



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES AGENCY

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO CONSORTIUM

FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 ANNUAL PLAN

ANNUAL PLAN STRATEGY

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Background

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Housing and Community Development Services (HCDS) is a recipient of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) entitlement grant funding, receiving annual allocations from four federal entitlement programs:

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – Supports community development activities for low- and moderate-income persons to address a variety of housing, public service, and community development needs.
- **HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME)** – Supports local housing strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing, such as development of housing and rental assistance.
- **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)** – Supports the first step in a continuum of assistance to prevent homelessness through street outreach, emergency housing, and rapid rehousing.
- **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)** – Supports housing and services for low-income people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). HOPWA activities are also guided by the Joint City/County HIV Housing Committee.

As a recipient of HUD entitlement funding, HCDS develops a five-year Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan serves as a strategic plan and guiding document for projects funded with the County's federal entitlement funding. The Consolidated Plan consists of a demographic profile, lists housing and community development funding needs, and describes a strategy for addressing those needs through the County's four entitlement programs. The current Consolidated Plan is in effect for the period of Fiscal Years 2020-2024 (July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2025) for the jurisdiction of the County of San Diego Consortium which includes the areas known as the "Urban County" and the "HOME Consortium":

- **The Urban County** – Composed of the County unincorporated area and the CDBG participating cities of Coronado, Del Mar, Imperial Beach, Lemon Grove, Poway, and Solana Beach.
- **The HOME Consortium** – Composed of the Urban County and the HOME participating cities of Carlsbad, Encinitas, La Mesa, San Marcos, Santee, and Vista.

The five-year Consolidated Plan follows an annual cycle which includes three stages, resulting in the following documents: the Annual Plan Strategy, the Annual Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The Annual Plan Strategy is the first stage of the cycle. The Annual Plan Strategy relies public input, allowing the public to make recommendations on how the County will prioritize projects and meet annual goals. The second stage results in the Annual Plan, which provides a list of recommended projects for funding to the Board of Supervisors. The third and final stage is the CAPER, which details the outcomes and accomplishments from the prior year's Annual Plan.

All activities in the Annual Plan align with the County's vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all. Additionally, Consolidated Plan establishes the goals for the County's HUD entitlement funding activities. The goals established in the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan are:

1. Increase affordable housing opportunities across the region for low-to-moderate-income and special needs residents.
2. Prevent and end homelessness through accessible housing and supportive services.
3. Enhance community infrastructure and facilities to provide a suitable and sustainable living environment.
4. Provide housing and support services for those living with HIV/AIDS.

Each year, the County receives approximately \$14.3 million in federal entitlement funding from HUD. Funding is allocated to eligible projects that work to improve the lives and under-resourced communities throughout the County of San Diego Consortium region. While HUD Entitlement funding has regulations that may limit of the eligibility of projects, community input is vital to the County’s efforts in determining how funding is directed towards eligible projects and for the development of the FY 2024-25 Annual Plan (Annual Plan) and FY 2024-25 Annual Plan Strategy (Annual Plan Strategy). A description of eligible activities can be found in Appendix A.

Annual Plan Strategy Community Engagement

During the month of August 2023, the HCDS conducted a variety of community engagement activities to gather vital feedback on how to prioritize funding projects aligned the goals outlined in the County’s five-year Consolidated Plan. Feedback was gathered through community forums and through an online survey. Both were promoted widely through various methods including social media, emails, and news stories. Community forums were hosted in Imperial Beach, Del Mar, Spring Valley, Lakeside, and Fallbrook, as well as twice virtually. There were 315 respondents to the online community survey and 72 participants who attended the community forums. This represents a 524% increase in total participation in the development of the Annual Plan Strategy compared to the prior year.

A key change in this year’s outreach efforts to promote the survey and community forums included establishing a project page on the Engage San Diego County website, the County’s new Community Engagement portal. Below is a summary of number of residents reached through the different outreach methods.

| Type of Publicity | Details | Impressions* |
|-----------------------|--|---------------|
| Informational Website | Housing & Community Development Annual Plan Funding Strategy Engage San Diego County | 567 |
| News Story | County News Center Story | 1,529 |
| Twitter | Community Forum and Survey Publicity HHSA Twitter | 8,862 |
| Facebook | Community Forum and Survey Publicity HHSA Facebook | 2,149 |
| Instagram | Community Forum and Survey Publicity Instagram | 1,019 |
| E-mail Announcement | GovDelivery Email Announcements | 21,707 |
| Total: | | 35,833 |

* Impressions may include duplicated individuals.

The online survey launched on August 4, 2023 and was live until August 27, 2023. A total of 7 of community forums were hosted between August 7, 2023 through August 15, 2023. A total of 387 residents participated in the survey and forums.

| Type of Engagement | Residents Engaged |
|--|--------------------------|
| Online Survey | 315 |
| Community Forum – In-Person and Virtual | 72 |
| Total Residents Engaged: | 387 |

In addition, HCDS is required to host a formal public comment period. This period began on October 6, 2023 and will conclude on October 24, 2023. Any written and oral public comments received prior to the end of the public comment period will be integrated into the Annual Plan Strategy.

In addition to community input, HCDS sought feedback from the County’s governing board. Each San Diego County Board of Supervisors member (Board) was sent an online questionnaire in which they were asked to rank funding categories to prioritize for the upcoming year, as well as provide more specific feedback for the types of projects that should be funded moving forward.

Results

Both online and community forum participants were asked to rank which Consolidated Plan goal is most important to them and/or their community, with “1” being the most important and “4” being the least important. It is important to note that most in-person community forum participants clarified that all these goals are important, which both qualitative and quantitative data also reflect.

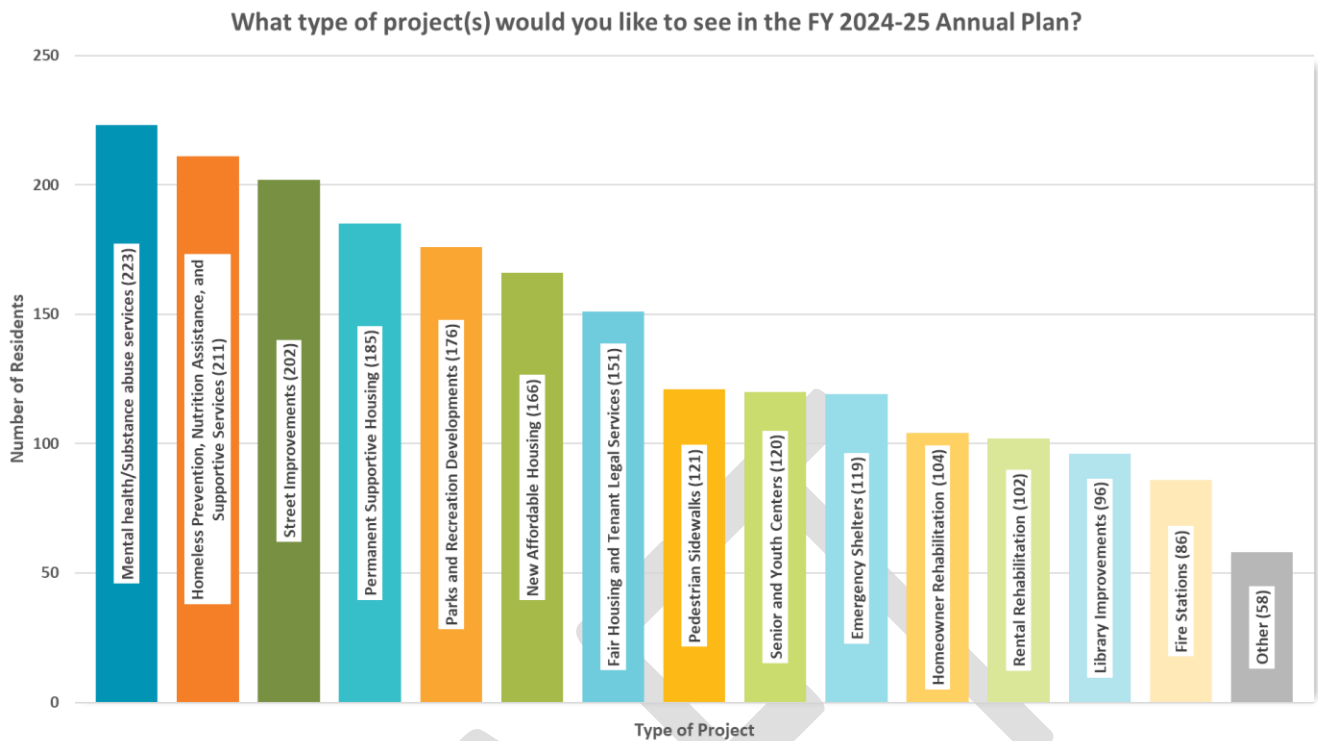
Below are the overall rankings for Consolidated Plan goals from the online survey and community forum engagement:

1. Affordable Housing
2. Infrastructure
3. Ending Homelessness
4. Housing and Support for those with HIV/AIDS

Participants were then asked what type of projects they would like to see funded in the Annual Plan. Respondents to the online survey were given a list of eligible activities they could select from, as well as an open-ended section for other activities. Each forum participants provided their input through an open-ended discussion.

Participants identified the need for a wide range of public services throughout the region, particularly mental health services, substance abuse services, nutrition and food assistance, and homeless prevention services. Additionally, participants noted the acquisition and construction of new affordable housing, creation of permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness, and street improvements as top activities to prioritize for funding.

Below is a summary of responses received for the type of projects residents would like to see in their community through both the community forums and online survey:



The Board offices were asked to rank categories specifically related to the CDBG program as this is the only federal entitlement program that opens applications to non-profits, community organizations, and public entities every year. Supervisors were asked to rank the following categories: Affordable Housing, Homelessness, and Community Infrastructure. The survey identified specific eligible activities under each category. The Board ranked the three categories in sequence to what is most important to their office.

The Board’s priority rankings:

1. Affordable Housing
2. Ending Homelessness
3. Infrastructure

Funding Restrictions

The HOPWA program is the County’s largest HUD entitlement program, bringing more than \$6.2 million annually to serve individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS. The HOPWA program has specific funding requirements and specific eligible beneficiaries as set by the federal government. Additionally, it is the only federal funding source that serves the housing needs for the population of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. Therefore, all funds received through the HOPWA funding are utilized to support the Consolidated Plan goal: “Provide housing and support services for those living with HIV/AIDS,”. Due to this, it was not included in the Board questionnaire. Additionally, while this Consolidated Plan goal was ranked last among community members, all HOPWA funds will continue to be allocated to activities to support this goal.

Finally, while all feedback is important and will be considered, only activities that align with the HUD regulations will be prioritized in the Annual Plan.

Strategy For Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Based on the key themes that emerged through the Annual Plan Strategy Community Engagement Process, projects that will be prioritized as funding opportunities arise will include those that:

- Provide new affordable housing units, or
- Serves groups facing substantial housing instability such as people experiencing homelessness and seniors on a fixed income, or
- Support services that allow people to remain housed and remove barriers to housing, or
- Create quality of life improvements to low-incomes neighborhoods through infrastructure or community improvements.

Based on feedback received through the Community Engagement process, HCDS has identified the following activities by program for alignment with the FY 2024-25 Annual Plan Strategy:

- HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) – Will continue to support tenant-based rental assistance, first-time homebuyer assistance, and housing acquisition, particularly the development of affordable housing units or rental assistance that benefits those at highest risk of homelessness, including seniors or individuals with extremely low incomes.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Works as a flexible funding source, which can respond to most of priorities identified by the community and Board of Supervisors. The CDBG program will evaluate all project proposals submitted through the annual CDBG application cycle against the feedback presented through the Annual Plan Strategy.
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) – Aligns with feedback received, as the ESG program supports emergency shelters, rapid rehousing, and homeless prevention services.
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) – Aligns with the community-identified need for permanent housing for individuals with specific needs, as well as emergency housing options that prevent homelessness and supportive services that promote housing stability.

Appendix A. Eligible Activities

The following sections outline the eligible program activities that can be funded by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) programs.

Community Development Block Grant

CDBG funds are allocated within the Urban County, which consists of the County unincorporated area and the CDBG participating cities of Coronado, Del Mar, Imperial Beach, Lemon Grove, Poway, and Solana Beach. Eligible activities include:

- Affordable Housing Development: CDBG funds may be used for property acquisition, rehabilitation, and site improvements, as well as predevelopment costs, new construction, and other eligible housing activities carried out by Community-Based Development Organizations to stimulate housing development for lower-income persons.
- Public Improvements: CDBG funds may be used for eligible public improvements, such as parks, streets, community centers, and drainage structures. Projects must benefit an area or a particular group of persons at least 51% of whom are low and moderate-income persons. Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to administer these projects.
- Public Services: CDBG funds may be used for public services that directly relate to and support physical community revitalization or housing development activities, such as childcare, health care, recreation and education programs, fair housing activities, and services for seniors or homeless persons.
- Planning Activities: CDBG funds may be used for planning activities that may include preparation of economic revitalization plans or assessments of facilities and housing needs.
- Program Administration: A portion of the CDBG entitlement will be set aside for community development planning, development of housing programs, and program administration.

HOME Investment Partnerships

The County of San Diego Consortium HOME funds support projects within the HOME Consortium, which consists of County unincorporated area and the cities of Carlsbad, Coronado, Encinitas, Del Mar, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Poway, San Marcos, Santee, Solana Beach, and Vista. Funds will be allocated to the following activities:

- Housing Acquisition/Rehabilitation: HOME funds may be used for acquisition of existing housing units for lower-income persons and special needs groups, with or without rehabilitation.
- Community Housing and Development Organization: At least 15 percent of HOME funds must be set aside for specific activities to be undertaken by a special type of nonprofit called a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). A CHDO is a private nonprofit, community-based organization that has staff with the capacity to develop affordable housing for the community it serves. In order to qualify for designation as a CHDO, the organization must meet certain requirements pertaining to their legal status, organizational structure, and capacity and experience.
- Housing Construction: HOME funds may be used for all eligible costs of new housing construction, including acquisition of unimproved real property, for lower income persons and special needs groups. However, acquisition of vacant land must be undertaken only with respect to a particular housing project intended to provide affordable housing. “Land banking” is prohibited under the HOME Program.
- Rental Assistance: HOME funds may be used for tenant-based rental assistance, security deposits, and eligible related costs. HOME funds may be set aside for a Special Needs Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program, which provide rental subsidies to targeted special needs populations identified by the County Health and Human Services Agency.
- Homeownership Assistance Programs: HOME funds may be used to support homeownership programs benefitting low- and moderate-income households.
- Administration/Planning: HOME funds, up to an allowed maximum of 10 percent of the HOME entitlement, may be used for eligible HOME administration and planning costs, including direct administrative costs, public information, fair housing, and program development costs.

Emergency Solutions Grant

San Diego County ESG funds will be allocated within the Urban County, which consist of County unincorporated area and the CDBG participating cities of Coronado, Del Mar, Imperial Beach, Lemon Grove, Poway, and Solana Beach. Funds will be used to implement a broad range of eligible activities that benefit homeless persons directly through local housing authorities or non-profit agencies. Eligible activities include:

- Street Outreach: ESG funds may be used for essential services necessary to reach out to unsheltered homeless individuals and families, connect them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services, and provide them with urgent, non-facility-based care. Component services generally consist of engagement, case management, emergency health and mental health services, and transportation.
- Emergency Shelter: ESG funds can be used for essential services for individuals and families in emergency shelter. Component services generally consist of case management, childcare, education services, employment assistance and job training, outpatient health services, legal services, life skills training, mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and transportation. ESG funds may also be used for direct operational costs of emergency homeless shelters. Shelter Operations costs include maintenance, rent, security, fuel, equipment, insurance, utilities, and furnishings.
- Homelessness Prevention: ESG funds may be used for programs that prevent homelessness within allowable funding maximums such as providing housing relocation and stabilization services.
- Rapid Re-Housing: ESG funds may be used for short-term rental assistance (up to 3 months) and medium-term rental assistance (up to 24 months). Component services related to rapid re-housing include rental arrears, rental application fees, security deposits, advance payment of last month's rent, utility deposits and payments, moving costs, housing search and placement, housing stability case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair.
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): ESG funds may be used for certain Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and comparable database costs, including computer equipment and staff costs for operating and maintaining the HMIS database system.
- Staffing and Administration: ESG funds may be used for eligible ESG program staffing and operational costs directly related to funded shelters, and for grant administration.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS

HOPWA funds will be allocated throughout San Diego County to implement a broad range of eligible activities for persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families. HOPWA funds can be used for the following activities:

- Housing Information Services: Includes, but not limited to, counseling, information, and referral services to assist an eligible person to locate, acquire, finance, and maintain housing.
- Resource Identification: To establish, coordinate and develop housing assistance resources for eligible persons (including conducting preliminary research and making expenditures necessary to determine the feasibility of specific housing-related initiatives).
- Acquisition/Rehabilitation: Includes conversion, lease, and repair of facilities to provide housing and services.
- New Construction: For single room occupancy (SRO) dwellings and community residences only.
- Project- Or Tenant-Based Rental Assistance: Includes assistance for shared housing arrangements.
- Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, And Utility Payments: To prevent the homelessness of the tenant or mortgagor of a dwelling.
- Supportive Services: Including, but not limited to, health, mental health, assessment, permanent housing placement, drug and alcohol abuse treatment and counseling, day care, personal assistance, nutritional services, intensive care when required, and assistance in gaining access to local, State, and Federal government benefits and services, except that health services may only be provided to individuals with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or related diseases and not to family members of these individuals.
- Operating Costs: For housing including maintenance, security, operation, insurance, utilities, furnishings, equipment, supplies, and other incidental costs.
- Technical Assistance: Establishing and operating a community residence, including planning and other pre-development or pre-construction expenses, and including, but not limited to, costs relating to community outreach and educational activities regarding AIDS or related diseases for persons residing in proximity to the community residence.
- Administrative Expenses: Each grantee may use not more than 3 percent of the grant amount for its own administrative costs relating to administering grant amounts and allocating such amounts to project sponsors; Each project sponsor receiving amounts from grants made under this program may use not more than 7 percent of the amounts received for administrative costs.