

HOME-ARP Allocation Plan Template

Guidance

- To receive its HOME-ARP allocation, a PJ must:
 - Engage in consultation with at least the required organizations;
 - Provide for public participation including a 15-day public comment period and one public hearing, at a minimum; and,
 - Develop a plan that meets the requirements in the HOME-ARP Notice.
- To submit: a PJ must upload a Microsoft Word or PDF version of the plan in IDIS as an attachment next to the “HOME-ARP allocation plan” option on either the AD-26 screen (for PJs whose FY 2021 annual action plan is a Year 2-5 annual action plan) or the AD-25 screen (for PJs whose FY 2021 annual action plan is a Year 1 annual action plan that is part of the 2021 consolidated plan).
- PJs must also submit an SF-424, SF-424B, and SF-424D, and the following certifications as an attachment on either the AD-26 or AD-25 screen, as applicable:
 - Affirmatively Further Fair Housing;
 - Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act and Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan;
 - Anti-Lobbying;
 - Authority of Jurisdiction;
 - Section 3; and,
 - HOME-ARP specific certification.

Participating Jurisdiction: County of Union

Date: January 7th, 2023

Consultation

Before developing its plan, a PJ must consult with the CoC(s) serving the jurisdiction’s geographic area, homeless and domestic violence service providers, veterans’ groups, public housing agencies (PHAs), public agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations, and public or private organizations that address fair housing, civil rights, and the needs of persons with disabilities, at a minimum. State PJs are not required to consult with every PHA or CoC within the state’s boundaries; however, local PJs must consult with all PHAs (including statewide or regional PHAs) and CoCs serving the jurisdiction.

Summarize the consultation process:

The County of Union (The County) recognizes that consultation is important to support evidence-based solutions and intentional planning. The County made this a top priority to comply with all regulatory guidelines governing HOME-ARP funds, including Notice CPD-21-

10: Requirements of the Use of Funds in the HOME-American Rescue Plan Program (the Notice). The County consulted a multitude of stakeholders including those required under the Notice, such as:

- The CoC serving the jurisdiction’s geographic area,
- Homeless service providers,
- Domestic violence service providers,
- Veterans’ groups,
- The public housing agency,
- Public agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations, and
- Public or private organizations that address fair housing, civil rights, and the needs of persons with disabilities.

For all processes involving the administration of funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the County follows consultation and public participation criteria outlined in our approved Citizen Participation Plan (CPP). The County’s CPP encourages input from the community and emphasizes involvement of low and moderate-income persons of the community, particularly those living in the targeted areas. The Plan also encourages comments and participation from all city residents, including minorities, non-English speaking persons, and individuals with disabilities. For the purposes of the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan, consultation and public participation focused on receiving input from qualifying populations, as defined above, and related service providers.

All stakeholders were provided the opportunity to complete a priority needs survey, a quick poll regarding gaps in the homeless services delivery system, exchange ideas related to HOME-ARP funding priorities, and ask questions about the County’s HOME-ARP allocation.

Stakeholders were also consulted directly via phone interviews where discussions involved soliciting input on the housing and service needs of the qualifying populations, identifying gaps in the housing inventory and homeless services delivery system, and revealing resources available for assisting qualifying populations. The consultation process involved the service organization and its clientele. Direct consultations took place during January and February 2023.

The data received from service providers, County internal departments, and special committees helped to inform the funding priorities identified in this plan.

List the organizations consulted, and summarize the feedback received from these entities.

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Community Access Unlimited, Inc.	Service provider that addresses the needs of persons with	Survey (Survey Monkey)	CAU’s most pressing needs involve unaccompanied youth. Increase production and preservation of affordable housing. Gaps in housing

	disabilities and at-risk youth.		and service needs include rental assistance and 1000+ units. Provide homeless residents with housing and full supportive services
Family Promise Union County	Service provider that addresses needs of homeless / at-risk families / DV	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Families at-risk of homelessness is the most pressing issue. Rental units with full supportive services, such as TBRA and case management support. Transitional housing is the best option in terms of non-congregate shelter. Create individual housing units, such as hotel/motel conversion for 1-2 BR units. “Rather than create more shelter beds, focus on the creation of non-congregate shelters, including SROs, or any other way to offer individual living space.”
Community Investment Strategies, Inc.	Organization that addresses affordable housing for at-risk of homelessness	Survey (Survey Monkey)	“General lack of affordability” is the most pressing issue. Prioritize production and preservation of affordable housing units. Housing and service needs gap that needs to be addressed is affordability. The best option to address this is building of new rental housing and case management services for residents. More apartments as opposed to non-congregate shelters. Barriers to quality housing include lack of housing in/near areas of opportunity.
City of Linden Social Services	Public agency that addresses needs of at-risk homeless single adults	Survey (Survey Monkey)	At-risk homelessness for single adults is the most pressing issue. Priority includes Supportive/homeless prevention services and purchase of non-congregate shelter. Housing shelter inventory gaps include affordable housing and financial literacy. Best homelessness prevention options include Case management/Home Ownership education, and life skills training. Supportive services that can be utilized are 6 month financial education courses with all housing programs, as well as promotion of home ownership with case management services for the first year. Landlord/tenant rights

			education for single parent households.
County of Union, Department of Human Services - DIFSS	Continuum of Care	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Most pressing issues are at-risk homeless single adults. Prioritize production and prevention of affordable housing, and TBRA. On the topic of current shelter and housing inventory, shelter for homeless individuals is a major gap in the housing shelter inventory. The best option to provide housing and prevent homelessness are conversion of hotels to serve the homeless population. Case management should be emphasized for social services funding.
HOPES CAP, Inc.	Public agency that provides supportive services to homeless/at-risk of homeless families	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Homeless families are the most pressing issue. Priority for funding should address supportive/homeless prevention services and purchasing of non-congregate shelters, along with TBRA. There is an inventory gap in shelters for homeless individuals. Provide rental housing with full supportive services, including homelessness prevention and financial literacy. Funding should be appropriated to UC based agencies that provide these social services. Build larger non-congregate shelters and address the cost of housing in UC.
Ingerman Developers	Private organization that addresses affordable housing needs to those at risk of homelessness	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Families at-risk of homelessness is the most pressing issue. Prioritize production and prevention of affordable housing, and TBRA. The largest gap in housing shelter inventory is rental assistance. Providing rental housing with full supportive services, including housing counseling, landlord-tenant rights, housing search, budgeting, credit education/repair. Barriers include lack of housing near areas of opportunity.
Visions and Pathways	Public organization that deals with homeless youth	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Visions and Pathways provide emergency/temporary shelter for homeless youth and persons with mental health issues. Priorities should be more supportive/

	and mental health issues		homeless prevention services and counseling, production/preservation of affordable housing. The most significant gap in homeless shelter inventory is lack of housing for homeless youth. Homelessness prevention services, such as case management, life skills training and medical/mental health services. Regarding non-congregate shelters, transitional, affordable housing for youth, adults and families is the best option. Cost of living is a major barrier. Provide free mental health services for youth as well as case management. “Our youth and families need affordable housing AND supportive services in order to thrive and not continue the poverty cycle.”
County of Union Department of Social Services	Continuum of Care: Homeless (+at-risk), domestic violence victims fleeing from domestic violence, mental health issues.	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Prioritize production and preservation of affordable housing, and supportive services designed to prevent homelessness. Families at-risk of homelessness are the population with the most critical needs. Biggest gaps in current housing shelter inventory are lack of rental assistance and job/financial counseling. Best options to prevent homelessness are providing rental housing with full supportive services and life skills training. ARP funds can be utilized to provide employment/financial coaching services.
Neighborhood Health Services Corporation	Health Service Provider for low-income individuals	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Prioritize purchase/development of non-congregate shelter, production and development of affordable housing. Lack of shelter for homeless individuals is a major gap in the current shelter and housing inventory. Rental housing with full supportive services is the best option to provide housing for the homeless, coupled with homelessness prevention service. Cost of housing is a major barrier in finding quality affordable housing. Smaller, non-congregate shelters throughout the jurisdiction.

<p>Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark</p>	<p>Homeless/ At-risk of homelessness affordable housing and service provider</p>	<p>Survey (Survey Monkey)</p>	<p>Production and preservation of affordable housing, along with supportive, homeless services and housing counseling should be prioritized. unaccompanied youth have the highest need based on their experience. Major gaps in the housing shelter inventory is the lack of rental assistance, but with “looser qualifications” to include more residents in need. Not enough non-congregate affordable housing, which should involve an increase in smaller shelters throughout the jurisdiction. Cost of housing is a major barrier in quality affordable housing. “(State-funded) Rental assistance dollars come with very specific requirements that many people in need do not meet. If the funds are left unspent year after year, they should re-assess those requirements.”</p>
<p>YWCA of Union County</p>	<p>Public Org. assist those fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking</p>	<p>Survey (Survey Monkey)</p>	<p>Purchase/development of non-congregate shelter, production of affordable housing and supportive services are priorities that should be addressed with ARP funds. Population with the highest needs are those fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking. Current gaps in the housing inventory are lack of shelters for those individuals who survived or are fleeing domestic violence. Increase affordable housing options with supportive services, which could include case management. Larger shelters and affordable housing options in “certain” areas are a barrier to finding quality housing. “programs and services should be designed to also address the underlying causes of homelessness including mental health and substance abuse, in addition to domestic violence etc.”</p>

<p>Volunteers of America, Greater New York</p>	<p>Private organization that provides affordable housing</p>	<p>Survey (Survey Monkey)</p>	<p>Increase in production and preservation of affordable housing should be a priority, along with the purchase/development of non-congregate shelter. Lack of shelter for homeless individuals is a major gap in the shelter/housing inventory. Increase the amount of non-congregate shelters for homeless individuals and families. The best option for providing housing to homeless residents are “development opportunities for affordable home ownership for low income individuals.” Supportive services should include housing counseling, consisting of landlord-tenant rights, housing search, budgeting, credit education/repair, etc. Training for case managers in engagement skills (developing trust and relationships) and trauma training when working with the homeless. Available funds for resources for the consumers (food, motel stays, application costs, background checks, etc.) Non-congregate shelters could be created by converting existing buildings into shelters. Barriers to quality affordable housing include lack of accessibility for people with disabilities. “Resources are needed so agencies can hire trained workers to do homeless outreach work. Even with trained staff, there are so many barriers to finding not only shelters but affordable housing. There is too much paperwork, hoops to jump through, and barriers to placement.”</p>
<p>Urban League of Union County</p>	<p>Non-Profit Homeless Service Provider, Fair housing services provider</p>	<p>Survey (Survey Monkey)</p>	<p>Tenant Based Rental Assistance, Supportive Services, Homeless Prevention Services, Housing counseling and Purchase of non-congregate shelter should be prioritized for ARP funding. Gap in the current shelter/housing inventory are the lack of rental assistance available for residents. Increase the programs available that provide rental assistance to prevent homelessness. The best option to</p>

			provide and prevent homelessness are rental housing with full supportive services, such as housing counseling. “Need for more housing counseling services along with rental assistance to prevent evictions which are on the rise. The problem stems from the aftermath of the pandemic in which many people have lost their jobs and have not been able to find work that provides a living wage.”
Rahway Community Action Organization	Homeless Service Provider (Families with dependents under 18)	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Produce and preserve more affordable housing projects, and increase the amount of supportive and homeless prevention services. A major gap in the current shelter and housing inventory is the lack of supportive services for homeless individuals, providing rental housing with full supportive services is the best option to fill this gap. The best option for non-congregate shelters is making more by converting existing buildings into shelters. Another barrier that should be closed is the lack of affordable housing in certain areas. “Because the majority of our funding is tailored towards families with dependents under 18, we are able to assist them. However, we receive a high volume of requests for assistance from at risk single adults in need of housing or rental assistance.”
Development Directions, LLC	Private Homeless Service Provider	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Emphasize the production and preservation of affordable housing and provide TBRA to those experiencing homelessness. Homeless Veterans are a major unmet housing and service need among Qualifying Populations. Some gaps that should be addressed are the lack of rental assistance. Best options to provide housing for homeless residents are assisting landlords with housing and providing homeless residents with housing counseling. ARP funding should be used for life skills training as well. Build smaller non-congregate shelters throughout the jurisdiction.

			Cost of housing is a serious barrier to finding quality affordable housing.
United Way of Greater Union County	Private Homeless Service Provider	Survey (Survey Monkey)	<p>A pressing issue for UWGUC is the need to stabilize families living in financial crises who are at risk of falling into homelessness. There needs to be an increase in supportive and homeless prevention services, along with housing counseling. Financial stability is an unmet housing need for Qualifying populations. Supportive services for households and individuals at risk of homelessness presents a gap in the current housing/shelter inventory. There is also a lack of a coordinated approach to helping families in need. Providing rental housing with full supportive services and homeless prevention services are the best options to preventing homelessness. In terms of ARP funding for social services, long term assistance helps families become financially stable - helping families understand income vs expense and having the income to meet more than basic needs". Cost of housing is a barrier to quality affordable housing. More non-congregate shelters should be produced by converting existing buildings into shelters.</p>

<p>The Gateway Family YMCA</p>	<p>Non-Profit Homeless (+At-Risk) Service Provider, Fair Housing Service Provider</p>	<p>Survey (Survey Monkey)</p>	<p>Prioritize the production and preservation of affordable housing units and provide supportive services, such as homelessness prevention and housing counseling. Unmet housing and service needs for residents fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking should be addressed by producing shelters for victims. In regards to providing housing for homeless residents, the best option would be creating rental housing with full supportive services, such as case management. There should be larger non-congregate shelters built. Cost of housing is a major barrier for QPs trying to get affordable housing for themselves. “Provide a central location that the at risk and homeless community can go to for resources.”</p>
<p>Linden Housing Authority</p>	<p>Public Housing Agency, Civil Rights, Fair Housing</p>	<p>Survey (Survey Monkey)</p>	<p>Most pressing needs to address are homeless veterans. Produce more affordable housing and purchase more non-congregate shelters. Among qualifying populations, at-risk of homeless single adults have significant unmet housing and service needs. The best option to provide housing to homeless residents is rental housing with full supportive services. Those supportive services should include various housing counseling services such as landlord/tenant rights, housing search, budgeting, etc. Cost of living is a major barrier to affordable housing, and non-congregate shelters should be produced by converting existing buildings into shelters. “Hire in a clinic setting a medical Doctor, Psychiatrist, Nutritionist, Physical Therapist, Ophthalmologist so one can visit on certain dates for service”</p>

<p>Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless</p>	<p>Homeless/ At-Risk of Homelessness, Fair Housing</p>	<p>Survey (Survey Monkey)</p>	<p>Prioritize the purchase and/or development of Non-congregate shelter, along with the production of affordable housing and TBRA. Unmet housing and service needs for youth, those fleeing, undocumented and households who have no income need to be addressed. Gaps in the current shelter and housing inventory include shelters for all residents of Union County, including persons with mental health conditions. There are not enough beds to address the homelessness issue in Union County, especially for those with mental health conditions. The best option for providing housing to homeless residents is building rental housing with full supportive services, this should be coupled with housing counseling services.</p>
<p>Rahway Housing Authority</p>	<p>Public Housing Agency, Fair Housing, Civil Rights</p>	<p>Survey (Survey Monkey)</p>	<p>Production and preservation of affordable housing, along with the purchase/development of non-congregate shelter should be a priority. There is a gap of available housing for about 1000 families and 250 seniors. Building affordable housing with affordable rents is the best option to provide housing to homeless residents, “rents are completely unmanageable.” Supportive services for the homeless could involve “mandatory flexible work internships with support services.” In terms of non-congregate shelters, an idea could be to create SRO units in old factory buildings. In addition, providing a fleet of electric vehicles so that the cost of car ownership is not needed, those vehicles could be owned and monitored by the Housing Authority.</p> <p>“The biggest problem is the residents do not know how to dress for work, show up on time, maintain a job when difficulties arise, and keep a job. All of this has to be mandatory, but with counseling, child care and</p>

			clothing provided. Obviously some are not able to work, but that is a small category.”
NAACP-Rahway Branch	Civil Rights, Fair Housing, Homelessness & At-Risk of Homelessness	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Increase the production and preservation of affordable housing and provide TBRA. Current gaps in the current shelter and housing inventory include the lack of rental assistance and affordable housing options for renters. Utilization of homelessness prevention services are important to help the homeless stay housed. Convert existing buildings into non-congregate shelters. Barriers to finding good and affordable housing are the cost of housing. “We are a social justice agency so we help our constituency advocate for themselves as opposed to supplying the service.”
County of Union Office of Veteran Services	Public Agency that addresses the needs of Veterans	Survey (Survey Monkey)	Priorities for HOME-ARP funds should involve more supportive services, homeless prevention services and housing counseling. In addition, purchase and/or development of non-congregate shelter and TBRA should be on the priority list. Current gaps in the housing shelter and inventory are the lack of shelter for Veterans. Rental housing with full supportive services are the best options for providing housing to homeless residents, including services that revolve around housing counseling. Funds could be used for additional social services such as “additional grants for qualified homeless veterans to

			<p>accommodate 50-75 Veterans per year.”</p> <p>Barriers to finding good and affordable housing include the lack of housing near areas of opportunity.</p> <p>“Locate or convert additional shelters for homeless or at-risk homeless Veterans in other Union County communities besides Plainfield and Elizabeth.”</p>
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During the consultation process, Union County reached out to over 50 Community Organizations – including organizations serving the homeless, those at risk of homelessness, public housing organizations, Veterans organizations, and civil rights agencies – through the HOME-ARP Needs Assessment Survey.

Public Participation

PJs must provide for and encourage citizen participation in the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan. Before submission of the plan, PJs must provide residents with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the proposed HOME-ARP allocation plan of **no less than 15 calendar days**. The PJ must follow its adopted requirements for “reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment” for plan amendments in its current citizen participation plan. In addition, PJs must hold **at least one public hearing** during the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan and prior to submission.

For the purposes of HOME-ARP, PJs are required to make the following information available to the public:

- The amount of HOME-ARP the PJ will receive,
- The range of activities the PJ may undertake.

Describe the public participation process, including information about and the dates of the public comment period and public hearing(s) held during the development of the plan:

- **Public comment period: start date - February 13th, 2023 end date - February 28th, 2023**

- **Public hearing: February 15th, 2023**

TBD

Describe any efforts to broaden public participation:

The Citizen Participation process was crucial to the development of the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan and was encouraged throughout all stages of the consultation process. Union County promoted the surveys, community and focus group meetings, 15-day comment period, and public hearings. Consultation provided multiple opportunities in various formats for stakeholders and residents to share their experiences with working and providing services to qualified populations.

Our Public Hearing was held as an opportunity to comment on the Draft HOME-ARP Allocation Plan, budget, and recommended activities. The hearing was held on February 15, 2023, via Zoom.

To broaden public participation, all correspondence including surveys and public notices were posted to the County's website. Other outlets such as newspapers with the widest circulation in English, Spanish and Asian, Social Media and email to over 50 stakeholders and over 100 community non-profit organizations were utilized.

- **Union County HOME-ARP Summary Webpage**
- **Surveys**
- **Stakeholder/Organization Community Meeting**
- **Individual Focus Group Meetings**

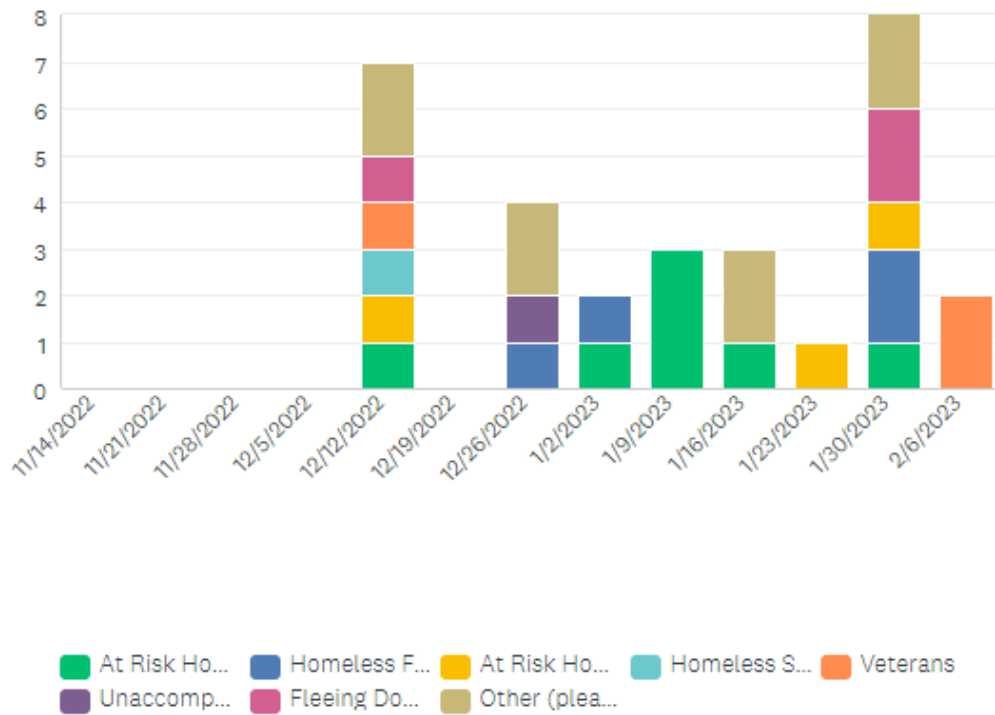
A PJ must consider any comments or views of residents received in writing, or orally at a public hearing, when preparing the HOME-ARP allocation plan.

Summarize the comments and recommendations received through the public participation process:

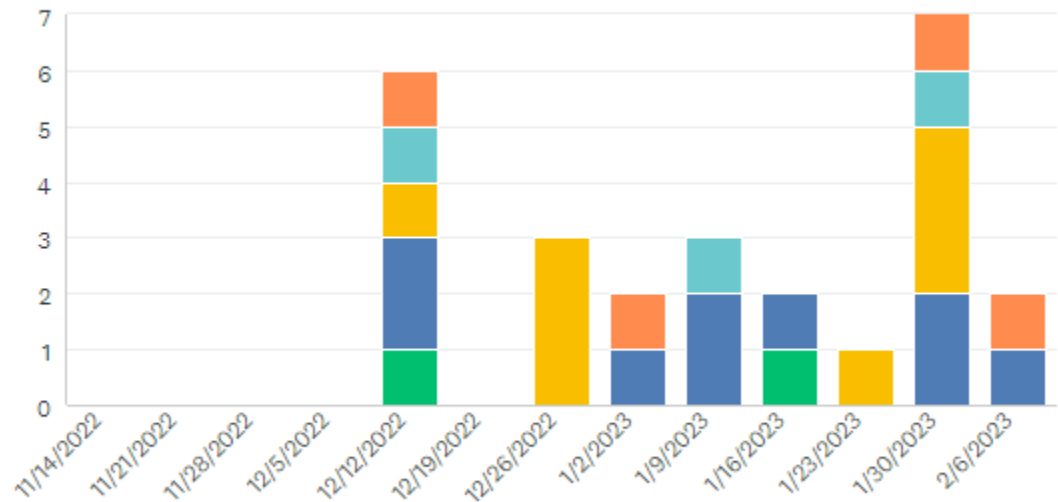
All comments from meetings, surveys, and public hearing are attached

What unmet housing and service needs do you see among "Qualifying Populations" in the Union County?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0 First: 12/14/2022 Zoom: 11/14/2022 to 2/6/2023

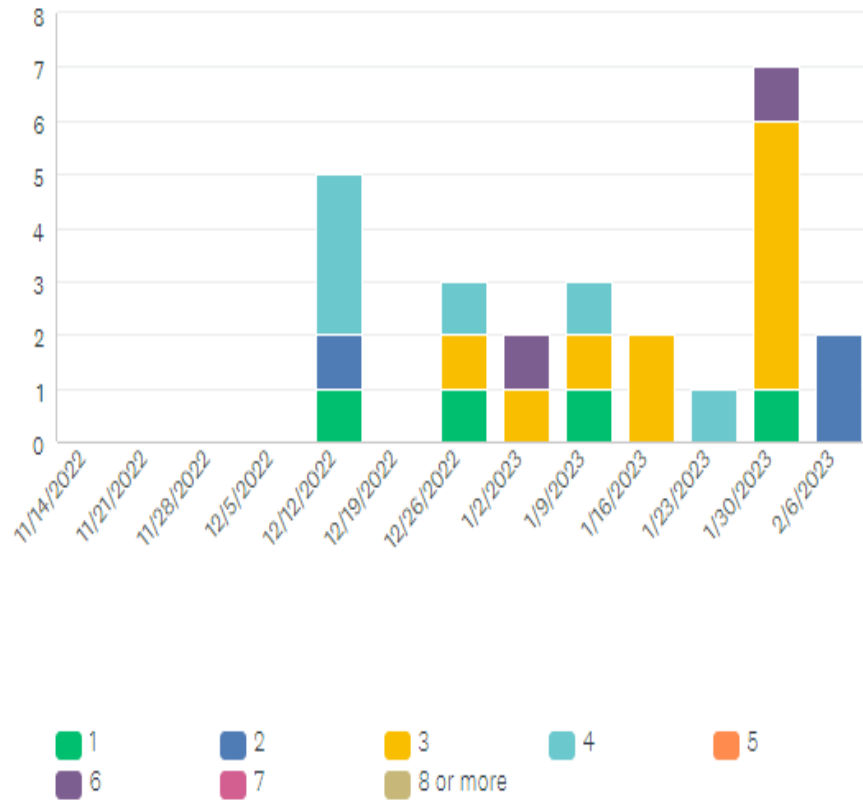


Preservation of Affordable Housing



What is your approximate average household size your agency works with ?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 1 First: 12/14/2022 Zoom: 11/14/2022 to 2/6/2023



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Summarize any comments or recommendations not accepted and state the reasons why:

Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis

PJs must evaluate the size and demographic composition of qualifying populations within its boundaries and assess the unmet needs of those populations. In addition, a PJ must identify any gaps within its current shelter and housing inventory as well as the service delivery system. A PJ should use current data, including point in time count, housing inventory count, or other data available through CoCs, and consultations with service providers to quantify the individuals and families in the qualifying populations and their need for additional housing, shelter, or services.

The PJ may use the optional tables provided below and/or attach additional data tables to this template.

The Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis sections of this plan utilized multiple data sources. These include but are not limited to the Census, 2020/2021/2022 Point-in-Time Count (PIT) for homeless individuals, the local Continuum of Care (CoC), Housing Inventory Count (HIC), and Union County Human Service Needs Assessment Report, among other sources.

This is in addition to consultation from CoC's, Homeless and Domestic Violence Service Providers, Veterans Groups, Housing Authorities, Public Service Providers, and organizations that address fair housing, civil rights, and the needs of persons with disabilities.

Union County evaluated the size and demographic composition of qualifying populations within its boundaries and assessed the unmet needs of those populations. In addition, we identified any gaps within its current shelter and housing inventory as well as the service delivery system.

The below table (Homeless Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table) includes data from the 2022 Point-In-Time and Housing Inventory Count Report.

OPTIONAL Homeless Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table - CoC

Homeless													
	Current Inventory					Homeless Population				Gap Analysis			
	Family		Adults Only		Vets	Family HH (at least 1 child)	Adult HH (w/o child)	Vets	Victims of DV	Family		Adults Only	
	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds					# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units
Emergency Shelter	35	35	139	139	15								
Transitional Housing	66	58	21	23	10								
Permanent Supportive Housing	99	71	133	69	4								
Other Permanent Housing						205	171	10	0				
Sheltered Homeless						81	360	16	58				
Unsheltered Homeless						0	56	2	3				
Current Gap										86	142	383	356

Suggested Data Sources: 1. Point in Time Count (PIT); 2. Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Count (HIC); 3. Consultation

OPTIONAL Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table- need to check.

Non-Homeless			
	Current Inventory	Level of Need	Gap Analysis
	# of Units	# of Households	# of Households
Total Rental Units	90,051		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness)	20,235		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI (Other Populations)	5,008		
0%-30% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (At-Risk of Homelessness)		16,905	
30%-50% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (Other Populations)		13,450	
Current Gaps			5,112

Suggested Data Sources: 1. American Community Survey (ACS); 2. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)

Describe the size and demographic composition of qualifying populations within the PJ's boundaries:

According to the American Community Survey 2021 annual estimates prepared by the Census Bureau, about 572,114 people live in Union County, and 9% (51,490 persons) of Union County residents are living below the poverty line.

In Union County persons identifying as Black or African American are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness. While 20.3% of the general population, persons identifying as Black or African American are 28% of the population in poverty and 54.1% of the population counted as experiencing homelessness. Persons identifying as Black or African American represent 57% of the sheltered population (staying in emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe havens) and 55.1% of the counted unsheltered population. Persons identifying as White and not Hispanic or Latino represent 16.5% of the sheltered population and 22.4% of the counted unsheltered population. Persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino represent 26.2% of the sheltered population and 22.4% of the counted unsheltered population. Of those unsheltered 53% reported a disability.

The Union County Veteran population has seen an increase in homelessness. Since 2019 there has been an 189% increase in those in Emergency shelters, transitional housing, or unsheltered. 80% of homeless veterans identified a disability. Findings for Victims of Domestic Violence include 72.7% females, 18.2% are African American.

Describe the unmet housing and service needs of qualifying populations, including but not limited to:

- ***Sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations;***
- ***Those currently housed populations at risk of homelessness;***
- ***Other families requiring services or housing assistance or to prevent homelessness;***
- ***Those at greatest risk of housing instability or in unstable housing situations;***
- ***Individuals and families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence; and***
- ***Veterans and their families who fit the previous criteria***

As the most frequently raised issue, the need for affordable housing is clearly the highest unmet need in the county. Issues exist related to availability of shelter beds, transitional housing, long term affordable housing, and housing for seniors and individuals with disabilities. While the county has taken efforts to address the needs of homeless people, including developing warming centers, and engaging the faith-based community in this effort, concentrated efforts are still needed to make the housing system, limited as it is, more responsive to resident needs. To accomplish this, the following activities are recommended:

Short-term:

- Under the public/community partnership, create a workgroup focused on homelessness to:
 - o Design and implement an organized system of services for homeless individuals and families.
 - o Establish a single point of intake and service routes for homeless services.
 - o Create strategies for “housing first” and homeless prevention in addition to crisis-based services.
 - o Consider best practice models/strategies from within NJ and nationally (e.g., Mercer County and Denver, Colorado).
- Utilize a unified, consistent approach to shelter development among faith-based providers.
- Review the use of the Homeless Trust Fund in the context of emerging strategies.

Longer-term:

- Engage federal and state officials, municipal officials, developers and landlords to create a Union County Housing Task Force to confront and resolve the many challenging issues identified in the Community Needs Assessment (CNA) related to affordable housing and income disparities.

Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Populations

As part of discovering the unmet need for the homeless population, we reviewed the CoC’s most recent 5-year plan. It outlines the following strategies to address immediate unmet needs

In addition to the strategies to meet immediate needs listed above, both the housing response system and crisis response system must also be strengthened. To address these needs, the CoC has also identified the following ways to refine engagement strategies for people living unsheltered:

- Expand the number of outreach teams and staff to ensure appropriate coverage to all geographies throughout the CoC. Coordinate outreach teams to ensure standardization of outreach practices, schedules, and engagement strategies across all outreach efforts.
- Undertake proactive, non-punitive responses to outreach, which are critical when there are high numbers of people who are unsheltered to reduce significant dangers found at encampments.
- Expand crisis housing response to include a navigation/ engagement center for the most vulnerable unsheltered people who require specialized services to address comorbidities of mental illness, substance use disorders, chronic health conditions and prolonged social dislocation.

At-Risk of Homelessness

Half of all renters in the County are considered cost-burdened, including a quarter who are severely cost burdened or spend more than 50% of their income on housing. More than half of

renter households earning between \$35,000 and \$50,000—which is the range that includes the median renter household income (\$42,000) in 2019—are considered cost-burdened.

- Lack of Homes available to Extremely Low-Income Households

One primary issue is the lack of homes that serve households earning less than \$23,000 per year, or 30% AMI. Because of this lack, 90% of these households are cost-burdened and end up renting homes that would otherwise be affordable to residents earning higher incomes. This, in turn, squeezes the available housing supply for those residents and causes housing shortages at the 30-60% AMI level as well.

- Housing Quality and Maintenance Challenges

In some cases, affordable homes may not have the high-quality, healthy living environment that families are seeking. Homeowners may face heavy burdens keeping up with needed maintenance, particularly in older homes.

- Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic has increased housing instability for many families through losses of jobs and income, leading more families to become cost-burdened. In addition, lumber prices and other prices of goods have substantially increased during the pandemic, which has increased the price of new construction and home repairs.

Individuals or families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence

Those that were able to leave their partners but could not access resources increased their chance of homelessness. Over half of the victims experienced homelessness at least once in their lifetime. A secure job would help the victim achieve a safe exit plan; however, most of the participants have children that would require childcare. Without care services or schooling for children it is difficult to maintain a job.

Based on the results of the PIT and HIC data, and consultation with community stakeholders the priority needs for Domestic Violence victims should include:

- Case Management Services
- Childcare Services
- Available access to Shelters
- Affordable Rental Units
- Services for Victims who are exiting incarceration or undocumented individuals

Identify and consider the current resources available to assist qualifying populations, including congregate and non-congregate shelter units, supportive services, TBRA, and affordable and permanent supportive rental housing:

Identify any gaps within the current shelter and housing inventory as well as the service delivery system:

Identify the characteristics of housing associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness if the PJ will include such conditions in its definition of “other populations” as established in the HOME-ARP Notice:

Identify priority needs for qualifying populations:

The priority needs among the qualifying populations are for shelter space for homeless populations, including shelter specifically for those fighting substance abuse and mental health, and for permanent supportive housing to move homeless households into permanent housing with the comprehensive services they need to ensure their housing stability.

Another priority is for permanent affordable housing serving those with housing instability, and those with a range of disabilities including behavioral health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), to improve their housing security and decrease their risk of becoming homeless.

Explain how the level of need and gaps in its shelter and housing inventory and service delivery systems based on the data presented in the plan were determined:

HOME-ARP Activities

Describe the method for soliciting applications for funding and/or selecting developers, service providers, subrecipients and/or contractors and whether the PJ will administer eligible activities directly:

Pending HUD approval of its HOME-ARP allocation plan and Annual Action Plan Substantial Amendment, the County of Union will issue a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for interested homeless service agencies, affordable housing developers and experienced developers of permanent supportive housing and/or affordable housing. In addition, there will be a posted public notice in the local newspaper as well as on the City’s website.

The County will not administer any eligible activities directly.

If any portion of the PJ’s HOME-ARP administrative funds were provided to a subrecipient or contractor prior to HUD’s acceptance of the HOME-ARP allocation plan because the

subrecipient or contractor is responsible for the administration of the PJ's entire HOME-ARP grant, identify the subrecipient or contractor and describe its role and responsibilities in administering all of the PJ's HOME-ARP program:

N/A

Use of HOME-ARP Funding

	Funding Amount	Percent of the Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	\$ 0		
Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	\$ 900,000		
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	\$ 2,500,000		
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	\$ 1,000,000		
Non-Profit Operating	\$ 0	# %	5%
Non-Profit Capacity Building	\$ 0	# %	5%
Administration and Planning	\$ 56,332	# %	15%
Total HOME ARP Allocation	\$ 4,456,332		

Additional narrative, if applicable:

Describe how the characteristics of the shelter and housing inventory, service delivery system, and the needs identified in the gap analysis provided a rationale for the plan to fund eligible activities:

The County of Union reviewed the needs and gap data for shelter, affordable rental housing, the available resources and investments from other sources for all eligible activities, and the input received from stakeholders working with people experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, and housing insecurity. The data and stakeholder input demonstrate significant resource gaps across all HOME-ARP eligible activities

HOME-ARP Production Housing Goals

Estimate the number of affordable rental housing units for qualifying populations that the PJ will produce or support with its HOME-ARP allocation:

Enter narrative response here.

Describe the specific affordable rental housing production goal that the PJ hopes to achieve and describe how it will address the PJ's priority needs:

Preferences

Identify whether the PJ intends to give preference to one or more qualifying populations or a subpopulation within one or more qualifying populations for any eligible activity or project:

- Preferences cannot violate any applicable fair housing, civil rights, and nondiscrimination requirements, including but not limited to those requirements listed in 24 CFR 5.105(a).
- PJs are not required to describe specific projects to which the preferences will apply.

If a preference was identified, explain how the use of a preference or method of prioritization will address the unmet need or gap in benefits and services received by individuals and families in the qualifying population or category of qualifying population, consistent with the PJ's needs assessment and gap analysis:

If a preference was identified, describe how the PJ will use HOME-ARP funds to address the unmet needs or gaps in benefits and services of the other qualifying populations that are not included in the preference:

HOME-ARP Refinancing Guidelines

If the PJ intends to use HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily rental housing that is being rehabilitated with HOME-ARP funds, the PJ must state its HOME-ARP refinancing guidelines in accordance with [24 CFR 92.206\(b\)](#). The guidelines must describe the conditions under which the PJ will refinance existing debt for a HOME-ARP rental project, including:

- *Establish a minimum level of rehabilitation per unit or a required ratio between rehabilitation and refinancing to demonstrate that rehabilitation of HOME-ARP rental housing is the primary eligible activity*

Union County does not intend to use HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt.

- *Require a review of management practices to demonstrate that disinvestment in the property has not occurred; that the long-term needs of the project can be met; and that*

the feasibility of serving qualified populations for the minimum compliance period can be demonstrated.

Enter narrative response here.

- *State whether the new investment is being made to maintain current affordable units, create additional affordable units, or both.*

The County intends to invest HOME ARP funds to maintain current affordable units.

- *Specify the required compliance period, whether it is the minimum 15 years or longer.*

- *State that HOME-ARP funds cannot be used to refinance multifamily loans made or insured by any federal program, including CDBG.*

The County will not use HOME ARP funds to refinance any multifamily loans or insured by any Federal program, including CDBG.

- *Other requirements in the PJ's guidelines, if applicable:*

N/A