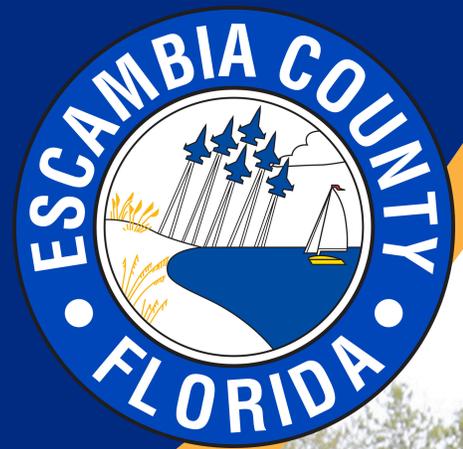


# 2024 PRO Housing Grant Application

Escambia County



**PREPARED FOR**  
HUD

**PREPARED BY**  
Escambia County  
Neighborhood  
Enterprise Division

**2024 PRO Housing Grant Application**

**Escambia County, Florida**

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**Exhibit A: Executive Summary**  
**Escambia County**

## **Exhibit A: Executive Summary.**

### **Project Title: Enhancing Affordable Housing in Escambia County: Replacing Substandard Homes and Developing Infill Housing**

**Applicant:** Escambia County, Florida

**Funding Request:** \$4,000,000

**Project Duration:** 24 months

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#### **Introduction**

Escambia County is resolutely committed to addressing the pressing housing challenges within our community through a multi-faceted and innovative strategy. Over the past year, our efforts have markedly intensified: we have more than tripled the number of housing rehabilitations completed through a combination of State and Federal funding. This significant achievement underscores our proactive approach to improving housing quality and responding to community needs.

In addition, we have launched an Infill Housing Pilot Program, an initiative funded by the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) in collaboration with the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP). This program exemplifies our innovative use of county-owned assets and diverse funding streams to create new affordable housing opportunities, reflecting a forward-thinking approach to leveraging available resources for maximum community impact.

Further advancing our commitment to housing reform, Escambia County has adopted the Live Local Act. This landmark legislation facilitates comprehensive reforms aimed at enhancing both rental and ownership housing options, positioning us to more effectively address the evolving needs of our residents.

If awarded the PRO Housing Grant, Escambia County is uniquely positioned to make a profound and lasting impact on housing affordability and community pride. Our proposed project represents a holistic response to the dual challenges of substandard housing conditions and a critical shortage of affordable housing. It aligns seamlessly with the grant's core objectives: improving housing quality, expanding affordable housing options, and promoting sustainable community development. Through this grant, we aim to further our mission of creating resilient and thriving neighborhoods, ensuring that every resident benefits from improved living conditions and increased housing stability.

## Statement of Need

Escambia County is grappling with an acute housing crisis, marked by a high prevalence of homes in disrepair and a critical shortage of affordable housing solutions. Many residents are living in substandard conditions that jeopardize their health, safety, and overall well-being. These deteriorating living environments not only affect individual households but also exacerbate broader socio-economic challenges, undermining community stability and quality of life.

The severity of this crisis is further highlighted by our demolition and replacement housing waiting list, which currently includes 50 families in dire need of services to replace unsafe and deteriorating homes. This extensive waiting list vividly demonstrates the stark imbalance between the need for these services and the funding availability. The urgent need for intervention is clear, as these families face continued exposure to inadequate living conditions.

In addition to these pressing challenges, Escambia County encompasses nine designated Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs). These areas are characterized by significant economic and housing distress, including high concentrations of substandard housing and limited access to quality affordable housing options. The CRAs represent neighborhoods where targeted interventions are critical to reversing patterns of disinvestment and improving living conditions for residents.

Escambia County is also acutely aware of the importance of avoiding the concentration of poverty and the associated challenges. We are committed to ensuring that our development efforts do not reinforce existing patterns of inequality but instead contribute to creating vibrant, mixed-income neighborhoods. By strategically using county-owned parcels and avoiding over-concentration in each of our three RECAP zones, we aim to foster inclusive community growth and enhance the quality of life across diverse socio-economic groups.

Fortunately, Escambia County has the advantage of county-owned parcels that offers a strategic opportunity for impactful development. This land, located in key areas including the CRAs, can be leveraged to address both the immediate need for housing replacement and the broader goal of expanding affordable housing capacity. By utilizing these assets, we can not only replace deteriorating homes but also contribute to the revitalization of struggling neighborhoods, promoting economic diversity and integration.

The convergence of deteriorating housing conditions, high demand for affordable housing, and the needs of the CRAs underscores the urgency of our situation. With the support of the 2024 PRO Housing Grant, Escambia County is positioned to transform these challenges into an opportunity for meaningful community improvement. This grant will enable us to address the critical need for safe, affordable housing and drive sustainable development, fostering greater stability and resilience within our community while promoting mixed-income, inclusive neighborhoods.

## **Project Objectives**

### **1. Replacement of Uninhabitable Homes**

Escambia County's housing crisis is exacerbated by many homes in severe disrepair, making them uninhabitable and posing significant health risks to residents. Currently, 50 families are on a waiting list for affordable housing and are at high risk of homelessness due to the deteriorating conditions of their current homes.

One in five homes in the county is over 50 years old, often failing to meet modern safety codes and energy efficiency standards. These older homes frequently require costly upgrades and suffer from issues such as deteriorating roofs, outdated plumbing, and foundation problems. Low-income families, prioritizing immediate needs over home repairs, struggle with deferred maintenance due to limited financial resources and credit.

Addressing this issue is essential to prevent further displacement and alleviate the homelessness crisis. Government programs, non-profits, and community initiatives provide crucial financial assistance for home repairs, which helps improve safety and stability for affected families. The 2024 PRO Housing Grant will focus on demolishing hazardous homes and constructing new, safe, and affordable housing, directly reducing the risk of homelessness and enhancing living conditions for these families.

### **2. Expansion of Infill Housing Development**

In response to the growing need for affordable housing, Escambia County established the Infill Housing Program last year. This initiative has already successfully constructed 14 new homes for low-income families, demonstrating our commitment and capability in addressing housing shortages. Building on this success, our current project will leverage the county-owned parcels to develop additional affordable housing units.

By utilizing other county-obtained grants alongside the 2024 PRO Housing Grant, we aim to maximize the impact of our funding and significantly expand our housing development efforts. This strategic approach will enable us to create more homes for families in need and further enhance the stability and vitality of our community.

### **3. Leveraging Resources for Maximum Impact**

The dual approach of replacing uninhabitable homes and expanding infill housing development constitutes a strategic and comprehensive response to the urgent housing needs in Escambia County. By effectively integrating diverse funding sources, including SLFRF and SHIP, alongside the strategic utilization of county-owned parcels, we will establish a robust housing solution. This approach not only addresses immediate housing challenges but also lays a solid foundation for sustained community resilience and long-term stability.

## Scope and Activities

### Phase 1 – Planning and Assessment (beginning of grant through month 6)

- **Property Assessments:** Conduct comprehensive evaluations of substandard properties to identify those in critical need of demolition, prioritizing based on households earning less than 50% Area Median Income (AMI).
- **Site Planning:** Develop and finalize site plans for new housing construction on both redevelopment sites and county-owned parcels. Ensure these plans adhere to modern standards and address community needs, integrating input from previous planning sessions.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Continue our commitment to affirmatively furthering fair housing by engaging with community members through ongoing planning meetings, public forums, and collaborative sessions. This engagement has been instrumental in affirmatively furthering fair housing and refining our housing strategy over the years.
- **Solicitation:** Bid projects out via Escambia County Procurement Policy minding any and all grants requirements in advertising.

### Phase 2 – Demolition and Construction (Month 7-12)

- **Demolition:** Execute the safe and efficient demolition of identified dilapidated homes, managing debris disposal and environmental considerations responsibly, noting any safety concerns over the presence of lead, asbestos, or any other dangerous/hazardous materials.
- **Infrastructure Preparation:** Prepare redevelopment sites and county-owned parcels for new construction, including necessary coordination from area partners related to the water, sewer, and power accessibility of the property.
- **Construction:** Initiate and advance the construction of new housing units, ensuring that both redevelopment and new construction projects adhere to energy-efficient and high quality design standards.

### Phase 3 – Infill Development (Month 13-20)

- **Ongoing Construction:** Continue the development and construction of new homes on county-owned parcels. Ensure these homes meet modern safety, efficiency, and design standards, and are well-integrated into the existing community framework.
- **Quality Assurance:** Maintain rigorous quality control throughout the construction process to ensure that all new homes comply with building codes and project specifications.
- **Community Integration:** Leverage insights from previous community engagement to ensure that new developments are accessible and beneficial to the community, addressing essential service needs and fostering positive neighborhood integration. In coordination with existing entitlement grants and additional Federal and State awards, Escambia County currently hold quarterly events that focus on various plans, grants, and topics and often includes presentations that affirmatively further fair housing from the Escambia Pensacola Human Relations Commission.

## Phase 4 – Completion and Transition (Month 21-24)

- **Final Inspections:** Perform thorough inspections of all new homes to verify compliance with building codes and project standards.
- **Move-In Preparations:** Finalize preparations for new occupants, including utility setup, addressing any outstanding issues, and ensuring that homes are ready for occupancy.
- **New Owner Placement:** Facilitate the transition for individuals/families with annual incomes less than 80% AMI moving into their new homes, providing support and resources to assist in their successful relocation and integration into the community.

## Expected Outcomes

### 1. Replacement of Substandard Homes

Our project will directly address the PRO Housing Grant’s focus on improving housing quality by replacing 10 homes that are currently in a state of severe disrepair. This initiative will significantly enhance living conditions for 10 families who are living in unsafe and unhealthy environments. By targeting these substandard properties, we will reduce immediate health and safety risks and prevent further deterioration, aligning with the grant’s objective to mitigate barriers to housing stability.

**Impact Alignment:** This outcome supports the PRO Housing Grant’s goal of reducing homelessness and improving housing conditions by addressing the most critical needs first. It ensures that families at risk of displacement due to uninhabitable conditions will have access to safe, modern, and affordable housing.

### 2. Construction of New Affordable Housing Units through Infill Development

Utilizing county-owned parcels, we will construct 10 new affordable housing units as part of an infill development strategy. This approach leverages existing resources to create new housing opportunities within established neighborhoods. This effort aligns with the PRO Housing Grant’s emphasis on innovative land use and increasing the supply of affordable housing.

**Impact Alignment:** This outcome demonstrates effective use of grant funding by integrating new housing into existing communities, promoting smart growth, and optimizing land use. Infill development is a proven strategy for enhancing housing availability while minimizing the environmental impact associated with new construction.

### 3. Strengthened Community Infrastructure and Enhanced Neighborhood Integration

By replacing substandard homes and developing new housing on county-owned parcels, our project aims to strengthen community infrastructure and foster enhanced neighborhood integration. This approach not only revitalizes existing neighborhoods but also ensures that new developments are well-connected with current services and amenities, aligning with the PRO Housing Grant’s goals of promoting sustainable and equitable growth.

In parallel, recognizing that broadband connectivity is crucial for all residents, especially those in low-income areas, Escambia County is making significant strides in improving its broadband infrastructure. The county is investing in expanding access and dedicating resources to enhance connectivity. Additionally, the Neighborhood Enterprise Division's involvement in local technology committees further underscores our commitment to addressing broadband needs, ensuring that the benefits of new housing developments are complemented by robust digital infrastructure.

**Impact Alignment:** This outcome aligns with the grant's objective of fostering community revitalization and stability. By enhancing infrastructure and integrating new housing, we support broader economic and social benefits, such as improved property values, increased community engagement, and overall neighborhood revitalization.

Through these outcomes, our project not only addresses immediate housing needs but also demonstrates a strategic approach to leveraging funding for long-term community improvement, in line with the PRO Housing Grant's requirements and goals.

## **Conclusion**

Escambia County is at a pivotal moment, poised to address its critical housing challenges through a well-defined and multifaceted strategy. The urgent need for replacing uninhabitable homes and expanding infill housing development is met with a comprehensive plan that integrates diverse funding sources and strategic use of county-owned assets. By leveraging State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) and the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), along with a commitment to avoid the concentration of poverty and foster mixed-income neighborhoods, we aim to create a sustainable and equitable housing solution.

Our approach addresses the immediate needs of families living in deteriorating conditions and simultaneously lays the groundwork for long-term community stability and growth. The utilization of county-owned parcels and innovative funding mechanisms will not only alleviate the current shortage of affordable housing but also revitalize key areas, particularly within our nine Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs).

With the support of the 2024 PRO Housing Grant, Escambia County is positioned to transform these pressing challenges into opportunities for significant and lasting improvements. This grant will enable us to enhance housing quality, expand affordable housing options, and promote inclusive community development. Our project reflects a steadfast commitment to advancing racial equity, fostering economic diversity, and building resilient neighborhoods.

In summary, the proposed project represents a strategic investment in Escambia County's future, ensuring that our community can thrive in safe, sustainable, and inclusive housing environments. We are dedicated to making a meaningful impact, and with the PRO Housing Grant, we will turn our vision for a better, more equitable housing landscape into a reality.

**Exhibit B: Threshold Requirements and Other Submission Requirements**

**Escambia County**

## Exhibit B: Threshold Requirements and Other Submission Requirements

### 1. Threshold Eligibility Requirements (Section III.D)

- **Eligibility of the Applicant** Escambia County, as a local government entity, meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Section III.D. We are a recognized political subdivision of the State of Florida, authorized to apply for and administer federal housing grants. Our capacity to manage and execute housing projects is demonstrated through our existing housing programs and successful track record in managing similar grants. As an Entitlement Community, we have a demonstrated history of effectively managing complex programs and grants, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), the Treasury's Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA), and the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). Our team consists of seasoned experts in housing and urban development, grant administration, and financial management.
- **Project Readiness** The proposed Program is designed with a clear and actionable plan that adheres to the PRO Housing Grant's requirements. We have conducted preliminary assessments and engaged with community stakeholders to ensure that the Program is both feasible and aligned with local needs. Our detailed Program timeline, outlined in the Scope and Activities section, demonstrates that we are prepared to commence with planning and execution upon receipt of funding. We are confident in our ability to initiate and execute the Program seamlessly, addressing local housing needs and achieving the intended impact
- **Compliance with Fair Housing and Civil Rights Requirements** Escambia County is committed to complying with all fair housing and civil rights requirements. We have established procedures to ensure adherence to the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Our commitment to affirmatively furthering fair housing is evidenced by our ongoing community engagement efforts and inclusive planning processes. Our staff and partners receive regular training on fair housing laws and best practices. This training ensures that everyone involved in the housing process understands their obligations under the FHA and is equipped to provide equitable service to all individuals.
- **Environmental Review and Compliance** We have initiated the required environmental review process to assess potential impacts associated with the project. Our preliminary review indicates compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant environmental regulations. We will complete all necessary environmental assessments and ensure compliance before project implementation. We currently conduct comprehensive environmental reviews for our other HUD programs, ensuring compliance with all regulatory standards and best practices
- **Financial Management and Capacity** Escambia County has a robust financial management system in place, capable of administering federal funds effectively. Our recent audits and financial reports demonstrate strong fiscal controls and accountability.

We have the capacity to manage grant funds and ensure that they are utilized in accordance with federal regulations and Program objectives. Escambia County has substantial experience in managing federal grants, including housing and community development programs. This experience includes overseeing project budgets, ensuring compliance with grant terms, and delivering successful project outcomes.

## 2. Other Submission Requirements (Section IV.G)

- **Project Narrative** The project narrative outlines our strategy to replace 10 substandard homes and develop 10 new affordable housing units through infill development. This narrative includes detailed information on project goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and how the project aligns with the PRO Housing Grant’s objectives of improving housing conditions, expanding affordable housing opportunities, and promoting sustainable community development.
- **Budget and Financial Plan** We have prepared a detailed budget and financial plan that aligns with the funding requirements of the PRO Housing Grant. The budget includes cost estimates for demolition, construction, site preparation and other project-related expenses. We have also outlined our plan for leveraging additional county-obtained grants to maximize the impact of the PRO Housing Grant funds. This comprehensive financial plan demonstrates our commitment to effective resource management and fiscal responsibility. We are committed to achieving cost efficiency without compromising project quality. Competitive bidding processes and cost-effective solutions will be employed to manage expenses.
- **Evidence of Community Support and Engagement** Our proposal includes evidence of community support, including records of public meetings, stakeholder consultations, and community engagement activities. We have actively involved residents and local organizations in the planning process to ensure that the project addresses community needs and reflects local priorities.
- **Implementation and Management Plan** The implementation and management plan outlines our approach to executing the project, including timelines, milestones, and responsibilities. This plan ensures that the project will be carried out efficiently and effectively, with clear oversight and accountability mechanisms in place.
- **Supporting Documentation** In accordance with the requirements outlined in Section IV.G of the PRO Housing Grant application guidelines, we have included all required supporting documentation to substantiate our eligibility and readiness to undertake the proposed project. This includes organizational certifications, legal compliance documents, and any other required forms or evidence of eligibility.

## **Conclusion**

Escambia County's submission fully addresses the Threshold Eligibility Requirements and Other Submission Requirements outlined in the PRO Housing Grant application. Our comprehensive response reflects our preparedness, commitment to fair housing, and capacity to manage and execute the proposed Program effectively.

We have provided a comprehensive overview of our eligibility, project readiness, compliance with fair housing and civil rights requirements, environmental review, financial management, and community support. Our well-structured Implementation and Management Plan further underscores our readiness to execute the Program efficiently and with clear oversight.

We are confident in our ability to achieve the grant's objectives and positively impact our community through this Program. We look forward to the opportunity to further discuss our proposal and demonstrate our ability to achieve the grant's objectives.

**Exhibit C: Need  
Escambia County**

## Exhibit C: Need

### 1. Overview of Housing Need in Escambia County

One community source of pride for residents of Pensacola and Escambia County derives from the fact that the community makes its claim as the oldest established settlement in North America. This historical compliment includes other associated issues, however. Any community which has a heritage which covers centuries will be faced with issues of aging community infrastructure, including its housing stock.

Within Escambia County one of every five homes is over 50 years old (see Figure 1, below). Homes built many decades ago may not meet current safety codes or energy efficiency standards. Upgrades to modern systems, such as heating, cooling, and insulation, are necessary but can be expensive. The cost of maintaining and repairing an older home can be higher due to the need for specialized skills and materials. Furthermore, older homes are more likely to suffer from wear and tear, such as deteriorating roofs, outdated plumbing and electrical systems, and foundation issues. These issues require regular maintenance and sometimes costly repairs.

Figure 1: *Escambia County, FL Housing Statistics*

Escambia County, Florida		
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT	Estimate	Percent
<u>Total housing units</u>	<u>151,217</u>	<u>100.00%</u>
Built 2020 or later	7,082	4.68%
Built 2010 to 2019	16,592	10.97%
Built 2000 to 2009	22,886	15.13%
Built 1990 to 1999	20,763	13.73%
Built 1980 to 1989	21,816	14.43%
Built 1970 to 1979	24,555	16.24%
Built 1960 to 1969	12,721	8.41%
Built 1950 to 1959	12,518	8.28%
Built 1940 to 1949	6,287	4.16%
Built 1939 or earlier	5,997	3.97%

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, & U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Selected Housing Characteristics. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04*

Families with low incomes often prioritize immediate needs such as food, healthcare, and education over home maintenance. This financial strain means that even minor repairs can be deferred. Low-income households may have limited access to credit or loans. Without financial resources or credit, they cannot afford major repairs or renovations, which can lead to further deterioration of their homes.

As aging homes continue to deteriorate, the need for repairs increases. For low-income families, these repairs are often beyond their financial means, making assistance essential. Government

programs, non-profit organizations, and community initiatives often provide financial assistance or resources for home repairs to low-income families. Repair assistance not only helps in maintaining the structural integrity and safety of homes but also contributes to the overall well-being and stability of low-income families. Improving housing conditions can have a positive impact on health, quality of life, and financial stability.

Escambia County faces a critical housing crisis that demands immediate and strategic intervention. The need for this Program is underscored by the significant number of residents living in substandard housing conditions and the persistent shortage of affordable housing options. This response provides a detailed analysis of the housing need in our community, supported by relevant data and evidence.

## **2. Substandard Housing Conditions**

A substantial portion of the housing stock in Escambia County is aging and in severe disrepair, posing significant risks to the health and safety of residents. According to assessments associated with the work of the County's Community Redevelopment Agency, a large number of homes within our community are classified as substandard, with many falling into the category of being blight on the community. It is in recognition of the degree of distress in the build environment that supports the establishment of Community Redevelopment Areas. Escambia County has nine (9) such Areas covering a total area of approximately 25 square miles within unincorporated Escambia County. (Figure 2: Community Redevelopment Area Map; Escambia County, FL). The distressed homes within these communities may lack essential utilities, have structural deficiencies, and fail to meet basic health and safety standards.

## **3. Urgent Need for Replacement Housing**

The immediate need for replacing substandard homes is highlighted by the current waiting list for demolition and replacement services. As of the latest data, there are 50 low-income households on our waiting list, each facing the risk of severe housing instability or homelessness due to their living conditions.

- **Waiting List Data:**

- **Number of Families:** The waiting list includes 50 families who are in urgent need of replacement housing due to living in homes that are no longer habitable.
- **Risk of Homelessness:** Many of these families are at high risk of displacement or homelessness, underscoring the urgency of addressing this issue promptly.

## **4. Affordable Housing Shortage**

In addition to the critical need for replacing substandard homes, there is a significant shortage of affordable housing options in Escambia County. The current demand far exceeds the available supply, exacerbating the challenges faced by low-income families.

Figure 2: Community Redevelopment Area Map; Escambia County, FL

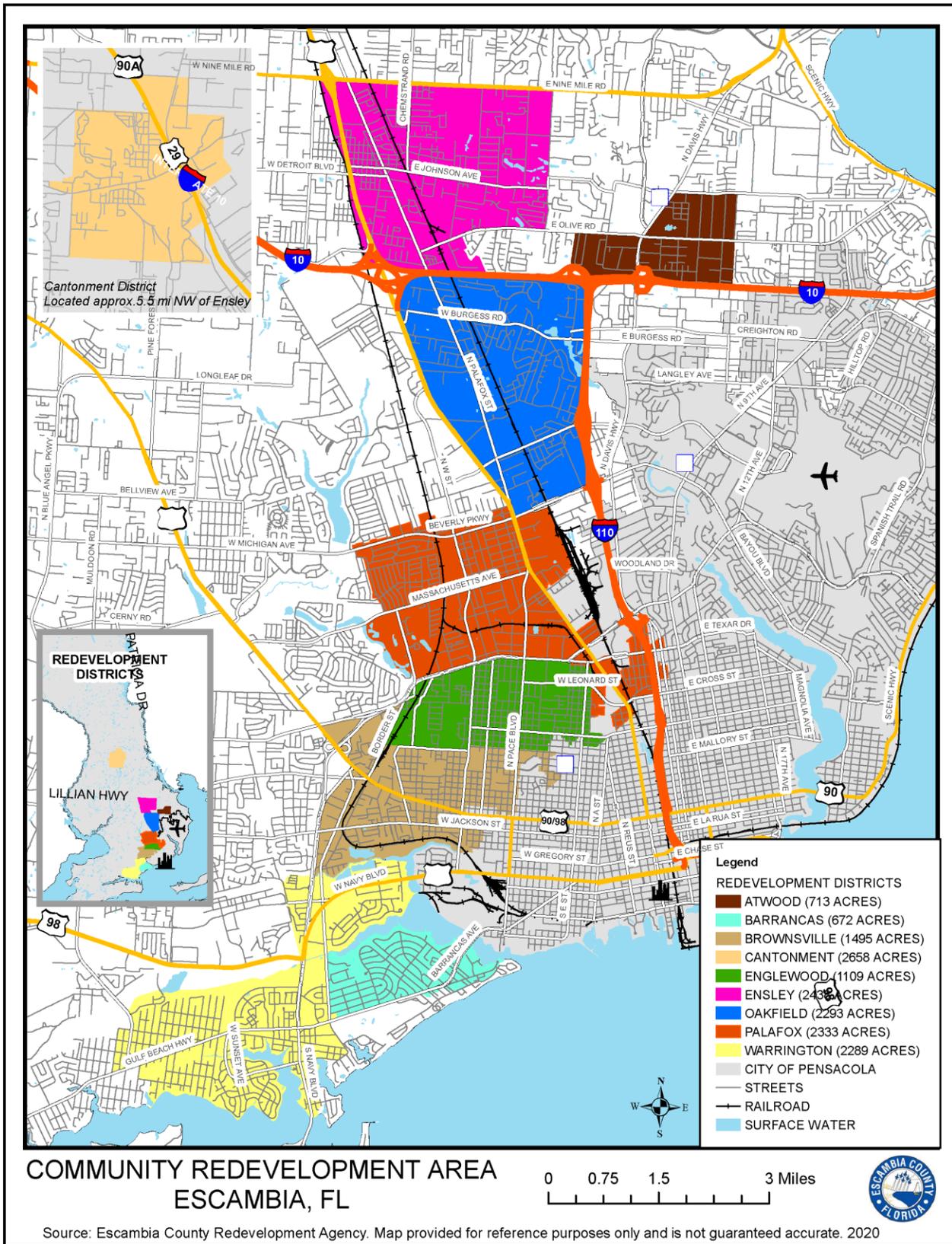


Figure 3: *Households, Cost Burden by Income, 2022 Estimate (Summary) [Escambia County]*

Owner-Occupied Households, Cost Burden by Income, 2022 Estimate (Summary)					
Geography	Household Income	Housing Cost Burden			
		30% or less	30.1-50%	More than 50%	
Escambia County	30% AMI or less	1,364	1,219	3,299	
Escambia County	30.01-50% AMI	4,560	1,999	1,450	
Escambia County	50.01-80% AMI	9,713	3,357	1,009	
				>50% Cost Burdened	5,758
				Total Owner-Occupied < 80%	27,970
				% of Owner-Occupied <80% AMI over 50% Cost Burdened	20.59%

Source: *Estimates and projections by Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, based on U.S. Department of Housing Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) dataset and population projections by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida*

- **Affordable Housing Statistics:**
  - **Current Demand:** Our housing waiting list reflects a substantial gap between the available affordable units and the number of families in need. In addition, data reflects that a large portion of the current homeowner population are cost burdened, we have determined that increasing the local stock of affordable housing, will serve to alleviate the inevitable housing cost burden that low- and moderate-income homebuyers face. More options for affordability are needed for the community to aid in the reduction of the cost burden to the general community, and perhaps steer market forces on future projects (see Figure 3, above).
  - **Infill Housing Program:** The success of our previous infill housing program, which resulted in the construction of 14 new homes for low-income families, highlights both the effectiveness of this approach and the ongoing demand for additional affordable housing.

## 5. Impact of the Proposed Program

The proposed Program aims to address these critical needs by replacing 10 substandard homes and constructing 10 new affordable housing units. This initiative will directly improve the living conditions for affected families and expand the availability of affordable housing, making a significant impact on our community’s housing stability and overall well-being.

## 6. Supporting Evidence and Documentation

To substantiate the need for this Program, we have included supporting documentation such as:

- **Housing Conditions Report:** Under Florida law ([Chapter 163, Part III](#)), local governments are able to designate areas as Community Redevelopment Areas when

certain conditions exist. Conditions that support the creation of a Community Redevelopment Areas include but are not limited to: the presence of substandard or inadequate structures, a shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways, and inadequate parking. To document that the required conditions exist, the local government must survey the proposed redevelopment area and prepare a Finding of Necessity. If the Finding of Necessity determines that the required conditions exist, the local government may create a Community Redevelopment Area to provide the tools needed to foster and support redevelopment of the targeted area. Our reliance upon the designation of Community Revitalization Areas over primarily the low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and block tracks of the County support.

- **Waiting List Records:** Comprehensive data on the number of families awaiting replacement housing.

### **Conclusion**

The need for the proposed Program is both urgent and substantial, driven by the prevalence of substandard housing conditions, the critical shortage of affordable housing, and the significant number of families at risk of homelessness. By addressing these issues through the replacement of deteriorated homes and the development of new affordable units, this Program aligns with the goals of the PRO Housing Grant and will make a meaningful difference in the lives of our community members.

**Exhibit D: Soundness of Approach**  
**Escambia County**

## **Exhibit D: Soundness of Approach**

### **1. Project Overview and Objectives**

Escambia County's proposed PRO Housing Program is designed to address critical housing needs through a two-pronged systematic and strategic approach to address long distressed owner-occupied properties to preserve affordable housing where it is naturally occurring and to develop long-overdue new opportunities for homeownership for low-income households. Our initiative aims to demolish and replace 10 owner-occupied substandard homes, and to construct 10 new affordable housing units on county-owned residential infill parcels selected specifically for the development of affordable housing for the community. This approach is grounded in a thorough understanding of local housing challenges and is structured to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

### **2. Comprehensive Planning and Assessment**

#### **a. Planning and Assessment Phase**

Our Program's approach begins with detailed planning and assessment. This step includes engaging with community stakeholders through public meetings and consultations to gather input, address concerns, and refine the project plans. This ensures that the Program reflects community needs and priorities.

The Affirmative Marketing outreach done in advance of the solicitation for homeowner applicants will ensure the least likely to apply for the program will be given that opportunity. Likewise, those property owners who have been on a glacially paced list awaiting assistance for home repairs will be moved forward with reconfirming eligibility for assistance.

Once confirmed eligible, comprehensive evaluations of substandard properties will be inspected for deficiencies and then prioritized for demolition. This process includes structural inspections and health and safety evaluations to ensure that the most critical cases are addressed first.

For the Infill housing component, finalizing site plans for new housing on county-owned land includes land use planning, infrastructure assessments, and ensuring that new homes are integrated effectively into existing neighborhoods, particularly those with cultural and historic characteristics.

#### **b. Feasibility and Execution**

We are preparing to bid out the demolition and replacement projects individually as part of the implementation phase of the Program, which involves the efficient and safe removal of ten identified substandard homes. Our detailed demolition plan adheres to environmental regulations and minimizes disruption to surrounding areas.

Following demolition, we will initiate the construction of 10 replacement homes and 10 new affordable housing units. Our construction plans include clear timelines, effective contractor management, and strict adherence to modern building standards to ensure quality and durability. We will select experienced contractors and suppliers to oversee this phase.

Preparation of the county-owned parcels for new construction will focus on meeting infrastructure needs, including utilities, roads, broadband, and drainage. As design and construction progress, we will prioritize integration of new housing units into the existing neighborhood, fostering community cohesion and preserving local heritage.

All new homes will be designed with considerations for Universal Design, Visibility, and Aging-in-Place, and will adhere to best practices for sustainable building and energy efficiency, ensuring affordability for future owners.

### **c. Leveraging Additional Resources**

The initial leveraging of County property for the Infill Housing Program allows the County to stretch the dollars of the grant to meet more community need. We plan to further leverage additional county-obtained grants (those which allow leveraging) and funding sources to maximize the local impact of the PRO Housing Grant.

## **3. Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure the Program's success, we have established a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. Progress tracking begins with the first outreach efforts, includes monitoring application eligibility processing as well as client management which all happens well in advance of any demolition or construction work. When the trades come into consideration, there is regular project monitoring progress against milestones and timelines. This includes tracking construction activities, budget expenditures, and compliance with Program goals.

The overall performance metrics will evaluate Program outcomes based on key performance indicators, such as the number of homes replaced, new units constructed, and improvements in living conditions for families. A last essential in the overall assessment of project success includes implementing a feedback mechanism to address any issues or concerns raised by stakeholders and residents throughout the Program's lifecycle.

## **4. Risk Management**

The approach to risk management involves developing and implementing strategies to mitigate identified risks, preparation of contingency plans and proactive problem-solving measures. Identified potential risks include those related to project execution, such as delays, budget overruns, or regulatory issues. Other risks associated with the construction phase of the project include dramatic changes to materials costs and/or availability, contractor issues, and potential weather impacts to the region (an active hurricane season cover 6 months of every year).

## **Conclusion**

Escambia County's approach to the proposed Program is both strategic and well-structured, designed to effectively address the critical housing needs identified by residents in our community. By combining thorough planning, robust execution, and ongoing evaluation, we are confident in our ability to achieve the Program's objectives and make a significant impact on housing quality, equity, and availability. Our approach aligns with the goals of the PRO Housing Grant, demonstrating our commitment to sound project management and successful outcomes.

**Exhibit E: Capacity**

**Escambia County**

## **Exhibit E: Capacity**

### **1. Organizational Capability**

Escambia County possesses the organizational capacity required to effectively manage and execute the proposed housing Program. Our government entity, as an Entitlement Community, has a proven track record in administering complex programs and grants such as: the Community Block Development Grant (CDBG); HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME); State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP); Treasury’s Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA); Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). Underscoring our capability to handle the responsibilities associated with the PRO Housing Grant.

#### **a. Experience and Expertise**

##### **1. Proven Track Record in Housing Development:**

- **Past Projects:** Just within the past year, Escambia County has successfully managed several housing development projects, including the recent completion of 14 affordable housing units through the Infill Housing Program; over 50 SHIP funded rehabilitations; four demolition rebuilds. This experience demonstrates our ability to navigate the complexities of housing construction and redevelopment effectively.
- **Program Management:** Our Housing Division has extensive experience in managing Federal and State housing grants, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and achieving project goals. This includes overseeing project administration/planning, execution, and evaluation processes.

##### **2. Skilled Personnel:**

- **Project Management Team:** Our project management team includes experienced professionals with expertise in housing development, construction management, and grant administration. Key personnel include dynamic management, an experienced program management team, and a seasoned construction supervisor who bring valuable skills and knowledge to the project, with various life experiences and professional accomplishments.

- **Clara Long**

Neighborhood and Human Services Department, Director| Pensacola, FL

Clara Long is a Certified Public Manager and accomplished leader in community development and public service. With a distinguished career in community development spanning over 20 years, Clara has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality of life for residents through strategic management and innovative program implementation.

Clara holds degrees from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College and the University of West Florida, and she is a member of the International Economic Development Council.

In her role, Clara oversees a diverse portfolio of services aimed at fostering community well-being, including neighborhood revitalization, human services, and public outreach initiatives. Her leadership is marked by a collaborative approach, working closely with local stakeholders, government agencies, and non-profit organizations to address the evolving needs of Escambia County's neighborhoods.

- **Laytonya Carter**

Neighborhood and Human Services Department, Deputy Director | Pensacola, FL

Laytonya Carter is a dedicated professional based in Pensacola, Florida, with extensive experience in Administrative Management. Known for her strong leadership skills and commitment to excellence, Laytonya has successfully managed a diverse range of projects that have consistently delivered results and driven organizational growth.

Passionate about community engagement, Laytonya actively participates in local initiatives that promote community development through dynamic relationships. She is dedicated to empowering others and believes in the transformative power of mentorship and teamwork.

In her current role, Laytonya continues to leverage her expertise to create impactful change, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to achieving excellence and driving positive outcomes in all her endeavors.

- **Garett Griffin**

Neighborhood Enterprise Division, Division Manager | Pensacola, FL

Garett Griffin serves as the Escambia County Neighborhood Enterprise Division Manager, where he leads initiatives to enhance community development and support neighborhood revitalization efforts.

With a strong academic background in environmental science, Garett earned both his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the University of West Florida. His expertise in environmental science and his commitment to sustainable community solutions drive his work in improving the quality of life for Escambia County residents.

Under his leadership, the Neighborhood Enterprise Division continues to focus on fostering resilient and thriving communities.

- **Timothy Evans**

Neighborhood Enterprise Division, Sr Dev Program Manager | Pensacola, FL

Timothy Evans is a seasoned Senior Development Program Manager based in Pensacola, Florida, with over 30 years of experience in leading complex projects across various industries. Known for his strategic vision and meticulous attention to detail, Tim excels in managing multifaceted projects from conception through to successful completion.

Tim has earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Florida State University and graduate degrees in from the University of West Florida and Duke University. His academic background, combined with his extensive industry experience, enables him to navigate and mitigate the challenges inherent in large-scale projects effectively.

Throughout his career, Tim has demonstrated a robust ability to foster collaborative relationships with stakeholders, drive project timelines, and ensure alignment with regulations and organizational goals. His expertise spans project planning, resource allocation, risk management, and team leadership.

- **Kristin Wilson**

Neighborhood Enterprise Division, Program Manager | Pensacola, FL

Kristin Wilson is an accomplished professional based in Pensacola, FL with experience in advertising, non-profit organization leadership and higher education administration. With a career spanning over 25 years, Kristin has served many entities over several industries.

Kristin holds Master's Degrees from City University of New York and Marist College. She has worked in both the non-profit and corporate sectors.

For Kristin, every project is an opportunity to deliver exceptional value and drive meaningful results, reflecting his dedication to excellence in project management.

- **Lisa Harrell**

Neighborhood Enterprise Division, Program Manager | Pensacola, FL

Lisa Harrell is a dedicated Program Manager based in Pensacola, FL. Known for looking at all our programs with fresh eyes and is a practiced hand at working with clients and their needs.

Lisa holds a Bachelor's Degree from Columbia Southern University. She is involved in strategic planning and implementation, contributing to the development of policies and programs that address key issues in the community.

She has a commitment to enhancing community services and supporting affordable housing initiatives. Lisa assists in the internal monitoring of various programs and preparing complex grant-based reports.

- **Sean Webster**

Neighborhood Enterprise Division, Accountant | Pensacola, FL

Sean is a dedicated Accountant with a specialized focus on grant-based affordable housing projects. With a robust background in accounting and accounting analytics, Sean excels in ensuring the financial integrity and efficiency of programs designed to enhance housing accessibility and affordability.

Holding a Bachelor's and Master's Degree from the University of West Florida, Sean is equipped with advanced skills in financial analysis and a comprehensive understanding of accounting theory. His professional journey reflects a dedication to leveraging financial expertise for the advancement of equitable and sustainable solutions.

His proficiency in analysis and reporting is complemented by a deep understanding of the complexities of grant management within the affordable housing sector. He plays a crucial role in budgeting, forecasting, and financial planning, helping the organization maximize the impact of their funding while adhering to stringent guidelines and standards. His work ensures transparency and accountability, fostering trust and effectiveness in the administration of housing grants.

- **Staff Training and Development:** We heavily invest in ongoing training and professional development for our staff to ensure they remain knowledgeable about current best practices, regulations, and emerging trends in housing development from both Federal and State resources to maintain regulatory concurrence within our programs. Topics of focus include but are not limited to: Eligibility; Duplication of Benefits; Environmental Regulations (NEPA/DEP); Financial Management; Housing Standards; Fair Housing Practices & Trends.

## **b. Resource Allocation and Infrastructure**

### **1. Financial Management Systems:**

- **Robust Financial Controls:** Escambia County employs a comprehensive financial management system, eFin, that includes sound accounting practices, strong internal controls, and regular audits. This system ensures that grant funds are managed efficiently and transparently.
- **Audit History:** Our financial practices are subject to regular audits, which consistently demonstrate compliance with Federal, State, and Local requirements and effective fund management.

### **2. Project Implementation Infrastructure:**

- **Administrative Infrastructure:** We have a well-established administrative structure to support Program implementation, including dedicated staff for grant administration, procurement, and compliance monitoring.
- **Technical Resources:** Our county's technical infrastructure supports efficient project execution, including access to geographic information systems (GIS) for site assessments and planning, and project management software for tracking progress and coordinating activities.

## 2. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

### a. Community Involvement:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Escambia County actively engages with community stakeholders, including residents, local organizations, and other government agencies, to ensure that our housing projects address real needs and reflect community priorities. Our approach includes regular public meetings, consultations, and feedback mechanisms.
- **Partnerships:** We have established partnerships with local non-profits, housing advocates, and other entities/persons to enhance Program outcomes and leverage additional resources.

### b. Collaborative Approach:

- **Coordination with Local Entities:** Our Program will involve coordination with various local entities, including planning departments, zoning boards, and health departments, to ensure that all aspects of the Program are addressed comprehensively.
- **Resource Leveraging:** We are adept at leveraging additional funding sources and resources to maximize Program impact. Our community needs require the County to be flexible with leveraging of funds, to achieve the best possible outcome for all stakeholders involved, especially the client. Our previous success in securing and managing supplemental grants accentuates our ability to effectively utilize various financial and logistical resources to date.

## 3. Risk Management and Problem Resolution

### a. Risk Mitigation Strategies:

- **Risk Identification:** We have a proactive approach to identifying potential risks associated with Program implementation, including financial, operational, and regulatory risks. Depending on the funding source, different methodologies are used to identify and reduce risk, using various resources and tools within the County.
- **Contingency Planning:** Our risk management plan includes contingency strategies to address potential challenges, ensuring that we can adapt and respond effectively to any issues that arise.

### b. Problem-Solving Capabilities:

- **Issue Resolution:** Our team has a demonstrated ability to resolve issues efficiently, using a vigorous problem-solving approach that involves stakeholders and experts as needed.
- **Adaptive Management:** We employ adaptive management practices to continuously monitor project progress and make necessary adjustments to stay on track and achieve project goals.

## **Conclusion**

Escambia County's capacity to undertake and successfully complete the proposed Program is well-established through our extensive experience, skilled personnel, robust infrastructure, and effective community engagement. Our proven track record in housing development, combined with our strong financial management systems and risk mitigation strategies, positions us well to manage the PRO Housing Grant effectively and achieve the Program's objectives. We are committed to leveraging our organizational strengths to deliver impactful and sustainable results for our community.

**Exhibit F: Leverage**

**Escambia County**

## **Exhibit F: Leverage**

Escambia County will be leveraging county-owned parcels and owner-occupied properties alike for PRO Housing affordable home development. Escambia County will also look to local contractors, through homebuilder associations and other affiliates, to redevelop their own land as developers will be stimulated by the availability of continued, steady work. The local building industry will also receive a boost in economic growth for builders, suppliers and contractors.

To enhance the feasibility of these initiatives, the County may utilize State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funding, which provides subsidies to participants in the Infill Housing Program. Additionally, the County plans to explore the use of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) as leveraged funding to further support these projects.

Escambia County will also look to local contractors, through homebuilder associations and other affiliates, to develop furthered partnerships stimulated by the availability of continued, steady work. The local building industry will receive a boost in economic growth for builders, suppliers and contractors. Affordable housing development is crucial for ensuring that people of all income levels have access to safe and decent living conditions. Leveraging affordable housing development involves using various strategies and resources to make these projects more feasible and effective.

### **1. Streamlined Approvals**

- **Expedited Permitting:** Simplify and accelerate the permitting process for affordable housing projects to reduce delays and costs.

### **2. Economic Development**

- **Job Creation:** With the increased volume of construction coming out of the County, we anticipate additional job creation and work for area contractors.
- **Local Materials:** Though we cannot mandate, we can encourage locally sourced materials and labor to reduce costs and support the local economy.

### **3. Resident and Community Involvement**

- **Engagement:** We recognize the importance of meaningful public engagement to promote fair housing practices and increase awareness of available resources. Our current strategies include collaborative partnerships with local organizations and outreach initiatives designed to inform and empower residents.
- **Support Services:** Provide or facilitate access to support services like job training and financial literacy programs to help residents thrive.

#### **4. County Leverage**

- **County-Owned Parcels**

Escambia County has identified several parcels of land that are owned by the county and are strategically located for affordable housing development. These parcels represent a significant opportunity for leveraging public assets to meet community housing needs.

- **State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) New Construction Strategy as Subsidy Sponsor**

The State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program provides funding for affordable housing initiatives, and Escambia County is poised to leverage this resource as a subsidy sponsor for new construction projects.

- **State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) as Subsidy Sponsor**

The State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), part of the American Rescue Plan, offer an additional funding avenue for Escambia County to support affordable housing initiatives as current homes are being built with this funding. Once recaptured, the County may further leverage to make funding go further and provide larger impacts to the communities we serve.

#### **Conclusion**

Through strategic leveraging of county-owned parcels, the SHIP program, and SLFRF, Escambia County is well-positioned to enhance its affordable housing stock. These initiatives not only address immediate housing needs but also promote long-term community resilience and equity. By aligning resources with local development efforts, the county aims to create sustainable housing solutions that benefit all residents.

**Exhibit G: Long-term Effect**

**Escambia County**

## **Exhibit G: Long-term Effect**

### **1. Overview of Long-term Impacts**

The proposed housing initiative for Escambia County is poised to deliver significant, lasting benefits across multiple areas. By replacing uninhabitable homes and expanding infill development, the Program will significantly improve living conditions for many families, offering safe, modern housing and reducing the risk of homelessness.

This initiative will also drive sustainable community development. Strategic use of county-owned land, particularly within the nine Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs), will revitalize neighborhoods, enhance infrastructure, and increase property values. By focusing on mixed-income neighborhoods, the Program will foster socio-economic diversity and build inclusive, vibrant communities.

Economically, the Program will stimulate local growth by creating jobs in construction and related sectors, while also attracting further investment. The development will contribute to a more resilient local economy with long-term benefits.

In terms of environmental impact, the Program will employ energy-efficient building practices, as defined in our Local Housing Assistance Plan, reducing both utility costs for residents and the overall carbon footprint, thus promoting sustainability.

Finally, by strengthening social infrastructure and maintaining ongoing community engagement, the Program will enhance social stability and resilience. Continuous feedback and adaptation will ensure that the initiative remains effective and responsive to emerging needs.

### **2. Sustainable Housing Development**

#### **a. Quality and Durability of New Housing**

- **Construction Standards:** The new homes constructed as part of this Program will adhere to modern building codes and standards, ensuring that they are durable, energy-efficient, and resilient. This commitment to high-quality construction will result in long-term benefits, reducing future maintenance needs and enhancing the overall living conditions for residents. These homes will also be constructed with storm-mitigation in mind. This will make the homes better protected against extreme wind events, and will also maximize possible insurance discounts for the homeowners—something critical to the overall picture of affordability in Florida.
- **Environmental Considerations:** The construction specifications for the homes will incorporate environmentally sustainable practices in the construction of new homes, such as energy-efficient appliances and quality building materials. These measures will contribute to lower utility costs for residents and a reduced environmental footprint.

## **b. Maintenance and Upkeep**

- **Community Support:** We will work with local organizations to offer homeownership education and support services, ensuring that residents are equipped to maintain their homes and manage their living environments successfully. We will also provide contact and appointment information to area resources that provide legal services and credit counseling.

## **3. Enhanced Community Resilience**

### **a. Enhanced Housing Stability**

- **Mitigation of Homelessness Risk:** The initiative aims to replace 10 substandard homes and construct 10 new affordable housing units, directly addressing unsafe and unstable living conditions. This will significantly lower the risk of homelessness by providing secure, high-quality housing for families currently facing critical housing needs.
- **Fostering Community Integration:** For the Infill Housing Program, developing new housing units on strategically chosen county-owned parcels will promote neighborhood revitalization and cohesion. For the owner-occupied homes, we help in stabilizing the neighborhoods keeping investors out and residents in. This approach will strengthen community bonds, foster a sense of belonging, and support the creation of inclusive, stable communities.

### **b. Strengthening Local Infrastructure**

- **Neighborhood Revitalization:** The Program will contribute to the of various neighborhoods throughout the County, improving overall community infrastructure and enhancing property values. The replacement of dilapidated homes and the construction of new units will create a more attractive and functional living environment.
- **Economic Impact:** The Program is expected to generate local economic benefits, including job creation in construction and related sectors. This economic activity will support local businesses and contribute to the broader economic health of the community.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed housing initiative for Escambia County is set to deliver substantial, long-lasting benefits. By replacing uninhabitable homes and expanding infill development, the Program will provide safe, modern housing and significantly reduce homelessness risks. Strategic use of county-owned land, especially within the nine CRAs, will revitalize neighborhoods, enhance infrastructure, and elevate property values, fostering vibrant and inclusive communities.

Economically, the Program will stimulate local growth through job creation and attract further investment, supporting overall economic health. It will also focus on environmental sustainability by incorporating energy-efficient practices and eco-friendly materials, which will lower utility costs and reduce the carbon footprint.

The initiative will enhance community resilience by improving housing stability, integrating new developments into existing neighborhoods, and strengthening social bonds. Ongoing maintenance support and community engagement will ensure the Program's long-term success and adaptability.

In summary, this comprehensive initiative will create a stronger, more resilient Escambia County, addressing immediate housing needs while promoting sustainable, equitable growth for the future.

**Attachment A: Summary of Comments Received on Published Application and List of Commenters by Name/Organization**

**Escambia County**

**TO BE ADDED**

**Attachment B: Certifications of Compliance with NOFO Public Participation  
Requirements**

**Escambia County**

**TO BE ADDED**

**Attachment C: Advancing Racial Equity Narrative**

**Escambia County**

## **Attachment C: Advancing Racial Equity Narrative**

### **1. Commitment to Racial Equity**

Escambia County is deeply committed to advancing racial equity through the proposed housing Program. We recognize that systemic inequalities have historically impacted marginalized communities, particularly communities with a high concentration of minorities, in accessing safe, affordable, and high-quality housing. Our approach to this Program integrates strategies and practices designed to promote equity and ensure that the benefits of the PRO Housing Grant are distributed fairly across all racial and ethnic groups in our community.

### **2. Equity-Focused Program Design**

#### **a. Inclusive Planning and Decision-Making**

- **Community Engagement:** Our planning process includes extensive engagement with diverse community stakeholders, ensuring that voices from all racial and ethnic backgrounds are heard and considered. We conduct outreach through community meetings, focus groups, and surveys to gather input from underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.
- **Equity Advisory Committee:** We have established an Equity Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from various racial and ethnic communities. This committee provides ongoing guidance and oversight to ensure that equity considerations are embedded in all aspects of project planning and implementation.

#### **b. Addressing Historical Disparities**

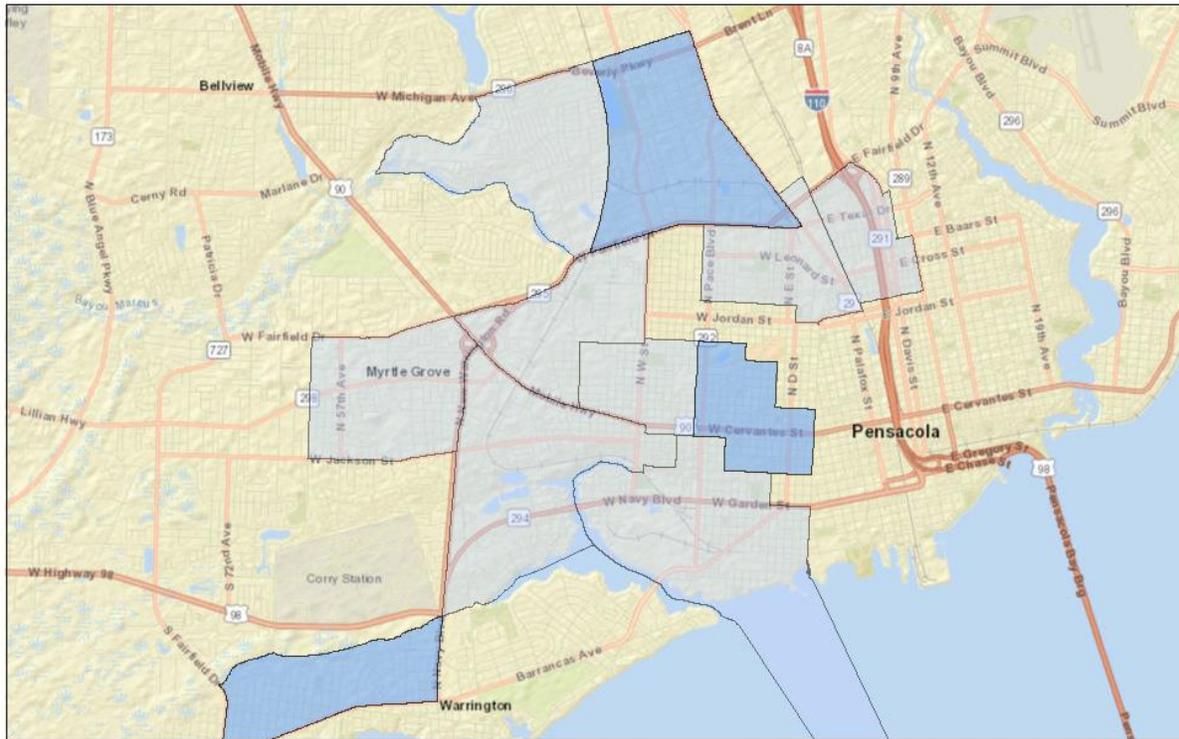
- **Targeted Interventions:** The Program specifically addresses areas with high concentrations of substandard housing, which often disproportionately affect communities of color. By focusing on these areas, we aim to rectify historical inequities and improve living conditions for the most affected populations.
- **Promoting Equitable Development and Community Empowerment Across Socio-Economically Disparaged Populations:** To prevent over-concentration in RECAP zones, our goal is to promote inclusive community growth and improve the quality of life for diverse socio-economic groups.

### **3. Equitable Implementation and Impact**

#### **a. Fair Housing Practices**

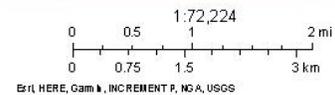
- **Non-Discrimination Policies:** We are committed to ensuring that all aspects of the Program, from demolition to construction and housing allocation, adhere to fair housing laws and non-discrimination policies. This includes providing equal access to housing opportunities regardless of race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics.

## Florida Housing Finance Corporation Report



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- 2024 Racially and Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty: Effective 02-01-24
- Qualified Census Tracts: Effective 01-01-24

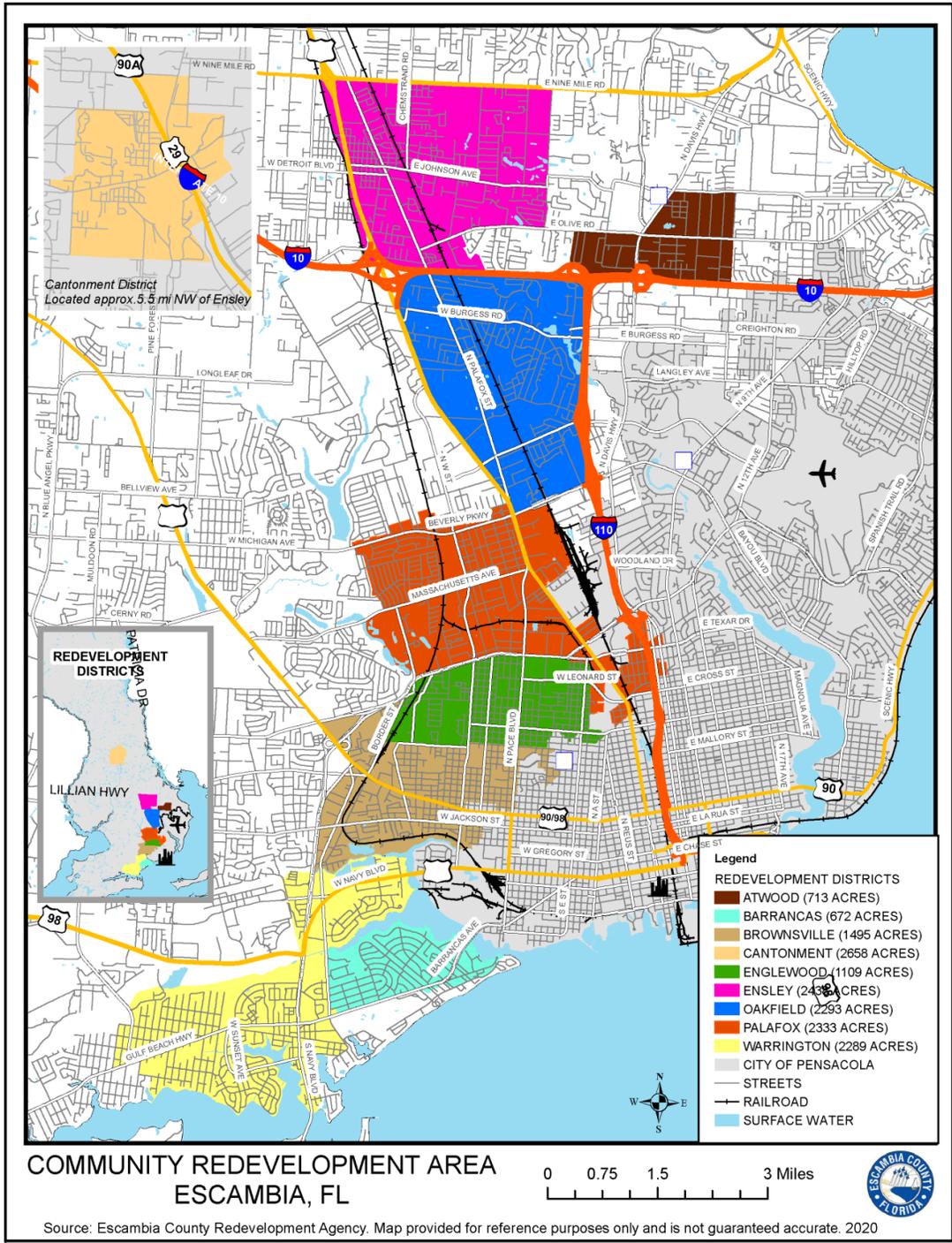


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- **Affordable Housing Access:** The new affordable housing units will be allocated through a fair and transparent process.

### b. Economic and Social Benefits

- **Economic Opportunities:** The Program will create job opportunities for residents, including those from disadvantaged racial and ethnic backgrounds. We will engage businesses owned by individuals from underrepresented groups as we do with our other grants.
- **Community Support Services:** In addition to housing development, we will advertise and inform citizens about support services such as financial literacy programs, homeownership education, and credit counseling. There are groups within our community that we currently partner with for several of these services. We will remain committed to spreading the opportunities to our clients involved with this Program.



**Conclusion**

Escambia County’s approach to the PRO Housing Grant Program reflects a strong commitment to advancing racial equity. By incorporating inclusive planning, fair housing practices, and targeted interventions, we aim to address systemic disparities and ensure that the benefits of the Program are equitably distributed.

**Attachment D: Affirmative Marketing and Outreach Narrative**

**Escambia County**

## **Attachment D: Affirmative Marketing and Outreach Narrative**

### **Introduction**

Affirmative marketing is a critical component of our commitment to ensuring that all community members, especially those from historically marginalized groups, have equitable access to housing opportunities. In Escambia County, we recognize the importance of engaging the public in a meaningful way to promote fair housing practices and increase awareness of available resources. This narrative outlines our current strategies to reduce barriers to access, ensure equitable outreach, create partnerships, and implement strategic affirmative marketing and outreach plans.

### **Current Marketing Strategies**

Escambia County employs a multifaceted approach to affirmative marketing, ensuring that our outreach efforts reach diverse populations:

#### **1. Annual Public Reporting Cycles**

- We conduct regular meetings with the public as part of our annual reporting cycles. These meetings provide a platform for community members to learn about housing programs, share their experiences, and express their needs. This engagement helps us tailor our services to better meet the diverse needs of our community.

#### **2. Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) Engagement**

- We collaborate closely with the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) in conjunction with the City of Pensacola. This joint effort ensures that a wide range of community stakeholders, including residents, housing developers, and local organizations, have a voice in the housing decision-making process. Regular meetings and workshops promote transparency and inclusivity.

#### **3. Quarterly Fair Housing Presentations**

- We are committed to hosting quarterly Fair Housing presentations in collaboration with local partners such as the Escambia Pensacola Human Relations Commission. These presentations aim to educate the community about their rights under fair housing laws, available housing programs, and resources to combat discrimination. By offering these sessions, we empower residents with knowledge and create a supportive environment for discussing housing challenges.

### **Outreach Methods**

To enhance our outreach efforts, we employ culturally relevant materials (brochures, flyers, online content, interpersonal communication) that convey information about housing opportunities, utilizing various media and methods designed to maximize community engagement.

- **Community Events and Workshops**
  - We participate in local planning meetings, public service fairs, community outreach events, and other publicly accessible gatherings to distribute informational materials and connect with residents. These interactions provide opportunities for face-to-face engagement and build trust within the community; on a not-less-than quarterly basis.
- **Targeted Communication**
  - We utilize a range of communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and local media outlets, to disseminate information about housing programs and upcoming events. Our communications are crafted to be inclusive, accessible, and relevant to various demographics.
- **Partnerships with Local Organizations**
  - Collaborating with local non-profits, advocacy groups, and community leaders enhances our outreach capabilities. These partnerships help us reach underrepresented populations and ensure our marketing efforts are culturally sensitive and relevant. Such partner organizations may include those representing:
    - Local Center for Independent Living (CIL)
    - Association for Persons with Disabilities (APD)
    - Local Mental Health Association (NAMI)
    - Non-profits providing direct service to individuals with disabilities
    - Escambia-Pensacola Human Relations Commission (Fair Housing)
    - Local Black Chamber of Commerce

### **Future Marketing Plans**

We recognize the requirements for utilization of HUD Form 935-2B, providing a framework for Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan. We are full prepared to utilize and implement the required HUD forms for marketing of specific infill properties in the Program, should our grant application receive positive consideration.

To further enhance our affirmative marketing initiatives, we plan to implement the following strategies:

1. **Expanded Outreach to Underserved Communities**
  - We will develop targeted outreach campaigns aimed at reaching underserved populations, including low-income families, individuals with disabilities, and communities of color. This may include specialized materials in multiple languages and culturally tailored messaging.

## **2. Increased Online Engagement**

- We intend to enhance our online presence by creating a dedicated section on our website that provides comprehensive resources related to fair housing and affordable housing options. This will include webinars, virtual workshops, and interactive tools to help residents navigate housing opportunities.

## **3. Feedback Mechanisms**

- Establishing formal feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, will allow us to gather input from the community on our marketing efforts and overall effectiveness. This feedback will inform our strategies and ensure they remain responsive to community needs.

## **Evaluation of Effectiveness**

To assess the impact of our affirmative marketing and outreach efforts, we will implement the following monitoring and evaluation measures:

### **• Tracking Participation**

- We will monitor attendance and engagement at public meetings, workshops, and presentations to gauge community interest and participation. All attendees will be asked to sign an attendance register which is maintained with the application and included in Attachment A.

### **• Analyzing Feedback**

- Collecting and analyzing feedback from community members will help us identify areas for improvement and adjust our outreach strategies accordingly. All feedback will be collected and processed for inter-departmental evaluation regarding feasibility and/or opportunity for inclusion in future planning.

### **• Outcome Metrics**

- We will establish metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of our outreach in increasing awareness and participation in housing programs, particularly among historically marginalized groups.

## **Conclusion**

Escambia County is dedicated to fostering an inclusive housing environment through robust affirmative marketing and outreach initiatives. By engaging the community, partnering with local organizations, and continuously evaluating our efforts, we aim to ensure that all residents have equitable access to housing opportunities. Through these efforts, we are committed to promoting fair housing practices and advancing racial equity in our community.

**Attachment E: Experience Promoting Racial Equity Narrative**  
**Escambia County**

## **Attachment E: Experience Promoting Racial Equity Narrative**

### **Introduction**

Promoting racial equity is at the core of Escambia County's mission to create inclusive housing opportunities for all residents. Our organization has a longstanding commitment to addressing systemic inequities and fostering environments where marginalized communities can thrive. This narrative outlines our experience, initiatives, and plans to advance racial equity in housing.

### **Organizational Background**

Escambia County has actively engaged in promoting racial equity through various housing initiatives and community partnerships. Our efforts are grounded in a deep understanding of the historical and structural barriers that impact marginalized populations, particularly communities of color.

#### **1. Established Partnerships**

- We have forged strong alliances with local organizations, such as: the Escambia Pensacola Human Relations Commission and various non-profits, to address issues of housing discrimination and equity. These partnerships enable us to leverage resources and expertise to amplify our impact.

#### **2. Community Involvement**

- Our commitment to community engagement is reflected in our inclusive planning processes. We actively involve residents, particularly from historically marginalized backgrounds, in discussions about housing policies and programs. This ensures that their voices are heard, and their needs are prioritized.

### **Case Studies and Examples**

Our experience in promoting racial equity is exemplified through several successful initiatives:

#### **1. Fair Housing Education Programs**

- We have partnered with numerous Fair Housing education workshops aimed at educating residents about their rights and available resources. These programs, often co-hosted with community partners, have successfully reached diverse audiences and have empowered residents to advocate for themselves.

#### **2. Equitable Housing Development Projects**

- Escambia County has prioritized equitable housing development in our planning and funding decisions. For example, we have supported affordable housing projects specifically designed to serve low-income families and individuals in marginalized communities. These projects include mixed-income developments that promote diversity and inclusion.

## **Future Commitment to Racial Equity**

As we move forward, Escambia County is committed to enhancing our efforts in promoting racial equity in housing through the following strategies:

### **1. Developing Targeted Programs**

- We plan to create targeted housing programs that specifically address the needs of underserved communities. This includes initiatives that provide financial assistance, counseling, and education to help residents secure stable housing.

### **2. Enhancing Outreach and Engagement**

- To ensure that our outreach efforts are effective, we will expand our community engagement strategies to reach more diverse populations. This will involve hosting events in various neighborhoods and conducting quarterly Fair Housing presentations.

## **Conclusion**

Escambia County is dedicated to advancing racial equity in housing through intentional practices and meaningful community engagement. Our experience, combined with our commitment to continuous improvement, positions us to effectively address the housing needs of marginalized populations. By prioritizing equity in our policies and programs, we aim to create a more just and inclusive housing landscape for all residents.