



# 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan

## Citizen and Stakeholder Participation

The City of La Crosse (the City) anticipates expending nearly \$8 million in HUD Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership (CDBG/HOME) resources over the next five years to address housing and community needs in La Crosse. These funds will be expended in accordance with both City and CDBG/HOME goals, and the purpose will be to positively impact low-and-moderate income residents. The Consolidated Plan is a 5-year planning document that assesses community development needs and identifies a strategic plan. Citizen participation was outstanding, with more participation than ever before. 1895 City of La Crosse residents took the community needs survey. Caroline Gregerson, the Community Development Administrator, also facilitated 18 public meetings with 235 participants, to gather in-depth feedback. These meetings were with neighborhood associations, at HUD public housing, with families, economic development organizations, Common Council, and City Department leadership. In addition, 43 different organizations were engaged in discussions on community needs.

## Priority Needs

The following needs were identified in both data and in public engagement:

- ◆ The poor quality of housing available in the City.
- ◆ The lack of affordable rental housing, especially for extremely low income families (2873 of these households are paying more than 50% of their income in rent).
- ◆ A large homeless population, particularly people with mental and physical health challenges, alcohol/drug dependency issues (758 in one year and nearly 250 people on any given night)
- ◆ Disrepair of streets and infrastructure, as a result of fiscal constraints both at a state-wide and local level.
- ◆ The declining number of families living in the City of La Crosse, due to overall demographic changes and the increasing number of households living outside the City.
- ◆ A scarcity of licensed child care services and the need for mental health care services.

## Prior Performance

Overall, since the last survey 5 years ago, the City saw an improvement both in resident satisfaction with neighborhoods (9% increase) and safety (12% increase). Long-term residents felt positive about the improvements they have seen (new development, forward-thinking planning, collaboration).

The City's CDBG/HOME prior funded programs ranked very well, with many comments noting the City's strong commitment and efforts to improving housing in distressed neighborhoods. However, the survey demonstrated the need to promote the housing rehabilitation loan program and economic development efforts better. Respondents also noted the slow progress of efforts to address homelessness and the need to ensure that affordable housing opportunities are available to a range of income levels— from those earning \$14,000 per year to \$48,000 per year.



Photo Credit: La Crosse Tribune



Habitat for Humanity— 912 Avon



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These goals were established based on the priority needs and the capacity of CDBG/HOME funds for impact.

## Goals and Performance Metrics (Over 5-years)

### 1. Increase the safety and maintenance of homes through code enforcement

400 housing units are better maintained, improved, or cease to have illegal activity occurring.

### 2. Repair aging housing infrastructure, both rental and owner-occupied

80 units of homeowner housing rehabbed to meet housing quality standards (HQS).

25 units of rental housing meet HQS standards.

30 rental units have all lead hazards abated (funded through State Grant).

50 homes make energy efficiency improvements (funded through City/Focus/Xcel/Weatherization).

### 3. Increase the number of quality and affordable owner-occupied homes in target neighborhoods.

20 units of homeowner housing added or significantly rehabbed, of which 100% are energy efficient.

20 extremely blighted and unsafe homes are demolished or acquired for rehabilitation.

4 homes re-built out of the flood plain.

### 4. Build mixed-income, affordable, multi-family housing, with set-aside units for homeless individuals

150 units of rental housing built or significantly rehabbed (high priority 30%, 50% AMI).

35 long-term units for people transitioning out of homelessness added (30% AMI).

### 5. Rebuild public infrastructure to improve livability for families in Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas.

4 projects completed (example: Hamilton Elementary, Street Lighting, Burns Park).

### 6. Expand access to licensed child care or early learning opportunities for LMI persons

50 spots for licensed child care are created or retained.

### 7. Support businesses that create economic opportunity in LMI neighborhoods with an emphasis on food access.

50 businesses receive technical assistance, 100 jobs created, launch public food market

### 8. Prevent and end homelessness in La Crosse

3000 people receive overnight shelter, 500 people assisted in obtaining permanent housing,

500 households provided assistance to prevent them from becoming homeless

### 9. Alleviate poverty and increase self-reliance (focus on mental health, substance abuse, health care, domestic violence, and youth services).

8000 LMI persons assisted.

### 10. Develop a regional affordable housing market analysis and a stormwater green infrastructure/tree plan.

Complete 2 plans. Explore new housing products for more holistic affordability (transit-oriented, reduced energy costs).