

## **CR-05 - Goals and Outcomes**

### **Progress the jurisdiction has made in carrying out its strategic plan and its action plan. 91.520(a)**

This could be an overview that includes major initiatives and highlights that were proposed and executed throughout the program year.

During the course of Program Year 2022, Somerset County made considerable progress toward completing the priorities established in the five-year Consolidated Housing and Community Development plan. The County, the Community Development Office, and its Subgrantees have used CDBG and HOME funds, along with other County resources, to improve housing stock, create housing opportunities, improve neighborhoods and neighborhood services, and create economic opportunities for lower and moderate-income residents.

Included within this broad goal are the following: assist homeless persons to obtain affordable housing; retain existing affordable housing stock; increase the availability of permanent housing - rental and otherwise - available to low and moderate income persons; and increase supportive housing that includes structural features and services to enable persons with special needs to maintain a favorable quality of life.

In addition, faced with the continuing public health threat from the COVID-19 pandemic, the County utilized CDBG-CV funds to prepare, prevent and respond to the novel coronavirus. These funds have been used to:

- provide emergency rental relief to dozens of County residents whose income was impacted by the pandemic
- provide food and personal care items, largely through existing or newly-created food banks, to at-need County residents
- provide services, including distribution of health information, to residents
- provide tenant advocacy services to residents as the eviction moratoriums have expired

Significant funds have also been dedicated to projects that will help improve the safety of residents using public facilities. Examples of these projects include:

- health and safety improvements at public libraries in Bound Brook, Manville and Somerville
- health and safety improvements at senior centers in Bridgewater and Green Brook
- health and safety improvements at several public facilities in North Plainfield.

These improvements - such as touchless sinks and toilets, barriers around computers, and improved air ventilation systems - are mainly at facilities that are disproportionately used by the most vulnerable members of the community and will help prevent the spread of disease and keep residents safer.

During Program Year 2022, the County also began to spend its HOME American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) funds. These funds have been dedicated for a number of projects, including several large construction projects - which, in total, will house over 100 low-income people - and a group home project for low-income individuals who are aging out of foster care.

**Comparison of the proposed versus actual outcomes for each outcome measure submitted with the consolidated plan and explain, if applicable, why progress was not made toward meeting goals and objectives. 91.520(g)**

Categories, priority levels, funding sources and amounts, outcomes/objectives, goal outcome indicators, units of measure, targets, actual outcomes/outputs, and percentage completed for each of the grantee’s program year goals.

Goal	Category	Source / Amount	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Complete
Administrative Costs	Non-Housing Community Development Administrative Costs	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Other	Other	4	4	100.00%	4	4	100.00%
Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	0	0				

Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	15		70	15	21.43%
Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	925	938	101.41%	400	260	65.00%
Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Public service activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	47		130	47	36.15%
Education/training for low-income persons	Education	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	2260	766	33.89%	153	83	54.25%
Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled	Non-Homeless Special Needs	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	0	117				

Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled	Non-Homeless Special Needs	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	125	211	168.80%	8	15	187.50%
Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled	Non-Homeless Special Needs	CDBG: \$	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	0	4				
Improvements at public facilities	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	5000	5619	112.38%	6560	5500	83.84%
Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing	Affordable Housing	HOME: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	45	15	33.33%			
Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing	Affordable Housing	HOME: \$	Rental units constructed	Household Housing Unit	40	0	0.00%	7	0	0.00%
Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing	Affordable Housing	HOME: \$	Rental units rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	0	4				

Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing	Affordable Housing	HOME: \$	Homeowner Housing Added	Household Housing Unit	0	1		4	1	25.00%
Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing	Affordable Housing	HOME: \$	Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers	Households Assisted	20	13	65.00%	5	3	60.00%
Public improvements in LMAs	Non-Housing Community Development Public Improvements	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	82230	40572	49.34%	21103	15220	72.12%

**Table 1 - Accomplishments – Program Year & Strategic Plan to Date**

**Assess how the jurisdiction’s use of funds, particularly CDBG, addresses the priorities and specific objectives identified in the plan, giving special attention to the highest priority activities identified.**

The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) documents the accomplishments of the Somerset County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Programs during Program Year 2022. The report contains performance information for the third year of the five-year Somerset County Consolidated Plan for 2020 - 2024. The programs addressed in this report represent critical resources that support local efforts to address community development, affordable housing, and homeless assistance needs in Somerset County. The County has made considerable progress toward the priorities established in the five-year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan. The County, the CD Office, and its Subgrantees have used CDBG, CDBG-CV, HOME and HOME-ARP funds - along with other County resources - to improve housing stock, create housing opportunities, improve neighborhoods and neighborhood services, and create economic opportunities for lower and moderate-income residents.

During the course of the 2022 Program Year, CDBG funding assisted a number of projects in the County. Improvements to benefit low/moderate

income residents of Somerset County were achieved with the successful completion of various projects:

Street improvement projects in Bound Brook, Manville, North Plainfield, and Raritan.

Improvements to increase accessibility: Improvements to group homes run by Alternatives and Midland Adult Services.

Improvements to public facilities: the installation of a generator at the library in Manville; ADA improvements to Alternatives group homes in Bound Brook and North Plainfield; installation of an emergency generator at Midland Adult Services' group home in Bernardsville; and installation of an emergency generator and ADA improvements at Midland's group home in Hillsborough.

Several CDBG-funded public service programs were also completed:

- The Arc of Somerset provided 9 children with scholarships for school and aftercare at the Jerry Davis Center for Children & Families.
- CASA SHaW assisted 25 children in foster care through their Child Advocate Supervision program.
- Community Hope provided 74 veterans with life skills and education training through the Hope for Veterans Program.
- Safe + Sound Somerset provided services to 47 victims of domestic violence through their Transitional Housing Direct Services program.

The County used HOME funds to complete construction on two 50-unit affordable housing complexes in Branchburg; to complete construction on a 50-unit affordable housing development in Warren; and to help Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity purchase property in Somerville on which to construct a pre-fabricated house for an income-qualified resident.

In addition, the County continued to spend HOME-ARP funds on several projects around the County, including large-scale projects in Warren,

Branchburg and Hillsborough.

The County used CDBG-CV funds for the following projects:

- Food security and wellness programs in Bernards, Hillsborough, Montgomery, Raritan and South Bound Brook
- Legal Services of Northwest Jersey assisted dozens of clients through their Tenant Advocacy Program

There are several CDBG-CV-funded public facilities projects that are underway in Green Brook and North Plainfield. These projects will help improve the safety and welfare of residents through the installation of touchless sinks and toilets, touchless doors, and improved air ventilation systems.

## CR-10 - Racial and Ethnic composition of families assisted

Describe the families assisted (including the racial and ethnic status of families assisted).

91.520(a)

	CDBG	HOME
White	14,514	8
Black or African American	2,479	2
Asian	1,644	0
American Indian or American Native	89	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	11	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,737</b>	<b>10</b>
Hispanic	3,811	2
Not Hispanic	14,926	8

**Table 2 – Table of assistance to racial and ethnic populations by source of funds**

### Narrative

During Program Year 2022, Somerset County assisted thousands of residents through the CDBG, CDBG-CV, HOME and HOME-ARP programs. The majority of the residents were helped by street improvements in Bound Brook, Manville, North Plainfield, and Raritan. The remainder of the residents saw benefits from various public facilities projects, including: improvements at group homes managed by Alternatives; installation of emergency generators at group homes managed by Midland Adult Services; and the installation of an emergency generator at the public library in Manville.

In addition, public services projects took place at the Arc of Somerset, CASA SHaW, Community Hope, and Safe + Sound Somerset, along with a Food Security and Wellness program in Bernards Township, funded through CDBG-CV funds.

The County used HOME funds to complete construction on two 50-unit affordable housing complexes in Branchburg; to complete construction on a 50-unit affordable housing development in Warren; and to help Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity purchase property in Somerville on which to construct a pre-fabricated house for an income-qualified resident.

In addition, despite the official end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the County continued to utilize CDBG-CV funds to prepare, prevent and respond to the novel coronavirus, as well as protect the County's most vulnerable members from other diseases. These funds have been used to:



- provide emergency rental relief to dozens of County residents whose income was impacted by the pandemic
- provide food and personal care items, largely through existing or newly-created food banks, to at-need County residents
- provide services, including distribution of health information, to residents
- provide tenant advocacy services to residents

Significant funds have also been dedicated to projects that will help improve the safety of residents using public facilities. Examples of these projects include:

- health and safety improvements at public libraries in Bound Brook, Manville and Somerville
- health and safety improvements at senior centers in Bridgewater and Green Brook
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These improvements - such as touchless sinks and toilets, barriers around computers, and improved air ventilation systems - are mainly at facilities that are disproportionately used by the most vulnerable members of the community and will help prevent the spread of disease and keep residents safer.

During Program Year 2022, the County also began to spend its HOME American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) funds. These funds have been dedicated for a number of projects, including several large construction projects - which, in total, will house over 100 low-income people - and a group home project for low-income individuals who are aging out of foster care.

## CR-15 - Resources and Investments 91.520(a)

### Identify the resources made available

Source of Funds	Source	Resources Made Available	Amount Expended During Program Year
CDBG	public - federal	1,342,124	1,126,368
HOME	public - federal	694,440	372,935

Table 3 - Resources Made Available

### Narrative

### Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
Countywide	100	100	

Table 4 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

### Narrative

While CDBG, CDBG-CV, HOME and HOME-ARP funds were spent at locations throughout the County, a significant amount of those funds were concentrated in the County's Low/Mod Service Areas (LMA). In Somerset County - which uses uncapped data with the exception criteria - census tracts where at least 44.87% of the residents are of low or moderate income are considered Low/Mod Service Areas. In general, these areas are concentrated in the County's older suburbs and include block groups in the boroughs of Bedminster, Bound Brook, Bridgewater, Hillsborough, Manville, North Plainfield, Raritan, Somerville, and South Bound Brook.

## Leveraging

**Explain how federal funds leveraged additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements were satisfied, as well as how any publicly owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that were used to address the needs identified in the plan.**

In response to the high cost of purchasing land and/or a building in the area, and the increase in construction costs, the CD Office encourages its HOME and CDBG Subgrantees to seek other funding for use in conjunction with CDBG and HOME funds. Examples of supplementary funding include: Federal Home Loan Bank funds, municipal donations of land and other in-kind services, property tax abatement, capacity-building grants from private, philanthropic organizations, and the use of McKinney-Vento funds in conjunction with HOME Investment Partnership Program funds. Public and private resources are consistently used to address needs. The County has consistently met - and often far exceeded - its Match obligations.

<b>Fiscal Year Summary – HOME Match</b>	
1. Excess match from prior Federal fiscal year	19,244,188
2. Match contributed during current Federal fiscal year	588,424
3. Total match available for current Federal fiscal year (Line 1 plus Line 2)	19,832,612
4. Match liability for current Federal fiscal year	117,231
5. Excess match carried over to next Federal fiscal year (Line 3 minus Line 4)	19,715,381

**Table 5 – Fiscal Year Summary - HOME Match Report**

Match Contribution for the Federal Fiscal Year								
Project No. or Other ID	Date of Contribution	Cash (non-Federal sources)	Foregone Taxes, Fees, Charges	Appraised Land/Real Property	Required Infrastructure	Site Preparation, Construction Materials, Donated labor	Bond Financing	Total Match
Conifer - York Village East (Red Rock I) - IDIS #1827	05/06/2022	287,923	0	0	0	0	0	287,923
Conifer - York Village West (Red Rock II) - IDIS #1828	05/06/2022	300,500	0	0	0	0	0	300,500

Table 6 – Match Contribution for the Federal Fiscal Year

**HOME MBE/WBE report**

Program Income – Enter the program amounts for the reporting period				
Balance on hand at begin-ning of reporting period \$	Amount received during reporting period \$	Total amount expended during reporting period \$	Amount expended for TBRA \$	Balance on hand at end of reporting period \$
0	0	0	0	0

Table 7 – Program Income

<b>Minority Business Enterprises and Women Business Enterprises – Indicate the number and dollar value of contracts for HOME projects completed during the reporting period</b>						
	Total	Minority Business Enterprises				White Non-Hispanic
		Alaskan Native or American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
<b>Contracts</b>						
Dollar Amount	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub-Contracts</b>						
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dollar Amount	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	Women Business Enterprises	Male			
<b>Contracts</b>						
Dollar Amount	0	0	0			
Number	0	0	0			
<b>Sub-Contracts</b>						
Number	0	0	0			
Dollar Amount	0	0	0			

**Table 8 - Minority Business and Women Business Enterprises**

<b>Minority Owners of Rental Property – Indicate the number of HOME assisted rental property owners and the total amount of HOME funds in these rental properties assisted</b>						
	Total	Minority Property Owners				White Non-Hispanic
		Alaskan Native or American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dollar Amount	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 9 – Minority Owners of Rental Property**

<b>Relocation and Real Property Acquisition</b> – Indicate the number of persons displaced, the cost of relocation payments, the number of parcels acquired, and the cost of acquisition						
Parcels Acquired		0		0		
Businesses Displaced		0		0		
Nonprofit Organizations Displaced		0		0		
Households Temporarily Relocated, not Displaced		0		0		
Households Displaced	Total	Minority Property Enterprises				White Non-Hispanic
		Alaskan Native or American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 10 – Relocation and Real Property Acquisition**

## CR-20 - Affordable Housing 91.520(b)

Evaluation of the jurisdiction's progress in providing affordable housing, including the number and types of families served, the number of extremely low-income, low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income persons served.

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	6	9
Number of Non-Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	2	1
Number of Special-Needs households to be provided affordable housing units	20	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>

Table 11 – Number of Households

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of households supported through Rental Assistance	15	10
Number of households supported through The Production of New Units	9	9
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	8	7
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>

Table 12 – Number of Households Supported

**Discuss the difference between goals and outcomes and problems encountered in meeting these goals.**

Somerset County has made considerable progress toward the priorities established in the five-year Consolidated Housing and Community Development plan. The County, the CD Office, and its Subgrantees have used CDBG, HOME and HOME-ARP funds, along with other County resources, to improve housing stock, create housing opportunities, improve neighborhoods and neighborhood services, and create economic opportunities for lower and moderate-income residents.

Included within this broad goal are the following: assist homeless persons with obtaining affordable housing; retain existing affordable housing stock; increase the availability of permanent housing - rental and otherwise - available to low and moderate income persons; and increase supportive housing that includes structural features and services to enable persons with special needs to maintain a favorable quality of life.

Even though the County’s Ten Year Plan to End Chronic and Other Homelessness has expired, the Community Development staff has continued to follow the guidelines and plan that was set by it. This plan contains multiple action steps to improve the collection and dissemination of data on homeless persons, increases the level of coordination among providers of housing and services, encourages the development of permanent housing for homeless individuals and families, and enhances the knowledge and use of mainstream resources. The CD Office is the responsible entity for coordination and implementation of many of these action steps, which will improve the continuum of care system for homeless individuals and families accessing services within the County.

One of the problems the County faces when it comes to housing - in emergency, temporary, or permanent housing - is the lack of available space and housing stock. Much of the County has been "built out" or is preserved as open space. This limitation, along with the relatively high cost of buying existing stock, has made meeting the County's annual goals difficult at times. In addition, there are only a few providers with the financial resources to build and/or buy housing. The amount of funding that the County receives each year is not enough to provide the funds necessary for a single project, much less numerous ones. This fact forces providers to find a large amount of funding from other sources, an effort that is becoming increasingly difficult in today's atmosphere of declining funds across the board.

**Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.**

The County will continue to encourage providers to expand the stock of housing for members of the community who are most in need. By dividing up funding among several organizations, the County feels that this provides the best opportunity for organizations to meet this goal. The providers have found that receiving County funding often plays an important role in soliciting outside funds for a project. In addition, since projects are required to have in place the majority of the funding prior to the application for County funding, the success rate for these projects is high.

The County is confident that through these efforts the housing stock for homeless and low-income persons will increase in the coming years.

**Include the number of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income persons served by each activity where information on income by family size is required to determine the eligibility of the activity.**

Number of Households Served	CDBG Actual	HOME Actual
Extremely Low-income	2,774	9
Low-income	2,640	0



Moderate-income	4,544	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,958</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 13 – Number of Households Served**

**Narrative Information**

Over the last couple of years, the County has received proposals from several larger companies that specialize in building affordable housing. The County has completed several of these projects in recent years, including three (3) in the past year - two in Branchburg (Red Rock I and Red Rock II) and one in Warren (Woods at Warren). There are also several more that are being constructed and should be completed and leased-up in the coming year. The County's Continuum of Care Committee has worked with these developers to ensure that at least five (5) units in each project are set aside for homeless members of the community. As these projects are leased-up, the County's housing stock for low-income and homeless members of the community will increase.

## **CR-25 - Homeless and Other Special Needs 91.220(d, e); 91.320(d, e); 91.520(c)**

**Evaluate the jurisdiction's progress in meeting its specific objectives for reducing and ending homelessness through:**

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

Somerset County reaches out to homeless persons in a number of different ways. Several of the CDBG and HOME grants - including grants to Alternatives, Community Hope, HOME of Somerset County (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network), Safe+Sound Somerset, and Visions & Pathways - directly address the needs of the County's homeless population by providing housing and services to those in need. Agencies such as Alternatives and Volunteers of America also receive funding through the Continuum of Care grant. This funding helps provide housing and services for homeless individuals and families.

In addition, in January 2023 the County was the lead entity in the annual Point in Time Survey of both the sheltered and unsheltered homeless. The survey was done by counties and municipalities on the same day throughout New Jersey, as coordinated by Monarch Housing. A limited in-person count, conducted by some of the County's social service agencies, added to the data collected by agencies such as Visions & Pathways, Alternatives, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, and the County Board of Social Services.

For nearly a decade - in large part due to the success of the January event and the needs of the County's homeless and near-homeless population - the County has held a donation/distribution event later in the year. Recently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this event has not been held. Instead, the County has done a more limited collection of clothes and other personal items, and made more targeted donations to those in need.

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

In an effort to meet the "worst-case" housing needs (defined as homelessness or imminent homelessness), the following measures are in place:

County administrators/decision-makers and the non-profit community are in agreement that the best strategy to help prevent homelessness for individuals and families with children who are at imminent risk of being homeless, is to intercede with the provision of financial or other assistance to avert the impending cause for homelessness. At the same time, the County believes firmly that while various forms of emergency assistance are often necessary, they do not replace the need for one to take action to improve one's circumstances and to move toward self-sufficiency. To that end, within Somerset County there is a broad array of services, such as: mortgage payments, rental payments, security payments and/or utility payments which are available through the Somerset County Board of Social

Services, Catholic Charities, municipal welfare system, Alternatives, Food Bank Network of Somerset County, SHIP, Safe + Sound, Department of Community Affairs, Homelessness Prevention Program, and the Homelessness Trust Fund. In addition, the faith community provides a number of resources to prevent homelessness. Emergency Support Services include the provision of food, clothing, transportation, child care as needed to assist families in securing other essential services, medically necessary prescription drugs, and medical care to alleviate life threatening and public health conditions.

In the event that these measures are not sufficient to prevent homelessness, the County Board of Social Services is committed to providing temporary housing to any person who needs emergency shelter. In addition, there are a number of county service providers who will also temporarily house people in the event that all of the emergency shelter beds are taken.

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

Somerset County continues to make major strides in addressing the needs of homeless persons through the Continuum of Care process and by undertaking the action steps to address the County's Ten Year Plan to End Chronic and Other Homelessness. Even though the Ten Year Plan expired several years ago, the Community Development staff has continued to follow the guidelines and plan that was set by it. The Plan has been the tool to evaluate the scope of homelessness in Somerset County and measure efforts to systematically reduce homelessness through new initiatives and better use of existing resources. This document was originally prepared by the CEAS Committee – now the Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee – with input from Community Development, the Department of Human Services, the Board of Social Services, and various social service agencies, including special needs housing providers, basic needs providers, and other social service professionals. In addition, the CoC Committee regularly discusses the issue of homelessness at its meetings and continuously strives to find solutions to this ongoing issue.

During Program Year 2022, County government and service providers undertook many actions to help low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless. These actions included:

- Continued provision of outreach services to those at risk of homelessness, as well as those who are already homeless, by staff of the Visions & Pathways StreetSmart Program, Project Outreach, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, and Samaritan Homeless Interim Program (SHIP).
- Continued provision of transitional housing, as well as supportive and case management services, by Alternatives, Center for Great Expectations, Community Hope, HOME of Somerset County (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network), Safe + Sound, Visions & Pathways, and Volunteers of America.

- Financial assistance from County agencies and service organizations, including the County Board of Social Services, Catholic Charities, Central Jersey Housing Resource Center, and faith-based churches, to be used to pay for rent and utilities, in an effort to keep individuals and families housed.
- Referrals, through the County Coordinated Entry program, to homeless set-aside units at various housing developments in the County, including Red Rock and Cornerstone.

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

During Program Year 2022, County government and service providers undertook many actions that will help homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing and independent living. These actions included:

- Continued provision of temporary emergency support including emergency rental assistance, emergency utility payments, emergency hotel and motel vouchers, and other basic needs.

Other forms of assistance to prevent homelessness include:

- Legal representation at Landlord/Tenant Court to assist low-income tenants who must appear in court because they face eviction; service is provided by Legal Services of Northwest Jersey. This has been especially important as housing and rental prices have risen dramatically.
- Emergency support through the NJ Homeless Prevention Program, currently administered by NORWESCAP.
- Provision of free housing counseling, financial literacy, and tenant education programs through the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC).
- Provision of follow-up case management to clients.

## **CR-30 - Public Housing 91.220(h); 91.320(j)**

### **Actions taken to address the needs of public housing**

The local Housing Authority is located in Franklin Township, which is a municipality that has its own CDBG Program. Due to this fact, the County is unable to provide assistance through the CDBG Program. However, the County's Annual Action Plan – with its strong emphasis on empowerment through housing counseling, education and outreach – certainly includes activities that will encourage public housing residents to participate in homeownership. County staff has taken - and will continue to take - the following actions:

- a. Offering to make presentations related to homeownership, the ADDI Program and other forms of housing-related assistance;
- b. To the greatest extent possible, ensuring that public housing residents are made aware of educational opportunities provided by the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC) and other organizations;
- c. Providing literature related to homeownership, the ADDI Program, and other forms of housing-related assistance;
- d. Encouraging HOME Subgrantees to include PHA residents in their outreach and affirmative marketing.

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

As stated previously, the County engages in activities to reach out to public housing residents and to encourage homeownership. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. Offering to make presentations related to homeownership, the ADDI Program and other forms of housing-related assistance;
- b. To the greatest extent possible, ensuring that public housing residents are made aware of educational opportunities provided by the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC) and other organizations;
- c. Providing literature related to homeownership, the ADDI Program, and other forms of housing-related assistance;
- d. Encouraging HOME Subgrantees to include PHA residents in their outreach and affirmative marketing.

### **Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs**

The Public Housing Authority in Franklin Township is financially stable and in no need of assistance.

## **CR-35 - Other Actions 91.220(j)-(k); 91.320(i)-(j)**

**Actions taken to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment. 91.220 (j); 91.320 (i)**

Two of the primary barriers that have had a negative impact on affordable housing are cost and, in some towns, restrictions on minimum lot sizes for homes. This latter requirement, especially, limits the affordability of this land to low-/moderate-income individuals and families, as well as the ability of organizations to purchase the property for either new construction or rehabilitation of an existing structure into a group home. New Jersey (and, consequently, Somerset County) has laws in place that encourage - and even require - the creation of affordable housing. However, due to the high cost of construction in the area, even housing that is designated as "affordable" is often out of reach to low-income individuals and families. In addition to the challenges of creating affordable housing in one of the most expensive markets in the state, it is also difficult to provide support services because of the extremely high cost of living which affects the cost of salaries, supplies, and space.

## **Actions taken to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

The strategic plan section of the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan lists a number of obstacles to meeting the needs of the underserved. In the housing, homeless, and special needs areas the following were included: the unavailability of Section 8 vouchers to assist low income tenants; insufficient funding resources for housing programs; reduction in the region's housing market; inflationary cost trends in construction; and community resistance. With respect to non-housing community development needs, the principal impediments identified were inadequate funding levels and resistance to increasing property taxes to provide projects and services in identified areas of need. The County has made significant progress in certain areas including:

- Continued use of HOME and CDBG funding for the provision and maintenance of supportive housing for the County's special needs populations.
- Use of HOME-ARP funding to help reduce homelessness and increase housing stability.
- Continued solicitation of agencies that provide services in areas of underserved needs.
- Project Homeless Connect (PHC), an event to deliver services to the homeless and near-homeless and to distribute donations, has typically been held simultaneously with the Homeless Point-In-Time Count (PITC). During the pandemic, the PITC was mostly a "paper-count" and the County shifted to targeted donations of items to individuals and families in need.
- Creation and implementation of a County Homelessness Trust Fund, which has assisted dozens of

individuals and families with paying their rent and financial counseling.

- Allocation of CDBG-CV funds to municipalities and non-profits to improve health conditions and provide needed services - including food - to residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Actions taken to reduce lead-based paint hazards. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

Federal Regulation 24 CFR Part 25 requires CDBG and HOME-assisted housing units constructed prior to 1978 to be tested for the presence and condition of lead. While there is no specific funding available for lead-based paint abatement, for many years Somerset County addressed lead-based paint hazards in accordance with the applicable regulations through its HOME and CDBG-funded Housing Rehabilitation programs, which have since been discontinued. However, a number of municipalities within the county continue to have their own housing rehabilitation programs and the Community Development Office refers residents to those programs. The appropriate disclosure, investigation, and response actions are performed ensuring occupant safety and compliance with the regulations.

The Community Development Office continues to be committed to addressing lead-based paint in all housing rehabilitation programs, as well as purchases of existing properties. All properties that undergo rehabilitation, or are bought by non-profits or private homebuyers, must be certified as lead-based paint-free. If lead paint hazards are indicated, the rehabilitation is completed using either interim controls or abatement in compliance with HUD regulations.

### **Actions taken to reduce the number of poverty-level families. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

The following actions were undertaken to reduce the number of persons in poverty who live in the County:

- Homelessness Trust Fund Rental Assistance Program – The Community Development Office administered this program for over a decade, although it was put on pause midway through the 2022 Program Year. This successful program has provided funds to help people remain in their homes and keep them from becoming homeless or displaced. The Program also provided financial counseling and resume assistance. It is hoped that the program will resume in the near future.
- Social Service programs - Through the Non-Profit Purchase of Service process, the County provides direct support for social service programs that will positively impact persons living in poverty within the County. These programs include, but are not limited to: counseling services; child care subsidies; temporary housing assistance; adult protective services; and income maintenance. The programs are designed to reduce the number of persons in poverty who live in the County.
- Office on Aging - The County Office on Aging provides counseling, nutrition programs, health care support, transportation, and housing rehabilitation to elderly residents of the County.

- Social Services - The Somerset County Board of Social Services and the Somerset County Department of Human Services provide financial assistance and referral services to appropriate County and State agencies for individuals and families in need.
- Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) - The County Board of Social Services, through a subcontract with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, manages the WFNJ Program. Board staff provides case management, skill assessment, job development and job readiness training to recipients of Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funding. The subsequent transition from public assistance to gainful employment produces a positive impact on the County's overall effort to reduce the number of families in poverty.
- Employment and Training Programs - The County does not have a division of Employment and Training, but does have a public/private partnership between the County's Department of Human Services and the Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board (WIB). WIB's mission is to meet the labor force needs of local businesses through its One-Stop Career Center; to use the Workforce Investment System's services in an effort to improve the quality of life for the employers, employees and residents in both Hunterdon and Somerset Counties; and to increase the skills and earnings of the "graduates" of the Workforce Investment System. Employment and training services are also provided by a number of quasi-governmental entities within the County. For example, the Somerset County Technical Institute offers programs in office administration, commercial art, allied health/practical nursing, and technologies to high school graduates. The County Board of Social Services provides a wide variety of employment and training programs. Jewish Family Services runs an employment counseling program, which includes interview coaching, resume critique and preparation, job search techniques, and individual counseling. Through provision of services directed toward job placement and advancement, these programs and services contribute to a reduction in the number of persons in poverty living in the County.
- Vocational and Technical School - Somerset County Vocational and Technical Schools provide shop programs for full and part-time students, an alternate high school program, Adult Continuing Education Programs, and a training program for at-risk youth.
- Raritan Valley Community College - RVCC offers a variety of career training programs and professional development courses, including: automotive technology, cosmetology, HVAC repair, and advanced manufacturing.

**Actions taken to develop institutional structure. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

The Community Development Office has, over the years, worked to create a structure through which the various public and private agencies work together and communicate ideas and plans to help the underserved populations in the County. The CD Office and the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC) make presentations on Fair Housing to the public and community organizations, and have conducted outreach efforts to local churches and civic groups. CD Staff have participated in community



events focusing on topics such as homeownership, County-funded Rental Assistance Programs, and other matters pertinent to housing and community development. In addition, the County will continue its aggressive effort to cultivate and increase capacity among its affordable housing developers through outreach and technical assistance. CD Staff continue to work with non-profit housing agencies around Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Certification, innovative approaches to all phases of housing that are part of the County's Continuum of Care, and alternative financing mechanisms.

**Actions taken to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies. 91.220(k); 91.320(j)**

The County has continued to contract with the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC) and Legal Services of Northwest Jersey (LSNWJ) to provide fair housing counseling and legal representation to low and moderate income residents of the County who are the victims of housing discrimination. Moreover, the County provides support to CJHRC as the agency provides training and educational opportunities during Fair Housing Month and throughout the year. Some of these workshops include: Rental Realities; Credit when Credit is Due; Step-by-Step; Spanish Step-by-Step; Financial Literacy; First Home Club; First Time Homebuyer's Expo and Seminar; Pre- and Post-Purchase Counseling (in English and Spanish); Delinquency and Foreclosure Counseling; and Reverse Mortgage Counseling.

The Community Development Office also organizes, and is the lead agency for, the Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee meetings. These bi-monthly meetings are well-attended (averaging over 35 people per meeting) by a cross-section of public and private agencies that operate throughout the County. Agencies that regularly send attendees include: Arc of Somerset, CJHRC, Middle Earth, Easter Seals, United Way, ADTI/Alternatives, the VA, Community Hope, Pioneer Family Success Center, NORWESCAP, Soldier On, the Somerset County Board of Social Services, Somerset County Human Services Department, Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center, Visions & Pathways, Zufall Health Center, Safe+Sound Somerset, Volunteers of America, and HOME of Somerset County (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network).

The CD Office continues to communicate with other agencies (for example: CJHRC) to identify and address impediments to Fair Housing. The Fair Housing Brochure is disseminated to local banks, realtors, non-profit and municipal organizations, county divisions, and CD subgrantees for display and distribution.

**Identify actions taken to overcome the effects of any impediments identified in the jurisdictions analysis of impediments to fair housing choice. 91.520(a)**

The Analysis of Impediments revealed the following impediments to fair housing choice in Somerset County:

A. Violations of fair housing law do occur, particularly in rental markets. The violations are primarily related to disability and source of income.

- B. Institutionalized housing discrimination continues to occur and there is a need for greater education.
- C. Need for greater awareness of the services and programs offered by the County.
- D. Given the patterns of racial/ethnic concentration that exist in Franklin Township, Bound Brook and North Plainfield, it could be that certain groups have limited housing choices, but it is not clear whether that is the result of housing discrimination or a personal decision.

To address the impediments to fair housing choice identified in this report, several steps will be taken to affirmatively further fair housing. Implementation of the following recommendations will strengthen the County's interest in fair housing activities and alleviate remaining impediments to fair housing choice:

A. Violations of fair housing law

- Continue to retain the services of CJHRC for the provision of fair housing counseling and referrals for legal representation when there are legitimate discrimination issues.
- Consider, and perhaps implement, paired testing, though this may be cost-prohibitive.
- Expand on-going housing education programs for housing providers, consumers, and local government officials about fair housing laws, rights, and responsibilities. These workshops should occur at varying times throughout the year and should specifically relate to persons with disabilities and families with children.

B. Institutionalized housing discrimination

- Expand on-going housing education programs for local government officials about fair housing laws, rights, and responsibilities.

C. Awareness of/access to services

- The County will continue the practice of educating the public about the Fair Housing Act by disseminating program literature at County events.
- Continue to require CDBG and HOME subgrantees to display Fair Housing literature and information.
- Fair Housing information is available on its own page on the County's website and is offered in the monthly Somerset County Board of County Commissioners newsletter.
- Ensure that CJHRC continues its practice of distributing Fair Housing literature at all of its educational events and to all clients who receive services.
- Expand on-going housing education programs for County residents about fair housing laws, rights, and responsibilities. These workshops should occur at varying times throughout the year and, if possible, in other languages.

D. Racial/Ethnic concentration

- Community Development staff will work with CJHRC to do outreach and, ideally, provide education to African-American and Latino households.
- Expand on-going housing education programs for County residents about fair housing laws, rights, and responsibilities, with special attention to the concerns of minority groups. These workshops will be scheduled with consideration to work schedules and family obligations.

During the pandemic, many workshops, seminars and other events were held virtually. These virtual events (in addition to in-person events) have continued and have been beneficial to the public, since they can often be held at times that are better for working individuals and families.

Through the County's contract with CJHRC, approximately \$3,500 was spent on the previously listed actions. CJHRC also does a lot of work at no cost to the County, which keeps costs low. In addition, the County's in-house printing department does all of the document printing, enabling the County to maintain a high level of visibility and outreach to the community at a low cost.

## **CR-40 - Monitoring 91.220 and 91.230**

**Describe the standards and procedures used to monitor activities carried out in furtherance of the plan and used to ensure long-term compliance with requirements of the programs involved, including minority business outreach and the comprehensive planning requirements**

Somerset County regularly monitors HOME and CDBG recipients based on HUD regulations regarding the frequency of such visits. These monitoring reports show that Subgrantees are generally compliant with CDBG and HOME income-eligibility, record-keeping, and other requirements, and CD staff maintain good relationships and communicate frequently with all Subgrantees. Staff also provides valuable feedback and training to subgrantees, as well as guidance in correcting any deficiencies.

The County encourages all subgrantees who are required to place bids for projects to reach out to minority and women-owned businesses. Data regarding ownership is collected from contractors and is regularly submitted as part of the reporting requirements for the MBE Report.

With regard to the HOME program specifically, when the HOME Program Snapshots were released quarterly by HUD, Somerset County regularly placed in the top 3 in the State, and was ranked 1st a number of times. According to data from the last two HOME Program Snapshot reports (for the periods ending June 30 and September 30, 2019), the County's HOME program ranked #1 out of 27 participating jurisdictions in the State and was in the 99th percentile nationally. Based on these reports, and the County's consistency in its ranking, it is anticipated that the County continues to be a top performer in the State.

## **Citizen Participation Plan 91.105(d); 91.115(d)**

**Describe the efforts to provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports.**

The County has a thorough Citizen Participation Plan, first adopted in April 1995 and updated regularly since, which meets all of the requirements outlined in 24 CFR 91.105. It is the intent of this Plan to provide for and encourage citizens to participate in the development of the annual Action Plan, the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). Participation is encouraged by low and moderate income persons, particularly those in areas where CDBG and HOME funds are expected to be used. All citizens, including minorities as well as persons with disabilities, are encouraged to participate in the process of

developing the plan, as well as the County's annual performance evaluation report. Citizen participation by members of these specific groups, as well as the general public, will be provided for and encouraged by the following means:

- Distribution of programmatic information and literature whenever appropriate and applicable;
- Public meetings and/or hearings - including joint in-person and virtual meetings - regarding activities related to the Action Plan, Consolidated Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER);
- Public notices and advertisements in local newspapers, including those for non-English speakers; and
- Public notices and advertisements on the County website.

## **CR-45 - CDBG 91.520(c)**

**Specify the nature of, and reasons for, any changes in the jurisdiction's program objectives and indications of how the jurisdiction would change its programs as a result of its experiences.**

Based on a self-assessment, as well as feedback from Subgrantees and performance standards endorsed by HUD, it is not necessary to make major changes to the program at this time. There were no changes in general program objectives during Program Year 2022, although the County continues to address the impact on the community from the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused delays in many of the PY2019, PY2020 and PY2021 projects, especially those involving construction, which resulted in some delays on PY2022 projects as non-profits and municipalities worked to complete older projects. However, the County has been able to seamlessly incorporate CDBG-CV funding with the ongoing projects, while maintaining a high-level of service to both the original subgrantees and the residents and subgrantees assisted with the CV funding.

Moving forward, we will continue to administer and spend CV funding on construction projects, as well as complete some remaining service-related projects. In addition, as municipalities and agencies come back up to "full speed," we anticipate that many more projects will be completed in the near future.

**Does this Jurisdiction have any open Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) grants?**

No

**[BEDI grantees] Describe accomplishments and program outcomes during the last year.**

## **CR-50 - HOME 24 CFR 91.520(d)**

### **Include the results of on-site inspections of affordable rental housing assisted under the program to determine compliance with housing codes and other applicable regulations**

Please list those projects that should have been inspected on-site this program year based upon the schedule in 24 CFR §92.504(d). Indicate which of these were inspected and a summary of issues that were detected during the inspection. For those that were not inspected, please indicate the reason and how you will remedy the situation.

The Community Development Office makes regular monitoring visits of HOME-funded projects, as required by - and based on the schedule in - Section 92.504. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, CD staff conducted monitoring visits "off-site" or via "desk" monitoring. However, as the pandemic wound down, the CD office returned to full, on-site monitorings during Program Year 2022.

These monitorings found that subgrantees were generally compliant with HOME income-eligibility, recordkeeping, and other requirements.

- ADTI - Fairview Avenue Group Home - Fairview Avenue, Somerville
- ADTI - Amwell Road Group Home - Amwell Road, Hillsborough
- Community Hope - Supportive Housing - Huff Avenue, Manville
- Community Hope - Supportive Housing - S. Main Street, Manville
- Community Hope - Supportive Housing - Harrow Drive, Franklin
- Pirhl - Montgomery Crossing - Hartwick Drive, Montgomery
- Ridge Oak - Ridge Oak II - East Oak Street, Basking Ridge
- Valley Brook Village - Supportive Housing - Knollcroft Road, Lyons
- Visions & Pathways - Transitional Housing - 3rd Avenue, Bridgewater

### **Provide an assessment of the jurisdiction's affirmative marketing actions for HOME units. 24 CFR 91.520(e) and 24 CFR 92.351(a)**

The County markets the HOME Program to County non-profit and for-profit organizations via email, by posting notices on the County webpage, by making presentations at public meetings, and by reaching out to agencies that might be eligible to apply for HOME funds. In addition, the County makes available a printed brochure summarizing the major provisions of current state and federal fair housing laws. All HOME-related press releases, advertisements and brochures include the Equal Housing Opportunity statement. HOME Subgrantees are mandated to market programs in a way that informs the public, owners and potential tenants about fair housing laws. Moreover, HOME Subgrantees are required to use community organizations, churches, fair housing groups, and housing counseling agencies to publicize the availability of HOME-assisted units to attract eligible persons from all socioeconomic and

demographic groups. Subgrantees must also display fair housing posters.

The Community Development Office reaches out to minority and women-owned businesses by ensuring that all bids are posted on the County website and by notifying interested parties when there are bidding opportunities. Subgrantees are also strongly encouraged to reach out to minority and women-owned businesses and are required to publicly post all bidding opportunities.

**Refer to IDIS reports to describe the amount and use of program income for projects, including the number of projects and owner and tenant characteristics**

Somerset County received no HOME Program Income during the 2022 Program Year. The County does not have any projects that provide a regular source of Program Income.

**Describe other actions taken to foster and maintain affordable housing. 24 CFR 91.220(k) (STATES ONLY: Including the coordination of LIHTC with the development of affordable housing). 24 CFR 91.320(j)**

In order to foster and maintain affordable housing, the Community Development Office has undertaken an intense public awareness campaign that includes, but is not limited to: outreach and technical assistance to potential affordable housing developers; encouragement of linkages and partnerships among agencies that have similar and/or complementary services; solicitation of CHDOs; and strict enforcement of HOME Program Affordability periods and on-site inspections. In addition, the County continues to educate community members about the cross-segment of County residents who are eligible for affordable housing.

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program is one of the primary funding sources for affordable housing development throughout the County. During Program Year 2022, program funds were used to fund a number of affordable housing initiatives, including the purchase of land by Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity (for the future construction of a single-family home), and the completion of construction on two low-income buildings in Branchburg and one low-income building in Warren, all of which will have units set aside for homeless families and individuals. In addition, HOME-ARP funds are being used for various projects in the County that will add more units for low-/moderate-income residents.



## CR-58 – Section 3

Identify the number of individuals assisted and the types of assistance provided

<b>Total Labor Hours</b>	<b>CDBG</b>	<b>HOME</b>	<b>ESG</b>	<b>HOPWA</b>	<b>HTF</b>
Total Number of Activities	1	0	0	0	0
Total Labor Hours	986	0			
Total Section 3 Worker Hours	0	0			
Total Targeted Section 3 Worker Hours	0	0			

**Table 14 – Total Labor Hours**

<b>Qualitative Efforts - Number of Activities by Program</b>	<b>CDBG</b>	<b>HOME</b>	<b>ESG</b>	<b>HOPWA</b>	<b>HTF</b>
Outreach efforts to generate job applicants who are Public Housing Targeted Workers	1	0			
Outreach efforts to generate job applicants who are Other Funding Targeted Workers.	1	0			
Direct, on-the job training (including apprenticeships).	0	0			
Indirect training such as arranging for, contracting for, or paying tuition for, off-site training.	0	0			
Technical assistance to help Section 3 workers compete for jobs (e.g., resume assistance, coaching).	0	0			
Outreach efforts to identify and secure bids from Section 3 business concerns.	1	0			
Technical assistance to help Section 3 business concerns understand and bid on contracts.	0	0			
Division of contracts into smaller jobs to facilitate participation by Section 3 business concerns.	0	0			
Provided or connected residents with assistance in seeking employment including: drafting resumes, preparing for interviews, finding job opportunities, connecting residents to job placement services.	0	0			
Held one or more job fairs.	0	0			
Provided or connected residents with supportive services that can provide direct services or referrals.	0	0			
Provided or connected residents with supportive services that provide one or more of the following: work readiness health screenings, interview clothing, uniforms, test fees, transportation.	0	0			
Assisted residents with finding child care.	0	0			
Assisted residents to apply for, or attend community college or a four year educational institution.	0	0			
Assisted residents to apply for, or attend vocational/technical training.	0	0			
Assisted residents to obtain financial literacy training and/or coaching.	0	0			
Bonding assistance, guaranties, or other efforts to support viable bids from Section 3 business concerns.	0	0			
Provided or connected residents with training on computer use or online technologies.	0	0			
Promoting the use of a business registry designed to create opportunities for disadvantaged and small businesses.	0	0			
Outreach, engagement, or referrals with the state one-stop system, as designed in Section 121(e)(2) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.	0	0			

Other.	0	0			
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**Table 15 – Qualitative Efforts - Number of Activities by Program**

**Narrative**

The County did not complete any projects that qualified under Section 3. There is one (1) on-going project that qualifies under Section 3, but it did not result in the hiring of any Section 3 workers.