

CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VA 2005-2009/2010 CONSOLIDATED PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Colonial Heights, Virginia is an entitlement community under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Entitlement communities include local governments with 50,000 or more residents, other local governments designated as central cities of metropolitan areas, and urban counties with populations of at least 200,000. The City of Colonial Heights, though it has an estimated population of only 17,000, is an entitlement community because it is a designated central city. HUD determines the annual allocation of CDBG entitlement funds according to relative need on the basis of the higher of two formulas. The first considers the presence of overcrowded housing in the locality, its population and poverty rate. The second uses housing age, population growth lag, and poverty rate.

The City is required by HUD to have an approved Consolidated Plan in order to receive the annual CDBG entitlement funds. The Consolidated Plan fulfills the application and reporting requirements for entitlement communities and contains a strategic component called the Action Plan which describes how the jurisdiction will use its CDBG funds. The Consolidated Plan must be updated every five years. The Action Plan must be updated and approved yearly. This is the City of Colonial Heights' first Consolidated Plan. It will address the time period of 2005-2009/2010.

The City of Colonial Heights' five-year Consolidated Plan examines community needs and prioritizes these needs in relationship to the City's Comprehensive Plan. The resulting First Year Action Plan's specific objectives and strategies are directly related to and in accord with the City's commitment to neighborhood revitalization.

For the Program Year 2005-2006, the City will receive \$100,411 in CDBG funds. These funds will be used to address community housing needs in two targeted areas. The Colonial Heights Consolidated Plan does not cover the HOME, ESG, and HOPWA programs for which the City is not eligible.

The Colonial Heights Consolidated Plan:

- 1) Describes the City's housing needs and market conditions
- 2) Contains a housing and regional homeless needs assessment
- 3) Presents a five-year strategy that addresses priority needs
- 4) Creates a one-year action plan that outlines the intended use of the CDBG funds
- 5) Identifies anticipated additional resources leveraged by the community

The Consolidated Plan document is organized into six principal sections:

- 1) Consultation and the Citizen Participation Process
- 2) Housing
- 3) Homeless
- 4) Community Development
- 5) Non-Homeless Special Needs
- 6) One-Year Action Plan

Following is a summary of these sections.

1) CONSULTATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS

In the preparation of this plan, the Colonial Heights Department of Planning and Community Development staff consulted with local and state health and human services agencies, affordable housing providers, non-profits, and homeless shelter operators. Valuable information was also supplied by various City departments.

A public hearing before the City Council presenting the Consolidated Plan Process and CDBG eligibility was held on April 12, 2005. An announcement was placed in the Progress Index on March 28, 2005. Public hearing notifications were also posted throughout City Hall, on the City website, and in the Colonial Heights Public Library.

The Consolidated Plan Draft was made available to the public on June 1, 2005. Citizens were given 30 days to comment on the plan. On July 7, 2005 the Colonial Heights City Council passed the necessary resolution adopting the Consolidated Plan and the one-year Action Plan (2005-2006.)

2) HOUSING

Housing Needs

There are a total of 2,780 extremely low to moderate income households in the City of Colonial Heights. These are defined as households whose yearly income is at or below 80% of the City's Median Family Income. Of the total extremely low to moderate income households, 1,115 (40.1%) are elderly, 867 (31.2%) are small related families, 154 (5.5%) are large related families and the remaining 644 (23.2%) are all other households.

Housing Problems

An estimated 1,152 (41.4%) of all the low to moderate income households have some type of housing problem such as cost burden (paying more than 30% of monthly household income for housing), lack of complete kitchen or plumbing facilities or overcrowding. Cost burden accounts for over 95% of the housing problems among extremely low income to moderate income households.

Housing Conditions

Over 10% of the City's housing stock predates 1940. Close to 67% of the total housing pre dates 1978. Though general housing conditions in the City are good, some of the older and most affordable housing is in dire need of repairs.

Housing Market

The estimated average home price in 2004 was \$136,500. From 2000 to 2004 new 256 single family housing units were built in the City of Colonial Heights. The City's 7.79 square miles are approaching build out. The estimated average price of a new home in 2004 was \$228,000. As elsewhere, with low interest rates and demand at a peak, prices continue to rise.

Affordable Housing

Despite increases in property values, Census and local 2004 data suggests that both rental and owner-occupied housing in Colonial Heights has remained affordable to median income households since 1990. Nonetheless, Census 2000 data points to considerable housing cost burden and affordability issues for Low Moderate Income (LMI) homeowners.

Census 2000 data also indicates that rental property in Colonial Heights is unaffordable to the City's LMI households. However, since 2000, 176 additional LIHTC apartment units were built. These are not reflected in the Census 2000 data. Unless there has also been an increase in LMI renter households, the addition of these units would significantly increase the ratio of affordable housing opportunities for very low to moderate income households.

3) HOMELESS

On March 30 and March 31st, 2005, a Point-In-Time Count was conducted by the Southside Continuum of Care. Sheltered count information was obtained from CARES and the Salvation Army Men's Shelter of Petersburg, Virginia. Petersburg is the only locality in the Southside Continuum of Care with shelter facilities. Therefore, no sheltered homeless were allocated to any other participating localities. The unsheltered count estimated 3 homeless individuals from the City of Colonial Heights. Given this and other available information, the conclusion is that there is not a significant homelessness population in the City and homeless needs are most efficiently met on a regional basis.

4) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

No priority non-housing community development needs that are eligible for CDBG assistance have been identified based on the 51% low to moderate income requirement.

The City does not directly provide services that reduce the number of poverty level families. However, Colonial Heights participates in or is working on making the following programs available to its citizens:

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR DISADVANTAGED PERSONS (EEIPDP)
VIRGINIA INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT (VIDA)
VHDA HOMEOWNERSHIP EDUCATION CLASSES
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA XV

5) NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS

Non-homeless special needs are addressed both regionally and locally. Based on the information received from various public and private entities, the largest unmet need appears to be accessibility and housing conditions. Though no isolated program allocations have been set aside for non-homeless special needs, the Emergency Home Repair Program will give priority to the qualifying elderly and disabled.

6) ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

In the belief that the future availability of affordable, safe, and sanitary housing relies on preserving and maintaining the City's older housing stock, all CDBG funds will be directed towards an emergency home repair grant program for extremely low to moderate income homeowners in the Violet Bank-Flora Hill and Shepherd Stadium Planning Districts. The one-time grants will be capped at \$5,000 per household.