

Harris County 2008 – 2012 Consolidated Plan Executive Summary

Harris County is the third most populous county in the U.S. and has the second fastest growth rate among the ten most populous counties in the country. However, the changing characteristics of Harris County's population, as reported in the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS), have placed the county at a crossroads. Dr. Stephen Murdock, State Demographer, notes that current trends in the population of Texas, including Harris County, are creating a future scenario in which the Harris County labor pool may lack the educational attainment and job skills necessary to obtain high wage, high skill jobs. Meanwhile the overall population is expected to be older, larger and in need of increased public services. The mixture of increased demand for service and the potential limited capacity of the labor pool may create a situation in which taxable income is outpaced by need. The result could impact all aspects of community development as strained local resources may make it difficult to improve the living conditions of Harris County residents, particularly those that are low- and moderate-income.

To avoid these trends, Harris County must continue to change, but in ways that anticipate and address community needs. In fact, some statistics indicate that the population has already begun to adapt. Others, however, indicate that much remains to be accomplished. The 2008-2012 Consolidated Plan for Harris County is a tool for addressing the issues faced by the Harris County population of today in anticipation of the needs of tomorrow. In determining the needs of the community, particularly the low-income individuals residing in the unincorporated areas of the county and smaller "cooperative cities" that together comprise the Harris County "service area," Harris County has prepared goals and measurable objectives to achieve over the five year life of the plan. Further, Harris County has determined specific activities to undertake in upcoming program year 2008 to begin to meet these measurable objectives.

Citizen Participation

To identify the nature and level of needs within Harris County, a community survey was distributed to residents and organizations in our target areas, cooperative cities, citizen groups, service organizations, non-profit organizations, civic clubs, and citizen groups operating in Harris County. The community survey was completed by citizens and organizations throughout the county including all the precinct areas. A series of focus group meetings were also held in each precinct.

The community survey reflects the needs and concerns of Harris County. The survey was created to evaluate existing conditions, concerns and opinions, and recorded the level of concern for issues in Housing, Social Services, Transportation, Senior Services, Children/Youth Services, Parks, Homelessness, Public Facilities/Infrastructure, Health, and Education.

Focus group meetings were held at the precinct level to help identify and evaluate characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of the four precincts. The results of the meetings helped us recognize the needs, goals, and objectives of the services needed in Harris County.

In an effort to broaden public participation in the development of the Consolidated Plan, CSD efforts for participation included personal and telephone interviews, focus groups, and surveys distributed at meetings, seminars, workshops and trainings in the areas listed below.

Table 1.1 Consultation Checklist

24CFR	Requirement	Consulted
91.100(a)(1)	Housing Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Social Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Fair Housing Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Health Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Homeless Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
91.100(a)(2)	Chronically Homeless	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
91.100(a)(3)	Lead-based Paint	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
91.100(a)(4)	Adjacent Government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	State (Non-housing)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	County (Metro city)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
91.100(a)(5)	Metro Planning Agencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
91.100(b)	HOPWA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
91.100(c)	PHA Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

In addition to the organizations that HUD required that we consult with as part of the Public Participation process, we met with following organizations to further our efforts in identifying the needs within Harris County.

- Education
- Public Infrastructure Department
- Senior Service Providers
- Youth Service Providers
- Housing Resource Center
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Economic Development
- Public Facilities
- Intergovernmental Coordination and Partnerships

The information obtained through this process was one of several primary considerations in the development of goals and objectives for each planning element described in the Strategic Plan section of the 2008 Consolidated Plan.

CSD staff also met with local engineers involved in working with MUDs in local low- income communities. This meeting highlighted the need for sewer and water rehabilitation in the areas of Cloverleaf, Barrett Station, McNair, Linus, Aldine/Greenwood, and other small communities in east Harris County.

Once the Plan draft was completed, the plan was made available to the public through the internet, and advertised in the major publications, Houston Chronicle, that the document was under review. The 2008 Consolidated Plan, complete with the 2008 Annual Action Plan was

published in the Houston Chronicle on October 22, 2007. The public notice informed Harris County residents about the public hearing. The public hearing was held on November 14, 2007.

During the following 30-day public review period, comments and suggestions were recorded and considered for addition and/or revision to the plan. In addition, a public hearing was held, in which Harris County residents voiced their opinions on the Consolidated Plan and the 2008 Annual Action Plan. The PY2006 CAPER was also available for review. All comments recorded during the public review period and public hearing was then added to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan (see Appendix D).

COMMUNITY PROFILE

According to Dr. Steve Murdock, Texas State Demographer, there are four key demographic elements impacting the Nation, the state of Texas, as well as Harris County and will affect nearly all persons in coming years. These four factors include the rate of 1) population growth, 2) the aging of the population, 3) the growth in racial/ethnic minority populations, and 4) and the change in household composition.

Rapid growth and diversity were trends common to the demography of Harris County throughout the 1990s. These trends are expected to continue. Harris County has experienced substantial population growth, with most of that growth due to immigrants from other states in the United States and immigrants from other nations, and their descendants. The minority population is expected to continue to grow, increasing to represent more than half of the total population. This diverse population will also be an aging population. As baby boomers' reach retirement age, median age will increase reflecting an overall older population. A young minority population in Harris County will temper the boomers' increased age. Household composition will continue to change as more single persons; single parents, married couples without children and other non-traditional family types characterize the population.

These projected demographic changes would be meaningless if it were not for their far-reaching implications. If the projected demographic changes take place, and relationships between such factors as minority status and income do not change, Harris County will be poorer and less competitive in the future.

Housing Market Analysis

In general terms, housing in Harris County is by no means scarce. Driven by a solid demand, the housing market in Harris County continues to experience growth in the development and construction of both single- family and multi-family housing units despite the nationally felt housing market course correction. Locally, the entry-price single-family communities and subdivisions, particularly in remote or secondary locations, are the most affected by the current housing slowdown plaguing many of the Nation's metropolitan areas (MetroStudy, 2007).

The cause of the slowdown locally is predominately the tightening of credit and underwriting standards due to the crash of the sub-prime mortgage industry. Over the past year, there has been a sharp rise in foreclosures both nationally and locally. The sub-prime market share in 2006 was

16.7 percent. With the drop in available sub-prime lenders more than 15 percent of potential homebuyers will not have access to the home buying process until other solutions for those with marginal credit is found. This situation is optimal for the apartment industry as more households will opt for renting over buying.

Area home builders did see a peak in home starts at over 50,000 in 2006, however, the first quarter of 2007 has shown a possible decline in starts. The current housing supply remains good with MLS “days on market” the lowest in four years (MetroStudy, 2007). Permitting activity is reaching an all time high. However, when analyzing housing in terms of the availability of a variety of housing products to meet a diverse population, there are shortfalls. Large families, lower-income families, and disabled persons may meet obstacles in finding affordable housing units that meet their space, accessibility and income needs. In Harris County, housing availability is also dependent upon location. The following narrative will focus on these issues and describe the current conditions of the availability of housing including future trends for Harris County.

According to the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS), single-family housing units represented 63.5 percent of the total housing stock in Harris County, an estimated 844,925 units. This number represents a 0.74 percent increase in single family units since 1990. Geographically, single-family housing is primarily concentrated in the central and southwestern portions of Harris County. Map 3.15 Housing Density, Single-Family Units in 2000 illustrates these concentrations. According to the Harris County Appraisal District, there are approximately 316,115 single-family units located in the unincorporated area of Harris County. This represents 25.6 percent of the total housing stock located in Harris County.

Multi-family housing represented 33.6 percent of the total housing in Harris County in 2006. There are an estimated 447,275 multi-family housing units in Harris County. Similar to the rise of single family residential, the increase in the construction of multi-family housing developments in Harris County is described as a “boom time” for the apartment industry. There was an estimated 33.6 percent of the multi-family housing units added to the housing stock by 2006 according to 2006 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

Homeownership is generally a significant indicator of the stability of a community. It lends itself to pride, security and community involvement in an area. The percentage of Harris County households that have achieved homeownership is significantly less than the national average. In 2006, approximately 65.2 percent of all occupied units in Texas are owner-occupied. In Harris County, 58.3 percent of all occupied units are owner-occupied, which shows a slight increase from 55.3 percent in 2000.

Housing in Harris County is by no means scarce. Driven by a high demand, the housing market is experiencing an increase in the development and construction of both single-family and multi-family housing units. Geographically, occupancy statistics resemble those for housing type. Owner-occupied homes represented 50 percent or more of the housing stock in the county, and are particularly prevalent in unincorporated Harris County. Renter-occupied units comprise a major portion of the housing stock in several incorporated areas of Harris County, particularly within the I-610 loop, along the Gulf Freeway (I-45 South), along the Southwest Freeway (I-59 South), and west of Houston Intercontinental Airport.

Vacancy rates in housing are often an indicator of the saturation of the total housing stock. High vacancy rates, especially in concentrated areas, often lend itself to vandalism and vagrancy in a community. It may also mean that the demand for housing in a particular community is low and can cause depressed housing values for all housing in that area. On the other hand, low vacancy rates may indicate a strong housing market but at the same time may mean that not all housing needs are being met when other indicators such as increased housing cost is present. For example, if vacancy is low and housing cost is increasing, low-income households may be moving into substandard housing or creating overcrowded housing situations.

The 2006 American Community Survey reports that there are 163,849 vacant housing units in Harris County; which represents an 11.2 percent increase in the number of vacant units since 1990. Of the number of vacant units in 2006, 11.1 percent are for rent, 11.1 percent for purchase, and 6.3 percent for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Map 3.19, Housing, Percent Vacant in 2000, shows that vacancy rates are much higher in older sections of incorporated Harris County.

The ability to which the housing market is responding to specific household needs is often measured through overcrowding. HUD defines overcrowding as the condition where there are more than 1.01 persons per room. Overcrowding is often a problem for large and “extended” households (five or more persons), when the housing market fails to provide an adequate supply of housing units with three or more bedrooms. Affordability is also an issue that increases the likelihood of overcrowding. Analysis of the current Harris County housing development trends, particularly multi-family development, shows that the market is pumping out an abundant supply of one- and two bedroom housing units in response to estimated and projected increase of smaller households. However, the market’s response to meet the needs of smaller households has created a void in meeting the needs of large households, thus enhancing the issue of overcrowding. In 2000, there were 157,039 overcrowded housing units in Harris County, 13 percent of the total housing stock. The majority of these overcrowded units are multi-family units.

Multi-Family Housing Units According to Bedroom Size represents only 4 percent of the multi-family housing stock has four or more bedrooms with a 23.1 percent occupancy. While two to three bedrooms units comprise 57.2 percent with a 61.3 percent occupancy. As a result, overcrowding is likely to happen because of the lack of four or more apartment units.

Assisted Housing Needs

On March 1, 2003 Commissioners Court created the Harris County Housing Authority. The Harris County Housing Authority had an incredible year of dramatic achievements to promote affordable housing. HCHA administered the Housing Choice Voucher Program providing affordable housing for more than 1,800 families. They also assisted more than 1,100 Disaster-Voucher Program clients by helping them put their lives back together in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In addition, they continued to develop senior-housing tax-credit communities through public/private partnerships and opened an apartment community serving the homeless as part of the “Housing First Model.” At the time of this plan, neither Housing County nor the Harris County Housing Authority own any public housing. Upon the last waiting list enrollment, some 12,000 individuals and families applied for the voucher program. As of September 2007,

all of those clients have been housed and there is no one currently on the waiting list.

Barriers to Affordable Housing

The following is a list of impediments faced by low-income persons when searching for affordable housing options:

- Many low- income potential homebuyers lack the downpayment to buy a house. The majority of homes that are affordable for very low- and low- income households are substandard or inappropriate for that particular household.
- There are a significant number of housing units in the Harris County target areas (an estimated 124,000 as of 2000) with potential lead-based-paint contamination.
- Large families are often forced into an overcrowded environment because smaller units are more affordable and much more readily available.
- Housing build specifically for disabled or elderly persons is relatively expensive.
- Payment of fees assessed by the local FWSD, WCID or MUDs can significantly impact the housing cost burden very low-, low- and moderate-income families.
- Each of the cooperative cities in the service area has various land-use regulations, which may impact the cost and/or availability of area housing.
- Private sector deed restrictions utilized by a number of subdivisions may place an undue burden on very low-, low- and moderate-income households.
- Fees charged by real estate brokers/housing sales consultants add to the cost of searching for and renting/buying a home.

Fair Housing

The Fair Housing Plan made the following strategy recommendations:

- Implement an aggressive fair housing program which includes:
 - Information on fair housing issues
 - Public education
 - Counseling
 - Conciliation
 - Referral and follow-up for fair housing compliance and/or redress
 - Pro-active rental testing for fair housing compliance
 - Eliminate discriminatory lending
 - Eliminate barriers to affordable housing development.
 - Encourage educational activities which promote awareness about fair housing and individuals rights about fair housing choice
 - Encourage assistance to families.

Lead-Based Paint

In Harris County as a whole, around half of all housing units are likely to contain lead-based paint. The percentage of units projected to contain lead-based paint is substantially higher in urban areas, most notably in older neighborhoods of inner-city Houston. Since housing in the unincorporated area of Harris County is relatively new, only 31.1 percent of housing units are likely to contain lead-based paint. The percentage is higher for homes in Harris County target

areas. Approximately 42 percent of all homes in unincorporated target areas may contain lead-based paint, compared to 58 percent of all homes in incorporated target areas.

Homeless Needs

Homelessness in Harris County, Texas, has markedly increased over the past few years. Unemployment, low job growth, and a host of other economic problems have combined to increase the homeless problem. Social problems have also contributed to rising homelessness. Harris County is affected by the increased use of illegal drugs, a rising number of low-income single parent and teen-headed households, coupled with slowly evaporating support networks. As unemployment or underemployment rises, the ability of low-income individuals to pay necessary living expenses (rent, food, utilities, etc.) declines. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the 2007 Fair Market Rent in Houston and Harris County is \$711 for a two bedroom apartment. As such, in Texas, the average person making the minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour would find it necessary to work 106 hours per week to afford funds for a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent. Combine these figures with the added burden of childcare, healthcare, and other living expenses; it is understandable how individuals and families may slip into the crevices of homelessness and despair.

In addressing its homeless problem, Harris County is proud to be a member of the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care since 1992. The goal of the Collaborative not only reduces chronic homelessness, but also decreases episodic and transitional homelessness to the greatest extent possible. As of March 2006, the Collaborative had secured nearly \$100 million for Houston/Harris County to address the needs of homeless individuals. The Collaborative seeks to: (a) reduce chronic homelessness for unaccompanied disabled individuals who have been continuously homeless for at least a year, (b) implement the Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) a system of collecting, recording, and analyzing demographic information relating to homelessness, (c) to promote the development of affordable housing opportunities with a supportive service nexus, and (d) to promote the development of permanent housing.

Community Development Needs

Many communities within the Harris County service area lack the basic necessities for a suitable living environment. There are often significant deficits in affordable housing options, supportive services for special needs populations, available homeless facilities, education and job training opportunities, and necessary infrastructure.

Unfortunately, statistics regarding changes in the Harris County population potentially indicate that the need for community services and facilities is likely to continue to grow while the ability to cover rising costs may shrink.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

HOUSING

The housing goal is to create the opportunity for adequate, affordable, accessible housing for extremely low- and low- income persons through eventual elimination of lead-based paint hazards, encouragement of homeownership, rehabilitation of single family and multi-family housing, provision of rental assistance, new construction, and development of partnerships.

Owners

Objective 1: Homeownership (13)

To provide 800 individuals and families with the opportunity for homeownership by February 28, 2012, thus improving quality of life and supplying decent housing. This objective will be accomplished through financial assistance to prospective homebuyers. Financial assistance includes, but is not limited to downpayment and closing cost assistance. Programs providing Downpayment and Closing Cost services should provide a minimum of \$10,000 in downpayment and closing costs per eligible program participant. Harris County places a high priority on projects servicing seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Objective 2: New Construction (12)

To provide assistance to aid in the construction of 15 affordable housing units within the Harris County service area by July 31, 2012 for the purpose of supplying decent housing for low- and moderate income owner occupied households. Harris County places a high priority on projects servicing seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Objective 3: Single Unit Major Rehabilitation (14A) To provide assistance to 100 low-income homeowners with minor home repair assistance within the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of supplying decent housing for low- and moderate-income households. Minor home repair assistance includes, but is not limited to rehabilitation of septic systems, emergency home repairs, water wells, and roof repair. Harris County places a high priority on projects servicing seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS

Objective 5: Lead-Based Paint Abatement (14I)

To assist in the abatement of lead based paint hazards in 150 owner-occupied, single-family housing units by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of providing safe and decent housing for low- and moderate-income households.

Renters

Objective 6: New Construction (12)

To provide financial assistance to aid in the construction of 200 affordable multi-family housing units within the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of supplying decent housing to low-income renter households. Harris County places a high priority on projects servicing seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Objective 7: Acquisition of Multi-Family Housing (01)

To provide assistance to acquire 100 multi-family, affordable housing units in the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of supplying decent housing to low-income renter households. (If acquiring and rehabilitating units use code 14G)

Objective 8: Rehabilitation, Multi-Unit (14B)

To provide financial assistance to aid in the rehabilitation of 15 multi-family, affordable housing units in the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of supplying decent housing to low- and moderate-income renter households.

Objective 9: Rental Assistance (CDBG 05S and HOME 21F)

To provide tenant based rental assistance to 50 extremely low- and low-income Harris County families and individuals, by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of supplying decent housing for low- and moderate-income renter households.

Objective 10: Lead Based Paint Abatement (14I)

To assist in the abatement of lead based paint hazards in 15 renter-occupied, single-family housing units by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of providing safe, decent housing for low- and moderate-income renter households.

Strategies to be utilized by Harris County in overcoming the barriers identified above include the following:

Strategy One. To promote and support affordable housing opportunities throughout the Harris County service area, including downpayment assistance programs, new construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing units for the purpose of increasing the availability of housing to the very-low, low- and moderate-income persons.

Strategy Two. Promote the Housing Resource Center which is an information clearinghouse for those interested in the search of affordable housing initiatives in the Harris County service area.

Strategy Three. Promote the development of collaborations and partnerships of both non-profit and for-profit builders, developers, and other interested parties for the purpose of increasing the capacity for the development of affordable housing in the Harris County service area.

Strategy Four. Promote and assist in the development of applications for additional funds for the use in development of affordable housing in the Harris County service area, including Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Homeownership Zones.

Strategy Five. Promote and provide technical assistance for the review and revision of land-use regulations in cooperative cities that may present an obstacle in the development of affordable housing.

Strategies for Fair Housing:

Strategy One: *Aggressively enforce and enhance existing fair housing laws.*

The Houston Area Urban League (HAUL) is the only registered fair housing organization in the Harris County area. An aggressive fair housing program should be undertaken, which includes:

- Information on fair housing issues
- Public Education
- Counseling
- Conciliation
- Referral and follow-up for fair housing compliance and/or redress
- Pro-active rental testing for fair housing compliance

Strategy Two: *Eliminate discriminatory lending.*

The County should investigate methods to encourage reinvestment by private lending institutions in needed areas of its jurisdiction. Public-private strategies will be developed to promote reinvestment in housing and other sectors, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Strategy Three: *Eliminate barriers to affordable housing development.*

The County should work to educate community groups about the benefits of affordable housing development at the front end of the development so they can have empowering input in the development process. In this fashion, community groups are included in the overall process. CSD continues to promote and provide technical assistance for the review and revision of land-use regulations in cooperative cities to allow for the development of affordable, accessible housing.

Strategy Four: *Encourage educational activities, which promote awareness about fair housing and individuals rights about fair housing choice.*

Local public announcements should be created and sent to local media, including public television, radio, and newspapers. Pamphlets should also be developed and given to the general public. Additionally, posters should be sent to non-profits, civil rights groups, and community action agencies on fair housing law.

Strategy Five: *Encourage Assistance to families.*

Activities should be undertaken by those entities who have a vested interest in the rental and sale of housing to lower income/minority groups. These activities could include:

- Mortgage lending counseling
- Rental maintenance counseling
- Referral programs for home seekers and renters
- Budget/credit counseling for first-time homebuyers
- Foreclosure/forbearance assistance
- Emergency Housing assistance

Lead Based Paint Hazard, Hazard Reduction Strategy

Effective September 15, 2000, all housing activities supported by funding administered by HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development must comply with lead-based paint regulations (Title X of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992). The changes will affect housing rehabilitation activities, tenant-based rental assistance, acquisition, leasing, support services and operations. The new regulation changes the acceptable work practices and expands the requirements to protect occupants and workers from lead-based paint hazards. In addition, it requires testing for lead, stabilization, control or abatement in the event that lead is found on the property. Certain programs will have the additional responsibility of on-going maintenance and record keeping. The impact of the new regulations on existing programs will be in several areas such as budgeting, productivity, and staff training.

In response to the changes in regulations, Harris County will continue to implement HUD's Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction strategy. This strategy includes incorporating the approved Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction regulations into all housing programs operated by CSD and those programs operated by subrecipients. Subrecipient training will continue to include information regarding implementation, documentation and reporting on all housing activities that are affected by changes in regulations.

Other strategies for lead-based paint hazard reduction include the continued support of the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services Department's Childhood Blood/Lead Screening/Abatement program. Through these programs Harris County will actively pursue the reduction of the number of lead-based paint hazards in the Harris County service area.

Homelessness

Objective 1: Essential Services – To provide 3,500 units of outreach, assessment and other essential services for homeless persons and families to improve their overall quality of life and assist in moving them to self-sufficiency by February 28, 2012. Essential services include but are not limited to counseling, case management, food and clothing distribution, job training and placement, life skills training, child care, health care, transportation, emergency dental care, education, housing placement and substance abuse treatment.

Objective 2: Homeless Prevention – To provide outreach and homeless prevention services to 500 persons and families at risk of homelessness by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of

promoting the sustenance of decent housing for the low- and moderate- income population. Homeless prevention services include but are not limited to emergency housing and utility assistance, security deposits, mediation and legal assistance, case management and counseling.

Objective 3: Emergency and Transitional Shelters – To maintain and expand operations and support renovations and rehabilitation of structures to provide shelter for 10,000 homeless persons within new and existing emergency and transitional shelters by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of providing decent housing for the homeless population.

Homeless Strategies

- Funding for homeless programs will be allocated to assist in the expansion and improvement homelessness services and prevention efforts, along with expansion of facilities (beds for emergency shelters and transitional homes.)
- Homelessness prevention for low-income families will be concentrated on services such as Section 8 rental assistance, housing counseling, emergency financial assistance (for rent and utilities), consumer credit services, domestic violence counseling, and substance abuse treatment and prevention.
- In an effort to provide outreach services, Harris County will collaborate with the Houston/Harris County Coalition for the Homeless, Inc. and Harris County homelessness service providers. Harris County will additionally support outreach efforts through the Collaborative for the Homeless funding application.
- Emergency and Transitional Shelters will be supported through funding allocated for the expansion and maintenance of bed capacities, in an effort to provide decent housing for the homeless population.
- CSD will promote the transition of homeless individuals and families to self-sufficiency through funding support of permanent supportive and transitional housing. In addition, through various Harris County Housing programs such as the “Independence” Homeownership Program, Homeless Housing Program, and others, Section 8 families and individuals are able to move toward becoming self-sufficient, thereby increasing the availability of rental assistance opportunities for at-risk families.
- Harris County will support the ideals of Rapid Re-housing and expanded Medical Services for the homeless as stated in the Houston/Harris County Strategic Plan for Homeless conducted by the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, Inc.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

To provide, improve and maintain community facilities, which contribute to the quality of life for extremely low-, very low-, low-income persons living in the Harris County service area, particularly in target areas with special emphasis on the needs of youth, senior citizens and disabled persons.

Objective 1: General Public Facilities (O3)

Provide improvements and/or construction of 10 public or social science facilities benefiting low-income areas by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of improving the quality of life of 20,000 residents of low- income communities, the homeless, and disabled persons by promoting the availability of public facilities to meet unmet needs. General public facilities include but are not limited to community centers, health care centers, educational centers, and group home facilities.

Objective 2: Senior Centers (03A)

Provide improvements to 5 senior center facilities located throughout the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of improving the quality of life of 5,000 elderly individuals by promoting the availability of facilities to serve unmet needs. Senior centers are facilities that exclusively provide space for services to persons aged 62 years and older.

Objective 3: Youth Centers (03D)

Provide improvements to 1 youth center located in the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of improving the quality of life of 1,000 youth by promoting the availability of facilities to serve unmet needs. Youth centers are facilities that primarily provide space for services to persons aged 18 years and younger.

Objective 4: Parks (03F)

Provide improvements to and/or construction of 10 parks/recreational facilities benefiting low-income areas in the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of improving the quality of life of 10,000 residents of low- income communities by promoting the availability of green space and playground areas to serve recreational and leisure needs.

INFRASTRUCTURE

To ensure quality infrastructure in low-income communities, including improvement and provision of adequate streets, sidewalks, water systems, wastewater systems, and storm drainage sufficient to eliminate severe flooding problems.

Objective 1: Street Improvements (03K)-Construct and improve 15 miles of roadways benefiting low-income areas of the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of improving the living environment and quality of life of 10,000 low-income persons.

Objective 2: Water/Sewer Improvements (03J)-Provide improvements to 50,000 linear feet of water/sewer lines and 4 water/sewer facilities benefiting low-income areas within the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012, for the purpose of improving the living environment and quality of life of 30,000 low-income persons. Improvements may include, but are not

limited to sewage treatment facilities, rehabilitation of manholes, rehabilitation of water storage tanks, and construction and maintenance of lift and pump stations.

Objective 3: Sidewalks/Pathways (03L)-Construct and improve 3 miles of sidewalks/pathways benefiting low-income areas within the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012, for the purpose of improving the living environment and improving the quality of life for 5,000 low-income persons.

Objective 4: Flood drain improvements (03I) -Construct and improve 2 miles flood drains and controls benefiting low-income areas of the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of improving the living environment and quality of life of 1,500 low-income persons.

PUBLIC SERVICES

To provide direct social services that improve the quality of life of extremely low, low and moderate income persons, including accessibility to information and educational opportunities from preschool to adult education, provision of a safe and comfortable educational environment, provision of general welfare services including food and clothing, accessibility to quality health care for seniors and youth, development of educational programs and youth enrichment programs, promotion of programs benefiting abused and neglected children, support of indigent bereavement services, and accessibility to social, medical and employment services.

Objective 1: General Services – To provide general public services to 5,000 low and moderate persons to increase quality of life and general well-being for individuals and families throughout the HCCSD service area. Services include but are not limited to food and clothing distribution, housing, counseling, crime awareness, and neighborhood clean up.

Objective 2: Senior Services (Special Needs Population) – To provide senior services to 2,500 elderly and frail elderly persons to enable them to increase or maintain quality of life and promote physical, mental, and social well-being. Senior services include but are not limited to food and clothing distribution, housing counseling, transportation services, enrichment classes, exercise and recreation programs, healthcare/medication assistance, emergency dental care and services for Alzheimer’s disease patients and their families.

Objective 3: Youth Services/Child Care – To provide youth services/child care for 12,000 low-income persons, 5-19 years of age, for the purpose of enriching, protecting, and improving quality of life by February 28, 2012. Youth services include but are not limited to counseling, after-school programs, sports and recreational programs, education and tutoring programs, life skills buildings, self-esteem building, drug and alcohol education, youth retreats, mentor programs, summer youth programs, child care services, and job and career counseling.

Objective 4: Health Services – To provide health prevention, services, and outreach to 2,500 low and moderate income persons to increase the mental, physical, and social well-being of the individual and family by February 28, 2012. Health prevention, services, and outreach include but are not limited to immunization, health clinic service, mobile care, vision care, dental care,

nutrition counseling, tele-medicine, after hours care, physical rehabilitation, services to person with HIV/AIDS, and health education and awareness.

Objective 5: Services to Persons with Disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS (Special Needs Populations) – To provide services to 200 disabled adults or persons with HIV/AIDS to enable them to increase or maintain their quality of life and promote physical, mental, and social well-being. Services include but are not limited to counseling, housing placement, food and clothing distribution, transportation services, enrichment classes, exercise and recreation programs, job training and placement and independent living skills training.

Objective 6: Transportation Services – To promote transportation services to 500 low-income persons by February 28, 2012 to increase mobility to access essential service, facilities, jobs and employment centers thus improving the quality of life.

Objective 8: Abused and Neglected Children-To provide services to 1,000 abused and neglected children by July 31, 2012 for the purpose of enabling a secure and stable environment thus increasing quality of life. Services include but are not limited to advocacy, counseling, childcare, and protection.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To encourage economic revitalization efforts, stimulate economic opportunities in low and moderate income communities throughout the Harris County service area and create jobs for low- and moderate-income persons, by providing assistance to for-profit businesses, encouraging microenterprise development and providing technical assistance to existing and new businesses.

Objective 1: Direct Financial Assistance to For-Profits (18A) To provide direct financial assistance to for-profit businesses by February 28, 2012, for the purpose of creating/retaining 25 jobs with at least 51% reserved for low and moderate income persons thus expanding economic opportunity and improving the quality of life for unemployed and underemployed individuals.

Objective 2: Microenterprise Assistance (18B) To provide financial and technical assistance and training to enable 25 low-income persons the opportunity for entrepreneurship by February 28, 2012. Training and assistance to include but not limited to business counseling and micro-loan availability.

OTHER INITIATIVES

To develop an expanded and enhanced delivery system by building capacity of non-profit organizations, developing a planning process to be utilized to comprehensively address the needs within the extremely low-, very low- and low-income areas, assisting in creation of additional community development organizations, constructing of a network of service providers to coordinate resources or other means by which community development and revitalization is bolstered.

Objective 1: Clearance and Demolition (04)

To eliminate 100 dilapidated and/or unsafe structures located in low and moderate-income areas in an effort to improve integrity of Harris County neighborhoods by February 28, 2012.

Objective 2: Nonprofit Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (19C)

To provide assistance to 10 non-profit organizations, including assistance to Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) and Community Based Development Organizations (CBDOs), to build capacity to support revitalization activities in low-income communities. Assistance includes, but is not limited to, technical assistance, referral services, and providing research and information services.

Objective 3: Planning (20)

To support, encourage and facilitate countywide service planning and local community planning activities through the Harris County service area for the purpose of preparing for the future and ensuring stabilization and needed expansion of services and facilities through February 28, 2012. Local planning activities will provide neighborhood level plans to 4 low-income target areas by developing and conducting a planning process, supporting research and analyses, and providing technical assistance. Two plans are to be submitted to the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development as Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies (NRS) by February 28, 2012.

ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

Many Harris County residents are currently living at or below the state poverty level. Many of these people are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless because of insufficient income. There is a great need among these individuals to expand their opportunities for education and employment, and thus improve their quality of living.

Anti-Poverty Strategies

- To assist low-income persons and families in achieving income levels above the Texas State poverty line. This will be achieved by expanding the number of available jobs within the CSD service area. Through programs offered by local organizations.
- To expand programs and services offered by CSD, the Housing Authority, Public Health Department, Community Assistance and local organizations to persons in need. This may be done by increasing the number of affordable rental units, increasing the number of Section 8 vouchers, expanding public health initiatives to underserved areas, offering affordable childcare service, and developing job creation programs through micro-loans, small business loans, and community revitalization. Only through strong and coordinated collaboration will this strategy be a true success.
- To build and form partnerships with Community Development Corporations (CDC), Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO), other non-profits, and other county departments, in planning revitalization strategies for local neighborhoods. Through community plans, neighborhoods can begin to implement strategies that can improve the local socio-economic environment.
- To provide training and technical assistance to individuals and non-profits via the Housing Resource Center, Medical Non-Emergency Transportation Website, and Three

Tract Training Program. These programs provide information and referrals to community resources to help create change in lives and communities.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

To effectively communicate with cooperative city governments, as well as Harris County neighborhood associations, CDC's, CHDO's, surrounding entitlement jurisdictions, assisted housing providers, private and governmental health, and service agencies to ensure coordination and compatibility of planning efforts, specifically with regards to all Consolidated and Action plans, and neighborhood revitalization strategies. This will be accomplished by requiring certifications of consistency in all plans (to be signed by all affected jurisdictions), actively encouraging all Harris County CDCs, CHDOs, adjacent jurisdictions, and cities with CSD cooperative agreements to participate in public hearings and community surveys. This will be done by establishing personal contacts by telephone, and sending meeting information by fax and mail.

To form partnerships with local non-profit organizations as well as private agencies and local service providers in order to eliminate overlap and promote cooperation of community development planning efforts. This will be accomplished by gathering participants through the professional consultation forum process, then working to form committees that regularly meet to establish contacts, discuss issues, and develop and implement solutions.

ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

For Program Year 2008 (PY08), Harris County anticipates receiving \$15,031,918 for use towards community development activities. This total is comprised of \$11,032,425 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, \$3,458,436 in HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) funds, \$473,802 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds, and \$67,255 in American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI) funds.

Administered by the Harris County Community Services Department (CSD) and in accordance to HUD's philosophy of comprehensive community development, Harris County is proposing to fund 42 projects addressing the PY2008-2012 Consolidated Plan's priority need areas of housing, homelessness, economic development, education and workforce development, infrastructure, public facilities, public services and other needs.

The total PY2008 project allocations amount to \$15,031,918 in a combination of CDBG, HOME, ESG, and ADDI and program income funds.

The following matrix reflects Harris County's funding allocations by subject area:

Consolidated Plan Need Area	Number of Projects	Amount Allocated
Housing	6	\$1,944,000
Homelessness	11	\$751,603
Public Facilities	2	\$699,574
Infrastructure	5	\$3,865,341
Public Services	17	\$1,276,858
Others *	1	\$150,000
Total Allocations	42	\$9,206,141
Unprogrammed Funds		\$3,277,201
Administration		\$2,576,018
Total Funds		\$15,031,918

**Projects classified in the Other category include a demolition/nuisance abatement project.*

Harris County believes its comprehensive and community-based approach to solving the complex socio-economic ailments within the county is the most effective way to stimulate private reinvestment in the county's most underserved areas. The 2008 Annual Action Plan is the County's blueprint for impacting change within lower-income communities and ultimately improving the quality of life in Harris County.