



## **Clay County**

### **Annual Action Plan FY 2025-26**

For the use of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

# Executive Summary

## ***AP-05 Executive Summary – 24 CFR 91.200(c), 91.220(b)***

### **1. Introduction**

Clay County, Florida, is a rapidly growing suburban county located in the northeastern part of Florida, along the west bank of the St. Johns River. As a rapidly growing community, home to over 230,000 residents, Clay County is known for its strong sense of community, good schools, and safe neighborhoods. As an entitlement jurisdiction under the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Clay County receives federal funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) based on population size, concentration of poverty, and socioeconomic and demographic data. Every year, HUD requires entitlement communities to develop and submit an Annual Action (AAP). Clay County's 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan is carried out through its Annual Action Plan, which provides a concise summary of the actions, activities, and specific federal and non-federal resources that will be used annually to address the priority needs and specific goals identified by the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan.

As approved by HUD, the County's 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan identified and analyzed community, social, and economic needs, especially within low to moderate-income (LMI) communities, and established multi-year goals to address those needs. Goals and strategies analyzing housing and community development needs and analyzing housing and economic market conditions and available resources. Clay County's allocation for FY25-26 is \$1,060,250.00. The priority needs of the County are addressed through activities developed in the Annual Action Plan that work towards accomplishing the established goals associated with the identified needs. By addressing these priority needs, the County can improve the quality of life of residents in Clay County.

### **2. Summary of the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan Needs Assessment Overview**

Clay County has identified various activities they intend to utilize to achieve the objectives and associated outcomes required by HUD. The County intends to focus investments on the following eligible areas: Preservation of Housing, Code Enforcement, and Neighborhood Improvements.

#### **Preservation of Housing**

Housing rehabilitation includes homes owned by low- and moderate-income (LMI) residents.

Objective: Decent Housing - Provide funding for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation/preservation of housing affordable to LMI residents.

Outcome: Affordability-Housing Rehabilitated: 5 Households/Housing Units

## **Code Enforcement – Funding Not Proposed for FY25-26**

Code enforcement in distressed neighborhoods is defined as more than 51% LMI in the County.

Objective: Suitable Living Environment - Provide funding for the payment of salaries and overhead costs directly related to the enforcement of local codes in deteriorating or deteriorated areas in Target Areas.

Outcome: Long-term Property Care

## **Neighborhood Improvements**

Infrastructure projects in distressed neighborhoods are defined as more than 51% LMI in the County.

Objective: Provide funding for public facility improvements, physical improvements, and comprehensive neighborhood planning activities in Target Areas, and HUD-designated LMI areas to improve the quality of life and health of neighborhood residents. Specific projects include street improvements, sidewalks, and neighborhood cleanups.

Outcome: Sustainability: Promoting Livable or Viable Communities-Public Facilities or Infrastructure Activities other than LMI Housing Benefit: 3,000 Households Assisted.

### **3. Evaluation of past performance**

Major accomplishments during FY23-24's action plan included paving Dennison and Baylor Avenues, two dirt roads in an LMI neighborhood, which benefited over 291 homes and created safe access for residents and emergency services. The County also completed eight limited home rehabilitation projects during this plan year. The application period for the FY24-25 limited home rehabilitation program opened in September 2024. Improved methods of outreach resulted in record numbers of applicants.

In Low/Moderate Income areas, 9 Homes were rehabilitated, 291 Infrastructure Improvements were made, and 6,000 pounds of trash removed for neighborhood clean-ups. Code Enforcement operations switched focus from fines/enforcement to holistic, community driven efforts to provide assistance and the resources necessary to provide non-deterrence methods of neighborhood improvement.

### **4. Summary of citizen participation process and consultation process**

Clay County staff conducted a total of three public meetings in Keystone Heights, Middleburg, and Orange Park to encourage citizen participation in LMI areas.

The County held a public comment period from June 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025, to allow an opportunity for the public to review the proposed Annual Action Plan. The Plan was available on the County's website and social media. The Plan was also available at the five (5) Clay County Public Libraries and at 420 College Drive, Suite 107, in Middleburg for those wishing to view a hard copy of the Plan. The

public was invited to submit comments by email or phone. The Annual Action Plan will be adopted after the public hearing on Tuesday, July 8, 2025.

## **5. Summary of public comments**

The meeting minutes from the County's three Public Comment Meetings are attached as Exhibit A. There were no attendees at the public meeting on June 12, 2025, at the Middleburg Public Library. There were no attendees at the public meeting on June 23, 2025, at the Orange Park Public Library.

During the public meeting on June 9, 2025, at the Keystone Heights Beach Pavilion, the public expressed support for infrastructure and safety improvements. There was also support for housing rehabilitation projects, which may be best addressed through other State programs like CDBG-DR. Clay County staff and Florida Commerce have discussed the potential of using CDBG-DR to replace aging mobile homes that were damaged during the 2024 hurricane season.

The County did not receive any public comment in-person or by phone. The County received one email request from Seeds of Grace to support neighborhood improvements in High Ridge Estates. Staff has requested more information from Seeds of Grace and will consider this funding request during its Substantial Amendment in Fall 2026. A copy of the email and project proposal are attached as part of Exhibit A.

**PR-05 Lead & Responsible Agencies – 91.200(b)**

- 1. Describe agency/entity responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan and those responsible for administration of each grant program and funding source**

The following agency is responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan and for administration of each grant program and funding source.

**Table 1 – Responsible Agencies**

<b>Agency Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Department/Agency</b>
CDBG Administrator	Clay County Board of County Commissioners	Community and Social Services
CDBG Compliance	Clay County Board of County Commissioners	Grants Management

**Narrative**

The lead agencies for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program are Clay County, Florida's Community and Social Services Department and Grants Management Department. The Community and Social Services Department oversees the administration and implementation of the program while Grants Management oversees the County's Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. The Grants Management Department is also responsible for all compliance reporting and plans that are required by the program.

**Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information**

Megan Covey, [Megan.Covey@claycountygov.com](mailto:Megan.Covey@claycountygov.com) (904) 529-4211, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

## ***AP-10 Consultation – 91.100, 91.200(b), 91.215(l)***

### **1. Introduction**

As part of the Annual Action Plan development, local agencies, service providers, and public documents pertaining to the County are consulted to gain a better understanding of the needs, services, and resources available to Clay County residents. The process outlined in the Clay County Citizen Participation Plan will be followed during the adoption of the Annual Action Plan.

The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) provides guidance for citizens and organizations in Clay County to voice their opinions and participate in all phases of the development of the Consolidated Plan including the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, the Citizen Participation Plan, the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, the Residential Anti-Displacement Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and any amendments to these plans. The Consolidated Plan, along with its supporting plans, provides a guiding framework for Clay County's management of programs and funds related to the CDBG program administered by HUD.

The CPP establishes the procedures for citizen participation in the development and updating of the Consolidated Plan and its supporting plans. These procedures are designed to maximize transparency and opportunities for public engagement. The CPP emphasizes public outreach to low- and moderate-income residents through non-profits, faith-based organizations, and philanthropic organizations to bolster the voices of under-represented demographics. Residents living in blighted neighborhoods and areas that qualify for CDBG funds are strongly encouraged to participate. The CPP is developed in accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's rule 24 CFR 91.105.

**Provide a concise summary of the jurisdiction's activities to enhance coordination between public and assisted housing providers and private and governmental health, mental health and service agencies (91.215(l)).**

The list of providers involved in the review process include housing, social service agencies, and other entities, including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, and their families, and homeless persons. Phone and email contacts will also be made to key non-profits and agencies that work with these specific groups to obtain a better understanding of their service or potential service to Clay County residents.

**Describe coordination with the Continuum of Care and efforts to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans, and unaccompanied youth) and persons at risk of homelessness.**

Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated

1	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	Mission of the Dirt Road
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services – Housing
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Housing Need Assessment
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	Email correspondence and in-person meetings to discuss infrastructure, home rehab, and code enforcement needs in the High Ridge Estates community.
2	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	Clay County Sheriff’s Office
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Other government – County
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Homeless Strategy
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	Email correspondence and in-person meetings to discuss community safety and security concerns for the homeless population in Clay County.
3	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	Operation Lifeline
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services – Housing
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Affordable Housing
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	Email correspondence and in-person meetings to discuss affordable housing in Clay County as well as details about the CDBG program.
4	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	Mercy Support Services
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services – Housing
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Affordable Housing, homelessness needs, employment
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	Email correspondence and in-person meetings to discuss affordable housing, homelessness, and employment in Clay County.

5	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	Northeast Florida Regional Council
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services – Planning
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Affordable Housing, homelessness, community development
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	Email correspondence and in-person meetings to discuss affordable housing in Clay County as well as details about the CDBG program.
6	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	Operation Barnabas
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services – Veterans
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Homelessness Needs – Veterans
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	Email Correspondence to discuss how CDBG funds can assist the local veteran population.

Northeast Florida Continuum of Care is the agency responsible on a regional level for the Continuum of Care. Clay County is one of three counties in the region. The County will continue to seek their input and coordinate CDBG and other housing-related programs (e.g. State of Florida SHIP funds) with the agency.

**Describe consultation with the Continuum(s) of Care that serves the jurisdiction's area in determining how to allocate ESG funds, develop performance standards and evaluate outcomes, and develop funding, policies and procedures for the administration of HMIS.**

Clay County is not a direct recipient of ESG funding. The Northeast Florida Continuum of Care is the lead agency for the regional (northeast Florida including Duval, Nassau and Clay Counties) Continuum of Care and distributes ESG funds.

**2. Describe Agencies, groups, organizations and others who participated in the process and describe the jurisdiction’s consultations with housing, social service agencies and other entities.**

Clay County Community and Social Services attend monthly general membership meetings relevant to the homeless population, specifically for Clay County.

**Identify any Agency Types not consulted and provide rationale for not consulting**

All relevant local agencies were consulted in the formation of the Consolidated Plan except for Broadband Service providers as the County is currently exploring options to ensure all residents will have adequate access to a minimum broadband coverage of 25mbps download/3mbps upload capabilities.

Additionally, the County recently completed a countywide flooding vulnerability assessment, which will provide new data and insights for its next Consolidated Plan.

**Other local/regional/state/federal planning efforts considered when preparing the Plan**

**Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts**

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
Continuum of Care	Changing Homelessness, Inc.	This collaborative group addresses homeless issues including chronic homelessness, homelessness prevention, and discharge coordination policies on a regional basis in Duval, Nassau, and Clay Counties.
State Housing Initiative Program (SHIP)	Clay County Board of County Commissioners	Increase the availability of affordable housing in Clay County. Availability of affordable housing includes homeowner rehabilitation programs, purchase assistance programs, and partnerships with non-profit organizations assisting those with "special needs" housing.

**AP12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)**

- 1. Summary of citizen participation process/Efforts made to broaden citizen participation. Summarize citizen participation process and how it impacted goal-setting**

The legal ad published in Clay Today described the citizen participation process as follows:

The Draft FY 2025-2026 Annual Action Plan will be available for review at the County’s Website at <https://www.claycountygov.com/community/community-development-block-grant> and at the following locations beginning on June 1, 2025:

Clay County Community & Social Services Office between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays at 420 College Drive, Ste 107, Middleburg, FL 32068

Clay County Library Locations listed below between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday-Thursday, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Friday-Saturday.

- Fleming Island Library- 1895 Town Center Blvd., Fleming Island, FL 32003
- Green Cove Springs Library- 403 Ferris Street, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
- Keystone Heights Library- 175 Oriole Avenue, Keystone Heights, FL 32656
- Middleburg-Clay Hill Library- 2245 Aster Avenue, Middleburg, FL 32068
- Orange Park Library- 2054 Plainfield Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32073

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** The 30-day public review and comment period is June 1 through June 30. Comments from the public are encouraged and will be accepted during this period at Clay County Community & Social Services Office between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays at 420 College Drive, Ste 107, Middleburg, FL 32068. Comments can also be given by calling 904-529-4256 or be sent by email to [cdbg@claycountygov.com](mailto:cdbg@claycountygov.com).

**PUBLIC MEETINGS:**

Purpose: To announce the Annual Action Plan for public review and comments and obtain public input on the Draft Annual Action Plan.

**Public Meeting #1:**

Date: Monday, June 9, 2025  
 Time: 6:00 p.m.  
 Place: Keystone Heights Historic Pavilion  
 565 S Lawrence Blvd., Keystone Heights, FL 32656

**Public Meeting #2:**

Date: Thursday, June 12, 2025  
 Time: 6:00 p.m.  
 Place: Middleburg Public Library  
 2245 Aster Avenue, Middleburg, FL 32068

**Public Meeting #3:**

Date: Monday, June 23, 2025  
 Time: 6:00 p.m.  
 Place: Orange Park Public Library  
 2054 Plainfield Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32073

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**Public Hearing #1:**

Purpose: To announce the draft of the Annual Action Plan for consideration.  
 Date: **Tuesday, June 10, 2025**  
 Time: 5:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard  
 Place: BCC Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Clay County Administration Building,  
 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

**Public Hearing #2:**

Purpose: To obtain final comments and adopt the Annual Action Plan.

Date: **Tuesday, July 8, 2025**

Time: 5:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard

Place: BCC Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Clay County Administration Building,  
477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

**Non-English-Speaking Persons:**

Special arrangements for a translator will be made by the County. A citizen requiring a translator should send a request at least two (2) business days before the event.

**Special Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:**

Special arrangements for a sign language interpreter will be made by the County. A request should be sent to the County at least two (2) business days prior to the event. Recorded events will be posted with closed captioning for those hard of hearing.

**Access to records/recordings:**

A recording of the public meetings and hearings will be made public for those who are not able to attend. Minutes of the public meetings and hearings will also be taken. Citizen input will be summarized and documented in the minutes. The recordings and minutes will be posted on the County's website at <https://www.claycountygov.com/community/community-development-block-grant>.

**In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing accommodations to participate in this matter should contact Clay County Risk Management by mail at P.O. Box 1366, Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043, or by telephone at (904) 529-4718, no later than three (3) days prior to the hearing or proceeding for which this notice has been given. Deaf and hard of hearing persons can access the telephone number by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955- 8770 (Voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).**

All interested persons are invited to attend the public meetings or hearings. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, a person deciding to appeal any decision made by the Clay County Board of County Commissioners (Board) with respect to any matter considered at the meeting, hearing, or at any subsequent meeting or hearing to which the Board has continued its deliberations is advised that such person will need a record of all proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record of all proceedings is made, which must include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

This process is consistent with the County's citizen participation plan and has been in use since 2021.

## Expected Resources

### **AP-15 Expected Resources – 91.220(c)(1,2)**

#### **Introduction**

Clay County does not have HOME funds as of this date. CDBG funds will be leveraged through partnerships it has with other governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations. Sources of leverage primarily include Low-income Housing Tax Credits, New Markets Tax Credits, Opportunity Zone Funds, State of Florida SHIP funds (State Housing Initiatives Program).

#### **Anticipated Resources**

**Table 5 - Expected Resources – Priority**

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 5				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation:	Program Income:	Prior Resources (Estimated – Projects still in progress):	Year Total:		
CDBG	public - federal	Acquisition Administration Housing Public Improvements Public Services	\$1,060,250	\$0	\$1,194,251.47	\$2,254,501	\$2,254,501	This will be the County's fifth year of CDBG funding.

**Explain how federal funds will leverage those additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements will be satisfied.**

Most of the funding earmarked to improve the quality of life of LMI households, revitalize deteriorating infrastructure / neighborhoods and offer opportunities for safe, decent affordable housing has been provided by Federal CDBG Program Funds, Florida’s State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program, and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program (regional CoC) which supports services for homeless persons. These programs provide rehabilitation of substandard units, emergency repairs, infrastructure improvements, elimination of slum and blighting influences, delivery of Countywide public and homeless services, and construction of community meeting places and centers.

**If appropriate, describe publicly owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that**

**may be used to address the needs identified in the plan.**

The plan includes publicly owned road repaving projects and publicly owned sidewalk replacement projects.

**Discussion**

Clay County will continue to use HUD and local funds to fund a variety of eligible projects to meet high-priority needs and goals.

## Annual Goals and Objectives

### ***AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives – 91.220(c)(3)&(e)***

#### Goals Summary Information

**Table 6 – Goals Summary**

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Affordable Housing	2021	2025	Affordable Housing	County wide low- and moderate-income CTS	Housing rehabilitation: Single-Unit Residential	Proposed FY25-26 CDBG: \$0	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 5 Household Housing Unit
2	Code Enforcement	2021	2025	Non-Housing Community Development	County wide low- and moderate-income areas Code Enforcement	Code Enforcement	Proposed FY25-26: \$0	N/A
3	Infrastructure improvements	2021	2025	Non-Housing Community Development	County wide low- and moderate-income CTS	Public Infrastructure (Street Improvements and Sidewalks)	Proposed FY25-26 CDBG: \$ 910,250	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 3000 Persons Assisted
4	Neighborhood Cleanups	2023	2025	Non-Housing Community Development	County wide low- and moderate-income areas	Housing preservation	Proposed FY25-26 CDBG: \$0	N/A
5	Administration	2022	2025	Planning and Administration		Costs associated with program administration and projects	Proposed FY25-26 CDBG: \$150,000	N/A

## Goal Descriptions

Table 7 – Goal Description

1	<b>Goal Name</b>	Affordable Housing
	<b>Goal Description</b>	No funds are allocated for new housing rehabilitation projects in FY25-26, but the County will complete housing rehabilitation projects that are in-progress and financially obligated; there are funds in prior CDBG Entitlement program years to complete these projects. Housing rehabilitation projects benefit eligible low- and moderate-income areas of the county. The projects focus on emergency repairs and code compliance.
2	<b>Goal Name</b>	Code Enforcement
	<b>Goal Description</b>	No funds are allocated for Code Enforcement in FY25-26, but funding from prior years is available, if needed. Projects focus on identification of properties in need of emergency repairs and code compliance.
3	<b>Goal Name</b>	Infrastructure improvements
	<b>Goal Description</b>	The County will provide for infrastructure improvements in low and moderate-income eligible communities, including street improvements and sidewalk construction and replacement.
4	<b>Goal Name</b>	Neighborhood Cleanups
	<b>Goal Description</b>	No funds are allocated for Neighborhood Cleanups in FY25-26, but funding from prior years is available to address community needs as they arise. This project aims to preserve the quality and value of low and moderate-income communities by providing resources and labor to remove special garbage, trash, and debris.
5	<b>Goal Name</b>	Administration
	<b>Goal Description</b>	This project will focus on the costs associated with the administration and planning of the CDBG grant and its projects.

## Projects

### ***AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)***

#### **Introduction**

The FY 2025-2026 Action Plan includes six projects to be funded under the CDBG Program. The first project is a housing rehabilitation project that will be implemented by Clay County Community and Social Services Department in eligible low- and moderate-income areas of the county. The project will focus on emergency repairs and code compliance. The County will also utilize 14% of the CDBG funds for administrative costs needed to oversee new and underway projects and provide general management of the CDBG funds. The County will also provide for infrastructure improvements in low and moderate-income eligible communities.

#### **Projects**

**Table 8 – Project Information**

<b>#</b>	<b>Project Name</b>
1	Housing Activities - Rehabilitation
2	Planning and Administration
3	Code Enforcement
4	Neighborhood Cleanups
5	Street Improvements
6	Sidewalks

#### **Describe the reasons for allocation priorities and any obstacles to addressing underserved needs.**

The Consolidated Plan goals described in the Goals section represent high priority needs for Clay County, and serve as the basis for the strategic actions the County will use to meet those needs. It is our goal that meeting these needs will expand and preserve the affordable housing stock in Clay County, as well as provide public infrastructure improvements that will strengthen LMI neighborhood revitalization. The County will implement all CDBG funded projects in-house.

## AP-38 Project Summary

### Project Summary Information

Table 9 – Project Summary

1	<b>Project Name</b>	Housing Activities - Rehabilitation
	<b>Target Area</b>	County wide low- and moderate-income areas
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Affordable Housing
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Housing rehabilitation
	<b>Funding</b>	FY 25-26 CDBG: \$0
	<b>Description</b>	In FY25-26, the County will finish any housing rehabilitation projects that are already in-progress, but additional funds are not needed. Rehabilitation - National Objective: 570.208 (a) (3) Low/Mod Housing; Eligible Category: 570.202 (a) (1) Eligible rehabilitation and preservation activities; Objective Category: Low- and moderate-income benefit; Proposed Outcome: Availability/Accessibility.  Matrix Code: 14A, 14H, 14I
	<b>Target Date</b>	9/30/2026
	<b>Estimated number/ type of families benefiting from the proposed activities</b>	5 low- and moderate-income households will benefit.
	<b>Location Description</b>	Clay County consists of unincorporated Clay County, as well as four municipalities (cities and towns). The Countywide area is comprised of low- and moderate-income areas within Clay.
<b>Planned Activities</b>	For the Home Repair program, repairs will be completed to homes of qualified applicants with dwellings in need of repairs, which may include roofing, electrical, plumbing, heating/air conditioning, accessibility modifications, health/sanitary problems including minor septic system repair, safety code violations, lead paint remediation, and/or interior/exterior damage or deterioration to the structure including flood damage, termite treatment and removal of trees. Additionally, under this strategy, failing septic systems and old wells can be replaced by paying for connection fees, abandoning private wells, and closing septic tanks, as well as other related plumbing costs may be funded under this program. Awards are available up to \$35,000.  Performance Measure: 5 households assisted	
2	<b>Project Name</b>	Planning and Administration
	<b>Target Area</b>	County wide
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Administration
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Administration of CDBG related programs and projects
	<b>Funding</b>	FY 25-26 CDBG: \$150,000
	<b>Description</b>	General planning and administration costs for CDBG program.
	<b>Target Date</b>	9/30/2026

	<b>Estimated number/ type of families benefiting from the proposed activities</b>	Not applicable. Grant administration is necessary for all projects that are identified in the Action Plan.
	<b>Location Description</b>	Not applicable.
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	General planning and administration costs for CDBG program.
<b>3</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	Code Enforcement
	<b>Target Area</b>	County wide low- and moderate-income areas
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Code Enforcement
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Code Enforcement
	<b>Funding</b>	N/A for FY25-26
	<b>Description</b>	Code Enforcement Conduct code enforcement and remediation of code enforcement violations of properties in low-and moderate-income areas that contribute to conditions of slum and blight. National Objective: 570.208 (a) (1) Low/Mod; Eligible Category: 570.202 (c) Section 105(a)(3); Objective Category: Slum and Blight national objective. Proposed Outcome: Improved housing conditions.  Matrix Code: 15
	<b>Target Date</b>	N/A
	<b>Estimated number/ type of families benefiting from the proposed activities</b>	N/A
	<b>Location Description</b>	Clay County consists of unincorporated Clay County, as well as four municipalities (cities and towns). The Countywide area is comprised of low- and moderate-income areas within Clay County.
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	Eligible code enforcement expenses that support the County's CDBG activities.
<b>4</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	Neighborhood Cleanups
	<b>Target Area</b>	County wide low- and moderate-income areas
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Neighborhood Cleanups
	<b>Need Supported</b>	Neighborhood Cleanups
	<b>Funding</b>	N/A
	<b>Description</b>	The County has funds from prior program years for Neighborhood Cleanups, if community needs arise. Provide resources and labor to remove special garbage, trash, and debris from low-and moderate-income areas that contribute to conditions of slum and blight. Proposed Outcome: Improved neighborhood conditions and preservation of low- and moderate-income housing stock.  Matrix Code: 05V
	<b>Target Date</b>	N/A

	<b>Estimated number/ type of families benefiting from the proposed activities</b>	N/A
	<b>Location Description</b>	Clay County consists of unincorporated Clay County, as well as four municipalities (cities and towns). The Countywide area is comprised of low-and moderate-income areas within Clay County.
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	N/A
5	<b>Project Name</b>	Street Improvements
	<b>Target Area</b>	County wide low- and moderate-income areas
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Infrastructure improvements
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Infrastructure
	<b>Funding</b>	FY 25-26 CDBG: \$0
	<b>Description</b>	Street improvements National Objective: Low and moderate-income benefit as an area benefit; Eligible Category: 570.201(c), 570.207, 570.208 Objective Category: Public improvements (General). Proposed Outcome: improve streets in low- and moderate-income areas. Matrix Code: 03K
	<b>Target Date</b>	N/A
	<b>Estimated number/ type of families benefiting from the proposed activities</b>	N/A
	<b>Location Description</b>	N/A
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	None planned for FY25-26.
6	<b>Project Name</b>	Sidewalks
	<b>Target Area</b>	County wide low- and moderate-income areas
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Infrastructure improvements
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Infrastructure
	<b>Funding</b>	FY25-26 CDBG: \$910,250
	<b>Description</b>	Sidewalk improvement in portions of low- and moderate-income areas of the County, including areas of Keystone Heights, Orange Park, and Middleburg. Matrix Code: 03L
	<b>Target Date</b>	9/30/2026

<b>Estimated number/ type of families benefiting from the proposed activities</b>	3,000 low- and moderate-income families.
<b>Location Description</b>	Clay County consists of unincorporated Clay County, as well as four municipalities (cities and towns). The Countywide area is comprised of low- and moderate-income areas within Clay County.
<b>Planned Activities</b>	Perform selected infrastructure upgrades. Performance Measure: number of new sidewalk segments by length.

**AP-50 Geographic Distribution – 91.220(f)**

**Description of the geographic areas of the entitlement (including areas of low-income and minority concentration) where assistance will be directed**

All Activities supported by the County’s Five-Year Consolidated Plan strive to improve the quality of life for Clay County low-to-moderate income residents located within Clay County’s unincorporated areas, as well as four municipalities (Town of Orange Park, City of Green Cove Springs, Town of Penney Farms, City of Keystone Heights). It also includes the census-designated places of Asbury Lake, Bellair-Meadowbrook Terrace, Fleming Island, Lakeside, Middleburg, Oakleaf Plantation and the unincorporated areas of Bellair, Clay Hill, Doctors Inlet, Fleming Island, Hibernia, Kingsley Lake, Lake Asbury, Lake Geneva, McRae, Meadowbrook Terrace, Melrose, and Virginia Village.

The Countywide area is comprised of low-and moderate-income areas within Clay County. The County’s focus is placed on eligible programs targeting low-and moderate-income persons on a county-wide basis. During FY 2025-2026 the County will utilize CDBG funds for housing rehabilitation, code enforcement, public facilities, and infrastructure improvements in target areas that have a high concentration of low-and moderate-income persons, substandard housing, and blight. The census tracts meet an area benefit national objective.

Targeted areas consist of low-and moderate-income concentration areas with several of those areas at 62% Low/Mod and incomes at or below 80% of Area Median Income determined through HUD generated Low-and Moderate-Income Summary Data. "White alone" and "non-Hispanic" are the most affected racial/ethnic groups based on population density. According to the data the County evaluated, there is not a substantial minority concentration in one specific area of the county.

**Geographic Distribution**

**Table 10 - Geographic Distribution**

<b>Target Area</b>	<b>Percentage of Funds</b>
County wide low- and moderate-income	70
Other areas countywide	30

## **Geographic Distribution**

Target Area: Clay County Low and Moderate-Income areas

Percentage of Funds: 70%

### **Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically**

Funding is being targeted to areas that demonstrate a community development need and where there is a concentration of low- and moderate-income persons and minority population. The geographic allocation of the CDBG funds is also a factor of program requirements that at least 70% of CDBG funds benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

The County is considering other sidewalk locations that help safely connect students to schools and residents to essential services. The County will not exceed

### **Discussion**

Clay County's goal is to improve the quality of life for Clay County residents and aim to have local municipalities, engaged citizens, and the County working together to better align resources, to revitalize and redevelop communities, and protect natural resources.

# Affordable Housing

## AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

### Introduction

Providing access to affordable housing for all residents continues to be a high priority for Clay County. Affordable housing will be provided through the use of Federal CDBG, and State SHIP funds. Priorities include the rehabilitation of new and/or existing owner, rental, homeless and special needs housing for low-and moderate-income households.

**Table 11 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement**

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	0
Non-Homeless	5
Special-Needs	0
Total	5

**Table 12 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type**

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	0
The Production of New Units	0
Rehab of Existing Units	5
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	5

### Discussion

The County seeks to assist low-and moderate-income households with their housing and community development needs, activities support persons with special needs such as the elderly or persons with disabilities. These activities include:

- Housing rehabilitation for income eligible homeowners, which may include accessibility retrofits for the elderly or persons with disabilities. AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

### Introduction

Clay County does not have a Housing Authority division, the County does partner with Flagler County Housing Authority to manage Clay County’s Section 8 Voucher program. In FY22-23 there were 190

families that took part in the voucher program in Clay County. Currently, 68 of the 190 families moved to Flagler County under HCV portability. The rest remain from the baseline voucher program. The total baseline for both Counties is 352.

There is one waiting list maintained for both Counties and is not broken down or set aside any specific number of vouchers by County. When the waiting list is opened, it is for anyone who wishes to apply and to be housed in either jurisdiction (Flagler or Clay).

**Actions planned during the next year to address the needs to public housing**

N/A

**Actions to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership**

N/A

**If the PHA is designated as troubled, describe the manner in which financial assistance will be provided or other assistance**

N/A

**Discussion**

Clay County does not have a Housing Authority division, but the County does partner with Flagler County Housing Authority to manage Clay County's Section 8 Voucher program. The County will continue to explore and groom additional partnerships with local housing authorities that are close to the locale such as Jacksonville, Palatka, and MacClenny.

## ***AP-65 Homeless and Other Special Needs Activities – 91.220(i)***

### **Introduction**

Clay County does not receive funding specifically to assist the homeless population. Clay County is an active member of the regional Continuum of Care (CoC), an organization that acts as the regional planning body to address homelessness in the region. This collaborative group addresses homeless issues including chronic homelessness, homelessness prevention, and discharge coordination policies on the region wide basis of Duval, Nassau and Clay Counties. Through active membership, Clay County supports the CoC's plan to achieve net zero for chronic homelessness.

**Describe the jurisdictions one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including:**

**Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs**

Clay County will work with and support regional organizations that address the needs of the homeless population.

**Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons**

Clay County will continue to monitor the number of homeless in the county and will evaluate the need for a homeless facility or shelter in the future.

**Helping homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living, including shortening the period of time that individuals and families experience homelessness, facilitating access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units, and preventing individuals and families who were recently homeless from becoming homeless again**

Clay County will work with and support regional organizations addressing the needs of the homeless population.

**Helping low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless, especially extremely low-income individuals and families and those who are: being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care (such as health care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); or, receiving assistance from public or private agencies that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, or youth needs**

Clay County will work with and support regional organizations that addressing the needs of the homeless population.

## ***AP-75 Barriers to affordable housing – 91.220(j)***

### **Introduction:**

Clay County faces barriers to affordable housing that are common across housing markets, including limited supply of developable (e.g. zoned) land particularly for multi-family rental housing, which increases the cost of acquisition and development of the land. Also, few resources exist beyond Low Income Housing Tax Credits to provide the appropriate subsidy for development of affordable rental housing.

### **Actions it planned to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment**

Clay County has identified several governmental constraints to the development, maintenance, and improvement of housing and affordable housing, as follows: Zoning Code Amendments, Lot Consolidation, and Monitoring of Planning and Development Fees. Nongovernmental constraints were identified as follows: Land Costs, Construction Costs, and Availability of Financing. Clay County will continue to review and examine all real and perceived barriers to affordable housing and seek to remove or ameliorate them.

### **Discussion:**

Please see discussion above.

## ***AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)***

### **Introduction:**

Listed below are the actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs, foster and maintain affordable housing, reduce lead-based paint hazards, reduce the number of poverty-level families, develop institutional structure, and enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies.

### **Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs**

The obstacles that Clay County faces are barriers to affordable housing, including lack of funding (federal, state, local) for affordable housing, limited land availability, high utility/maintenance costs in older housing units, cost prohibitive tree/landscaping requirements, aging mobile home parks, smaller units in demand but not cost feasible to construct, and tenant barriers including Fair Housing issues. In terms of specific gaps, the amount of need almost always outweighs the available funding. More specific deficits in the quantity and quality of affordable housing were identified during the citizen participation process. Affordable housing continues to be a concern for Clay County, primarily due to the widening gap between median income and median home values and rents, and due to limited land availability. Related to housing affordability, homelessness also continues to be an area of concern. Underserved populations in Clay County include the elderly; mentally ill, or substance abuse/addiction challenges; and persons with disabilities. The County continues to coordinate with a network of community partners and the Continuum of Care (CoC) to address these needs as funding allows.

### **Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing**

Fostering and maintaining affordable housing that may be lost from the assisted housing inventory is a high priority for the County. The County will use CDBG and other funding to:

- Provide Housing Counseling and Education to LMI households through the Clay County IFAS Extension office.
- Preservation of the existing housing stock through rehabilitation of owner housing for LMI households using CDBG funds.
- Production of new affordable housing through rehabilitation.

### **Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards**

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is the primary agency for addressing lead-based paint (LBP) hazards in Clay County. Budgetary constraints have limited lead screening and case management activities; however, the DOH still responds to reported cases of lead poisoning as determined by local

pediatricians and health care providers.

The DOH, authorized under the Florida Lead Poisoning Prevention Screening & Education Act, Section 381.985, F.S., and Chapter 64D-3, F.A.C., conducts surveillance of Blood Lead Level (BLL) testing and poisonings in the County, promotes BLL screening for high-risk populations, and provides information to health care providers, individuals, and businesses on lead poisoning prevention. Program activities include surveillance and epidemiology, lead poisoning investigations, primary prevention, and coordinate of care if a person or family is found to have high BLL. The DOH also disseminates information to parents and caregivers, healthcare providers, and renovators and contractors about LBP hazards and screening options. This information includes brochures on keeping children safe from LBP hazards, sources of lead, remediation tactics, and adult lead poisoning prevention at home and in the workplace.

To address LBP hazards, the DOH in Clay County performs BLL testing and coordinates follow-up care if elevated BLL is detected. For children identified with elevated BLL, a lead assessment of the home is recommended. A specialist performs inspections and risk assessments at no charge for families with children having elevated BLL, family day care homes, and day care centers. The DOH in Clay County also works to identify LBP hazards in the environment in conjunction with housing demolition, rehabilitation, and redevelopment activities in older neighborhoods. The primary source of lead exposure among children is LBP in older, deteriorating buildings.

### **Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families**

Clay County's strategy to reduce the number of poverty-level families is multi-faceted and relies on the cooperation of numerous partners throughout the County and the greater Jacksonville region. These partners include County departments, economic development partners such as the Economic Development Corporation and the regional JAXUSA, 7public service providers, the Continuum of Care, housing authorities, public and private organizations (e.g. non-profits and community development corporations), and other stakeholders in community development activities. These stakeholders will work in concert to address a variety of interrelated social issues, including disparities in education and training, unemployment, limited access to healthcare, family instability, criminal background, inadequate housing, deteriorating neighborhoods, and transportation disadvantage.

The County's goals are to address the categories of affordable housing, homelessness, non-homeless special needs, and non-housing community development are all anti-poverty strategies. Clay County will connect poverty-level individuals and families with publicly available services, including healthcare resources, emergency financial assistance, housing assistance, justice coordination, senior/elderly services, and social security and disability benefits. These programs support social and economic stability for residents, particularly those with special needs. Economic Development Partners offer employment and job skills/workforce training programs for LMI individuals. Such partners include Clay CareerSource. Challenge Enterprises, and BASCA, among others can also connect poverty-level persons and persons with disabilities with employment opportunities. Beyond any Countywide program or initiative, Clay County

also supports HUD's Office of Economic Resilience strategies for enhancing equity and inclusion. Within Clay County, there is a disproportionate percentage of poverty-level individuals among minority racial and ethnic groups (2013-2017 ACS). Therefore, anti-poverty strategies must also address equity, inclusion, and fair housing. HUD's equity and inclusion strategies include building inclusive government structures; identifying regional barriers to opportunity; prioritizing investments to equalize opportunity; and improving the location of transportation assets to improve access to employment.

### **Actions planned to develop institutional structure**

Clay County is the lead agency in administering the CDBG grant funds. Clay County's Planning office has a strong support system internally and externally. The Public Works and Engineering Departments work with various neighborhood/resident committees to obtain requests for projects such as sidewalks, parks improvements, areas in need of improved drainage, road improvements, and other community development needs. Clay County works closely with local nonprofit organizations to implement various public services activities.

In terms of specific gaps, the amount of need almost always outweighs the available funding. More specific deficits in the quantity and quality of affordable housing were identified during the citizen participation process. Affordable housing continues to be a concern for Clay County, primarily due to the widening gap between median income and median home values and rents, and due to limited land availability. Related to housing affordability, homelessness also continues to be an area of concern. Underserved populations in Clay County include the elderly, persons with mental illness, or substance abuse/addiction challenges, and persons with disabilities. The County continues to coordinate with a network of community partners and the CoC to address these needs as funding allows.

Clay County will continue to network with participating cities and towns, elected officials, citizens, non-profit and for-profit stakeholders, and the CoC to identify community needs, make these needs widely known to stakeholders, and identify projects or programs and funding opportunities to address these needs. In order to improve the preservation and production of affordable housing within Clay County, the County plans to emphasize a transit-oriented/activity center development framework that will foster affordable housing proximate to transportation and employment opportunities. The County will also utilize leveraging and matching of federal funding, particularly with state and local funding sources such as SHIP that are specifically designated for housing and/or economic development activities. The preservation and production of affordable housing, as well as housing/rental assistance, is overseen by the Clay County Planning Department's Community Development Division and implemented through a network of non-profit and for-profit housing developers and organizations.

In order to improve the funding of public services, particularly for homeless and special needs populations, the County will support the CoC member organizations in the development of projects or programs that address priority needs, and encourage applicant subrecipients to leverage and match federal funding with state and local funding sources to address priority needs. Such investment will be focused in areas of

concentrated poverty, such as the Target Areas identified previously. The provision of public services will be overseen by the Community Development Division.

### **Actions planned to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies**

Key agencies that are additional resources that may be available are described below. The County's Community and Social Services Department works with private sector partners to coordinate actions and address the public's requests for assistance.

#### *Public Sector*

The Community and Social Services Department which includes Veterans Services, Case Management, and Volunteer Coordination will assist as needed in getting those in need the assistance and/or resources they require. Clay County Department of Health offers a variety of services and programs to residents such as childcare licensing, childhood lead poisoning, family planning, WIC and women's health, among others. Flagler County Housing Authorities administers Clay County's Section 8 Voucher Program.

#### *Private Sector*

The private sector is an important collaborator bringing additional resources and expertise that can be used to supplement existing services or fill gaps in the system. Lenders, affordable housing developers, business and economic development organizations, and private service providers offer a variety of assistance to residents such as health care, small business assistance, residential mortgage programs, commercial lending and assisted housing, among others.

#### **Discussion:**

The County is committed to continuing its participation and coordination with federal, state, municipal and local agencies, as well as with the private and non-profit sector, to serve the needs of target income individuals and families in the County. In particular, the County will continue to work in close coordination with County departments regarding infrastructure improvements and the provision of services.

The allocation of priorities for housing activities (i.e. rehabilitation), code enforcement, and infrastructure improvements were determined through several processes including but not limited to: public hearings, outreach and listening sessions, and a citizen survey to gauge the activities and projects the public deemed important. The proposed housing activities (i.e. rehabilitation), code enforcement, and infrastructure improvements that will take place in low- and moderate-income areas of Clay County are critical to sustaining the quality of life of residents and businesses in the area. This decision allows improvements to be directed to a concentrated area utilizing the limited CDBG resources available. The limiting factor in addressing underserved needs in Clay County is the lack of sufficient CDBG funding allocations as well as

other resources to address all the needs.

## Program Specific Requirements

### ***AP-90 Program Specific Requirements – 91.220(I)(1,2,4)***

#### **Introduction:**

The County, under section AP-20 "Annual Goals and Objectives", has identified its targeted activities planned with respect to all CDBG funds expected to be available during the program year (including program income that will have been received before the start of the next program year). At this time, the County does not receive HOME/American Dream Down Payment Initiative (ADDI) or Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) funds.

#### **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)**

##### **Reference 24 CFR 91.220(I)(1)**

Projects planned with all CDBG funds expected to be available during the year are identified in the Projects Table. The following identifies program income that is available for use and is included in projects to be carried out.

1. The total amount of program income that will have been received before the start of the next program year and that has not yet been reprogrammed	\$0
2. The amount of proceeds from section 108 loan guarantees that will be used during the year to address the priority needs and specific objectives identified in the grantee's strategic plan.	\$0
3. The amount of surplus funds from urban renewal settlements	\$0
4. The amount of any grant funds returned to the line of credit for which the planned use has not been included in a prior statement or plan	\$0
5. The amount of income from float-funded activities	\$0
<b>Total Program Income:</b>	<b>\$0</b>

#### **Other CDBG Requirements**

1. The amount of urgent need activities	0%
2. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income. Overall Benefit - A consecutive period of one, two or three years may be used to determine that a minimum overall benefit of 70% of CDBG funds is used to benefit persons of low and moderate income. Clay County will use the last three years of the Consolidated Plan to determine the minimum overall benefit.	70%

# **Exhibit A**

## **Citizen Participation Received during the Public Comment Period June 1 – June 30, 2025**

**The Clay County Board of County Commissioners' Grants Division held an Open forum for public comment on the proposed plan for the FY25- 26 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan at the Keystone Heights Historic Beach Pavilion, 565 Lawrence Blvd. Keystone Heights, Florida, on Monday, June 9, 2025.**

**There were 5 attendees.**

Megan Covey, Grants Director, opened the meeting at 6:03 PM. Megan Covey and Chris Curington, Grants Research and Application Manager, facilitated the meeting.

Megan Covey explained the Annual Action Plan draft and displayed the Community Development Block Grant funding for this year, the funding breakdown, and presented questions geared to encourage discussion. Citizens were provided information on how to access the Annual Action Plan draft online and send their comments to [cdbg@claycountygov.com](mailto:cdbg@claycountygov.com).

Official allocation: \$1,060,250.00

Infrastructure: \$760,250

Housing Rehab: \$150,000

Administration: \$150,000

The following discussion questions were presented to meeting attendees, and their responses are recorded:

*What qualities make up a vibrant neighborhood or community?*

**Public Comments:**

- Paved streets
- Street lights
- Sidewalks/Walkability of communities
- ADA accessible trails
- Bicycle paths
- Clearing of trees
- Safety improvements to trails
- Clearing vegetation from walkways/trails
- Community cleanups

- Flooding/Drainage management
- Park/amenity improvements
- Waterparks
- Road grading
- Railing along the culvert

*What kind of infrastructure needs to be implemented to create a safer living environment?*

Public Comments:

- Sidewalks
- Lighting along roadways and sidewalks
- Railing
- Crosswalks
- Smoother transitions between paved/unpaved roads

*What types of specific projects would you like to see with the proposed funding categories?*

Public Comments:

Public Infrastructure:

- Crosswalks across
- Flashing signals/signage
- Tree trimming
- Clearing vegetative overhangs along major roads and trails
- Community parks and playgrounds

Housing Rehab:

- Well replacement in Highridge neighborhood
- Skirting replacements
- Roof replacements

*How would you prioritize the following funding categories?*

Public Comments:

1. Public infrastructure received 2 #1 votes
2. Housing Rehab received 3 #1 votes

Open Discussion

- Neighborhood cleanup funds were addressed. Megan Covey explained that this will still follow under volunteer programs with the same Point of Contact.
- Middleburg-Clay Hill, Tanglewood, and Bellair were mentioned as neighborhoods in need of cleanup activities.
- Residents asked about what specific public infrastructure projects are planned. Megan Covey mentioned that roads and sidewalks are priorities, and target areas are to be defined shortly.

Megan Covey closed the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

The next public comments meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 12, 2025 at the Middleburg-Clay Hill Public Library located at 2245 Aster Avenue, Middleburg, Florida 32065.

**The Clay County Board of County Commissioners' Grants Division held an Open forum for public comment on the proposed plan for the FY25- 26 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan at the Middleburg-Clay Hill Library, 2245 Aster Avenue, Middleburg, Florida, on Thursday, June 12, 2025.**

**There were no attendees.**

Chris Curington, Grants Research and Application Manager, opened the meeting at 6:15 PM. For the video record of the meeting, Chris Curington explained the Annual Action Plan draft and displayed the Community Development Block Grant funding for this year, including the funding breakdown. Citizens were provided information on how to access the Annual Action Plan draft online and send their comments to [cdbg@claycountygov.com](mailto:cdbg@claycountygov.com). Chris Curington encouraged citizens to attend the next public comment meeting on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**The next public comments meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 23, 2025 at the Orange Park Library located at 2054 Plainfield Avenue, Orange Park, Florida 32073.**

**The Clay County Board of County Commissioners' Grants Division held an Open forum for public comment on the proposed plan for the FY25-26 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan at the Orange Park Library, 2054 Plainfield Avenue, Orange Park, Florida, on Monday, June 23, 2025.**

**There were no attendees.**

Chris Curington, Grants Research and Application Manager, opened the meeting at 6:17 PM. For the video record of the meeting, Chris Curington explained the Annual Action Plan draft and displayed the Community Development Block Grant funding for this year, including the funding breakdown. Citizens were provided information on how to access the Annual Action Plan draft online and send their comments to [cdbg@claycountygov.com](mailto:cdbg@claycountygov.com). Public comments will be received through the close of business on Monday, June 30, 2025.

**From:** [Carey Morford](#)  
**To:** [Community Development Block Grant](#)  
**Subject:** See attached  
**Date:** Friday, June 13, 2025 11:10:42 AM  
**Attachments:** [Megan-CDBG county partnership plan.docx](#)

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CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Seeds of Grace is a non-profit which has worked alongside Mission of the Dirt Road to serve High Ridge Estates since 2012. We believe that the neighborhood needs a community advocate who is working to bring resources, solutions, and collaborative energy to the community every day. Seeds of Grace would like to partner with the county to work toward improving the strength and safety of High Ridge Estates and achieving the goals of the High Ridge Initiative. Please see the attached proposal for consideration. If there are questions, please reach out to Carey Morford.

Rev. Carey Morford  
Pastor, Mission of the Dirt Road  
[missionofthedirtroad.com](http://missionofthedirtroad.com)  
352-215-9379



## **Proposal**

We request that Clay County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and Seeds of Grace (SOG) create a partnership guided by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to manage the goals and objectives of the High Ridge Initiative (HRI). We recommend a five-year agreement that will include the county providing 100% of a community advocate's salary for at least 3 years, and no less than 50% of the community advocate's salary for the last 2 years.

Projected cost to the county: \$200,000 over 5 years.

### **Seeds of Grace Reasons for recommendation:**

Clay County BCC has already approved the HRI community development project.

Clay County BCC has already passed a resolution to support the project.

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) study of High Ridge Estates recommended a Public-Private Partnership and a consultant.

HRI is a unique project with a wide scope of work that will require many cross-departmental meetings and the development of relationships with many agencies outside of county government.

It is vital that the High Ridge community members are active participants in the redevelopment process. Historic Eastside in Jacksonville has started using the language “withintrification” to declare the importance of their current residents being involved instead of displaced in the redevelopment of the neighborhood. Whether this project adopts this language or not, the mindset will be key to the success of this project. That will require community engagement and education that is more aligned with non-profit work than governmental work.

A non-profit will be able to seek funding that the county government cannot, and the county may be able to apply for funding that the non-profit cannot.

- By having an MOU in place between Seeds of Grace and Clay County BCC, we can maximize resources for the neighborhood. Our neighborhood clean-up days are an example of the benefit of sharing resources and working together. The county has used community development block grants (CDBG) funds to provide the dumpsters and Mission of the Dirt Road has provided volunteers and other heavy equipment to maximize the amount of trash and debris we have been able to remove more than 30 tons of tires and trash from the neighborhood since 2022.

- Seeds of Grace will be eligible to apply for grants from The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and United Way, and both organizations are already familiar with the High Ridge Initiative.

The Clay County BCC strategic plan has the following priorities and goals:

Implement board approved recommendations from ULI studies

Continue and build relationships with outside partner organization leadership to provide a connected approach to the issues facing the county

Increase # of county hosted programs by 20%

This current informal partnership has seen success by collaborating on neighborhood clean-up days and with the SHIFT program.

While Mission of the Dirt Road has been the primary partner to this point, MOTDR recognizes that the scope of this work is outside of its capability. Seeds of Grace has always partnered with Mission of the Dirt Road in the past and is prepared to increase its involvement and capacity so that this community development project will benefit.

**Services and Support Seeds of Grace will provide the High Ridge Estates neighborhood:**

Conduct a door-to-door survey to learn about the High Ridge residents needs and desires related to affordable housing (grant funding and a partnership with UF FIBER is already in place for this work)

Assist with MOTDR Community Center to provide needed social services

Develop and maintain partner and financial supporter relationships for the purpose of increasing resources to the neighborhood.

Raise at least \$200,000 for direct neighborhood impact by 2030

Develop a compelling fundraising impact story to share with the wider community for the purpose of creating partnerships for affordable housing solutions and creating a coalition of engaged residents.

Using input from HRI Steering Committee, SOG Board, and data from previous studies work with the county to develop and implement a strategic plan for the future of the neighborhood.

Provide a conduit of communication between High Ridge residents and the BCC and county staff, providing education as needed.

Work with county staff to develop creative plans and solutions to address needs in High Ridge Estates

Ensure that neighborhood residents' desires and needs for the neighborhood remain forefront in the BCC's conversation about plans for High Ridge Estates.

Collaborate with other non-profits to bring in resources that are beneficial to the neighborhood

Assist with the connection between non-profits who may provide education, increase health and well-being, assist with home repairs or development of affordable housing

Assist the county in vetting potential new partner organizations for work related to HRI

Recruit non-profits to fill specific needs as they arise in the neighborhood

Manage MOTDR's home repair program

Work with governmental agencies and other non-profits to advocate for improved housing, transportation, and jobs, especially as it relates to the 32656 zip code (High Ridge's zip code). This may include but is not limited to advocating at the state and federal level and with developers and builders.