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CDBG Annual Action Plan 2014-2015

GENERAL

Executive Summary

The City of Blue Springs is a suburban community located in eastern Jackson County, the eastern portion of the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. Blue Springs is located on Interstate 70, U.S. 40 Highway and Missouri Highway 7, which has positioned the community as a regional center of commerce and industry. The major highways and Interstate 70 provide commuter access to other parts of the metropolitan area and have also encouraged growth of the City, more specifically commercial development along the major highway corridors with large residential developments adjacent.

Blue Springs has experienced rapid growth since 1970 when the population was comprised of approximately 6,800 residents. By 1980, the City had more than quadrupled its population and by 2000 the population had reached approximately 48,500. Today, Blue Springs is the 11th largest city in Missouri with 53,294 residents.

According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, the Blue Springs median household income is \$66,509. This means that a household income of \$53,207 represents 80% of the median household income. HUD has identified five census tracts within Blue Springs that have a predominance of low and moderate income (LMI) households.

The City of Blue Springs intends to utilize the CDBG funding from HUD by providing public infrastructure improvements in areas of greatest need, minor home repair, first time homebuyer support, neighborhood park improvements, and downtown façade improvements.

Blue Springs also intends to continue the Minor Home Repair Program (MHRP) that was started in 2008. The City plans to continue the First Time Home Buyers (FTHB) program to assist low/moderate income residents to make a home purchase in Blue Springs. The grassroots organization Downtown Alive—formed by residents and business owners in downtown Blue Springs—has grown into a vital part of the reinvestment of the older, historic portion of the City. Providing funding for this organization will help to foster its continued growth and enhance the connections the City has with the residents in downtown Blue Springs. In conjunction with Downtown Alive, the City will fund a grant to help restore a historic building facades. This will inspire and fuel continued redevelopment and growth of services to the immediate adjacent residents.

The City also will provide vital improvements to Baumgardner Park. The surface of the tennis courts are in disrepair and need replacement along with necessary enhancements for all people to enjoy.

The City intends to meet the national objective of Low/Mod Area benefit with the façade improvements and park improvements that are proposed and Low/Mod Housing benefit with the MHRP and FTHB programs. The performance measurement objective is to “Create Suitable Living Environments” and the outcome is to achieve “Sustainability” of the core of the City.

The City has been engaged in multiple visioning and master planning processes during the last nine years. These efforts to involve the public in the advancement of the older neighborhoods of our City have produced a very clear direction that the City intends to follow with the help of CDBG funding. The City is in the midst of a complete Comprehensive plan rewrite. Many lessons learned while implementing the CDBG program will be woven into the new Comprehensive plan.

The projects proposed for the 2014-2015 Annual Action Plan will address the concerns the citizens raised in the "Renew the Blue" visioning process, the Downtown Master Plan formulation process, the Downtown Alive Main Street revitalization group, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and public input meetings, and public comments from the citizens.

The Minor Home Repair Program has helped numerous Low/Moderate income citizens with minor repairs to their homes. The City intends to continue this program by continuing to utilize CDBG funds in 2014-2015. The program has averaged 13 grants per year and provided nearly \$300,000 to individual home owners for repairs to their homes.

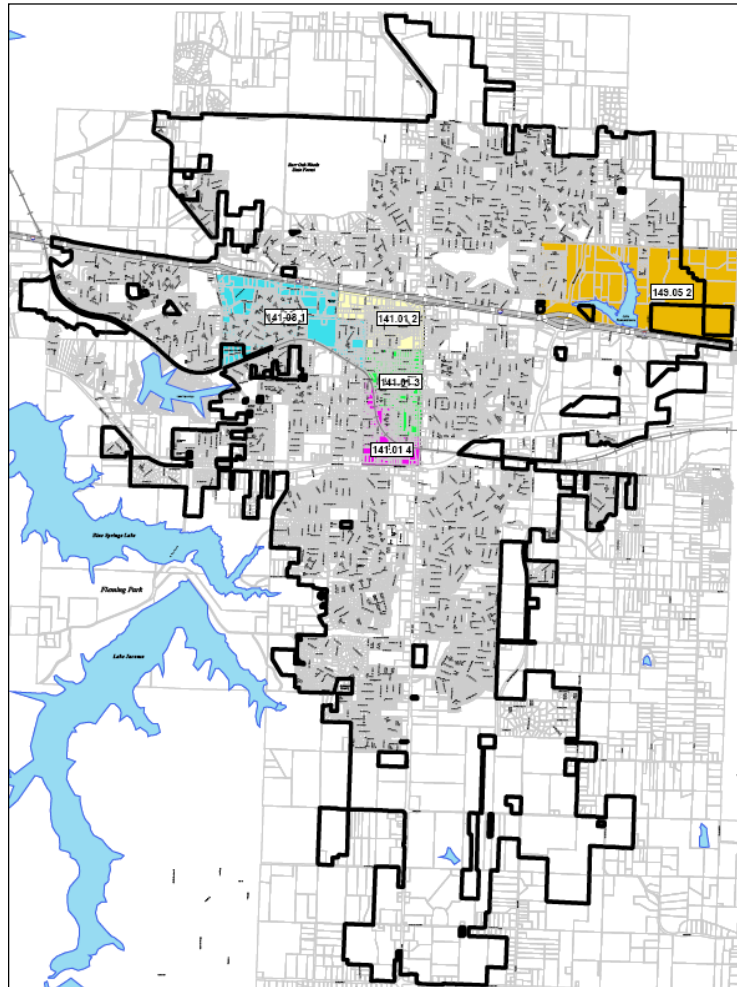
The First Time Home Buyers program remains active with all of the allotted funding being used and has succeeded in bringing new residents into the City. This program has assisted 50 new home owners in the City of Blue Springs. The FTHB program is proposed to be renewed in 2014-2015.

The City intends to focus CDBG funds for infrastructure improvements in the downtown area and more generally located south of Interstate 70 to US 40 Highway and west of 7 Highway to Woods Chapel Road. This area is the older core of the city and residential in nature with a higher percentage of low/moderate income households. Specific infrastructure improvements include installation of sidewalks that are adjacent to residential neighborhoods and intended to be used by the residents for safe pedestrian travel to schools, parks and community services. The Minor Home Repair Program as well as the First Time Home Buyers Program allow for citywide participation for individuals who are income qualified per HUD guidelines.

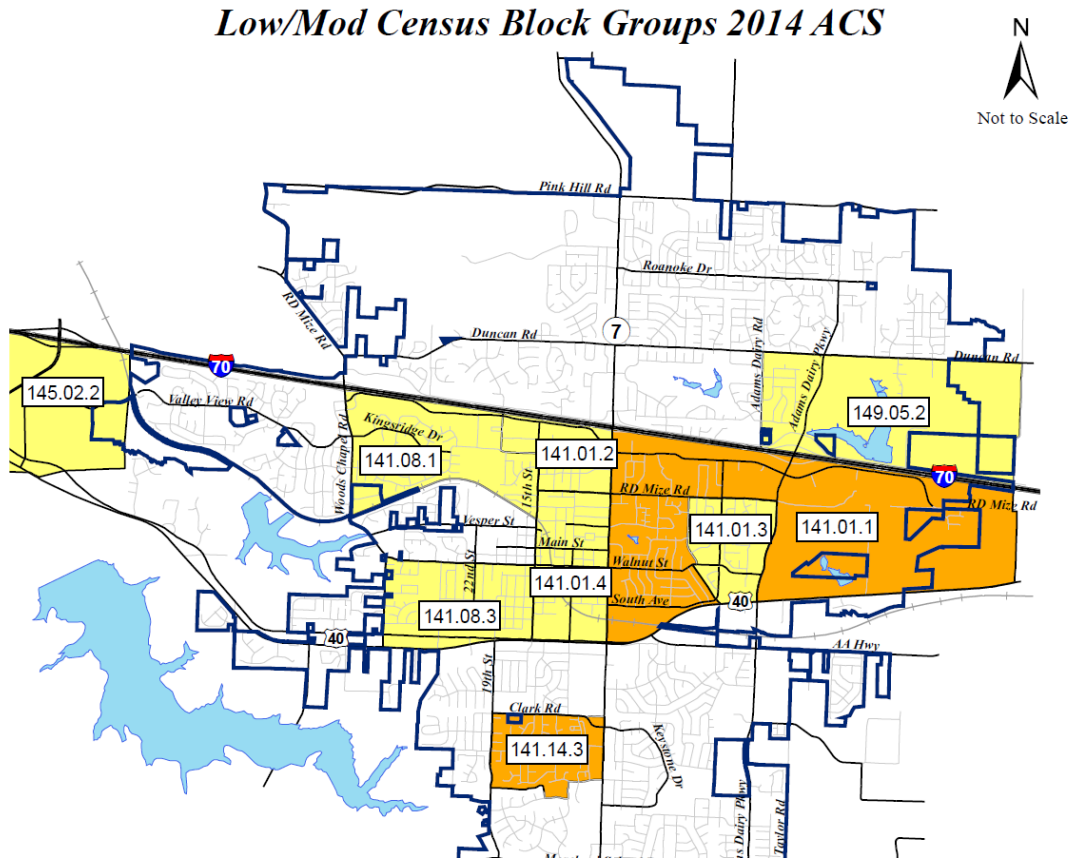
The increased focus of the community towards revitalizing downtown Blue Springs has led to a community group of residents, business owners and property owners to form the group known as Downtown Alive. This group focuses their energies on revitalizing downtown. Their efforts are supported by the City and every avenue to assist this movement is being pursued. The City plans to fund a portion of the Downtown Alive budget and to provide a matching grant to buildings in downtown for façade renovations. Helping Downtown Alive promote the core of Blue Springs will encourage reinvestment and provide the residents with expanded services and opportunities that otherwise did not exist.

As represented in Map 1, four of the five LMI census tracts are concentrated in the central portion of the City, which includes some older housing stock located around the original downtown area. A majority of Census Tract 141.01, Block Group 4 is located within the designated downtown district as well a significant portion of Census Tract 141.01, Block Group 3.

Map 1. LMI Census Tracts



MAP 2. FUTURE LMI Census tracts



The newest data on Low/Mod Income areas was released on July 1, 2014. In the future these census tract and a more focused "Service Area" process will be used to identify Area Benefit projects.

Managing the Process

The City of Blue Springs serves as the lead agency for initiating, overseeing and implementing the Consolidated Plan. More specifically, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Blue Springs is the primary decision-making body for establishing housing policy, selecting policies through each budget year and capital improvements plan and approving the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. The City Administrator is responsible for implementing the City Council policy and decisions.

The Community Development Department serves as the lead for developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan. The Department is responsible for citywide planning and will administer programs from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, including the infrastructure improvements, Minor Home Repair Program and First Time Home Buyers Program.

The Blue Springs Comprehensive Plan, enacted in 2003 by the Planning Commission, presents strategies and a range of recommendations for future and existing housing, business development and parks and recreation. The Comprehensive Plan is used as a general guide for all development decisions of the Planning Commission and City Council. The Comprehensive Plan went through a minor update in 2010. It is being completely updated in 2014. The new update plans to address many areas that will be of importance to the City's CDBG Consolidated Plan.

The City of Blue Springs Downtown Master Plan, adopted in 2007, emphasized revitalizing the City's core and surrounding neighborhood areas. The Master Plan identified many areas in need of infrastructure improvements in order to better serve residents and enhance downtown Blue Springs. A visioning effort, "Renew the Blue" included a variety of Blue Springs residents as well as businesses and identified what Blue Springs should look like decades from now. Both the Master Plan and visioning effort included a vast amount of public input and participation. The City's decision to focus CDBG funds to the downtown core area is a direct result of both processes.

The community driven downtown revitalization effort has been reenergized by the Downtown Alive group. This group of residents, business owners and property owners all with a vested interest in the regrowth of downtown Blue Springs has organized and implemented a grant from Missouri Main Street, Inc. to become a Main street community. This effort has brought new life and energy to downtown and is all coordinated by private citizens. The wellbeing of the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses are their main priority.

As a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement community, the City of Blue Springs is required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) in conformance with the requirements of the Consolidated Planning Regulations, Annual Action Plans and the Consolidated Annual Performance Report. The CPP describes the policies and procedures for involving the general public (citizens) in critical planning issues and funding recommendations related to the CDBG program.

It is the policy of the Blue Springs City Council to afford citizens the opportunity to assist in selecting priorities and otherwise participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan. Citizen participation is a vital component to the development of the Consolidated Plan and subsequent Annual Action Plans. Public meetings were held with the City Council starting in April of 2014 and continued through August of 2014. These meetings were advertised to the public and offered time for the public to provide comments on CDBG.

In addition, the Downtown Alive group meets once a month as a large group and has four committees that meet once a month outside of the main meeting. CDBG topics are discussed every month and provide City staff with an updated view of the citizens points of view on many topics that deal directly with the low/mod neighborhoods all around downtown.

There are numerous groups particularly targeted for participation including low-and moderate income persons, minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities. Notices of meeting were available on the City's website, the local government cable channel and Vesper Hall which serves seniors in the community as well as articles in the Blue Springs Examiner beyond just public notices.

The City made available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance the jurisdiction expects to receive and the range of activities that will be undertaken. This also included the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low-to-moderate income households.

The publicly noticed comment period was from June 23, 2014, through July 23, 2014. During this time period there were not any public comments received on the 2014-2015 Annual Action Plan.

Institutional Structure

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Blue Springs is the primary decision-making body for establishing housing policy, selecting policies through each budget year and capital improvements plan and approving the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan. The City Administrator is responsible for implementing the City Council policy and decisions.

The City of Blue Springs is responsible for developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan. The City is also responsible for monitoring for compliance. The City is the grantee of the CDBG funds, administers the selected programs and is responsible for the allocation of funds. The Community Development Department serves as the lead for developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan. The Department is responsible for citywide planning and will administer programs from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, including the infrastructure improvements, Minor Home Repair Program and First Time Home Buyers Program

The City of Blue Springs is expanding the staff involvement in CDBG administration. The ability for staff to be available to implement the Consolidated Plan will create a stronger system of review, implementation, and customer service.

Monitoring

City staff monitors all activities to ensure compliance with eligibility requirements as well as the national program objectives. Staff reviews each program step-by-step to ensure that all requirements are met. Training has also been a key element of effective monitoring techniques which ensure continued compliance. Staff has received IDIS training, environmental training, Fair Housing training and additional updates of applicable laws, policies and procedures. Procedures have been developed by the City in order to make sure that program goals are being achieved, activities are completed in a timely manner, and the financial systems and all required documentation are maintained. As staff continues to become familiarized with the programs, procedures, systems and policies it is anticipated that the administration, implementation, allocation and monitoring processes will become more efficient.

Lead-based Paint

In response to HUD's lead-based paint regulations the City will assess lead paint issues in all contracts that the City enters into under the CDBG program and other non-CDBG capital projects and will monitor compliance with all contractual requirements. The City does not anticipate any infrastructure projects will have lead-based paint hazards. Conversely, lead-based paint concerns may arise in the Minor Home Repair Program and First Time Home Buyers Program. Each project will be assessed individually and may require remediation. A Lead-Based Paint Visual Assessment, performed by a certified inspector, will be required for all properties constructed prior to 1978 to be assisted under the Minor Home Repair Program.

Additionally, the City has made available information and brochures on the hazards associated with lead-based paints and the federal laws that apply to landlords and sellers to disclose known information on lead-based hazards before leases or sales take place of the specific units. This information is being disseminated to all persons and applicants seeking building permits at the City Hall or any other interested persons.

HOUSING

Specific Housing Objectives

The City of Blue Springs plans to address housing by providing two programs—Minor Home Repair and First Time Home Buyers—to assist with older homes and home ownership in the city. Both programs are targeted to low/moderate income individuals.

The Minor Home Repair Program is addressing needed home improvements that allow citizens to stay in their homes and address older housing stock with repairs that will extend the life of the home.

The First Time home Buyers Program provides homeownership assistance to people that want to purchase their first homes. Providing this assistance brings new residents to the city and helps to create strong neighborhoods.

Needs of Public Housing

The Section 8 program for the City of Blue Springs is administered by the City of Independence, Missouri, immediately west of Blue Springs. The Housing Authority operates three public housing sites in Independence. The City will offer any assistance requested by the agency if the need arises.

Barriers to Affordable Housing

Some of the strategies we hope to employ in breaking down the barriers to affordable housing include:

- Working with the development community to encourage mixed-use developments (including owner-occupied and tenant-occupied housing) that allow services within walking distance of residential areas.
- Working to encourage multi-family units of varying densities at appropriate locations.
- Encourage approval of developments of attached single-family homes and senior housing at appropriate locations.

HOMELESS

Specific Homeless Prevention Elements

The City of Blue Springs intends to create a revitalization environment in our older neighborhoods. By providing basic infrastructure in the form of sidewalk reconstruction, the city will take the first step in the process of revitalization. The City hopes to spur reinvestment in the form of infill housing and renovation of existing properties, thus creating more housing opportunities across the spectrum of need.

Blue Springs is committed to addressing the problem of homelessness in its community through a variety of local and area wide services.

The City work closely with the Blue Springs School District in many areas including identifying and helping homeless families. The School District has an assistant superintendent that serves as the District's Homeless Coordinator. The District maintains statistics for homeless students. It is their responsibility to ensure that homeless children enroll in school, transfer records and address records and transportation issues. Upon identification as a homeless student, the school district ensures that the student will have transportation to get to school. The District also provides referrals to the Blue Springs office of the Community Services League.

Students classified as homeless by the school district:

School Year	# students classified as
2008-2009	20
2009-2010	31
2010-2011	60
2011-2012	76
2012-2013	83
2013-2014	70

The increase from the 2009-2010 school year to the 2010-2011 school year is attributed to a better understanding of the system and classifications. More students were identified and offered services because of the consistent effort of the school district and of the residents of the district.

Homeless Population

The homeless needs in Blue Springs are addressed through the Kansas City/Jackson County, Missouri's Continuum of Care (CoC). The CoC is coordinated by the Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City whose mission is to "bring together organizations and individuals dedicated to creating opportunities for compassionate community responses to homelessness." This collaborative effort, supported by more than 60 diverse organizations, is committed to creating and maintaining a continuum of care that responds to the complex needs of homeless individuals and families.

The Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City (HSC) is committed to community networking and coalition building. Service providers, consumers, community leaders, government agencies and others in the Greater Kansas City metro area have come together, under the central umbrella of the Homeless Services Coalition, to help eradicate homelessness in the community. HSC was formed to address the concerns and interests of the homeless community, service providers, their consumers and supporters

The homeless services coalition funding for 2012 was 10.5 million dollars and includes a range of agencies that serve Blue Springs and Jackson County. The Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City (HSC) conducted a 24 hour point in time census in Jackson County on January 24, 2011. The survey found in Jackson County there were 2,434 total individuals that are considered homeless. 1,173 of those were part of a family. These figures represent the number of people living on the streets who were interacting with street outreach workers or those receiving or requesting shelter or housing on January 24, 2011.

One of the lead entities offering transitional living or transitional housing is The Community Services League. The Community Services League is headquartered in nearby Independence, Missouri and provides services to persons in Blue Springs from its satellite office at 200 SW 10th Street in Blue Springs. The Community Services League (CSL) provides a broad spectrum of services to meet the immediate and long term needs of the community. Services include Emergency Assistance, Housing Counseling, and Work Express.

The Community Services League obtains funds from Missouri Housing Trust Fund, Jackson County Housing Commission and the Federal Emergency Management Administration. Funds are used to provide rent/mortgage and deposit assistance and in most cases only pay a portion with the applicant paying a portion depending upon their circumstances. In future program years, the CSL intends to request funds from the City's CDBG funding.

In 2013, CSL provided assistance to 556 new Blue Springs households including 1563 individuals. Following is a summary of the Emergency Assistance that CSL provided to Blue Springs residents.

- \$58,021 in Food and \$3,485 in Clothing Distributed
- 16 Families Provided \$6,452 in Housing Assistance
- 49 Families Provided \$5,970 of Utility Assistance
- 1,191 (Projected) Presents Delivered to Children for Christmas
- 163 (Projected) Christmas Meal Baskets Distributed
- 303 Children Received School Supplies
- \$1,715 in Eye Exams, Hearing Aids, Glasses, Dental Services, and Prescriptions
- \$2,421 of personal care items
- 647 Unique Children have been served
- 77 Unique Seniors have been served

The City is providing support to a local faith based group that operates the IMPACT food pantry. The parent church of this organization recently purchased a new property near Downtown Blue Springs. The City is providing technical assistance and planning services to help bring the facility up to code. The facility will greatly increase its efficiency and services in the new space.

Projected housing needs over the next five years for all income levels are expected to increase. Citizens on fixed incomes and retired citizens on retirement income will be affected most. The City of Blue Springs plans to address this situation by providing two programs, Minor Home Repair and First Time Home Buyers, to assist with older homes and home ownership in the city. Both programs are targeted to low/moderate income individuals.

The Minor Home Repair Program is addressing needed home improvements that allow citizens to stay in their homes and address older housing stock with repairs that will extend the life of the home.

The First Time home Buyers Program provides homeownership assistance to people that want to purchase their first homes. Providing this assistance brings new residents to the city and helps to create strong neighborhoods.

The City of Blue Springs participated in a Regional effort that produced the "Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for the Kansas City Region" during the Winter of 2010 through Spring 2011. This document addresses the impediments to fair housing along with recommendations to remove these barriers in Blue Springs and the Kansas City Metro region. The City of Blue Springs plans to utilize the following steps to remove barriers to affordable housing in the community.

The City of Blue Springs hopes to remove barriers to affordable housing by:

- Working with the development community to encourage mixed-use and mixed-income developments (including owner-occupies and tenant-occupied housing) that allow services within walking distance of residential areas.
- Working to encourage quality multi-family units of varying densities at appropriate locations.
- Encourage approval of developments of attached single-family homes and senior housing at appropriate location.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development

The 2011-2016 Consolidated Plan for the City of Blue Springs focuses on downtown street, parks and recreation and infrastructure improvements in the five Census tracts identified by HUD as home to the highest density of low-mod persons. These areas include four Census tracts generally located south of Interstate 70 including the Downtown core of Blue Springs, east to Highway 7, south to the railroad tracks and west to Woods Chapel Road. There is also a low-mod area in the farthest northeast portion of the City north of I-70 extending north to E. Pink Hill Road and west including neighborhoods bordering along Adams Dairy Parkway. The City's 2014 Capital Improvements Program identifies the specific projects that are proposed in the low and moderate-income areas of Blue Springs.

The 2011-2016 Consolidated Plan analyzed the City's housing needs and resident preferences and developed a plan which prioritized where resources should be invested. The Plan is driven by four major goals. The goals and objectives are the result of a wide range of citizen input through task forces, surveys and planning workshops. The four priorities were identified as follows:

Goal 1: Redevelop Downtown Blue Springs. Promote Downtown Blue Springs' Potential for Growth

Objectives:

- Promote high density housing Downtown to create activity.
- Study opportunities for public gathering places in the Downtown.

Goal 2: Promote Housing Diversity. Diversify the Blue Springs Housing Market

Objectives:

- Promote high density development in order to accommodate housing diversity.
- Promote a variety of housing development satisfying various income brackets.
- Adopt and amend housing development standards to offset the perception that higher density housing must be lower quality.
- Address the needs of the elderly by providing a wider range of elderly housing in environments that are conducive to their lifestyle and needs.

Goal 3: Maintain Existing Housing and Infill Housing

Objectives:

- Promote stabilization of neighborhoods to encourage home investment and maintenance.
- Promote infill housing development to maximize existing infrastructure and encouraging reinvestment.

Goal 4: Provide Park Improvements

Objectives:

- Promote stabilization of neighborhoods through park facility reinvestment and maintenance.

- Address the needs of neighborhood parks by replacing and renovating equipment and infrastructure and providing ADA access.

A continued obstacle for meeting the community’s needs is the limited funding available for public service programs and public infrastructure improvements. The economic situation over the past few years has not only created an increase in needs but has also limited available resources.

Antipoverty Strategy

According to the American Community Survey 2008-2012 5 year estimate, 14.6% of the Blue Springs households are considered below the poverty level, which earn \$23,850 for a family of four or less annually. The City recognizes a need to continue the current programs for lower income families and to explore the opportunities to improve programs serving both the low income and the low-moderate income segments.

Blue Springs Poverty Levels

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WHOSE INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS IS BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL	
All families	6.9%
With related children under 18 years	10.5%
With related children under 5 years only	9.6%
Married couple families	2.9%
With related children under 18 years	4.4%
With related children under 5 years only	3.9%
Families with female householder, no husband present	25.9%
With related children under 18 years	32.7%
With related children under 5 years only	33.5%
All people	8.8%
Under 18 years	13.5%
Related children under 18 years	13.5%
Related children under 5 years	15.7%
Related children 5 to 17 years	12.9%
18 years and over	7.1%
18 to 64 years	7.7%
65 years and over	3.4%
People in families	7.7%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and over	15.7%

INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	Blue Springs, Missouri							
	Households		Families		Married-couple families		Nonfamily households	
	Estimate		Estimate		Estimate		Estimate	
Total	19,086		14,341		11,076		4,745	
Less than \$10,000	3.3%		3.1%		1.1%		3.8%	
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.4%		1.7%		0.6%		8.7%	

City of Blue Springs

\$15,000 to \$24,999	7.9%	6.6%	3.9%	14.4%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.1%	7.0%	5.3%	17.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13.9%	11.6%	9.1%	22.4%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	19.5%	19.4%	19.9%	15.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	19.0%	21.2%	24.3%	11.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16.3%	19.6%	23.7%	4.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4.3%	5.4%	6.8%	1.4%
\$200,000 or more	3.4%	4.5%	5.2%	0.0%
Median income (dollars)	66,509	75,676	84,273	38,786
Mean income (dollars)	76,899	85,850	N	46,715

The City recognizes the best way to assist people in improving their economic positions is to provide employment opportunities. Therefore, the City, through its policies and planning, will continue to encourage business growth in the community. The City plans to continue its efforts to support programs to maintain the quality and integrity of the low and moderate income neighborhoods where older, more renter-occupied housing is found.

The City aggressively supports infrastructure improvements in these areas. The City supports an active Codes Enforcement program throughout the City. In recognition that some families cannot afford to adequately correct code violations, the City is implementing the Minor Home Repair Program to help income-eligible homeowners correct property deficiencies.

Other Narrative

No other Action Plan information that was not covered by a narrative in any other section is to be presented.

2014 – 2015 One Year Action Strategy

PROJECTS		HUD Code	Planned Funding	Internal project #
Public Facilities Improvements - Sidewalks				
LMA	Baumgardner Park development (Tennis Courts)	03L	\$104,000	CDBG-14-03
Low/Moderate Income Housing Improvements				
LMH	Minor Home Repair Program	14A	\$60,000	CDBG-14-01
LMH	First Time Home Buyers Program	13	\$39,000	CDBG-14-02
Building Rehab				
LMA	Downtown Façade Grant Program	14E	\$10,000	CDBG-14-04
Public Services				
LMA	Downtown Alive	05	\$10,000	CDBG-14-05
Administration				
	Administration	21A	\$5,360	CDBG-14-06
TOTAL			\$228,360	

List of Attachments

- A. SF 424 and Certifications
- B. Project Description Tables and Information
- C. Summary of Public Comments
- D. Resolution Adopting the 2014-2015 Annual Action Plan
- E. Public Hearing Affidavit of Publication
- F. Public Hearing Minutes
- G. City Data Statistics