveys were returned representing various groups and interests within the community. The results were analyzed and funding allocations were determined on the basis of priorities. Priority needs and activity funding recommendations were prepared by the Community Development Department in concert with the city administration based on total citizen input, relevant planning documents, and compliance with CDBG regulations and national objectives.

The Community Development Department conducted a review of the survey results. The results were analyzed and project funding allocations will be determined on the basis of the priority percentages. Funding allocations will further be analyzed by the city administration. Citizen participation, planning documents, and adherence with the national objectives in the determination of local CDBG goals and objectives.

The CD staff disseminated the survey results analysis throughout the community and further outlined the consolidated planning process. A power point presentation and brochure was also created by the CD staff. The brochure thoroughly illustrated the concept and requirements of the Community Development Block Grant program and was also distributed throughout the community.

The housing and community needs survey analysis is shown below in order of priority needs:

**City of Lancaster Consolidated Plan
Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Program**

**Housing and Community Development Needs
Survey Results**

The city of Lancaster's Community Development Department conducted a survey to establish the housing and community needs within the city. The survey results will determine the priority needs within the City of Lancaster's Five Year Community Development Block Grant *Consolidated Plan*. The results are as follows:

	HIGH PRIORITY PERCENTAGE
There is a need to create and retain jobs for low and moderate income persons.	68%
There is a need to provide transportation services for the elderly and low and moderate income persons.	61%
There is a need to provide public service programs (crime prevention, childcare, health, drug abuse, education) for low and moderate income persons.	57%
There is a need to provide weatherization and home heating assistance to low and moderate income homeowners and renters.	55%
A need exists to provide homeless prevention programs with supportive services and emergency housing for families and individuals at risk of homelessness.	53%
A need exists to provide employment opportunities for persons with special needs (handicapped, mentally ill, developmentally disabled).	52%

There is a need for the rehabilitation of substandard single family dwelling units for low and moderate income homeowners.	52%
A need exists to assist individuals who are the victims of domestic violence in securing safe and suitable housing including supportive services.	50%
A need exists for programs to assist low and moderate income households to purchase a home.	50%
There is a need to provide supportive services for persons with special needs (handicapped, mentally ill, developmentally disabled).	48%
There is a need to provide public street, storm sewer, and drainage improvements in the city ' s low and moderate neighborhoods.	47%
There is a need to provide home accessibility modifications for handicapped individuals.	45%
There is a need to provide recreational facilities in the city's low and moderate income areas.	38%
There is a need to assist landlords to rehabilitate substandard rental housing which is available and affordable to low and moderate income households.	37%
There is a continuing need to affirmatively further equal housing opportunity through fair housing outreach activities.	33%
A need exists to develop programs and strategies to reduce the hazards associated with lead based paint in residential structures and to prevent childhood lead poisoning.	27%

Housing Coalition Committee Meetings

The housing coalition committee reconvened to discuss housing assistance needs. The housing coalition committee membership included the following representatives and their respective agencies:

- Orman Hall, ADAMH
- Laura Holton, Fairfield County Job and Family Services
- Mary Bozman, Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Paula Fargus, Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Gary Wasmer, Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Tammy Carr, Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Susan Secoy, Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Becky Edwards, Family, Adults, Children First Counsel
- Cindy Pyle, Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Head Start
- Carol Wagner, Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action
- Kelli Ailes, Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action
- Erin Petrovay, Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action
- Mary Jo Smith, Lancaster Community Development Department
- Shan Brown, Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action
- Diana Gregory, Lutheran Social Services
- Victor Ward, Lutheran Social Services
- Sarah Sherman, MRDD
- Scott Gerhard, New Horizons
- Rita Crow, Older Adult Network
- Brooks Davis, Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission
- Sherry Orlando, United Way
- Judy Smith, Information & Referral
- Molly Swisher, Lutheran Social Services
- Suzanne Walker, Lighthouse
- Bob Sulick, Habitat for Humanity

Extensive communication, information outreach and meetings were held regarding the update of the continuum of care gaps analysis. Regarding the development of the *Consolidated Plan*, an initial meeting was held on January 30, 2003. The committee identified critical affordable housing assistance needs and prepared an update of the housing assistance inventory. A second meeting was held on March 5, 2003, to discuss specific components of the update. A copy of the committee agendas, minutes, and a list of participants is included as a part of the citizen comments.

Public Hearings

The Community Development Department distributed an initial notice of CDBG funding availability on March 7, 2003. Information indicating eligible and ineligible activities funded under the CDBG program was included in the distribution. An initial public hearing in reference to the development of the *Consolidated Plan* and the annual action plan was held on April 16, 2003. The hearing was conducted to provide information and receive public input regarding the Community Development Block Grant program. The Community Development Department presented an overview of the funding program and distributed an extensive informational document to attendees. Information was also made available regarding the city's annual performance administration of the CDBG program.

A summary of the proposed *Consolidated Plan* and the FY 2003 annual action plan was introduced to City Council on May 12, 2003. The summary was published as a display ad in the Lancaster Eagle Gazette on May 23, 2003. A second public hearing was held on June 9, 2003, to receive input regarding the proposed plan and annual action plan. In addition to the two public hearings, the citizens were given further input consideration during the three required readings at City Council. Public discussion as well as council member discussion took place during the planning process.

The consensus of City Council was to approve the housing and community needs priorities as outlined in the *Consolidated Plan*. City Council also approved the FY 2003 Annual Action Plan at their regular meeting held on June 23, 2003.

The citizen involvement process has resulted in an increase in community involvement in the development and planning component of the *Consolidated Plan*. Public meetings, public notices, and news releases were a successful tool in disseminating information to the public.