



John Gayle  
Mayor

## CITY of VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

September 29, 2015

Ms. Mary Presley, Director  
Office of Community Planning and Development  
U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Five Points Plaza  
40 Marietta Street  
Atlanta, GA 30303

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION OF 2014 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND  
EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER) FOR THE CITY OF VALDOSTA

Dear Ms. Presley:

Enclosed is one (1) original document and two (2) copies of the City of Valdosta's 2014 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

As always, we are extremely excited to continue the work in our community which we have been able to accomplish through our partnership with HUD. If you should have any questions regarding the above mentioned report, please do not hesitate to contact Vanassa Flucas in our Neighborhood Development Division at (229) 259-3571.

In the interim, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Gayle  
Mayor

tsb

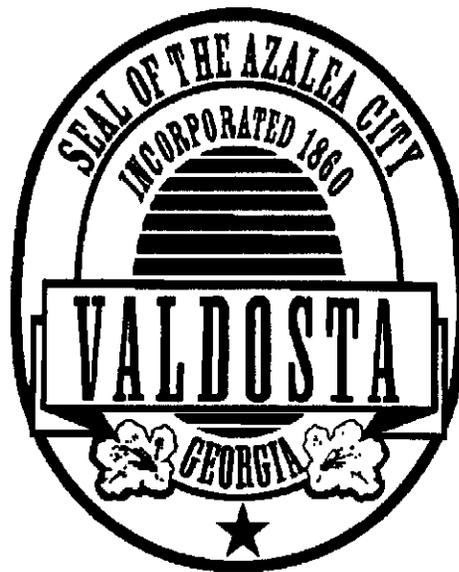
cc: Vanassa Flucas, Manager (Neighborhood Development Division)

Enclosures



# **CITY OF VALDOSTA, GEORGIA**

## **Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) 2014**



**PREPARED FOR SUBMISSION TO THE  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING  
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
FIVE POINTS PLAZA  
40 MARIETTA STREET, 15<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-9812**

**PREPARED BY THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT DIVISION  
CITY OF VALDOSTA**

**SEPTEMBER 28, 2015**



# Sixth Program Year CAPER

The CPMP Sixth Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report includes Narrative Responses to CAPER questions that CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, and ESG grantees must respond to each year in order to be compliant with the Consolidated Planning Regulations. The Executive Summary narratives are optional.

The grantee must submit an updated Financial Summary Report (PR26).

## GENERAL

### Executive Summary

This module is optional but encouraged. If you choose to complete it, provide a brief overview that includes major initiatives and highlights that were proposed and executed throughout the sixth year.

Program Year 6 CAPER Executive Summary response:

Fiscal year 2014 represented the City of Valdosta's 11th year as an Entitlement Community under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the 6th year under the 2009-2014 Consolidated Plan (the second Consolidated Plan submission to HUD for the City of Valdosta). This CAPER represents the sixth year of the 2009 – 2014 Consolidated Plan. The City received a one year extension from HUD to submit the required Consolidated Plan for 2015-2019. This year, staff continued to diligently study pertinent federal regulations, attend critical training opportunities, develop administrative and program policies and procedures, and implement the programs identified in the Annual Action Plan. Staff have submitted and received approval for both the 2015 Annual Action Plan and the 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan. Staff continues to work to implement and complete sixth year projects.

### General Questions

1. Assessment of the one-year goals and objectives:
  - a. Describe the accomplishments in attaining the goals and objectives for the reporting period.
  - b. Provide a breakdown of the CPD formula grant funds spent on grant activities for each goal and objective.
  - c. If applicable, explain why progress was not made towards meeting the goals and objectives.
2. Describe the manner in which the recipient would change its program as a result of its experiences.
3. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing:
  - a. Provide a summary of impediments to fair housing choice.
  - b. Identify actions taken to overcome effects of impediments identified.

4. Describe Other Actions in Strategic Plan or Action Plan taken to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs.
5. Leveraging Resources
  - a. Identify progress in obtaining "other" public and private resources to address needs.
  - b. How Federal resources from HUD leveraged other public and private resources.
  - c. How matching requirements were satisfied.

Program Year 6 CAPER General Questions response:

1. a. In fiscal year 2014, **37** homes were repaired and brought up to code in the housing rehabilitation program (**18** Community Development Department Code Violations Homes brought up to code, and **4** Single Family Rehabilitation/Reconstruction Homes), and **15** homes were demolished in the Designated Revitalization Area.

b. The City has met the goals and objectives of the 2014 program year by providing single family residential housing rehabilitation and reconstruction. The amount of funds spent (\$409,580.79) was utilized on this grant activity. Also, an amendment was completed to re-allocate \$219,000, of which \$209,514.56 was used from housing rehabilitation and reconstruction activities for an infrastructure project in the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA) of the City. The CDBG street repaving project was completed during the final quarter of FY 14. Fair Housing funding was used to complete on-going projects through the Fair Housing Committee. During FY 14, the committee completed a series of Housing Focus Group around the City, coordinated the 2015 Point-in-Time Homeless Count for the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County in partnership with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and completed a windshield survey to assess the status of the housing stock within the DRA.

c. Staff continues to be extremely diligent and careful in implementing programs, policies and procedures. Staff continues to retain and promote working relationships with other Entitlement Communities throughout Georgia, especially on the new environmental requirements for grantees and community economic development programs.

2. Overall, the city is pleased with the outcomes from the second Consolidated Plan submission and the programs identified in the 2014 Annual Action Plan. The City of Valdosta has made a conscious commitment to allocate the majority of the funds to homeowner rehabilitation/reconstruction, with funding being committed also to the promotion of fair housing education and community economic development. The City has recognized that with the down-turn of the housing market over recent years, there is not as much of a demand for down-payment assistance as in prior years. Also, it has been extremely difficult to find leading institutions willing to participate in down-payment assistance programs for the targeted area of revitalization (Designated Revitalization Area) in the City. For this reason, staff has made a conscious commitment to utilize CDBG allocated funding towards continuing the DRA focused homeowner rehabilitation and reconstruction program and fair housing education and communication activities currently administered by the City.

**Fair Housing Activities and Jurisdiction's Efforts to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (3a and b)**

4. a.) The City is awaiting the final outcomes that will be required of our program through the most recent legislative changes by FHEO regarding the affirmatively furthering fair housing policies. Staff has continued to seek out partnerships with our local technical colleges and nonprofit organizations to continue to offer Workforce Development programs, testing and Certification to citizens interested in seeking employment. The City has also partnered with a local WIA sponsored program out of our local Department of Labor (DOL) to also provide GED preparation and attainment as well as Career Development/Readiness Training.

b.) The City of Valdosta will continue to provide more information regarding Fair Housing and Fair Lending rights for homebuyers and renters. Due the decrease demand for down-payment assistance in the DRA, the City will not offer first time homebuyers classes, but will continue to work with those organizations in the local area that are certified to offer this valuable resource. Although the City will be unable to provide formal training, staff will continue to provide residents information on fair housing rights, predatory lending and Accessibility Rights and Reasonable Accommodations. The City of Valdosta has strengthened our current efforts in conjunction with Valdosta's Small Emerging Business Program (VSEB) to provide outreach, training educational and employment opportunities for Section 3 Residents and Section 3 Business Concerns. For example, staff investigated and disseminated information to Section 3 Business Concerns for a series of Contractor Workshops presented by a local architectural firm, the local school district, and the public housing authority. A Small Business Resource Fair was presented in August of 2014, which assembled over twenty-five small business resources in one location for area small business. This event was sponsored by the City of Valdosta and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

4. The city continues to work with local community and faith-based organizations to identify and address potential obstacles to meeting underserved needs. The City of Valdosta has formed a Fair Housing Committee based on recommendations from the Mayor and City Council to address the findings and barriers identified in the 2012 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. The responsibility of this committee will be to collaborate on possible solutions to eliminate the barriers identified in the report, but to also provide the necessary information to our underserved populations in our community. This forum will allow community non-profits the opportunity to present information regarding their programs and additional resources to the Fair Housing Committee. During the third quarter of FY 14, the Fair Housing Committee in partnership with Valdosta State University's

Staff is moving forward in preparing and attending additional forums within the community to continue to present information on potential obstacles to meeting underserved needs, and to provide informational materials regarding the wealth of different community and faith-based housing, employment, educational and health related services that are offered in the City at no cost. Staff will continue to meet with local non-profit agencies in our community to inquire as to what they feel the needs of the underserved are and to solicit suggestions on how these needs can be best met and the gaps in services offered can be filled.

6. The leveraging funds from the previous fiscal year have expired, and the City is actively seeking other sources for program leverage.

Due to circumstances beyond the control of the City, the yearly work camp co-sponsored by the Group Work Camps Foundation has been switched to an every two year model. After numerous meetings with Group to reconsider this decision locally, the national economic downturn, cost of fuel and building materials have forced the organization to make these necessary changes to the program. Therefore, the City did not have a work camp during FY 2014, but are scheduled to have a group work camp sponsored during the final quarter of FY 15 (June 2016). The normal funding amount from the City and local sponsors in the amount of \$19,000.00 is still earmarked for this project and those funds will be available for the scheduled camp in FY 15. Staff continues to work to secure additional leveraged funds from sources such as the Georgia Department of Transportation, Goodwill Industries and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The City also works to maximize available resources through leveraging with homeownership programs such as Habitat for Humanity, DCA Homebuyer Programs and the minor home repair program administered through the City of Valdosta.

### **Managing the Process**

1. Describe actions taken during the last year to ensure compliance with program and comprehensive planning requirements.

Program Year 6 CAPER Managing the Process response:

The City continues to investigate and utilize various forums within the community for organizations to provide information regarding Fair housing/Fair lending practices, homebuyer counseling information, weatherization information and resources, homeless shelter information and resources, rental housing information, elderly and disabled individual housing resources and information regarding subsidized child-care programs and more affordable housing resources that would assist to provide decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing for the citizens of Valdosta.

Valdosta will continue to provide certifying and informational opportunities throughout the upcoming program year for residents and business entities regarding Section 3. To date, nearly **70** residents of the Valdosta Housing Authority have been Section 3 Certified and have attended a Section 3 Information/Orientation Session. Two (**2**) area businesses have been certified as a Section 4 Business Concerns and six (**6**) businesses have attended the Section 3 Business Concern Information/Orientation Sessions. Section 3 policies are being updated and revised to reflect current practices.

The City's Neighborhood Development Division continues its ongoing partnership with the Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) Division to provide Section 3 Business Concerns information and opportunities to the small businesses that participate in the VSEB Program as well as all interested businesses in Valdosta. Businesses are offered the opportunity to submit the information needed to become a Section 3 Certified Business Concern and are also provided with information regarding Section 3 Certified Residents they may hire for job openings with their company/business. The City has also partnered with the local technical college Workforce Development program to offer Work Ready Testing and Certification to citizens interested in this program. The Division is also seeking to provide educational/informational opportunities to Section 3 business entities through the VSEB program, with its continuing education offerings.

Staff has participated in numerous training opportunities as they have become available during the last year. Staff continues contact with our HUD Community Planning and Development Representative on a regular basis to ensure program compliance. Program files and procedures are reviewed periodically to ensure files are being maintained in compliance with program regulations throughout HUD.

## **Citizen Participation**

1. Provide a summary of citizen comments (add comments in if they are received).
2. In addition, the performance report provided to citizens must identify the Federal funds made available for furthering the objectives of the Consolidated Plan. For each formula grant program, the grantee shall identify the total amount of funds available (including estimated program income), the total amount of funds committed during the reporting period, the total amount expended during the reporting period, and the geographic distribution and location of expenditures. Jurisdictions are encouraged to include maps in describing the geographic distribution and location of investment (including areas of minority concentration). The geographic distribution and expenditure requirement may also be satisfied by specifying the census tracts where expenditures were concentrated.

\*Please note that Citizen Comments and Responses may be included as additional files within the CPMP Tool.

Program Year 6 CAPER Citizen Participation response:

1. **The Citizen Participation period for this report will occur from September 9, 2014 – September 28, 2014. Any and all formally submitted citizen comments will be included in the submission of this report to the HUD Atlanta Field Office of Community Planning and Development. As of September 28, 2015, there was no citizen participation for this reporting period.**
2. The total amount of federal funds available to the City of Valdosta for the Sixth Year Annual Action Plan under the current 2010-2016 five-year Consolidated Plan is **\$1,031,125**. There was no program income received during this Program Year. If program income is ever received, it will be redirected into the housing rehabilitation program. The total amount of funds expended during the reporting period is **\$729,200.35** (this includes program administration). The census tracts where expenditures were concentrated are 0106.00, 106.03 blocks 2, 0108.00, 0109.00, 0110.00, 0113.01 and 114.02 which make up the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA).

## **Institutional Structure**

1. Describe actions taken during the last year to overcome gaps in institutional structures and enhance coordination.

Program Year 6 CAPER Institutional Structure response:

At the commencement of the City's Entitlement fund program, it was determined the most efficient methodology for delivery of some funds would be through partnerships with those organizations already providing the identified programs and projects. This decision prevented the need for the creation of large institutional structures within the city government, allowed for more efficient delivery of funds, provided equal opportunity to community and faith-based organizations and increased opportunities for collaboration. It is the City's intention to continue this philosophy of collaboration with outside agencies and organizations. Staff also meets with local non-profit agencies to inquire as to discuss the needs and gaps in the institutional structures and to solicit suggestions on how these needs can be met and the gaps that may be in some of the services offered in our community can be filled. For example, the City works with Habitat for Humanity to provide homebuyer education. The City also partners with the Valdosta Housing Authority to provide homeowner relocation units. The City utilizes its own Community Protection Division in the effort to demolish and clear dilapidated structures. The City currently partners with Valdosta State University, and CA\$H Prosperity Campaign to further gather additional community information, to assist with stopping local foreclosures and coordinating needed services for the community.

## **Monitoring**

1. Describe how and the frequency with which you monitored your activities.
2. Describe the results of your monitoring including any improvements.
3. Self Evaluation
  - a. Describe the effect programs have in solving neighborhood and community problems.
  - b. Describe progress in meeting priority needs and specific objectives and help make community's vision of the future a reality.
  - c. Describe how you provided decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanded economic opportunity principally for low and moderate-income persons.
  - d. Indicate any activities falling behind schedule.
  - e. Describe how activities and strategies made an impact on identified needs.
  - f. Identify indicators that would best describe the results.
  - g. Identify barriers that had a negative impact on fulfilling the strategies and overall vision.
  - h. Identify whether major goals are on target and discuss reasons for those that are not on target.
  - i. Identify any adjustments or improvements to strategies and activities that might meet your needs more effectively.

Program Year 6 CAPER Monitoring response:

The monitoring documents and guidelines have been established.

1) Although the City currently does not have any subreceptients, when applicable, subreceptients are required to turn in monthly/or quarterly reports with drawdown requests. The reports for reimbursement are evaluated to ensure the activities for reimbursements are within the program parameters.

2) When applicable, during the evaluation of monthly/quarterly reports, subreceptients were asked to include or document detailed information in respect to the clients they provided services to (i.e.income verification of participants, race and gender).

3) a. Programs have assisted in solving community problems by providing services and by referring people to the proper agencies that are available to provide assistance to their individual needs. Neighborhoods are being revitalized through various housing initiatives. The City has continues to utilize Enterprise Zones and Opportunity Zones in the revitalization areas, which serves as the state stimulus for economic development, expansion and redevelopment.

b. The progress in meeting priority needs and objectives is good. The home repair program administered through the City is seeing an increased number of requests for assistance, which were addressed through grant funding.

c. Decent housing and a suitable living environment has been provided through referrals to Coastal Plains, Counsel on Aging, the Salvation Army and the South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness. The Community Development Code Enforcement division has demolished **15** houses and **18** houses were repaired for a suitable livable environment for people living in substandard housing within the DRA. Economic opportunities were provided through the entrepreneurial program the Valdosta Small Emerging Business program as well as the Section 3 Program. A total of \$360,794.21 in city contracts was awarded to VSEBs during the fiscal year.

d. The Single Unit Residential Rehabilitation program continues to progress. The City has reached an agreement with the local housing authority to utilize additional units from their housing stock to temporarily relocate homeowners who are participating in the housing rehabilitation program, when units are available. Activities and strategies have made an impact by addressing the identified needs of; providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities for low and moderate income people.

e. Fair Housing and Lending information, Residential Rehabilitation/Reconstruction, the Small Emerging Business program, and its partnerships with community organizations in the educational and labor markets are indicators that address the strategies and describe the results of the activities and strategies implemented.

f. Major goals have been outlined and have been addressed. The major goals are on target.

h.In the activities, changes were made to better address the needs of homeownership/retention and housing rehabilitation and to create more educational and economic opportunities as well as affirmatively furthering fair housing initiatives within the City.

## **Lead-based Paint**

1. Describe actions taken during the last year to evaluate and reduce lead-based paint hazards.

Program Year 6 CAPER Lead-based Paint response:

For the residential rehabilitation component of the program, applicants were given a Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home booklet which informs homeowners of

potential lead -based paint hazards. In the housing rehabilitation program, homes that were built prior to 1978 were tested for lead. In the homes that tested positive for lead, abatement practices were used by licensed lead abatement contractors.

## HOUSING

### Housing Needs

\*Please also refer to the Housing Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Describe Actions taken during the last year to foster and maintain affordable housing.

Program Year 6 CAPER Housing Needs response:

A Housing Windshield Survey was completed during the third quarter of FY14. This survey gave an assessment of the state of the housing stock within the DRA. This type of assessment has not been completed since 2001. The data gathered from this survey is still being entered into the Success Measures database being provided through our partnership with our local Habitat for Humanity affiliate.

Staff continues to collaborate with local providers to implement steps to alleviate barriers to affordable housing that have been identified in the recently completed Analysis of Impediments for the City of Valdosta.

### Specific Housing Objectives

1. Evaluate progress in meeting specific objective of providing affordable housing, including the number of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income renter and owner households comparing actual accomplishments with proposed goals during the reporting period.
2. Evaluate progress in providing affordable housing that meets the Section 216 definition of affordable housing for rental and owner households comparing actual accomplishments with proposed goals during the reporting period.
3. Describe efforts to address "worst-case" housing needs and housing needs of persons with disabilities.

Program Year 6 CAPER Specific Housing Objectives response:

1. The goal of the CDBG program under the housing strategy is to fund and collaborate with programs that encourage and increase the rates of homeownership and retention in the Designated Revitalization Area. Due to the alarming increase in housing foreclosures in the area, the City has partnered with local organizers such as CA\$H Prosperity, and Habitat for Humanity to get citizens the necessary information to assist with retention programs such as Home Safe Georgia.

2. The City (Dream Valdosta) continues to collaborate with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in efforts to increase the homeownership rate via providing down payment assistance for first time homebuyers. Due to the current economic atmosphere regarding the housing industry, there have been no down-payment

assistance requested during this reporting period. Although the proposed goal was not reached regarding down-payment assistance funding provided to homeowner's, this goal was met and exceeded regarding the rehabilitation of existing units. There were no rental or acquisition projects completed for this reporting period.

3. The City has also established a relationship with local organizations to provide opportunities for homeowner rehabilitation, emergency shelter as well as elderly and disabled housing in the Designated Revitalization Area. CDBG funds have been coordinated with local funds to assist with homeowner repairs. The City continues to collaborate with Group Work Camp, a faith based organization, to assist with homeowner rehabilitation. Although, this effort can only be offered every two years, this program is still important to the City's work. Staff continues to collaborate with local providers to implement steps to alleviate barriers to affordable housing that have been identified in the Analysis of Impediments.

## **Public Housing Strategy**

1. Describe actions taken during the last year to improve public housing and resident initiatives.

Program Year 6 CAPER Public Housing Strategy response:

The Valdosta Housing Authority continues in its mission to provide affordable housing to the most vulnerable in our community. The Housing Authority has continued to modernize its housing stock through its Comprehensive Modernization Program, and continues to work with a local service provider to provide after-school programs for its residents and their children. Currently, ten units are being modernized.

The Valdosta Housing Authority is continuing the façade and various other site renovations on the Hudson Dockett housing units that are included in their housing stock.

### ***Resident Initiatives***

Activities being carried out by the Valdosta Housing Authority that benefit residents and surrounding areas are listed below.

- **Programs and services for residents:**

- Computer Classes
- Parenting Classes
- Interviewing Techniques/Skills
- After School Tutoring
- Computer Labs Available for Children
- Job Readiness Classes
- Girl Scouts
- Food Bank KIDS Café Program
- Summer Camp Programs
- Valdosta State University – Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE)
- Lowndes Drug Action Council, Inc. (LODAC) afterschool activities
- GED Preparation classes (***\*Began in collaboration with the City's Section 3 and VSEB efforts***)

*Programs to Fight Criminal Activity*

- The Housing Authority has an assigned officer from the City of Valdosta's Police Department who patrols the area and assists residence with complaints.
- Efforts to Improve Adjoining Neighborhoods - The physical improvements that the Valdosta Housing Authority is making to its public housing developments and the way in which the VHA and its residents maintain their housing should have a positive impact on neighborhoods that immediately surround public housing developments.

The Valdosta Housing Authority is in the various stages of repairing 60 of their single-family homes. These homes are located in subdivisions throughout the city. These units will provide affordable housing and homeownership opportunities for eligible housing authority residents and potentially other low to moderate-income residents in the community.

Statistical information about the Valdosta Housing Authority public housing:

- 458 Households are headed by females
- 62 Households are headed by elderly persons
- 279 Households have incomes at or below 30% of the media area income

The Valdosta Housing Authority in partnership with the Valdosta State University's Student in Free Enterprise (SIFE) organization completed a Skills Success Center at the Ora Lee West Housing Development in February 2011. The center is a multi-purpose learning facility which addresses the social, economic and educational needs of the residents, especially the children living in Ora Lee West. VHA has also partnered with the South Health District and Lowndes Drug Action Council, Inc. (LODAC) to start several community garden projects at the Hudson Dockett Housing Development and afterschool and summer programs for both the Hudson Dockett and Ora Lee West developments.

## **Barriers to Affordable Housing**

1. Describe actions taken during the last year to eliminate barriers to affordable housing.

Program Year 6 CAPER Barriers to Affordable Housing response:

**State Barriers:** The State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards at the state government level is a barrier to affordable housing concerning the rehabilitation or demolition of houses that were built more than 60 years ago. Historic preservation and the tax benefits associated with it is a great contribution to neighborhood revitalization. Preserving and rehabilitating homes adds to the supply of quality housing, but reasonable standards should be applied when low-income homeowners, homebuyers and rental property investors cannot benefit from historic tax credits due to the existing standards. The City of Valdosta consulted with the historic preservation planner to address these

barriers. The result of this consultation was that changes are being made to our historic preservation regulations as follows:

- the addition of administrative review for minor projects
- the creation of "subareas" within the Historic District- classifies high style and vernacular architecture within the Historic District
- concise instructions for identifying when demolition/relocation of structures over 60 years old is appropriate
- streamlined Design Guidelines for the Historic District
- Survey of Contributing and Noncontributing structures – identifies which structures within the Historic District "contribute" to the City's historic character architecturally as well as historically.

**Local Barriers:** The City of Valdosta completed an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in 2012. The report has listed the local barriers residents of Valdosta/Lowndes County face in regards to securing affordable, safe and sanitary housing in our community. The City continues to utilize the impediments set forth in the report as the basis for their housing goals in the 2014 Annual Action Plan. Funding will be allocated yearly to address Fair Housing education and activities in our Annual Action Plan. The Fair Housing Committee, which was formed through member recommendations from the Mayor and City Council, to examine and bring forth suggestions to enhance the programs available to ensure fair housing choices in the City of Valdosta continues to work on the issues presented. The Fair Housing Committee has completed one of two planned neighborhood canvasses to present a neighborhood assessment survey to attempt to match the actual needs of the citizens with the information reported in the Analysis of Impediments. The Committee has vowed to continue with its mission into the next fiscal year with the possible planning of a housing informational summit and citizen focus groups to gain additional targeting information.

**Private Sector Barriers:** The City will continue to push for sensible relaxation of underwriting criteria used by banks and other financial institutions that participate in the City's housing partnership. Other barriers will be identified, analyzed, and where appropriate changed. The City, in partnership with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), hosted a Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) workshop to bring awareness and to work with local financial institutions to encourage activities that contribute to Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) activities in our community.

**The following information on barriers to affordable housing is what was identified in the Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Plan.**

#### Federal Housing Barriers

Need for increased federal funding especially for elderly homeowners unable to borrow home repair funds from banks due to low and fixed incomes i.e. \$600-\$600 per month.

Relocation expenses associated with the purchase of occupied housing for repair and resale, or re-rent when using federal money discourages neighborhood revitalization, and add unnecessarily to the cost of housing.

The recent guidelines concerning lead testing and corrective measurements in privately owned housing could limit a municipality's ability to provide affordable

housing to low income persons—unless the federal government provides communities with substantial lead paint abatement grants.

When appraisers base new house or substantial rehab appraisals on the value of substandard housing that has been sold in a neighborhood it is difficult to obtain financing, including FHA insured financing.

## 2. State Policy Barriers

- a. The State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs no longer awards low-income housing tax credits to single family infill projects (new construction and rehab of vacant houses) in older neighborhoods. It restricts projects to multi-family developments, which limits the choice of housing unit options, i.e., a multi-family unit versus a single-family unit.
- b. This policy contributes to urban sprawl and expenses associated with it. It also contributes to urban decay as it pulls the best renters from older neighborhoods into suburban apartment complexes.
- c. Priority should be given to developers willing to renovate vacant houses and/or build new infill houses and new developments on vacant lots in older neighborhoods.

## 3. Local Policy Barriers

- a. Drugs and crime are seen by many as major barriers to inner city investment and revitalization, therefore their elimination should be a part of the city's policy for inner city housing, neighborhood revitalization and economic development.
- b. Blight caused by vacant, dilapidated houses and overgrown lots, is often viewed as a major barrier to private investment and neighborhood revitalization. It is felt that blight contributes to crime and criminal activity.
- c. Planning and zoning regulations impede neighborhood revitalization and housing development. For example a 100' x 100' lot cannot be subdivided into two 60' x 100' lots because doing so would result in a substandard lot less than 6,000 square feet. This drives up the cost of housing and encourages a housing type that is different from the historical housing type found in some neighborhoods. However, this issue has been addressed and corrected with the adoption of the city's new Land Development Regulations.
- d. The cost of new construction is a major barrier to affordable housing. Land acquisition costs, labor costs, and material costs all help explain why there is so little new construction geared toward extremely low, low and moderate-income families.
- e. Rehabilitation requirements on structures located within the locally designated historic district can be cost prohibitive to homeowners on fixed incomes. However, with the creation of "subareas" within the

Historic District that classify high style and vernacular architecture within the Historic District and concise instructions for identifying when demolition/relocation of structures over 60 years old is appropriate, the city is trying to close the gap between having requirements that make projects cost prohibitive and making them affordable.

4. Private Sector Barriers

- a. Credit requirements of lending institutions are still too demanding despite recent improvements.
- b. Inner city appraisals are too low to encourage in-fill development.

**HOME/ American Dream Down Payment Initiative (ADDI)**

- 1. Assessment of Relationship of HOME Funds to Goals and Objectives
  - a. Evaluate progress made toward meeting goals for providing affordable housing using HOME funds, including the number and types of households served.
- 2. HOME Match Report
  - a. Use HOME Match Report HUD-40107-A to report on match contributions for the period covered by the Consolidated Plan program year.
- 3. HOME MBE and WBE Report
  - a. Use Part III of HUD Form 40107 to report contracts and subcontracts with Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) and Women’s Business Enterprises (WBEs).
- 4. Assessments
  - a. Detail results of on-site inspections of rental housing.
  - b. Describe the HOME jurisdiction’s affirmative marketing actions.
  - c. Describe outreach to minority and women owned businesses.

Program Year 6 CAPER HOME/ADDI response:

The City is not a recipient of HOME funds.

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**HOMELESS**

**Homeless Needs**

\*Please also refer to the Homeless Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

- 1. Identify actions taken to address needs of homeless persons.
- 2. Identify actions to help homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing and independent living.
- 3. Identify new Federal resources obtained from Homeless SuperNOFA.

Program Year 6 CAPER Homeless Needs response:

1. The City of Valdosta is involved in the development and activities of the local Continuum of Care System (partners in the homeless coalition include: South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness (SGPEH), LAMP/New Horizons, The Haven, Valdosta Housing Authority, the Salvation Army, Behavioral Health Services of South Georgia, and the City of Valdosta). The South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness is an organization that identifies the causes and conditions of homelessness and obstacles faced by those living in poverty.

2. SGPEH provides outreach, intake, assessment information and referrals, case management, follow up, and tracking homeless individuals and families. The City of Valdosta also works closely with the Salvation Army. The City makes referrals to the Salvation Army for eligible citizens to participate in the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) program, which has resulted in the prevention of the families referred from becoming homeless. LAMP/New Horizons now has the capacity to offer emergency shelter for homeless men within their facility.

4. Due to the limited and lack of resources available for this area, the City continues to seek opportunities for permanent housing for persons completing their stays in transitional housing. The City of Valdosta continues to work with the Salvation Army in obtaining a transitional shelter for homeless men. A provision for permanent supportive housing is an existing future goal for the Salvation Army.

### **Specific Homeless Prevention Elements**

1. Identify actions taken to prevent homelessness.

Program Year 6 CAPER Specific Housing Prevention Elements response:

The South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness (SGPEH), Coastal Plains, Lowndes Associated Ministries to People, the Salvation Army, and other agencies will continue to provide utility assistance to families at risk of becoming homeless if resources are available. The Valdosta Housing Authority (VHA) will give priority to homeless families in its public housing program. SGPEH will continue to promote the Pathways Case Management system that will allow each agency to participate in building a database on each homeless person as well as other special needs groups. The City makes referrals to the Salvation Army for eligible citizens to participate in their Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) program, which has resulted in the prevention of the families referred from becoming homeless. The City will continue to work with agencies that provide supportive services to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. Nonprofit agencies and the City will continue to identify and match at-risk persons with available services which can assist with housing and prevent homelessness. The City applied to DCA to become the local organization to coordinate and complete the area homeless count for our community. Valdosta completed the homeless count during January 2015, and will be piloting a program with DCA to complete the count in the area annually starting in January 2016, along with the Valdosta State University Sociology Department.

The South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness (SGPEH) will continue to reach out to homeless individuals and families by making available its information and referral service, and advertising available services through different mediums such as radio and television advertisements, newspapers, and flyers. SGPEH will provide

comprehensive case management that will assess individual and family needs and connect them with the proper resources. A well developed referral and case management system will allow most agencies to immediately assess the needs of homeless persons. Once an agency determines the need, the individual or family is promptly referred to the appropriate services. The City will also collaborate with homeless agencies to address the housing needs of recently released institutionalized persons.

### **Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)**

1. Identify actions to address emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless individuals and families (including significant subpopulations such as those living on the streets).
2. Assessment of Relationship of ESG Funds to Goals and Objectives
  - a. Evaluate progress made in using ESG funds to address homeless and homeless prevention needs, goals, and specific objectives established in the Consolidated Plan.
  - b. Detail how ESG projects are related to implementation of comprehensive homeless planning strategy, including the number and types of individuals and persons in households served with ESG funds.
3. Matching Resources
  - a. Provide specific sources and amounts of new funding used to meet match as required by 42 USC 11376(a)(1), including cash resources, grants, and staff salaries, as well as in-kind contributions such as the value of a building or lease, donated materials, or volunteer time.
4. State Method of Distribution
  - a. States must describe their method of distribution and how it rated and selected its local government agencies and private nonprofit organizations acting as sub-recipients.
5. Activity and Beneficiary Data
  - a. Completion of attached Emergency Shelter Grant Program Performance Chart or other reports showing ESGP expenditures by type of activity. Also describe any problems in collecting, reporting, and evaluating the reliability of this information.
  - b. Homeless Discharge Coordination
    - i. As part of the government developing and implementing a homeless discharge coordination policy, ESG homeless prevention funds may be used to assist very-low income individuals and families at risk of becoming homeless after being released from publicly funded institutions such as health care facilities, foster care or other youth facilities, or corrections institutions or programs.
  - c. Explain how your government is instituting a homeless discharge coordination policy, and how ESG homeless prevention funds are being used in this effort.

Program Year 6 CAPER ESG response:

The City does not receive ESG funds

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Community Development

\*Please also refer to the Community Development Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. **Assessment of Relationship of CDBG Funds to Goals and Objectives**
  - a. Assess use of CDBG funds in relation to the priorities, needs, goals, and specific objectives in the Consolidated Plan, particularly the highest priority activities.
  - b. Evaluate progress made toward meeting goals for providing affordable housing using CDBG funds, including the number and types of households served.
  - c. Indicate the extent to which CDBG funds were used for activities that benefited extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income persons.
2. **Changes in Program Objectives**
  - a. Identify the nature of and the reasons for any changes in program objectives and how the jurisdiction would change its program as a result of its experiences.
3. **Assessment of Efforts in Carrying Out Planned Actions**
  - a. Indicate how grantee pursued all resources indicated in the Consolidated Plan.
  - b. Indicate how grantee provided certifications of consistency in a fair and impartial manner.
  - c. Indicate how grantee did not hinder Consolidated Plan implementation by action or willful inaction.
4. **For Funds Not Used for National Objectives**
  - a. Indicate how use of CDBG funds did not meet national objectives.
  - b. Indicate how did not comply with overall benefit certification.
5. **Anti-displacement and Relocation – for activities that involve acquisition, rehabilitation or demolition of occupied real property**
  - a. Describe steps actually taken to minimize the amount of displacement resulting from the CDBG-assisted activities.
  - b. Describe steps taken to identify households, businesses, farms or nonprofit organizations who occupied properties subject to the Uniform Relocation Act or Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and whether or not they were displaced, and the nature of their needs and preferences.
  - c. Describe steps taken to ensure the timely issuance of information notices to displaced households, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations.
6. **Low/Mod Job Activities – for economic development activities undertaken where jobs were made available but not taken by low- or moderate-income persons**
  - a. Describe actions taken by grantee and businesses to ensure first consideration was or will be given to low/mod persons.
  - b. List by job title of all the permanent jobs created/retained and those that were made available to low/mod persons.
  - c. If any of jobs claimed as being available to low/mod persons require special skill, work experience, or education, provide a description of steps being taken or that will be taken to provide such skills, experience, or education.

7. Low/Mod Limited Clientele Activities – for activities not falling within one of the categories of presumed limited clientele low and moderate income benefit
  - a. Describe how the nature, location, or other information demonstrates the activities benefit a limited clientele at least 61% of whom are low- and moderate-income.
8. Program income received
  - a. Detail the amount of program income reported that was returned to each individual revolving fund, e.g., housing rehabilitation, economic development, or other type of revolving fund.
  - b. Detail the amount repaid on each float-funded activity.
  - c. Detail all other loan repayments broken down by the categories of housing rehabilitation, economic development, or other.
  - d. Detail the amount of Income received from the sale of property by parcel.
9. Prior period adjustments – where reimbursement was made this reporting period for expenditures (made in previous reporting periods) that have been disallowed, provide the following information:
  - a. The activity name and number as shown in IDIS;
  - b. The program year(s) in which the expenditure(s) for the disallowed activity(ies) was reported;
  - c. The amount returned to line-of-credit or program account; and
  - d. Total amount to be reimbursed and the time period over which the reimbursement is to be made, if the reimbursement is made with multi-year payments.
10. Loans and other receivables
  - a. List the principal balance for each float-funded activity outstanding as of the end of the reporting period and the date(s) by which the funds are expected to be received.
  - b. List the total number of other loans outstanding and the principal balance owed as of the end of the reporting period.
  - c. List separately the total number of outstanding loans that are deferred or forgivable, the principal balance owed as of the end of the reporting period, and the terms of the deferral or forgiveness.
  - d. Detail the total number and amount of loans made with CDBG funds that have gone into default and for which the balance was forgiven or written off during the reporting period.
  - e. Provide a List of the parcels of property owned by the grantee or its sub-recipients that have been acquired or improved using CDBG funds and that are available for sale as of the end of the reporting period.
11. Lump sum agreements
  - a. Provide the name of the financial institution.
  - b. Provide the date the funds were deposited.
  - c. Provide the date the use of funds commenced.
  - d. Provide the percentage of funds disbursed within 180 days of deposit in the institution.
12. Housing Rehabilitation – for each type of rehabilitation program for which projects/units were reported as completed during the program year

- a. Identify the type of program and number of projects/units completed for each program.
  - b. Provide the total CDBG funds involved in the program.
  - c. Detail other public and private funds involved in the project.
13. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies – for grantees that have HUD-approved neighborhood revitalization strategies
- a. Describe progress against benchmarks for the program year. For grantees with Federally-designated EZs or ECs that received HUD approval for a neighborhood revitalization strategy, reports that are required as part of the EZ/EC process shall suffice for purposes of reporting progress.

Program Year 6 CAPER Community Development response:

1. a. Several areas in Public Facility Needs received a high priority rating under the Community Development Needs table. These needs included homeless facilities, health and neighborhood facilities. Since completion of the Consolidated Plan, New Horizons continues to serve as the emergency shelter for families. The Leila Ellis Center has a variety of significantly needed health and supportive services to at-risk homeless, current homeless and HIV/AIDS patients. The center also has the Soup Kitchen located along with the New Horizons Shelter. The Salvation Army is working on a homeless transitional shelter for men. The new Boys and Girls Club facility sees hundreds of children daily and is a major asset to the City of Valdosta. The new Toombs Street unit includes a technology center, classrooms, an art room and cafeteria. The Boys and Girls Club is located within the Designated Revitalization Area. The City of Valdosta's Downtown Development Authority served as the main financial conduit for this project.

b. The City has made continued progress towards meeting the goals of providing affordable housing. The City has recognized with the down-turn of the housing market over recent years, there is a lower demand for down-payment assistance. For this reason, staff has made a conscious commitment to offer down-payment assistance with local CHIP (DCA provided Community Home Investment Program), when available.

All area infrastructure projects received a high priority rating in this table. Since completion of the plan, the City has completed close to \$3 million in improvements to its water facilities and roadways. During this fiscal year, a CDBG Street Repaving Project was completed on five streets found within the DRA. The total cost of this project was \$209,515.00.

In the area of public, youth, substance abuse, and health services needs and crime awareness were identified as high priority. The City continues to provide technical assistance to the Pines Family Campus project that serves a long term transitional housing and supportive services to families for up to one-year. This project serves a significant need in this community in dealing with the issues of addictive disease and its effects on families. Part of the supportive services provided is health services to the clients and their families. The Leila Ellis Social Service building continues to provide health and dental facilities to at-risk, homeless and HIV/AIDS clients in our community. The Community Development Department continues to partner with the Valdosta Police Department during April and October of each year to provide crime awareness literature during the Great American Clean Up and National Make a Difference Day Clean Up. The Neighborhood Development Division has partnered with

the Police Department in support of the new litter ordinance with assistance from the Community Protection Division. Staff has participated in the National Council for Negro Women's (NCNW) Annual Community-Wide Family Reunion and the Goodwill Community & Family Empowerment Days to distribute information regarding Fair Housing and other services provided to citizens by the Neighborhood Development Division, the Police and Fire departments of the City. Finally, the division held an economic development Small Business Resource Fair in August 2014. This event was a partnership with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) as both an informational resource and networking forum for small businesses in the area.

The final area that received a high priority was in the area of planning. Working from the seventeen neighborhood revitalization plans completed in prior program years, the division is working with the Valdosta Housing Authority and its Board to revitalizing the Tom Town area of the city with emphasis on the Ora Lee West public housing development. To begin the process, both the Mayor and City Council and the Housing Authority Board have toured Sustainable Fellwood in Savannah, which is excellent example of a public housing community revitalization project. In the coming months, representatives from each group will start to explore the steps necessary to seek leveraging funding and partnerships for this project.

The City, in partnership with the Valdosta State University's Center for Applied Social Sciences, completed a series of focus groups throughout the DRA to gather additional information from citizens regarding housing and their neighborhoods. VSU composed a report based on the data collected during the focus groups and this information was presented to the City Administration to address the opportunities offered during these sessions. A copy of the focus group summary is being attached to this report. Within the third quarter of the upcoming fiscal year (FY15), these results and the corresponding city plans to handle areas of focus will be presented to the those who participated in focus groups and other interested parties within the community.

In addition, the division completed a windshield housing survey in April 2015 to assist the Fair Housing Committee in assessing the condition of the housing stock with the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA). The local Habitat for Humanity affiliate in Lowndes County partnered with the division to complete this task by assisting with volunteer coordination and data entry. Habitat has allowed the City to utilize their access to the Success Measures software program, with Habitat for Humanity International, to collect and analyze the data for this survey. The results of this survey are anticipated in the third quarter of the FY15.

c. Nearly 100% of the households that were served with CDBG funds were low to moderate incomes.

2. There were no changes in program objectives during the reporting period. The City continues to develop the necessary policies and procedures with guidance from the HUD CPD staff and is currently completing a divisional policies and procedures manual for staff use.

3. The City worked to identify and pursue any leverage fund opportunities, such as State CHIP funds and HUD Choice Neighborhood Grants.

The City continues to develop internal programs as well as work with local organizations to fully implement the goals and strategies set forth in the Consolidated Plan.

4. CDBG funds were used only to meet national objectives and meet all minimum requirements for overall benefit to low and moderate income citizens.
5. The City conducted the rehabilitation of single residential units located in the Designated Revitalization Area. Uniform Relocation Act requirements procedures were followed in the process.
6. The 2014 Annual Action Plan did not set forth any economic development programs that created jobs for low-to-moderate income citizens. However, the City is currently working with community partners to continually increase the effectiveness of the Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) program and the Enterprise/Opportunity Zone program. Funds have been allocated in FY15 for two economic development programs to assist the City in addressing the demonstrated economic development needs within the City, and look toward projects where additional funding in future program years can be directed to this activity.
7. Citizens were given the opportunity to receive information regarding fair housing and small business operation topics locally and free of charge. Often, in order for citizens to gain such information, they would have to travel to either Atlanta or Macon.
8. There was no program income received during this program year.
9. There was one adjustment made to the annual action plan during this fiscal year to complete an infrastructure project (CDBG Street Repaving Project) with funding from the 2012/2013 fiscal years. This project was completed during this fiscal year at a cost of **\$209,514.56**. There were no reimbursements made during this fiscal year. Copy of the signed program amendment is attached.
10. There were no float-funded activities or loan activities/receipts during the reporting period. Therefore, there are no outstanding loans from this reporting period. There were no parcels of property acquired with CDBG funds during this reporting period.
11. There were no lump sum agreements executed during the reporting period. All CDBG program activities are conducted on a reimbursement basis.
12. a1. The CDBG Single Unit Residential Rehabilitation Program resulted in: **4** homes rehabilitated  
b1. A total of **\$449,190.41** was used in the projects.
13. The City of Valdosta does not have any HUD-approved Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy areas but it does have an Urban Redevelopment Plan approved by DCA, which encompasses the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA).

### **Antipoverty Strategy**

1. Describe actions taken during the last year to reduce the number of persons living below the poverty level.

Program Year 6 CAPER Antipoverty Strategy response:

1. Funded programs that impact the quality of life for persons living in poverty.

2. Funded and supported programs that reduce housing costs of persons living in poverty including programs for low-income homeowners, renters, and first-time homebuyers.
3. Supported programs that address the basic causes of poverty--lack of employment training, substandard housing, education, illiteracy, and financial literacy.
4. Developed and supported economic development programs that created jobs for low-income persons.
5. Coordinated programs with service providers that addressed the needs of the homeless, elderly, disabled, and special needs groups, including persons with HIV/AIDS, living in poverty.
6. Worked with private agencies, quasi-governmental bodies and government agencies to leverage funding of programs that help persons living in poverty.
7. Supported homeless projects including, but not limited to, transitional housing, emergency shelter, and projects associated with the city's continuum of care efforts.
8. Developed and implemented small business development assistance programs. Conducted an informational meeting for area contractors in partnership with the local school district and a local architectural firm.

## NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS

### Non-homeless Special Needs

\*Please also refer to the Non-homeless Special Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Identify actions taken to address special needs of persons that are not homeless but require supportive housing, (including persons with HIV/AIDS and their families).

Program Year 6 CAPER Non-homeless Special Needs response:

The Pines Family Campus is a twenty eight bed long term (one year) facility that has been completed for families (who suffer from addictive diseases) and their children. There are five housing developments that are designed for the elderly and disabled in Valdosta. Four facilities; Langdale Place, The Ashley House, Ashton Meadows Apartments, and Sands Horizon offer housing to independent persons who are able to perform daily activities without the assistance of others. In addition to providing an independent living environment, Langdale Place also offers assisted living. Sands Horizon has expanded their facilities to provide more supportive housing. The City supported the construction of the Woodlawn Forrest complex, a 60 unit senior citizen Low Income Tax Credit project. This facility has provided additional decent, safe and sanitary affordable housing for area senior citizens. Additionally, the City supported the recent LIHTC project application for renovations to the Ashley House, which will celebrate its grand re-opening in September 2014.

### Specific HOPWA Objectives

\*Please also refer to the HOPWA Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Overall Assessment of Relationship of HOPWA Funds to Goals and Objectives  
Grantees should demonstrate through the CAPER and related IDIS reports the

progress they are making at accomplishing identified goals and objectives with HOPWA funding. Grantees should demonstrate:

- a. That progress is being made toward meeting the HOPWA goal for providing affordable housing using HOPWA funds and other resources for persons with HIV/AIDS and their families through a comprehensive community plan;
- b. That community-wide HIV/AIDS housing strategies are meeting HUD's national goal of increasing the availability of decent, safe, and affordable housing for low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS;
- c. That community partnerships between State and local governments and community-based non-profits are creating models and innovative strategies to serve the housing and related supportive service needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families;
- d. That through community-wide strategies Federal, State, local, and other resources are matched with HOPWA funding to create comprehensive housing strategies;
- e. That community strategies produce and support actual units of housing for persons living with HIV/AIDS; and finally,
- f. Those community strategies identify and supply related supportive services in conjunction with housing to ensure the needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families are met.

2. This should be accomplished by providing an executive summary (1-6 pages) that includes:

a. Grantee Narrative

i. Grantee and Community Overview

- (1) A brief description of your organization, the area of service, the name of each project sponsor and a broad overview of the range/type of housing activities and related services
- (2) How grant management oversight of project sponsor activities is conducted and how project sponsors are selected
- (3) A description of the local jurisdiction, its need, and the estimated number of persons living with HIV/AIDS
- (4) A brief description of the planning and public consultations involved in the use of HOPWA funds including reference to any appropriate planning document or advisory body
- (5) What other resources were used in conjunction with HOPWA funded activities, including cash resources and in-kind contributions, such as the value of services or materials provided by volunteers or by other individuals or organizations
- (6) Collaborative efforts with related programs including coordination and planning with clients, advocates, Ryan White CARE Act planning bodies, AIDS Drug Assistance Programs, homeless assistance programs, or other efforts that assist persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

ii. Project Accomplishment Overview

- (1) A brief summary of all housing activities broken down by three types: emergency or short-term rent, mortgage or utility payments to prevent homelessness; rental assistance; facility based housing, including development cost, operating cost for those facilities and community residences

- (2) The number of units of housing which have been created through acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction since 1994 with any HOPWA funds
  - (3) A brief description of any unique supportive service or other service delivery models or efforts
  - (4) Any other accomplishments recognized in your community due to the use of HOPWA funds, including any projects in developmental stages that are not operational.
- iii. Barriers or Trends Overview
    - (1) Describe any barriers encountered, actions in response to barriers, and recommendations for program improvement
    - (2) Trends you expect your community to face in meeting the needs of persons with HIV/AIDS, and
    - (3) Any other information you feel may be important as you look at providing services to persons with HIV/AIDS in the next 6-10 years
  - b. Accomplishment Data
    - i. Completion of CAPER Performance Chart 1 of Actual Performance in the provision of housing (Table II-1 to be submitted with CAPER).
    - ii. Completion of CAPER Performance Chart 2 of Comparison to Planned Housing Actions (Table II-2 to be submitted with CAPER).

Program Year 6 CAPER Specific HOPWA Objectives response:

The City of Valdosta is not a recipient of any funding from the HOPWA program.

## OTHER NARRATIVE

Include any CAPER information that was not covered by narratives in any other section.

Program Year 6 CAPER Other Narrative response: None

**PART I: SUMMARY OF CDBG RESOURCES**

01 UNEXPENDED CDBG FUNDS AT END OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM YEAR	480,600.69
02 ENTITLEMENT GRANT	550,525.00
03 SURPLUS URBAN RENEWAL	0.00
04 SECTION 108 GUARANTEED LOAN FUNDS	0.00
05 CURRENT YEAR PROGRAM INCOME	0.00
05a CURRENT YEAR SECTION 108 PROGRAM INCOME (FOR SI TYPE)	0.00
06 RETURNS	0.00
07 ADJUSTMENT TO COMPUTE TOTAL AVAILABLE	0.00
08 TOTAL AVAILABLE (SUM, LINES 01-07)	1,031,125.69

**PART II: SUMMARY OF CDBG EXPENDITURES**

09 DISBURSEMENTS OTHER THAN SECTION 108 REPAYMENTS AND PLANNING/ADMINISTRATION	619,095.35
10 ADJUSTMENT TO COMPUTE TOTAL AMOUNT SUBJECT TO LOW/MOD BENEFIT	0.00
11 AMOUNT SUBJECT TO LOW/MOD BENEFIT (LINE 09 + LINE 10)	619,095.35
12 DISBURSED IN IDIS FOR PLANNING/ADMINISTRATION	110,105.00
13 DISBURSED IN IDIS FOR SECTION 108 REPAYMENTS	0.00
14 ADJUSTMENT TO COMPUTE TOTAL EXPENDITURES	0.00
15 TOTAL EXPENDITURES (SUM, LINES 11-14)	729,200.35
16 UNEXPENDED BALANCE (LINE 08 - LINE 15)	301,925.34

**PART III: LOWMOD BENEFIT THIS REPORTING PERIOD**

17 EXPENDED FOR LOW/MOD HOUSING IN SPECIAL AREAS	409,580.79
18 EXPENDED FOR LOW/MOD MULTI-UNIT HOUSING	0.00
19 DISBURSED FOR OTHER LOW/MOD ACTIVITIES	21,809.62
20 ADJUSTMENT TO COMPUTE TOTAL LOW/MOD CREDIT	17,800.00
21 TOTAL LOW/MOD CREDIT (SUM, LINES 17-20)	449,190.41
22 PERCENT LOW/MOD CREDIT (LINE 21/LINE 11)	72.56%

**LOW/MOD BENEFIT FOR MULTI-YEAR CERTIFICATIONS**

23 PROGRAM YEARS(PY) COVERED IN CERTIFICATION	PY: 2012 PY: 2013 PY: 2014
24 CUMULATIVE NET EXPENDITURES SUBJECT TO LOW/MOD BENEFIT CALCULATION	209,514.56
25 CUMULATIVE EXPENDITURES BENEFITTING LOW/MOD PERSONS	209,514.56
26 PERCENT BENEFIT TO LOW/MOD PERSONS (LINE 25/LINE 24)	100.00%

**PART IV: PUBLIC SERVICE (PS) CAP CALCULATIONS**

27 DISBURSED IN IDIS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES	17,800.00
28 PS UNLIQUIDATED OBLIGATIONS AT END OF CURRENT PROGRAM YEAR	0.00
29 PS UNLIQUIDATED OBLIGATIONS AT END OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM YEAR	0.00
30 ADJUSTMENT TO COMPUTE TOTAL PS OBLIGATIONS	0.00
31 TOTAL PS OBLIGATIONS (LINE 27 + LINE 28 - LINE 29 + LINE 30)	17,800.00
32 ENTITLEMENT GRANT	550,525.00
33 PRIOR YEAR PROGRAM INCOME	0.00
34 ADJUSTMENT TO COMPUTE TOTAL SUBJECT TO PS CAP	0.00
35 TOTAL SUBJECT TO PS CAP (SUM, LINES 32-34)	550,525.00
36 PERCENT FUNDS OBLIGATED FOR PS ACTIVITIES (LINE 31/LINE 35)	3.23%

**PART V: PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION (PA) CAP**

37 DISBURSED IN IDIS FOR PLANNING/ADMINISTRATION	110,105.00
38 PA UNLIQUIDATED OBLIGATIONS AT END OF CURRENT PROGRAM YEAR	0.00
39 PA UNLIQUIDATED OBLIGATIONS AT END OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM YEAR	0.00
40 ADJUSTMENT TO COMPUTE TOTAL PA OBLIGATIONS	0.00
41 TOTAL PA OBLIGATIONS (LINE 37 + LINE 38 - LINE 39 +LINE 40)	110,105.00
42 ENTITLEMENT GRANT	550,525.00
43 CURRENT YEAR PROGRAM INCOME	0.00
44 ADJUSTMENT TO COMPUTE TOTAL SUBJECT TO PA CAP	0.00
45 TOTAL SUBJECT TO PA CAP (SUM, LINES 42-44)	550,525.00
46 PERCENT FUNDS OBLIGATED FOR PA ACTIVITIES (LINE 41/LINE 45)	20.00%

**LINE 17 DETAIL: ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER IN DETERMINING THE AMOUNT TO ENTER ON LINE 17**

Plan Year	IDIS Project	IDIS Activity	Voucher Number	Activity Name	Matrix Code	National Objective	Target Area Type	Drawn Amount
2012	2	69	5736745	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$4,964.38
2012	2	69	5762268	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$49,218.30
2012	2	69	5776525	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$24,369.00
2012	2	69	5790061	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$35,836.00
2012	2	69	5791725	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$33,063.00
2012	2	69	5795752	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$3,819.27
2012	2	69	5803489	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$97,306.18
2012	2	69	5822616	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$35,922.06
2012	2	69	5831298	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$46,509.50
2012	2	69	5833624	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$1,687.02
2012	2	69	5839256	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$9,775.00
2014	1	78	5739611	Single Family Residential Rehabilitation 2014	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$4,383.39
2014	1	78	5772409	Single Family Residential Rehabilitation 2014	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$7,851.95
2014	1	78	5776014	Single Family Residential Rehabilitation 2014	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$2,854.29
2014	1	78	5789936	Single Family Residential Rehabilitation 2014	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$3,160.12
2014	1	78	5833574	Single Family Residential Rehabilitation 2014	14A	LMH	Strategy area	\$9,251.71
					<b>14A</b>	<b>Matrix Code</b>		<b>\$369,971.17</b>
<b>Total</b>								<b>\$369,971.17</b>

**LINE 18 DETAIL: ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER IN DETERMINING THE AMOUNT TO ENTER ON LINE 18**

Report returned no data.

**LINE 19 DETAIL: ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE COMPUTATION OF LINE 19**

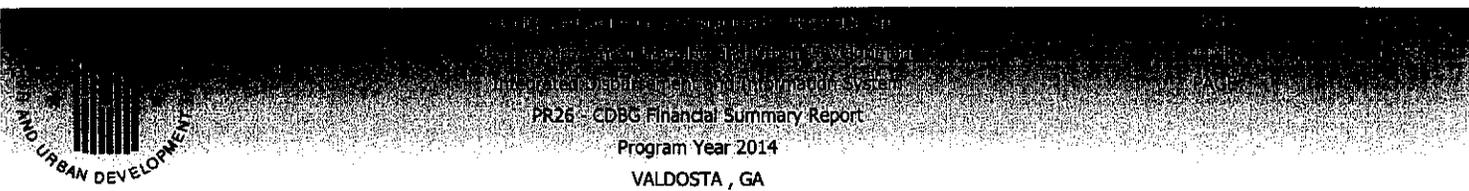
Plan Year	IDIS Project	IDIS Activity	Voucher Number	Activity Name	Matrix Code	National Objective	Drawn Amount	
2011	3	65	5736742	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION	14A	LMH	\$21,809.62	
					<b>14A</b>	<b>Matrix Code</b>	<b>\$21,809.62</b>	
<b>Total</b>								<b>\$21,809.62</b>

**LINE 27 DETAIL: ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE COMPUTATION OF LINE 27**

Plan Year	IDIS Project	IDIS Activity	Voucher Number	Activity Name	Matrix Code	National Objective	Drawn Amount	
2013	2	72	5738183	FAIR HOUSING EDUCATION	05	LMC	\$800.00	
2013	2	72	5789930	FAIR HOUSING EDUCATION	05	LMC	\$2,000.00	
2014	2	79	5789936	Fair Housing Education 2014	05	LMC	\$721.12	
2014	2	79	5803486	Fair Housing Education 2014	05	LMC	\$6,300.00	
2014	2	79	5833574	Fair Housing Education 2014	05	LMC	\$5,978.88	
					<b>05</b>	<b>Matrix Code</b>	<b>\$17,800.00</b>	
<b>Total</b>								<b>\$17,800.00</b>

**LINE 37 DETAIL: ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE COMPUTATION OF LINE 37**

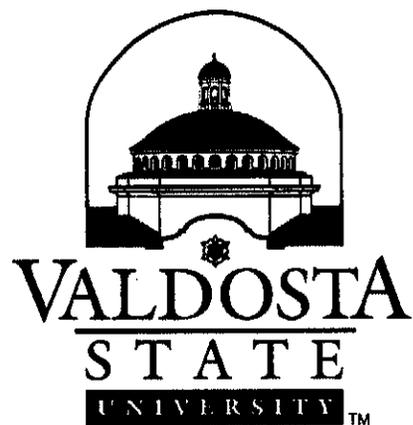
Plan Year	IDIS Project	IDIS Activity	Voucher Number	Activity Name	Matrix Code	National Objective	Drawn Amount
2014	3	80	5739611	Program Administration 2014	21A		\$23,636.30
2014	3	80	5772409	Program Administration 2014	21A		\$37,872.86
2014	3	80	5776014	Program Administration 2014	21A		\$20,500.38
2014	3	80	5789936	Program Administration 2014	21A		\$18,784.17
2014	3	80	5803486	Program Administration 2014	21A		\$9,311.29
					<b>21A</b>	<b>Matrix Code</b>	<b>\$110,105.00</b>



Plan Year	IDIS Project	IDIS Activity	Voucher Number	Activity Name	Matrix Code	National Objective	Drawn Amount
<b>Total</b>							<b>\$110,105.00</b>

**Center for Applied Social Sciences  
at  
Valdosta State University**

**Focus Group Report  
Prepared for the  
Fair Housing Committee  
City of Valdosta**



**Dr. James LaPlant  
Dr. Robert Yehl  
Dr. Nicholas Fowler**

**April 2015**

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Of course, the authors are responsible for any errors or omissions.

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## Executive Summary

This report summarizes focus group findings conducted as part of the City of Valdosta's Fair Housing Committee (FHC) efforts to develop strategies to mitigate real and perceived impediments to fair housing choice and development within the City. These findings are based on three focus group interviews conducted by Valdosta State University's Center for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) in March, 2015. A total of 36 individuals participated in the focus groups, and the demographics of the sample in this study closely mirror the population in the City's revitalization area. In response to a series of questions, several overarching themes were identified:

- When asked about what they liked *best* about living in their neighborhood, residents identified the sense of community, location (access), neighborhood appearance, and homeownership as positive features.
- When asked about what they liked *least* about living in their neighborhood, residents identified transportation, infrastructure and lack of maintenance, reactive public safety, slow response times, and the proliferation of rental properties as factors.
- When asked about *housing affordability*, residents were evenly split, but in particular, good rental property is perceived as less affordable. Residents identified several obstacles to affordability: low wages/lack of jobs, utility costs, rental property management, and the cost of upkeep and repairs.
- In describing *neighborhood conditions*, residents were quite clear that overall conditions are declining. This is perceived as a result of the lack of maintenance of rental properties and increasing crime.
- While residents had limited interaction with *code enforcement*, that experience was mixed. Some believe that code enforcement is not proactive and that city marshals were slow in responding and enforcement efforts were unequally enforced. Others noted that the efforts of code enforcement made a positive impact on their neighborhood.
- *Housing discrimination* is manifested by "steering" families away from areas within the city school district and that financial institutions scrutinized certain neighborhoods resulting in less attention and assistance being provided to these neighborhoods. Racial discrimination in the rental, sale, or advertising of homes/apartments was not mentioned in any of the focus groups.
- Regarding *safety*, there was a qualified feeling that participants felt safe in their neighborhoods, noting that a lower level of safety was experienced after dark. Residents noted that gang activity and drug dealing, lack of street lighting, drivers ignoring traffic laws, and reactive policing lead to feelings that their neighborhoods were not as safe as they once were.
- The vast majority of residents (86%) feel they are *part of their neighborhood*, although an equivalent percentage of residents report they are not a member of a neighborhood organization.
- Four specific themes emerged regarding *neighborhood needs* across all focus groups. First, there is a perceived need for more neighborhood parks and affordable recreation activities for youth. Second, residents believe that property maintenance in general and the increase in rental

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properties needs to be addressed by the City. Third, code enforcement was emphasized, and residents identified a fourth need of public transportation. In two of the focus groups, residents called for building better relationships and trust with the police. One-third of focus group participants report they have communicated specific needs to the City of Valdosta. Responses were mixed about the value of the communication with some residents noting a positive experience and felt the communication made a difference while others felt ignored.

- Finally, in addressing *issues not previously covered* by the focus group questions, residents identified child safety, deteriorating public housing, availability of drugs, and mentoring programs as areas for more involvement by the City.

In summary, residents expressed many positive views about Valdosta. However, based on the responses of participants, we recommend the City consider more affordable recreation activities for youth, greater community-based policing, more public transportation, stronger code enforcement for rental properties, and the promotion of home ownership. These efforts would be received as constructive improvements within the community's 17 designated revitalization neighborhoods and continue to build partnerships and trust within these communities.

The following addresses in detail the background, methodology, and resident responses within the focus group discussions as well as concluding comments regarding next steps.

## Section 1: Background

Over the last decade, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Community Planning and Development has focused efforts on coordinating and developing revitalization strategies for local communities. The purpose is to "create communities of opportunity in neighborhoods by stimulating the reinvestment of human and economic capital and economically empowering low-income residents."<sup>1</sup> As part of the strategic planning efforts, the City of Valdosta has collected and analyzed data on the barriers to fair and affordable housing as well as development to effectively focus resources on the solvable issues affecting citizens in the 17 designated revitalization areas of Valdosta.

In 2012, JQUAD Planning Group, LLC was contracted by the City to conduct an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI), which is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for all entitlement communities to assist in the development of their revitalization plans. Based on that analysis, it was determined more information was necessary to further explore issues of housing and development within the City. In 2014, a limited community survey was conducted to provide some of this additional data. Later in 2014, the Fair Housing Committee contacted the Center for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) at Valdosta State University (VSU) about expanding efforts to collect additional data by holding focus groups. Planning, strategy, and organizing meetings were held in late 2014 and early 2015 for the focus groups. In March 2015, focus groups were conducted by Drs. James LaPlant, Robert Yehl, and Luke Fowler, with support from the city's Fair Housing Committee. Based on the data, CASS has suggestioned and assisted the Fair Housing Committee in developing strategies to mitigate impediments to fair housing and development. Based on these suggestions, the Fair Housing Committee will be able to provide recommendations on these issues to the Mayor, City Council, and city administration.

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<sup>1</sup>South Georgia Regional Development Center. Community and Economic Development Department. "City of Valdosta Neighborhood Revitalization Plans: HUD Designated Revitalization Areas." Supporting document to the City of Valdosta's Consolidated Housing Plan 2004-2009.

## Section 2: Methodology

To provide more sophisticated data on the issues relative to housing in the identified revitalization neighborhoods of Valdosta, three focus groups were conducted by CASS. Focus groups are recognized as being useful in determining how people feel about issues and relies, in part, on the interaction between group members. As Gibbs notes:

- Focus group research involves organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of a topic.
- Focus group interviewing is particularly suited for obtaining several perspectives about the same topic.
- The benefits of focus group research include gaining insights into people's shared understandings of everyday life and the ways in which individuals are influenced by others in a group situation.<sup>2</sup>

The focus groups were facilitated by Drs. James LaPlant and Robert Yehl, both trained and experienced in focus groups. Dr. Luke Fowler was involved in the planning and administration of the focus groups. Additionally, graduate assistants were employed to keep minutes during the meetings. The research protocol was approved for expedited review by the University's Institutional Review Board, and all procedures were followed as such. The question protocol included a list of 12 questions identified by Drs. LaPlant, Yehl, and Fowler, and the Fair Housing Committee. The question protocol can be found in Appendix A.

The focus groups were held at churches local to the revitalization neighborhood, as they represent neutral locations with constituencies familiar with neighborhood issues and comfortable attending meetings there. The churches were identified with the assistance of the Fair Housing Committee and local pastors. Focus groups were held on different days and different times to attract a variety of participants with locations spread throughout the revitalization area to represent numerous neighborhoods. Times and places of the focus groups were as follows:

- Morning Star Baptist Church (1051 Howell Road) on Thursday, March 5 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM
- River Street Church of Christ (619 River Street) on Saturday March 7 from 1:00 to 2:30 PM
- Mount Calvary Baptist Church (505 E. Force Street) on Saturday, March 7 from 4:00 to 5:30 PM

Participants were restricted to residents of the revitalization neighborhoods over the age 18. An incentive of a \$25 gift card was offered to participants. Participants were recruited through two approaches. First, the City of Valdosta advertised via mainstream media outlets including the

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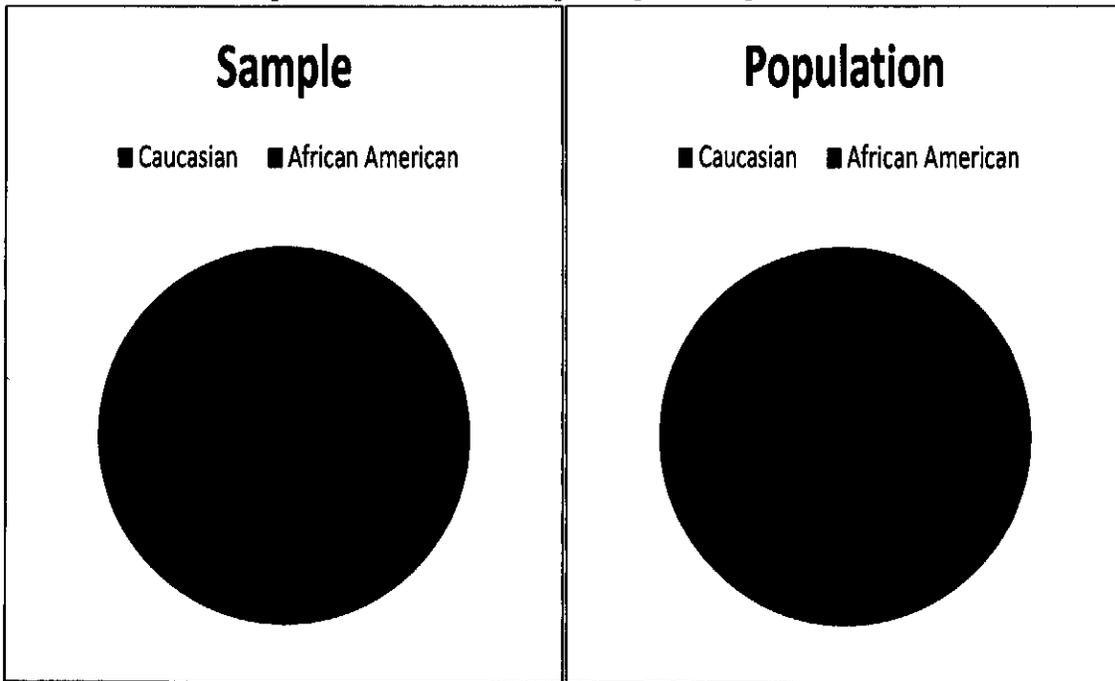
<sup>2</sup>Gibbs, Anita. "Focus Groups." *Social Research Update* Issue 19, Winter 1997. Accessed at: <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU19.html>.

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*Valdosta Daily Times* and the public broadcasting channel. Second, flyers were distributed at the location of each focus group to advertise to the constituency that was most familiar with that specific area. Participants were requested to register in advance but were not required to do so. Additionally, steps were taken to facilitate any participants with special needs, including transportation, language translation, and/or disability assistance. In total, 36 residents participated in the focus groups (four at Morning Star, five at River Street, and 27 at Mount Calvary).

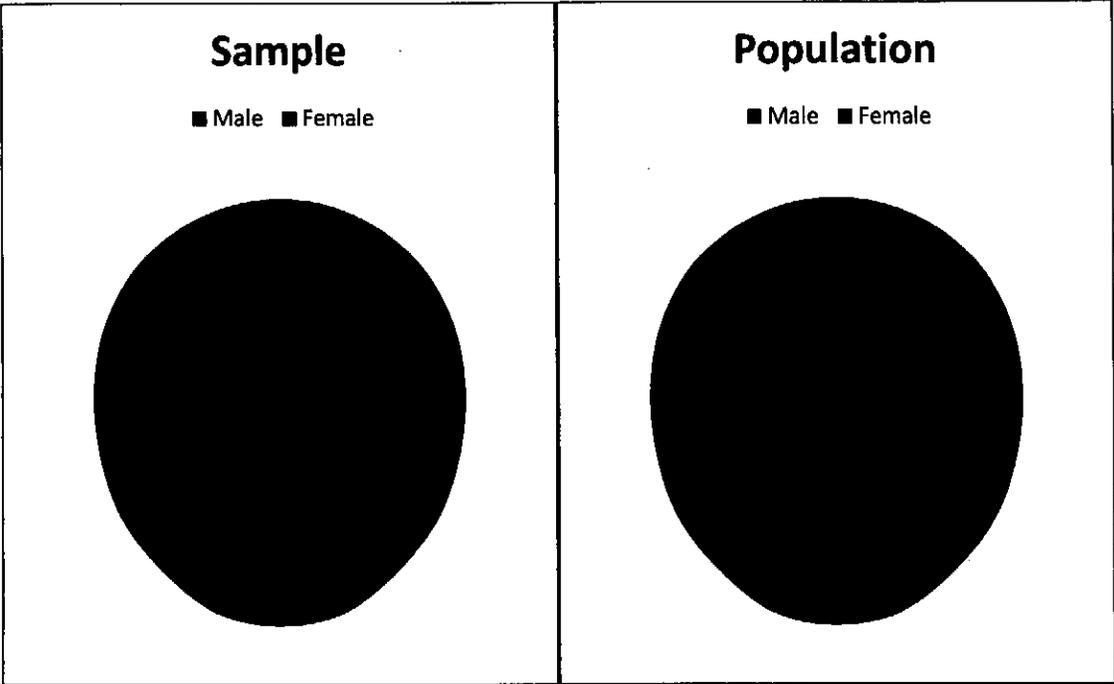
Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 compare the demographics of the focus group sample to the general population estimates from the U.S. Census for the Census Tracts included in the City of Valdosta Revitalization Plan. The comparison is along four categories: race, gender, home ownership, and length of residency.

**Figure 2.1**  
**Comparison of Focus Group Sample to Population<sup>3</sup> on Race**

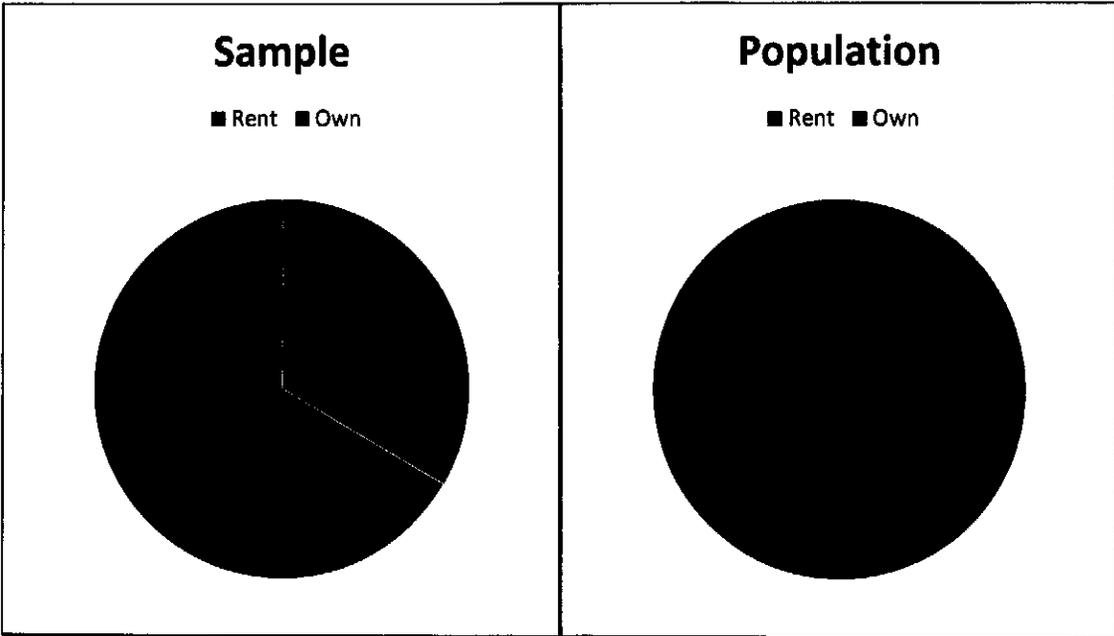


<sup>3</sup>Based on 5-year estimates from American Community Survey from U.S. Census Bureau for Census Tracts 105, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113.01, 113.02, and 114.02. Note: Census Tracts estimates may include areas not included in revitalization plan neighborhoods.

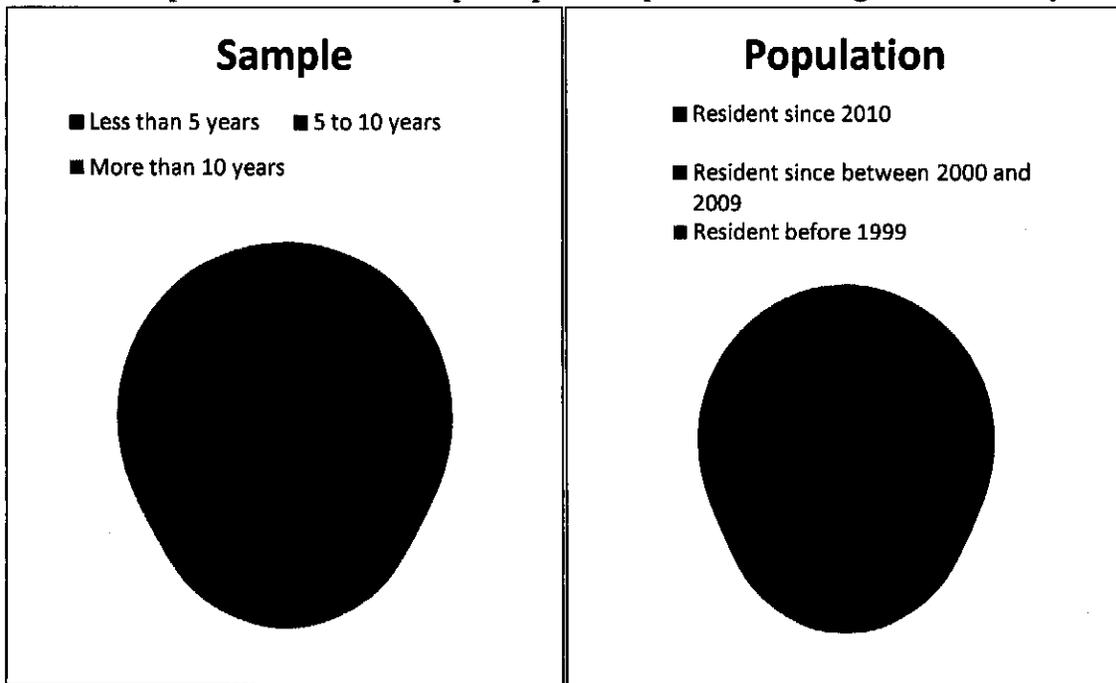
**Figure 2.2**  
**Comparison of Focus Group Sample to Population<sup>1</sup> on Gender**



**Figure 2.3**  
**Comparison of Focus Group Sample to Population<sup>1</sup> on Own versus Rent**



**Figure 2.4**  
**Comparison of Focus Group Sample to Population<sup>1</sup> on Length of Residency**



The focus group sample mirrors the population in the revitalization neighborhoods as illustrated in Figures 2.1 through 2.4. Although the percentage African American in the sample (92%) is higher than the percentage in the population (70%), the gender breakdown of the sample and population are basically equivalent. Given the focus on housing issues, it is important to note that the percentage of renters (33%) and the percentage of homeowners (67%) in the sample reflect the distribution in the population. In the sample, one-quarter of the focus group participants compared to one-third of the population report living in their neighborhood less than five years. Three-quarters of the sample have lived in their neighborhood five or more years while two-thirds of the population have resided in their neighborhood more than six years.

A note is in order on the limitations of focus group samples. The sample for this study was not randomly or systematically drawn from the general population as we often see in public opinion polls. Individuals did self-select to participate in this study. Although this is not a probability sample (meaning we cannot calculate the probability of a given resident being selected for this study), the demographics of the sample mirror the population. Unlike many public opinion polls, a focus group allows for in-depth discussions of key topics with detailed narratives from participants which can provide valuable insights to policymakers.

### Section 3: Findings from Focus Groups

The analysis in this section summarizes the responses of focus group participants to the following ten questions, which constitute the heart of the study, with special attention to the themes that emerged.

#### What do you like best about living in your neighborhood?

As highlighted in Table 3.1, four themes emerged on what residents like best about their neighborhoods. First, and the most prominent of responses, residents liked the sense of community established in their neighborhoods. The sense of community was expressed as being multifaceted, though. General relations with neighbors along with a close-knit community, proximity to family, and a low concern for criminal behavior were noted in two focus groups. However, it was also mentioned that this sense of community can change depending on the particular block. Long-time residents and the quiet nature of the neighborhood were also seen as positives.

**Table 3.1**  
**Themes for “Like Best about Your Neighborhood”**

Theme	Selected Quotes
Sense of Community	<p><i>“Good neighbors.”</i></p> <p><i>“Close knit.”</i></p> <p><i>“People watch out for each other and watch each other’s homes.”</i></p> <p><i>“On my block, there is a sense of community.”</i></p> <p><i>“Quiet.”</i></p>
Location	<p><i>“Accessibility”</i></p> <p><i>“Location. I can walk to restaurants.”</i></p> <p><i>“Close to the schools.”</i></p>
Neighborhood Beauty	<p><i>“By the Martin Luther King monument park. It brings a lot of visitors. Good sight-seeing.”</i></p> <p><i>“The azaleas blooming.”</i></p>
Home Ownership	<p><i>“My home is paid for, the neighborhood is beautiful, and I feel comfortable there.”</i></p>

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Second, the location of the neighborhoods in proximity to community amenities and the feeling of accessibility were established in all three focus groups as a benefit to residents. Participants noted the ability to access schools, the library, the hospital, businesses, and restaurants in all three focus groups. Furthermore, having quick access to downtown events was an important point of discussion in one focus group as all participants regularly attended downtown events and activities. Additionally, paved sidewalks were seen as an amenity aiding in the accessibility of the community in one focus group.

In addition to a sense of community and accessibility, two other minor themes appeared: neighborhood beauty and home ownership. Though not a major point of discussion, in all three focus groups, participants noted the beauty of their neighborhoods represented what they liked best. Neighborhood beauty ranged from azaleas and birds to the monument in Martin Luther King Park. Finally, in two focus groups, participants specifically mentioned that owning their home was the best part of the neighborhood.

### **What do you like least about living in your neighborhood?**

Five themes emerged on what residents like least about their neighborhoods as illustrated in Table 3.2. First, transportation was a major point of discussion in all three focus groups. The most prominent issue raised across all three focus groups was traffic. More specific traffic concerns included speeding, an overwhelming volume of cars and foot traffic, and safety of pedestrians. Furthermore, two focus groups identified the lack of public transportation and the 'un-walkability' of the environment as major concerns.

Second, concerns about infrastructure and maintenance, both public and private, were raised in all three focus groups. The most pressing concern presented were issues related to storm water runoff; these were prominent in two focus groups. Participants showed concern for the related issues of general road maintenance in terms of potholes in one focus group, and standing water creating mosquito breeding grounds in another. Other issues that arose were littering, insect infestations of older homes, and the arduous bureaucratic process associated with maintaining homes in the historic district.

Third, public safety concerns were notable issues for two focus groups. The most disturbing of these concerns, presented in one focus group, was a feeling that residents were not safe in their own homes or that they had to "hide." These concerns were most likely relative to other concerns presented; namely, the prevalence of "child molesters, ex-cons, etc...", prostitutes, drugs, and gang activity, which were discussed in two focus groups. Notably, about half the participants in one focus group noted gang activity as an issue. Other concerns were noise control, selling of bootlegged cigarettes and alcohol, and unsupervised children.

**Table 3.2**  
**Themes for “Like Least about Your Neighborhood”**

Theme	Selected Quotes
Transportation	<p><i>“There used to be a time when kids could ride bikes. They can’t anymore because of the traffic... There are long stretches without stop signs.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lack of public transportation.”</i></p> <p><i>“Speeding.”</i></p> <p><i>“It is not a walkable environment. You have to drive everywhere... There is not a park nearby... Walking is important for health and nutrition.”</i></p>
Infrastructure and Maintenance	<p><i>“When it rains the infrastructure can’t hold it.”</i></p> <p><i>“When it rains, it floods... We have to drive ten miles down the road because the whole street doesn’t drain.”</i></p> <p><i>“Littering.”</i></p>
Public Safety	<p><i>“I like to sit on the porch at certain times at night. I can’t do that anymore. I love sitting on the porch. They have taken something that I love from me.”</i></p> <p><i>“I get emails about people moving into street — child molesters, ex-cons, etc. I’m all for rehabilitation, but I see people doing things on the weekend that they were arrested for.”</i></p> <p><i>“[I have] to hide. I can’t go outside during certain times of the day.”</i></p> <p><i>“Loud music coming up and down the streets.”</i></p>
City Responsiveness	<p><i>“City ignores (cleaning) certain neighborhoods.”</i></p> <p><i>“Slow reaction time from the police.”</i></p>
Rental Properties	<p><i>“Rental owners do not take care of their property — both landlords and renters. They make your property look bad.”</i></p> <p><i>“Homeowners suffer because the value of the neighborhood is going down.”</i></p>

Finally, two other minor themes appear in the focus groups: rental properties and city responsiveness. The growing prominence of rental properties was raised in two focus groups. More specifically, participants were concerned that rental properties decreased property value and were not properly maintained. City responsiveness was an issue for one focus group, with participants noting slow or no response from city marshals, the police department, and the sanitation department.

### Is housing affordable in your neighborhood?

While the sample was evenly split in Figure 3.1, participants contended that the affordability question was different for renters versus owners. In general, renting is seen as less affordable; owning is seen as cheaper due to depreciation of property value over time, especially for long-time owners. However, the upkeep costs for home ownership were identified as being a major issue effecting affordability especially as it relates to historic preservation and maintaining standards.

**Figure 3.1**  
**Is Housing Affordable in Your Neighborhood?**

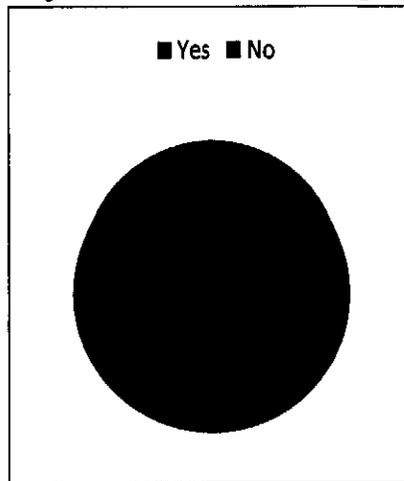


Table 3.3 summarizes the four major themes that were identified as being obstacles to affordable housing by participants. First, wages and jobs were, by far, the most pressing issue hindrance to housing affordability. Wages were identified in all three focus groups as being below average, failing to keep pace with the cost of living or inflation, and being uncompetitive. Participants linked wage issues as a major impediment to financing or refinancing home loans, in two focus groups. Additionally, job availability and the burden of working single parents were identified in one focus group.

Second, utility prices were identified in all three focus groups as an issue of concern for affordability. In one focus group, all participants noted utilities as an impediment. Most participants identified utilities being high in general, but the problem may be more acute for those in older homes.

**Table 3.3**  
**Themes for “Obstacles to Affordable Housing”**

Theme	Selected Quotes
Wages and Jobs	<i>“Wages are below average.”</i> <i>“It makes it difficult to go to the bank and get a loan.”</i>
Utility Prices	-
Rental Properties	<i>“Some houses need so much work. People shouldn’t be living in them.”</i> <i>“The insides of rentals need to be fixed up.”</i> <i>“Owners are not concerned about who rents. They rent to anyone. They don’t check on property.”</i> <i>“Renters are lowering the value of my home.”</i>
Repairs and Upkeep	<i>“When there is a problem who can you trust to fix something?”</i>

Third, in two focus groups, issues of rental properties and their management were major points of discussion. In two focus groups, participants identified rental properties as being in poor condition and unsuitable for inhabitation. In one focus group, participants argued that so-called ‘slumlords’ were prominent, and had little concern to who they rented to. This was of particular concern as it applied to ‘transit’ or short-term rentals.

Finally, repairs and upkeep were minor points of discussion, but were mentioned in all three focus groups. One focus group noted the high costs associated with historic preservation, and another focus group universally noted the difficulty of finding a trustworthy contractor or maintenance person.

**How would you describe the condition of your neighborhood?**

Across all three focus groups, residents are adamant that the conditions of their neighborhoods are declining! One of the major concerns of residents is the prevalence of slumlords and the maintenance of rental properties as revealed in Table 3.4. In all three focus groups, participants discussed the conditions of rental homes as being below the necessary standards, and placed blame on owners for refusing to maintain those homes. Additionally, in two focus groups, it was noted that it was easy to identify the rental properties within a neighborhood based on the condition of the homes. The consensus of one focus group was that the poor maintenance of rental properties was a direct cause of the declining conditions of the neighborhood. Moreover, in all three focus groups, participants expressed that owner-occupants were unable to afford costs

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associated with repairs, further contributing to neighborhood decline and leading to vacant homes and empty lots.

**Table 3.4**  
**Themes for “Condition of Neighborhood”**

Themes	Selected Quotes
Rental Properties	<i>“Renting homes people shouldn’t be living in.”</i> <i>“Rental properties are not kept up. It makes our neighborhood look bad.”</i> <i>“Rentals much worse condition than owned. You can drive around and guess which homes are rented and which are owned.”</i> <i>“You can tell the difference between homeowner properties and rental properties.”</i> <i>“Our rentals really made our neighborhood decline...the homes were beautiful, but not after they moved in.”</i> <i>“A lot of houses/businesses are torn down.”</i>
Public Safety	<i>“Someone stole our washer and dryer.”</i> <i>“Junk yards,...motorcycle races down the street. Roaches, snakes, rats, fumes that come from the junkyard...I had to put up a privacy fence.”</i>

Other concerns of participants included issues of public safety. In two focus groups, increasing crime was a point of discussion. Participants mentioned the increases in theft and violent crime, as well as vandalism. Additionally, in one focus group, participants noted the negative impacts of a local junk yard attracting pests to the area and producing odorous fumes.

#### **What is your experience with code enforcement and the City of Valdosta?**

Across all three focus groups, only a minority of participants had any contact with the city marshals on housing or related issues. For those participants with experience dealing with the city marshals, their experiences were mixed as summarized in Table 3.5. In one focus group, the consensus was the city marshals were reactive rather than proactive. However, it was also noted in this focus group that a participant had seen the city marshals inspecting before, and another contended contacting the city marshals had made a difference in terms of grass being cut, removing abandoned cars, and dealing with stray animals. Additionally, this focus group felt that residents who were more involved and reported issues were likely to have those issues resolved by the city marshals.

The consensus for another focus group was less positive. Participants contended that a slow or no response from the city marshals resulted in a lack of effectiveness in maintaining

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neighborhood standards. Additionally, some participants felt that responsiveness was unequally enforced and financially discriminatory.

**Table 3.5**

**Selected Quotes on Experiences with Code Enforcement and the City of Valdosta**

*"Some neighborhoods are just more involved and report things."*  
*"Issues get resolved...maybe not as quickly as they would like them to."*  
*"I called the city marshal...came two and a half hours later...the guy had time to move all the cars across the street."*  
*"I had to put up a sign myself to keep people from parking in front of my house."*  
*"I have one car and they said if I don't move it I will pay \$600, but my neighbor has 20 plus cars."*

**Do you feel there is housing discrimination in your neighborhood?**

Within all three focus groups, the participants did not identify racial discrimination in the rental, sale, or advertising of homes/apartments. As the focus group discussion unfolded, the most prominent feature of housing discrimination emerged in terms of schools. In two focus groups, participants contended that county schools were promoted over city schools in housing decisions, steering families away from areas within the city school district as reported in Table 3.6. In one focus group, participants noted they felt discriminated against in dealing with financial institutions based on their neighborhood. Specifically, they felt they had been overly scrutinized by lending institutions and banks. One focus group discussed the perception there was less attention and assistance being directed to their neighborhood than other areas of the city. Finally, noteworthy is one participant's anecdote that certain businesses refused to deliver to his neighborhood.

**Table 3.6**

**Selected Quotes on Housing Discrimination**

*"[Realtors] tried to steer my family away from the city schools toward the county schools."*  
*"City schools are not promoted. If you are looking to buy a home only the county schools are promoted...being close to a city school is not considered a positive."*  
*"No banks would underwrite the loans."*  
*"The northern side of the historical district is getting attention or assistance. The southern isn't."*  
*"In our old neighborhood certain places wouldn't deliver to the neighborhood."*

### How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?

Across all three focus groups, participants in general felt safe in their neighborhoods. However, this was a qualified feeling as summarized in Table 3.7. In two focus groups, participants identified mornings and afternoons as feeling safer than evenings, with many contending they feel unsafe at night. Furthermore, in one focus group, a participant noted he feels safe in general, but certain areas feel less safe than others.

**Table 3.7**  
**Themes for “Feel Safe in Your Neighborhood”**

Themes	Selected Quotes
Qualified Sense of Feeling Safe	<p><i>“I have felt safer before. I still feel comfortable walking/running. I still feel safe in neighborhood.”</i></p> <p><i>“I feel safe wherever I go, but my wife is uneasy about me going to certain areas at night.”</i></p> <p><i>“Depends on what time of day it is.”</i></p> <p><i>“I won’t walk my dog at night.”</i></p>
Contributors to Feeling Safe	<p><i>“We all know one another.”</i></p> <p><i>“Neighbors who watch. Neighbors who care help with feeling safe. Neighbors see people as people.”</i></p> <p><i>“Older community and older people, so we don’t have to deal with a lot of crime. Everybody watches out for each other.”</i></p>
Detractors to Feeling Safe	<p><i>“Gang activity and dealing drugs.”</i></p> <p><i>“We have one house where there is a different car every 30 minutes... counted 32 in one day... it has cleaned up though.”</i></p> <p><i>“I used to feel safe — not anymore. A lot of homeowners moved out and renters moved in. A lot of gangs. Teenagers are walking the street on a school day.”</i></p> <p><i>“We’ve had break-ins but I don’t fear for my safety.”</i></p> <p><i>“People are walking the street at night... walking in the backyard.”</i></p> <p><i>“People don’t use sidewalks.”</i></p> <p><i>“If it was well lit I would probably feel safer.”</i></p> <p><i>“I called about the street light burning out and they still haven’t fixed it.”</i></p> <p><i>“People who don’t follow traffic laws.”</i></p> <p><i>“We don’t walk at night... we’ll get hit by a car.”</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t want to walk or run in the neighborhood.”</i></p>
On Police	<p><i>“Police presence is more reactive than proactive.”</i></p>

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In two focus groups, participants were able to identify circumstances and issues that made them feel safer. The most prominent of these was the feeling of community. In both focus groups, participants contended they felt their neighbors were watching out for them, and this added to the level of safety. Additionally, home alarm systems were noted as adding a feeling of safety.

In all three focus groups, participants were, also, able to identify circumstances and issues that made them feel less safe. The most prominent of these were drug and gang activity. Participants in all three focus groups discussed the prevalence of drugs and gangs in their neighborhoods, and connected this to their feeling of safety. Other safety concerns related to people roaming the neighborhoods at night, poor lighting, traffic, and dogs. In two focus groups, there was a safety concern related to the number of people roaming the neighborhoods at night, with participants noting they did not use sidewalks and walked through backyards. In two focus groups, participants mentioned street lights were blocked or burnt out leaving areas with poor lighting. In two focus groups, participants contended running stop signs and speeding were common in their neighborhoods, with many participants expressing fear of being hit by a car. In one focus group, participants noted concern related to unleashed dogs.

Finally, in two focus groups, participants discussed the relationship between police and their feelings of safety in their neighborhoods. The reactions were mixed. In one focus group, participants felt that police presence was reactive rather than proactive. However, participants did feel that the routine patrol through their neighborhood did make them feel safer. In another focus group, participants contended any police presence contributed to anxiety, rather than safety.

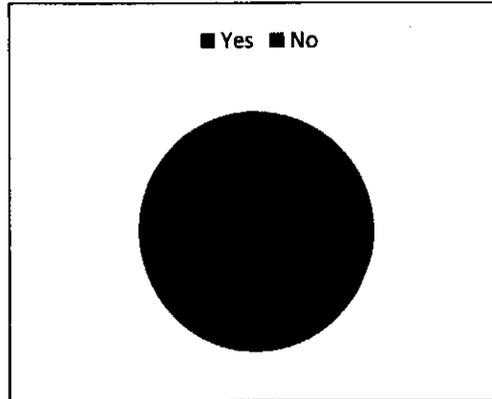
### **To what extent do you feel a part of your neighborhood?**

Figure 3.2 highlights that the vast majority of respondents (86%) feel they are part of their neighborhood. Focus group participants noted that “family and friends” help them feel connected and they feel “invested” in their neighborhood. Several respondents remarked that annual block parties and neighborhood gatherings contribute to a feeling of being a part of the neighborhood. Walking in the neighborhood was identified as an activity that provides the opportunity to meet neighbors. Many respondents feel a part of their neighborhood because “neighbors watch over each other’s homes.” For the 14% of focus group participants who do not feel a part of their neighborhood, the themes emerged that neighbors are not as connected as they were in the past and people frequently move. One respondent observed “people are not neighborly anymore. It is a different society.” Another respondent remarked their neighborhood is “no comparison to what it was like when I was a child because people move in and out.” One

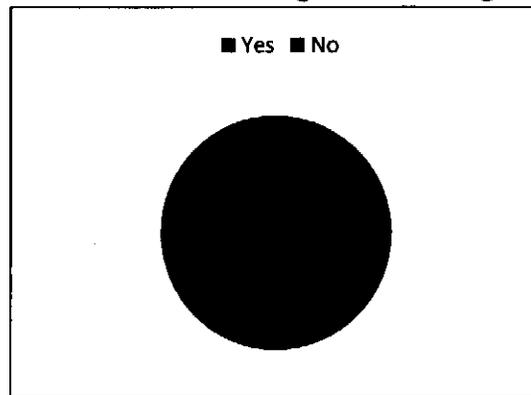
Draft | For discussion purposes only.

participant noted “the majority of my neighbors are military families so they move in and out a lot.”

**Figure 3.2**  
**To What Extent Do You Feel a Part of Your Neighborhood?**



**Figure 3.3**  
**Are You a Member of a Neighborhood Organization?**



When asked if they are a member of a neighborhood organization, only five of the focus group participants (14%) report current membership. Interestingly, the percentages are reversed from Figures 3.2 to 3.3 with 86% of respondents reporting that they feel a part of their neighborhood, but an equivalent percentage are not members of a neighborhood organization. In one focus group, six of the participants noted that their neighborhoods once had an organization but do not currently have one. Another participant remarked that their neighborhood once had a patrol but not anymore. It is clear that focus group participants still feel a part of their neighborhood even when most are not members of a neighborhood organization.

**What does your neighborhood need most?**

Across all three focus groups, participants emphasized the theme of more parks and recreation activities for youth in their neighborhood. Table 3.8 reveals that a subtheme to the focus group discussions is the need for affordable recreation activities for children and teenagers. Many participants noted that the activities provided by the Boys and Girls Club are not affordable to many residents. All of the focus group discussions also noted the need for greater property maintenance and less rental properties. Participants noted that the decline in property maintenance in their neighborhoods is strongly related to the rise of rental properties. The need for more code enforcement as well as public transportation also emerged across all three focus groups.

**Table 3.8**  
**Themes for “Neighborhood Need Most”**

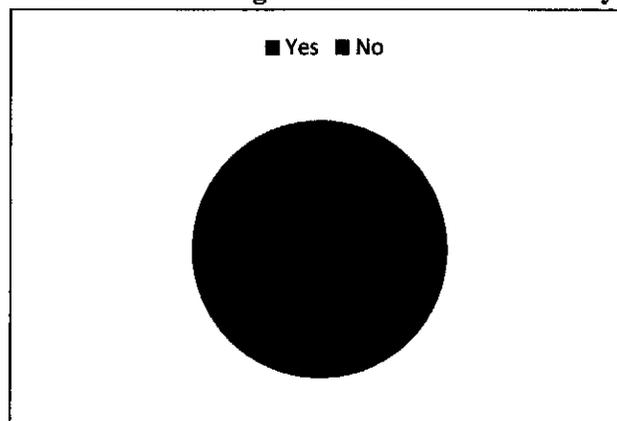
Theme	Selected Quotes
Parks and Recreation Activities for Youth	<p><i>“Playground for the children. Somewhere kids can play. Yards are too close to the road.”</i></p> <p><i>“Community centers for youth...need affordable youth activities. The Boys and Girls Club is too expensive, overpopulated, and there is a waiting list.”</i></p> <p><i>“Something for children, 5 or 6 years old...a recreation center that’s affordable. Boys and Girls Club is not affordable.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lack of parks...not everyone can afford the Boys and Girls Club.”</i></p>
Property Maintenance and Less Rental Properties	<p><i>“More homeowners who take care of their property and less renters.”</i></p> <p><i>“Renters and owners to maintain their properties.”</i></p> <p><i>“Too much ownership has migrated to rentals...Once they move out they are less focused on upkeep and maintenance. If property values drop too far then they are not concerned about who moves into their homes.”</i></p>
Code Enforcement	<p><i>“More enforcement on landlords to maintain their properties.”</i></p> <p><i>“Don’t see codes enforced right now.”</i></p> <p><i>“Make sure the codes apply to everyone not just a select few.”</i></p>
Public Transportation	<p><i>“Public transportation helps to bring jobs in.”</i></p> <p><i>“If you do get a job there is no public transportation to get you there.”</i></p> <p><i>“The public transportation we do have doesn’t come.”</i></p>

In two of the focus groups, participants articulated the theme of building better relationships and trust with the police. One respondent noted “it’s not about running through the neighborhood chasing people...It’s getting to know the community. Building trust in the community.” Another respondent observed that “police are not a part of the community.” Several focus group participants called for more community policing and community involvement. Discussions in two of the focus groups also noted the need for more financial assistance in the repair and maintenance of homes, especially for the elderly and those on fixed incomes. Participants noted the need for financial support to make homes energy efficient given the older housing stock in many neighborhoods. Better lighting for neighborhoods and recreation facilities was noted in two of the three focus groups.

In one of the focus groups, a myriad of safety and appearance issues were noted as the greatest needs in the neighborhood: speed bumps, more fencing, cleaning up litter, widen the roads, more sidewalks, and more signage for children at play.

A follow-up question asked participants “if they have communicated these needs to the City of Valdosta?” As Figure 3.4 highlights, approximately one-third of focus group participants have communicated specific neighborhood needs to the City of Valdosta. These respondents noted they have contacted a city council member, the mayor, the police department, or the assistant to the city manager. Responses were mixed about the value of the communication. Some of the respondents had a positive experience with their communication and felt it made a difference while others felt they were ignored. Several respondents noted the challenge of digital communication with the City if an individual does not have an Internet connection or is not comfortable with electronic communication.

**Figure 3.4**  
**Have You Communicated Neighborhood Needs to the City of Valdosta?**



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Among the two-thirds of participants who have not communicated neighborhood needs to the City, the theme emerged that they do not know “who to call” or “where to go” or “who to talk to” about neighborhood issues. One respondent blamed “citizen apathy.” This discussion of citizen apathy in one focus group resulted in participants encouraging communication and engagement among their fellow residents. A respondent noted how few people attend city council meetings and declared “we need more [residents] up there. We need to put more effort into this as citizens.” Several focus group participants expressed optimism that persistence is the key and attending city council meetings over time can result in neighborhood needs being addressed.

**Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your neighborhood or housing in your neighborhood?**

Our final focus group question asked participants to share any other observations about their neighborhood or housing which had not been addressed with previous questions. In one of the focus groups, a participant noted concern for children’s safety in their own yards and neighborhoods. The participant wanted children to have the feeling that it is safe for kids to go out and play. Another participant in the same focus group expressed concern about the deteriorating condition and upkeep of public housing as well as “drugs from neighbors” in public housing. In another focus group, a participant suggested that the City of Valdosta should consider “programs that promote accountability” as well as “mentor programs” for residents of neighborhoods.

#### **Section 4: Discussion and Conclusions**

While there are some limitations to the data collected from the focus groups, the findings provide some important insights into housing issues in the City of Valdosta's Revitalization Plan neighborhoods. Among the most important of findings is the overwhelmingly sense of community felt within these neighborhoods. A consistent theme reflected in all the focus groups and across numerous discussion questions was the feeling of community and the connection between neighbors. This sense of community, in turn, reflects positively in other areas. Participants who felt part of a community were more likely to "look out" for their neighbors, report criminal activity and code violations, participate in public events, own homes, and maintain their property. A sense of community provides residents a vested interest in their neighborhoods, and cannot be understated as a benefit in revitalizing declining areas. Additionally, a positive finding that is noteworthy is the lack of concern surrounding racial discrimination in housing. While participants do feel there is discrimination in some ways, there was almost no feeling of discrimination in the sale, rental, or advertising of housing. This likely supports the feeling of community noted by participants, as discrimination does not undermine their unity.

On the other hand, several concerns about the neighborhoods came to light as well. Chief among these concerns were public safety, rental properties, transportation, and infrastructure. All contribute to the consistent feeling of neighborhood decline. Gangs, drug activity, and unsupervised youths undermine feelings of safety and security. Rental properties, including affordability, upkeep and maintenance, provide for a declining sense of neighborhood value. Transportation and infrastructure create a feeling of isolation from other parts of the city. Taken as a whole, they reflect very real concerns participants have in their neighborhoods. However, each of those weaknesses can be seen as an opportunity, as they reflect solvable problems within the capacity of the City of Valdosta.

Based on the responses of participants, more affordable activities for youth, stronger code enforcement for rental properties, more home ownership, greater public transportation, and more community-based policing will strike at the heart of many of the concerns for residents. More affordable recreation activities for children and teenagers can contribute to the well-being of youth in the community. Stronger efforts at code enforcement can help to improve the condition of properties. More home ownership can provide for both better property conditions and value, and reinforce investment in the community both financially and socially. Greater public transportation can promote economic opportunities and community integration. More expansive community-based policing can help to reduce crime and support communal ties. Efforts of this nature will have the twin benefit of serving to remedy concerns in the neighborhood and strengthening the heart of the community. If well planned and supported, the positive aspects of

**Draft | For discussion purposes only.**

the community can be focused on solving the major problems identified, and serve as a foundation for further revitalization. Additionally, upgrades to infrastructure and better traffic management can encourage stronger ties outside of neighborhoods to the Valdosta community as a whole, and reduce frustrations when dealing with traffic and storm water runoff.

CASS at VSU is dedicated to supporting local governments to effectively plan and provide public services to their communities. In efforts to move forward with the recommendations of this report, CASS is uniquely positioned to provide further research and analysis on issues of housing and revitalization of neighborhoods.

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**Appendix**  
**Focus Group Questions**

**How long have you lived in your current neighborhood?**

Show of hands for less than five years, five to 10, and more than 10 years

**Do you rent or own?**

Show of hands for rent or own

**What do you like best about living in your neighborhood?**

**What do you like least about living in your neighborhood?**

**Is housing affordable in your neighborhood?**

Probe what they consider to be affordable housing for rent and then mortgage payments

Probe what percentage of their monthly income goes to housing (more than one-third?)

Probe the obstacles to affordable housing (timing of payments, other household obligations, financing/interest rates/inability to get a loan)

**How would you describe the condition of your neighborhood?**

Probe the condition of and maintenance of homes

**What is your experience with code enforcement and the City of Valdosta?**

Probe if they have had any contact with a city marshal

Probe if such contacts made a difference

Probe if code enforcement is equally enforced

**Do you feel there is housing discrimination in your neighborhood?**

Why or why not?

Probe about the sale, rental or advertising of homes or apartments

**How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?**

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Probe what makes you feel safe or unsafe in your neighborhood?

**To what extent do you feel a part of your neighborhood?**

Why or why not do you feel connected?

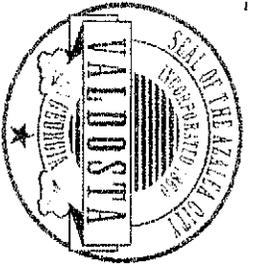
Probe if they are a member of a neighborhood organization

**What does your neighborhood need most?**

Probe what is perceived as the greatest housing need

Probe if they have communicated these needs to the City of Valdosta

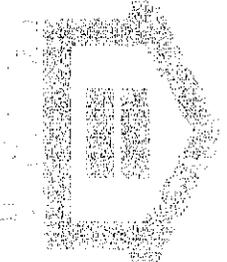
**Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your neighborhood or housing in your neighborhood?**



**CITY OF VALDOSTA**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**2014 CAPER**

404-122-0000 FAX 404-122-0001 404-122-0002 404-122-0003 404-122-0004 404-122-0005 404-122-0006 404-122-0007 404-122-0008 404-122-0009 404-122-0010 404-122-0011 404-122-0012 404-122-0013 404-122-0014 404-122-0015 404-122-0016 404-122-0017 404-122-0018 404-122-0019 404-122-0020 404-122-0021 404-122-0022 404-122-0023 404-122-0024 404-122-0025 404-122-0026 404-122-0027 404-122-0028 404-122-0029 404-122-0030 404-122-0031 404-122-0032 404-122-0033 404-122-0034 404-122-0035 404-122-0036 404-122-0037 404-122-0038 404-122-0039 404-122-0040 404-122-0041 404-122-0042 404-122-0043 404-122-0044 404-122-0045 404-122-0046 404-122-0047 404-122-0048 404-122-0049 404-122-0050 404-122-0051 404-122-0052 404-122-0053 404-122-0054 404-122-0055 404-122-0056 404-122-0057 404-122-0058 404-122-0059 404-122-0060 404-122-0061 404-122-0062 404-122-0063 404-122-0064 404-122-0065 404-122-0066 404-122-0067 404-122-0068 404-122-0069 404-122-0070 404-122-0071 404-122-0072 404-122-0073 404-122-0074 404-122-0075 404-122-0076 404-122-0077 404-122-0078 404-122-0079 404-122-0080 404-122-0081 404-122-0082 404-122-0083 404-122-0084 404-122-0085 404-122-0086 404-122-0087 404-122-0088 404-122-0089 404-122-0090 404-122-0091 404-122-0092 404-122-0093 404-122-0094 404-122-0095 404-122-0096 404-122-0097 404-122-0098 404-122-0099 404-122-0100

**Meeting Sign-In Sheet**  
**September 3, 2015**  
**City Hall Annex, Multi-Purpose Room**  
**5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**



Printed Name/Address	Signature	Date/Time
<del>_____</del>		
No Citingers	Pan to accept	
	Pan to accept	

**Staff**

Vanassa Fluca, City of Valdosta

*Vanessa Fluca*

5:20pm

9/3/2015

903 Cherokee Z/T 5 \$600  
Avalon Apt. 2/1.5 \$525

**DUPLEXES**  
6104B Vinnie Dr. 2/2 \$695  
1088 Larkford 2/1 \$495  
4003 B Camellia Dr. 2/1 \$450

**APARTMENTS**  
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Baytree Manor 2/1 \$450  
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**Miscellaneous Notices**

9pm14  
**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
Public Hearing  
Thursday, September 3, 2015  
City Hall Annex,  
First Floor, Multi-Purpose Room  
300 North Lee Street  
Valdosta, Georgia 31603  
5:30 p.m.

For the purpose of seeking citizens input on the City of Valdosta 2014 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. On September 3rd, the City of Valdosta will have completed copies of the CAPER for FY 2014 for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for review. The purpose of the CAPER is to provide the City of Valdosta with an opportunity to evaluate its overall progress on an annual basis in carrying out priorities and objectives identified in the HUD-approved Consolidated Plan and to report its progress to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the citizens of Valdosta. The City of Valdosta actively encourages ongoing citizen input and feedback. The public comment period for this report will be open until 5 p.m., September 28, 2015. This report can be provided in an alternate format, upon request to the Neighborhood Development Division. The comments received from the public participation process are an integral part of the overall CAPER assessment process.

If you have any questions, please contact:  
The City of Valdosta  
Neighborhood Development Division  
300 North Lee Street, Room 204  
Between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.  
(229) 671-3617

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Public Notice

**Miscellaneous Notices**

On August 28-29, 2015, the Valdosta area experienced thunderstorms that produced 8 inches of rain. As a result, inflow and infiltration entering the sanitary sewer system caused a surcharge of the system and resulted in four sanitary sewer overflows.

A manhole in the 600 block of Scott Drive discharged an estimated 61,100 gallons of combined stormwater and wastewater into Sugar Creek.

A manhole at the end of Rainier Lane discharged an estimated 151,700 of combined stormwater and wastewater into Sugar Creek.

A manhole in the 1400 block of Gorrio Road discharged an estimated 177,000 gallons of combined stormwater and wastewater into Sugar Creek.

An additional manhole in the 2400 block of Meadowbrook Drive discharged an estimated 48,000 gallons of combined stormwater and wastewater into Sugar Creek.

City staff cleaned the area, re-covered wastewater, and applied lime to disinfect the affected areas. Public notification signs have been placed at and downstream of the spill sites to warn the general public. Due to the possibility of bacterial contamination from combined stormwater and wastewater, the public is advised to avoid contact with Sugar Creek in these areas for the next seven days.

The City has made the proper notification to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources and has initiated sampling of the affected stream.  
For more information, contact Environmental Manager John Waite at (229) 259-3592 or at jwaite@valdostacity.com.  
00093175  
9/2/15

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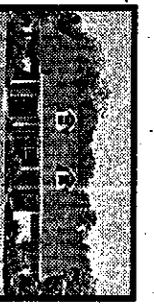
Call Natalie or Debra  
229-247-4208 between  
8am & 5:30pm M-F

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Single wide, Barber Cir., 3br/2ba, Barnes Rd to 122, \$500/mo.  
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**WATERFRONT** mobile home with dock. 4135 Gove. Drive Lake Park. 32'x64' 3bd/1m 2 baths. \$85,000.  
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### Miscellaneous Notices

gpn14  
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Thursday, September 3, 2015  
City Hall Annex,  
First Floor Multi-Purpose Room  
300 North Lee Street  
Valdosta, Georgia 31603  
5:30 p.m.

For the purpose of seeking citizens input on the City of Valdosta 2014 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. On September 3rd, the City of Valdosta will have completed copies of the CAPER for FY 2014 for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for review. The purpose of the CAPER is to provide the City of Valdosta with an opportunity to evaluate its overall progress on an annual basis in carrying out priorities and objectives identified in the HUD-approved Consolidated Plan and to report its progress to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the citizens of Valdosta. The City of Valdosta actively encourages ongoing citizen input and feedback. The public comment period for this report will be open until 5 p.m., September 28, 2015. This report can be provided in an alternate format, upon request to the Neighborhood Development Division. The comments received from the public participation process are an integral part of the overall CAPER assessment process.

If you have any questions, please contact:  
The City of Valdosta  
Neighborhood Development Division  
300 North Lee Street, Room 204  
Between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.  
(229) 671-3617  
000933069  
8/30/09/02/15



The Valdosta Daily Times  
The Moultrie Observer

THOMASVILLE  
TIMES-ENTERPRISE  
The Tifton Gazette

# AFFIDAVIT

I, Mae Stokes, Public Notice Manager, do hereby certify that the legal  
Advertisement(s) for NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING (CAPER)

were published in THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES  
on 8/30:09/02/15

Subscribed and sworn to me, in the County of Lowndes in the State of  
Georgia on this 14TH day of SEPTEMBER 2015.

Deborah Ritzman

Notary Signature

Mae Stokes

Public Notice Manager





**Community & Family Empowerment Day**  
**Saturday, May 2 ♦ 11a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**SPONSORSHIP FORM**

Please complete the form in its entirety and return by **Friday, April 24 at noon.**  
**Fax: 229-316-1218 Email: [khamilton@gwivr.org](mailto:khamilton@gwivr.org) Office: 229-316-1216 ext. 2**

Name of Organization City of Valdosta  
 Contact Name Vanessa Flucas  
 Phone (229) 259-3571 Email vflucas@valdostacity.com

**\*\*All sponsors are required to provide a door prize\*\* ONLY "30" VENDOR SPACES AVAILABLE**

Door prize: \_\_\_\_\_

Please select to sponsor one or more of the following:

**Workshop / Training** (Instructed by a representative from your organization)

Select one of the workshop options below:

Financial Success for You & Your Families  Homebuyer Workshop

**Legal Advice**

Family Law  Business Law  
 Estate Planning  Other

**Family Entertainment – KIDZ ZONE**

Select one or more of the options below:

Bounce House  Games  Crafts  
 Music (Live or Broadcast)  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth Services**

Summer Camp  After-school / Extended Day programs  
 Tutoring / Literacy Services  Library / Book Club  Sports/ Athletics  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Health & Lifestyle**

Preventative Screenings  Parenting / Childhood Development  
 Health Club / Nutritional Service  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Counseling and Social Services**

Mental/Behavioral Health  Family Therapy  Assistance Programs  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Hispanic/Latino Services**  **Entrepreneurship/Business Development**

**Religious Organizations**  Food  Beverages  Other Municipal Services thru City

**DEADLINE: Friday, APRIL 24 at noon. Late Submissions will not be accepted.**

# Welcome to Job Shadow Day

April 22, 2015

*A celebration of Georgia Cities Week*

8:30 a.m.

Students Arrive

City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room

8:30 - 8:45 a.m.

Breakfast

8:45 a.m.

Welcome

Mayor John Gayle

City Manager Larry H. Hanson

9 a.m.

Introduction of Department Heads

City Manager Larry H. Hanson

9:15 - 11:15 a.m.

Job Shadowing

Various City Departments

11:15 a.m.

Student Presentations

City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room

12:15 p.m.

Certificate Presentations, Lunch, Group Photos

1 p.m.

Students Depart

Thank you to the Valdosta High School students participating in  
the 2015 Georgia Cities Week Job Shadowing Day:

**City Manager's Office**  
Jada-Brielle Keeley  
Jasmine West

**Police Department**  
Nichelle Holliday  
Ja'Quine' Calloway  
Kevin Hunter

**Community Development Services**  
Nikera N Daniels  
Cristen Fulton

**Engineering Department**  
Jeon Gates  
Garonte' Whitfield

**Planning & Zoning Division**  
Abby Simmons  
Alliyah Bell

**Public Works**  
Jameya Irvin  
Krishna Horne

**Neighborhood Development Division**  
Antonio Wilson  
Taylor Terrell

**Human Resources Development**  
Santana Martin  
Amber Young

**Utilities Department**  
John Slater  
Kye' Ashia Larkins

**Municipal Court**  
Brianna Biggs  
Rejean Jacob

**Fire Department**  
Sanaria Crumpton  
Jashia Robinson

**Finance Division**  
Shianne Haynes  
Larissa H Jones

**Thank you to the Valdosta High School Staff!**

Dr. Janice Richardson, Principal; Ricky Thomas, Assistant Principal;  
Brian Law, School Counselor; Karen Cook, AVID Co-Coordinator;  
and Alex Alvarez, Central Office Teaching and Learning.

11:00

APRIL 11  
11:00AM- 4:00 PM



# Volunteers Needed!!!

Valdosta-Lowndes County Habitat for Humanity and the City of Valdosta need your help! We are doing windshield surveys for our Designated Revitalization Area! These are so important for us to know what areas need more focus!

**On April 11 from 11 AM- 4PM** we will host a training, feed volunteers, and send them out to conduct the surveys from their car. We need **TEAMS of 3** with at least one reliable car- **Please call Molly at 229-245-1330 x31 or [developmentdirector@valdostahabitat.org](mailto:developmentdirector@valdostahabitat.org)** for more information or to sign up your group! First come first serve but we need a lot of volunteers!

**INCENTIVE:** Everyone who participates will receive a **\$25 GIFT CERTIFICATE** along with lunch and snacks for the day!

Must be 18 or older to participate.



Valdosta-Lowndes County  
**Habitat**  
for Humanity®

Help your community!

Contact:

Molly Roan

[developmentdirector@valdostahabitat.org](mailto:developmentdirector@valdostahabitat.org)

229-245-1330 x31



**VALDOSTA**  
A City Without Limits

Jessie Boring	Jessie Boring	4/11/15	jrboring@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Latosha Yates	Joshua <del>Yates</del>	4/11/15	lyates@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raven Kind	Raven Kind	4/11/15	rakind@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
James Ferriter	James Ferriter	4/11/15		<input type="checkbox"/>
Bronahs Merce	Bronahs Merce	4/11/15		<input type="checkbox"/>
Angelina Cardwell	Angelina Cardwell	4/11/15	Angelina.Aldwin1395@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kesha Scott	Kesha Scott	4/11/15	reshadscott@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay Jordan	Gail Jordan	4/11/15		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cherie Small	Cherie Small	4/11/15	cherie.talate@progrum.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shantae Walker	Shantae Walker	4/11/15	shyanbethy@munswilc-qa.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rosemarie Jenkins	Rosemarie Jenkins	4/11/15	Rosemarie.Jenkins@yahoo.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pamela Clark-Fields	Pamela Clark-Fields	4/11/15		<input type="checkbox"/>
Josh Campagna	Josh Campagna	4/11/15	Josh.Campagna@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cameron Young	Cameron Young	4/11/15	scyoungs@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joshua Hensford	Joshua Hensford	4-11-15	Jshansford@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farhan Yahya	Farhan Yahya	4/11/15	mfyahya1@yahoo.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheryl Carter	Cheryl Carter	4/11/2015	checarter@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Molly Drescher	Molly Drescher	4-11-2015	mdrescher@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yasmine Gilmore	Yasmine Gilmore	4-11-2015	ygilmore@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jenmalaye Adam	Jenmalaye Adam	4/11/15	ajenmalaye@yahoo.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leedrix Meida-Morzon	Leedrix Meida-Morzon	4/11/15	stoleam@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remiro Vignilla	Remiro Vignilla	4/11/15		<input type="checkbox"/>
Alison Frantz	Alison Frantz	04/11/15	ajfrantz@valdosta.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethom Reterstuf	Ethom Reterstuf	04/11/15		<input type="checkbox"/>

Robert McCarty	prof	2009	11 APR 2015	Robert.mccarty8@uvaldosta.edu	
Amber Pileman	amuller	Pileman	<del>4/11/15</del> 4/11/15	amrice.pileman@uvaldosta.edu	
Heather Vess	Heather	Voss	4/11/15	heather.voss@uvaldosta.edu	
Elizabeth Johnson	Elizabeth	Johnson	4/11/15	elizabeth.johnson.11@uvaldosta.edu	
Salvatore D'Aprile	Salvatore	D'Aprile	4/11/15	salvatore.daprile@uvaldosta.edu	
Lawrence Patterson	Lawrence	Patterson	4/11/15	lawrence.patterson.1@uvaldosta.edu	
Albert Turner	Albert	Turner	11 APR 15	albert.turner.1@uvaldosta.edu	
Carl Cauley	Carl	Cauley	11 APR 15	carl.cauley@uvaldosta.edu	
STANFORD FLOYD	Stanford	Floyd	11 APR 15	stanford.floyd@uvaldosta.edu	
David & Emily Pope	David	Pope	11 APR 15	david.pope@uvaldosta.edu	
Brandon Braddock	Brandon	Braddock	11 APR 15	brandon.braddock@uvaldosta.edu	
Jolly Henriault	Jolly	Henriault	11 APR 15	jolly.henriault@uvaldosta.edu	
Desmond Blair	Desmond	Blair	11 APR 15	desmond.blair@uvaldosta.edu	
Ynthia Scurry-Bookin	Ynthia	Scurry-Bookin	4/11/15	ynthia.scurry@uvaldosta.edu	
Elaine W. Barnes	Elaine W.	Barnes	4/11/15	elaine.w.barnes@uvaldosta.edu	
Robbi Hancock	Robbi	Hancock	4/11/15	robby.hancock@uvaldosta.edu	
Amber Mills	Amber	Mills	4/11/15	amber.mills@uvaldosta.edu	
Summer Carter	Summer	Carter	4/11/15	summer.carter@uvaldosta.edu	
Raymond Copeland & Sr	Raymond	Copeland & Sr	4/11/15	raymond.copeland@uvaldosta.edu	
Jacob Myron	Jacob	Myron	4/11/15	jacob.myron@uvaldosta.edu	
Vivencat Givens	Vivencat	Givens	4-11-15	vivencat.givens@uvaldosta.edu	
CHRIS CHEMNAULT	Chris	Chemnault	4-11-15	chemnault@uvaldosta.edu	
Byron Myers	Byron	Myers	4-11-15	myers@uvaldosta.edu	
Chris Pease	Chris	Pease	4/11/15	chris.pease@uvaldosta.edu	









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Valdosta Celebrates National Community Development Week

Staff Report From Valdosta CEO
Monday, April 6th, 2015

The City of Valdosta will participate in the 2015 observance of National Community Development Week, April 6-11, with a variety of events that highlight the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

The CDBG program is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program that provides grants to states, cities, and counties to devise neighborhood approaches to improve the physical, economic and social conditions in communities.

The following is a list of events coordinated by the city's Neighborhood Development Division to observe National Community Development Week locally.

Monday - April 6: CDBG City-Wide Project Tour and Proclamation. The celebration in Valdosta will kick off with Mayor John Gayle issuing a proclamation supporting the CDBG program, which will be followed by a city-wide tour of some the projects funded through the CDBG.

Monday - April 6: Knowing Your Fair Housing Rights Workshop. WFN Consulting, from Marietta, Ga, will host a workshop for all interested citizens in the Valdosta City Hall Annex, Multi-Purpose Room, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday - April 7: Knowing Your Fair Housing Rights Workshop. In an effort to attract more citizens to important fair housing information, a repeat of the April 6 workshop will be held in the Valdosta City Hall Annex, Multi-Purpose Room, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday - April 8: Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) Program Presents - Small Business 101. In partnership with the Valdosta State University Small Business Development Center, this free workshop for small business owners and potential small business owners will be held in the Valdosta City Hall Annex, Multi-Purpose Room, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Thursday - April 9: Home Buyer Education 101. Hosted in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, this workshop will provide practical home-buying tips and resources for citizens interested in purchasing a home. The class will meet in the Valdosta City Hall Annex, Multi-Purpose Room, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Friday - April 10: Mad City Money. Fifth graders from Pinevale Elementary School will learn how to utilize financial resources for personal and community benefits.

Saturday - April 11: City Windshield Housing Stock Survey. Completed in partnership with volunteers from Habitat for Humanity and Valdosta State University, this event will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., starting and ending at the Valdosta City Hall Annex, Multi-Purpose Room.

For more information about National Community Development Week and any of the events taking place throughout the week, contact the City of Valdosta's Neighborhood Development Division at (229) 671-3671.

Email Print Comments



Advertisement for 'UNLIMITED' featuring a person on a horse in a field. Includes a search bar at the top right.

Get the Daily Valdosta CEO Briefing

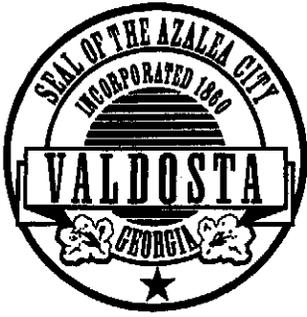
The Valdosta CEO Briefing is a daily email newsletter that contains the day's top business news headlines and a summary of each day's feature. Subscribe Today.

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Advertisement for 'Central Holidays and GACCE present' featuring 'Aunt and Company with Oktoberfest' on September 30, 2016. Lists features like air transportation from Atlanta, 11 included meals, and sightseeing to Munich & Oktoberfest, and Neuschwanstein Castle, Hall day tour of Innsbruck.

229.433.1000 sgmc.org





**City of Valdosta**

**National Community Development Week**

**April 6-11, 2015**

**Monday – April 6, 2015**

- ❖ **Community Development Block Grant Project Tour/Proclamation**
- ❖ **Knowing Your Fair Housing Rights – WFN Consulting, Marietta, GA**  
Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room (6 pm – 8 pm)

**Tuesday – April 7, 2015**

- ❖ **Knowing Your Fair Housing Rights – WFN Consulting, Marietta, GA**  
Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room (9:00 am – 12:30 pm)

**Wednesday – April 8, 2015**

- ❖ **Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) Program Presents - Small Business 101**  
With Valdosta State Small Business Development Center - Valdosta City Hall Annex  
Multi-Purpose Room (9 am – 12:30 pm)

**Thursday – April 9, 2015**

- ❖ **Home Buyer Education 101 – with Habitat for Humanity**  
Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room (9 am – 12 pm)

**Friday – April 10, 2015**

- ❖ **Mad City Money – Pinevale Elementary School (5<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

**Saturday – April 11, 2015**

- ❖ **City Windshield Housing Stock Survey – Completed in Partnership with**  
Volunteers from Habitat for Humanity and Valdosta State University  
Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room (10 am – 4 pm)



# Fair Housing Training



The City of Valdosta Fair Housing Committee and the Neighborhood Development Division present a training session on the laws which govern and the issues that arise from topics of Fair Housing.

## "Knowing Your Fair Housing Rights"

Where: 300 N Lee Street  
City Hall Annex—Multi Purpose Room

When: Monday, April 6, 2015

Time: 6 p.m.—8 p.m.

&

Tuesday, April 7, 2015

Speaker:

Mr. Nick Autorina, Pres. & CEO  
WFN Consulting, LLC  
Experts in Fair Housing  
and Community Development



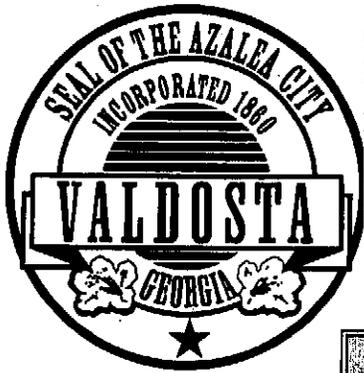
*For More Information Contact: Neighborhood Development Division  
at (229) 671-3617*

Fair Housing Seminars

April 7, 2015 9AM-11AM

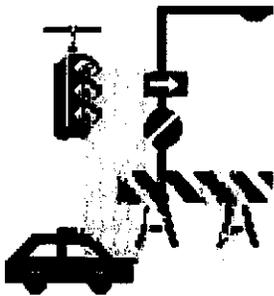
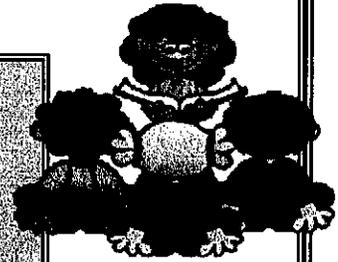
Valerie Smith

family services director @  
valdosta-habitat.org



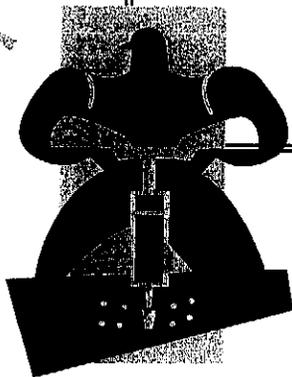
*The Valdosta Small Emerging  
Business (VSEB) Program  
Presents*

*Small  
Business  
101*



Helpful Information will be presented by  
Ms. Lynn Bennett, Small Business Development  
Center, Valdosta State University on how to plan  
and form your small business!!

WHEN: Wednesday, April 8, 2015  
WHERE: Valdosta City Hall Annex,  
Multi-Purpose Room  
TIME: 9 am—12:30 pm



*Please RSVP to the Neighborhood Development Division at (229) 671-3671  
by April 7rd.*

**VSEB Program**  
**April 8, 2015**  
**SIGN IN SHEET**

	NAME	Email Address	Phone
1	Diondrick Smith	CSmith@upmc.com	229 232-3260
2	Charles Van Cleave	CDVD014@msn.com	301-395-3382
3	Annie Register	ANNIE.REGISTER@yahoo.com	
4	Eric M. Gilbert	Gilbert Eric 6388@gmail.com	
5	Chardia Brown	chardy684@gmail.com	
6	<del>Chardia Brown</del>	<del>Chardy684@gmail.com</del>	
7	Denise Hall	Denise.renee.hall47@yahoo.com	
8	Mary Lison	Mary.Lison4@yahoo.com	834 9182
9	MR SPANKY WHITEFIELD	WESTSIDE ARCHIVES 512 WEST	229 588-0466
10	Stuart Taylor	stuart.taylor@yafnews.com	
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
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20			
21			
22			
24			
25			
26			

# VALDOSTA

A City Without Limits

## Are You Looking to Buy a Home??

**When: Thursday, April 9, 2015**

**Where: 300 N Lee Street**

**City Hall Annex—Multipurpose Rm**

**Time: 9 a.m.—12 p.m.**

This shortened version of the home buyer workshops being

presented by the Valdosta/Lowndes County Chapter of Habitat for Humanity can assist with the necessary information for citizens who are looking to purchase a home.



**CITY OF VALDOSTA PRESENTS:**



# HOME BUYER EDUCATION 101



## Valdosta News

### National Community Development Week

**Posted Date:** 3/20/2015

The City of Valdosta will participate in the 2015 observance of National Community Development Week, April 6-11, with a variety of events that highlight the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

The CDBG program is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program that provides grants to states, cities, and counties to devise neighborhood approaches to improve the physical, economic and social conditions in communities. Although the CDBG program across the nation has been cut significantly in the past several years, the City of Valdosta's program remains a valuable resource to its citizens and works to improve the overall condition of our city neighborhoods.

The following is a list of events coordinated by the city's Neighborhood Development Division to observe National Community Development Week locally.

**Monday – April 6: CDBG City-Wide Project Tour and Proclamation.** The celebration in Valdosta will kick off with Mayor John Gayle issuing a proclamation supporting the CDBG program, which will be followed by a city-wide tour of some the projects funded through the CDBG.

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For more information about National Community Development Week and any of the events taking place throughout the week, contact the City of Valdosta's Neighborhood Development Division at (229) 671-3671.



# Valdosta & Lowndes

www.valdostadailytimes.com

Thursday, February 26, 2015

3A

Some members of Little Actor Theatre's UP team exhibit awards won in a recent theatrical competition in Orlando, Fla.

## Little Actors Theatre achieves national recognition

BY DEAN POLING  
dean.poling@gathnews.com

**VALDOSTA** — Little Actors Theatre rocked the boat with its national competition performance of "Guys & Dolls."

LAT's Uninitiated Potential troupe traveled last week to Disney World in Orlando, Fla., to compete in the Brightspark Travel National Performing Arts Festival.

The group received a trophy for overall excellence.

Individuals also win awards. Aloura Barnas, Church Barnas and Ava Grace Bradford won outstanding performance awards, said Diane Tovar, LAT president.

Gabriele Bradford and Chase Pope performed as a duet. Pope also performed a solo. Bradford performed a solo. Alexander Cope performed a solo.

They performed "Guys & Dolls Jr.," a youth-adapted version of the famed Frank Loesser, Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows' musical. The adaptation included favorite musical numbers such as "Guys & Dolls," "Follow the Fold," "Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat," and most notably, "Luck Be a Lady."

"It was a wonderful experience," Tovar said. "One of the best moments was when one of the judges said he counted 10 on the stage but we sounded like 100."

During the past nine months, LAT raised approximately \$18,000 to attend the competition. LAT has already decided to attend the competition again next year. Young members are discussing possible shows to perform.

LAT has been dedicated for more than a decade to shows for children by children in the Valdosta area.

A total of 18 people traveled to Orlando, breaking down to 10 youth performers and eight adult chaperones.

They left last Wednesday and returned late Sunday night. The youngsters returned to school the next morning, and LAT kept rolling without missing a beat. Rehearsals resumed Monday afternoon for the youth-adapted musical "Hairspray Jr.," which opens next weekend.

LAT UP team members: Katie Atkinson, Aloura Barnas, Church Barnas, Ava Grace Bradford, Gabrielle Bradford, Alexander Cope, Lauren Greer, Chase Pope, Victoria Shibley, Katie Smith.

## Focus groups to discuss city housing opportunities

**VALDOSTA** — The City of Valdosta Neighborhood Development Division, along with the Fair Housing Committee, will utilize three focus groups to address neighborhood housing conditions and possible barriers to equal housing in Valdosta. The focus groups will meet at the following times and locations:

- Thursday, March 5, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., at the Morning Star Baptist Church, located at 1051 Howell Road.
- Saturday, March 7, from 1 to 2:30 p.m., at the River Street Church of Christ, located at 619 River Street.
- Saturday, March 7, from 4 to 5:30 p.m., at the Mount Calvary Baptist Church, located at 505 E. Joyce Street.

"We want residents to share their views and experiences with us, so the city may consider ways to overcome barriers that may exist here in Valdosta," said Pastor David Adams, Fair Housing Committee Vice Chair.

Each focus group will have about 10-15 participants, who are required to be residents of one of the city's 17 neighborhoods in the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA).

The focus group meetings will be coordinated by the Center for Applied Social Science Research at Valdosta State University. Interested residents need to pre-register by calling VSU at (229) 293-6058.

The results of the focus group meetings are expected to be presented to the Valdosta City Council by the end of May 2015. Alternate formats or translation assistance will be made available upon request. For additional information, citizens may contact the city's Neighborhood Development Division at (229) 671-3617.



## Vanassa Flucas

---

**From:** kelly strozier [kellyvsu@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2015 11:15 PM  
**To:** katherine.arce@dca.ga.gov  
**Cc:** Vanassa Flucas  
**Subject:** Homeless Count Stories

Katherine,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this year's homeless count. We had three great stories from the Lowndes County count.

First, a representative, Kellie Thomason, of the Behavioral Health Services of South Georgia's PATH program accompanied Matt McMurray of Lowndes Associated Ministries to People (LAMP) in conducting the street outreach portion of the homeless count. The program is fairly new and stands for Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness. It was the first time a PATH representative had the opportunity to visit the campsites and is now coordinating their supportive services to assist this unsheltered population.

Secondly, several Valdosta State University sociology students voiced a concern in reference to providing some form of community resource guide to the homeless who were interviewed and surveyed. Our Family Connections Executive Director, Seth Brown is in the process of collaborating with Dr. Stephanie Gonzalez-Guittar of Valdosta State University's Sociology Department to update their resource manual of community service providers and distribute at future homeless counts.

Lastly, with monetary donations and the \$1000 grant from DCA, we were able to provide every homeless person who completed a survey and some who did not, with a blanket and gift card to a local restaurant located in the city's Designated Revitalization Area.

This year's count was truly a win-win!!

Best Regards,

Kelly Strozier  
2015 Lowndes County Homeless Count Coordinator

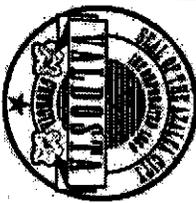
# Faith & Family

8A

Sunday, February 22, 2015

www.valdostadailytimes.com

## Focus Groups to Discuss Community Housing Issues



The City of Valdosta's Neighborhood Development Division, in conjunction with Fair Housing Committee, will be conducting three small discussion group meetings about neighborhood housing conditions and barriers to equal housing in Valdosta.

Interested residents need to **pre-register** by calling Valdosta State University at 229-293-6058. Each focus group will have about 10-15 participants. Participants are required to be residents of one of the City's 17 target neighborhoods in the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA).

The meetings will be held at three different times and locations:

- Thursday, March 5th from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Morning Star Baptist Church, 1051 Howell Road;
- Saturday, March 7th from 1:00 to 2:30 PM at the River Street Church of Christ, 619 River street; and
- Saturday, March 7th from 4:00 to 5:30 PM at the Mount Calvary Baptist Church, 505 E. Force Street.

The results of the focus group discussions will be presented to the Valdosta City Council later in the year.

The focus group meetings will be coordinated by the Center for Applied Social Science Research at Valdosta State University. Alternate formats or translation assistance will be made available upon request.

For any additional questions, please contact the Neighborhood Development Division at 229-671-3671.

90774

REGISTRATION SERVICE

REGISTRATION

Direct  
Registration  
**\$1095**

Serving Valdosta and surrounding areas.

Mike Jones

106 E. 12th St. • Tifton • 229-445-3616

## EARLY VOTING STARTS TOMORROW!

### Elections Office- 808 N Oak St, Valdosta

- Monday, Feb 23 - Friday, Feb 27 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Monday, Mar 2 - Friday Mar 6 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Monday, Mar 9 - Friday Mar 13 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

If you would like an absentee ballot mailed to you, call the elections office at (229) 671-2850.

On the **LAST DAY TO VOTE**, Tuesday March 17, 2015, all voting will be in the precincts - not in the elections office. Polling will be open from 7 am. until 7 p.m.

### Lowndes County Elections

Soldiers exposed to the deafening din of battle have little defense against hearing loss, and are often reluctant to wear protective gear like ear plugs that could make them less able to react to danger. But what if a nutritious daily "candy bar" could prevent much of that potential damage to their hearing?

In a study in animals, University of Michigan researchers report that a combination of high doses of vitamins A, C, and E and magnesium, taken one hour before noise exposure and continued as a once-daily treatment for five days, was very effective at preventing permanent engine at take-off at close range. The nutrients effectively blocked one major factor in hearing loss after noise trauma-- inner ear damage caused by excessive free radical activity.

The formation the researchers used built on earlier animal studies showing that single antioxidant vitamins were somewhat effective in preventing hearing loss, and on studies of Israeli soldiers given magnesium many days prior to exposure, who gained relatively small protective effects.

In the study, noise-induced hearing loss was measured in guinea pigs treated with the antioxidant vitamins A, C and E; magnesium alone; an ACE-magnesium combination; or a placebo. The treatments began one hour before a five-hour exposure to 120 decibel (dB) sound pressure level noise, and continued once daily for five days. The group given the combined treatments of vitamins A, C and E and magnesium showed significantly less noise-induced hearing loss than all of the other groups.

Brought To You As A Public Service by  
Valdosta Hearing Aid Center  
229-259-9200 or 1-800-216-8775

www.yourhearing.net  
1310-B Baytree Rd.  
(Across from Remerton Square)

80874

start slow to care for health program, choice, VA's

my hearing loss was diagnosed in 1995 at the VA Medical Center in Valdosta, GA. I am now 67 years old and have been hearing impaired for over 20 years.

**Valdosta  
Housing  
Authority**

**SECTION 3 REGULATORY  
TRAINING FOR  
CONTRACTORS**

**JANUARY  
28**

The **Valdosta Housing Authority** is hosting a Section 3 Regulatory training for all contractors wishing to do business with them. **Learn how Section 3 impacts your company!**

Training facilitated by:



**January 28, 2015 at 2:00 PM**

**Hudson Dockett Community Center**  
807 S. FRY STREET, VALDOSTA GA 31601

**Topics Include:**

## **Valdosta News**

### **Valdosta Coordinates Homeless Count**

**Posted Date:** 1/16/2015

The City of Valdosta's Neighborhood Development Division is coordinating the 2015 Georgia Homeless Count for Valdosta and Lowndes County, part of a statewide effort through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to determine the number of homeless families and individuals in Georgia.

The data for the 2015 Georgia Homeless Count will specifically focus on people's housing status on the night of Monday, Jan. 26, and data collection will continue through Feb. 3.

The city will be working with the following local non-profit and social service organizations to provide the DCA with information regarding the Valdosta/Lowndes County count: Salvation Army, Lowndes Associated Ministries to People (LAMP), Valdosta City School System, Telemon, Behavioral Health Services, The Haven, Coastal Plains, Department of Labor, Veterans Affairs, Valdosta State University, and the South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness.

The 2015 Georgia Homeless Count and the availability of homeless information by county is part of DCA's responsibilities for the Balance of State Continuum of Care plan under the federal McKinney-Vento programs.

Local citizens may volunteer for the count; however, they must undergo some screening and training prior to the event. Citizens may also participate by providing or collecting donated items—such as travel-sized toiletries or cold-weather items—for care packages that will be delivered to the homeless on Jan. 26.

For additional information, contact the City of Valdosta Neighborhood Development Division at (229) 671-3617.

## Vanassa Flucas

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**From:** Molly Roan [developmentdirector@valdostahabitat.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 12, 2015 10:36 AM  
**To:** Vanassa Flucas  
**Subject:** 5-year consolidated plan

Hey Vanassa!

I'm thinking we could get our current homeowners to fill out the survey if it is in a hard copy! Do you think you could print out some copies that we can put in the front office and maybe the ReStore? I've posted the link to our facebook as well!!

Let me know when you want to get together about the surveys. We have students coming in March for Collegiate Challenge- they will probably not have many cars but I can find that out and possibly pair them with the campus chapter so they can work together!

Thank you!!

*Molly Roan*



*Proud to be a United Way agency.*

Valdosta-Lowndes County Habitat for Humanity  
2010 E Cypress Street  
Valdosta, GA 31601  
(229) 245-1330, Ext. 31  
(229) 245-1339 (Fax)

Decent housing saves lives. It rekindles hope, and roots families and communities. In decent housing, the walls are strong and the roof is secure—and the family inside focuses more on thriving than on surviving. Thank you for allowing us to help more families!

## **Vanassa Flucas**

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**From:** Andrea Schrujjer [aschrujjer@buildlowndes.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 12, 2015 10:39 AM  
**To:** Vanassa Flucas  
**Subject:** Neighborhood

Good morning Vanassa,

Thank you for inviting me to the consolidated neighborhood planning meeting. Please forward me the link to the survey and I will make sure we post it on our site and via social media.

Thank you,

Andrea Schrujjer  
Executive Director  
Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority  
Direct Dial: (229) 316-2821  
Mobile: (229) 300-3179  
Email: [aschrujjer@buildlowndes.com](mailto:aschrujjer@buildlowndes.com)  
[www.buildlowndes.com](http://www.buildlowndes.com)