

Executive Summary

AP-05 Executive Summary - 91.200(c), 91.220(b)

1. Introduction

On behalf of the Somerset County Board of County Commissioners and the Department of Human Services, the Community Development Office is pleased to present the 2024 Action Plan, which details the proposed uses of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds in Somerset County. The plan also highlights the County's collective effort to improve the quality of life for residents of Somerset County, with special attention to programs and services for low-income residents and those with special needs.

The Somerset County Department of Human Services, the Board of Social Services and the Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee continue to work toward providing services to those who are either experiencing homelessness or will imminently experience homelessness. In response to HUD's initiative to end chronic homelessness within ten years, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in 2005. Even though the time frame for the Plan has expired, the County continues to follow the goals and plans outlined in it. The Plan reflected a multi-pronged approach that had as its main goals the development and implementation of a systematic approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data and identify needs/gaps in services for those experiencing homelessness, the improvement of county-wide coordination at all levels of service delivery for families and individuals experiencing homelessness in the County, the expansion of opportunities that lead to permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness, and increased knowledge, linkage, and usage of mainstream services. Inter-agency cooperation and collaboration have been vital to this effort and under the compassionate leadership of the Board of County Commissioners, as well as the County's Department of Human Services, the County continues working toward this goal.

2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan

This could be a restatement of items or a table listed elsewhere in the plan or a reference to another location. It may also contain any essential items from the housing and homeless needs assessment, the housing market analysis or the strategic plan.

The Somerset County Community Development (CD) Office is committed to effectively and efficiently administering all Federal grant funds for which it is assigned responsibility, while fully complying with all grant and legal requirements, and assisting all actual and potential participants in the grant programs. In addition, the Community Development Office will seek to further the causes of affordable housing and community development in Somerset County by providing training opportunities and technical

assistance, by participating in committees and other activities, and by facilitating the exchange of information and interactions that are necessary to meet community needs.

3. Evaluation of past performance

This is an evaluation of past performance that helped lead the grantee to choose its goals or projects.

The CDBG and HOME Committees meet on an annual basis to choose projects that meet the goals and priorities set by the Consolidated Plan Priorities. Projects are chosen on the basis of how well they meet those goals and priorities, the past performance of the applicant, and how likely it is that the applicant will be able to complete the project during the allotted time period. Somerset County has had an excellent track record of working with subgrantees to ensure that funds are spent properly and in a timely manner, helping to meet the County's goals and priorities for the Program Year.

4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process

Summary from citizen participation section of plan.

Somerset County has a thorough Citizen Participation Plan, originally adopted in April 1995 and most recently re-adopted in May 2019, which meets all of the requirements outlined in 24 CFR 91.105. The intent of the Plan is to provide opportunity for, and to encourage residents to participate in, the development of the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments to the Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). Generally, citizen participation is provided for and encouraged by distribution of program information and literature, public meetings and hearings, and public notices and advertisements.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the County was unable to hold in-person public meetings. Instead, meetings and public hearings were held virtually. In order to accommodate Committee members and the public, all public meetings are now being held both virtually - via Zoom - and in-person. In addition, the Committee meetings associated with the 2024 CDBG and HOME allocation processes were held via virtual meetings. In order for County residents to provide input regarding the 2024 Annual Action Plan, Community Development staff held a joint in-person and virtual (via Zoom) public meeting on June 20, 2024. The public was made aware of this meeting via public notices, and an announcement and notice posted on the County website.

The Action Plan was advertised in a legal notice that appeared in the Courier News, with a comment period from May 30 to July 3, 2024. The notice is included as an attachment to this report. The Action Plan was also presented for public comment at the Somerset County Board of County Commissioners meeting on July 9, 2024. All of the meetings associated with the 2024 CDBG and HOME allocation processes were advertised and open to the public.

5. Summary of public comments

This could be a brief narrative summary or reference an attached document from the Citizen Participation section of the Con Plan.

The proposed Action Plan received no comments.

6. Summary of comments or views not accepted and the reasons for not accepting them

The proposed Action Plan received no comments.

7. Summary

Somerset County has a vibrant non-profit community that continues to provide the highest level of services to its residents. This year, CDBG funds will be used to complete sewer rehabilitation and sidewalk improvement projects in three (3) communities throughout the County; improvements to a public park, a library and a youth center; and to improve handicapped accessibility and perform other improvements at several group homes for developmentally disabled residents. CDBG funds will also be used to provide funding for schooling for disabled children and the children of disabled adults; education training for at-need high school students; employment training for veterans; outreach to homeless and runaway youth; mobile case management for victims of domestic violence; swim instruction for low-income youth; and recreation and life skills programming for youth and disabled adults.

HOME funds will support construction projects for low-income residents and the acquisition of land and new construction of a home built by Habitat for Humanity. In addition, the Board of County Commissioners will continue to provide additional services through the Non-Profit Purchase of Service. Furthermore, in 2017, the Somerset County Board of County Commissioners voted to continue the provisions of the New Jersey Homelessness Trust Fund, and funds will continue to go toward construction projects that add and improve housing for low-income people.

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

1. Agency/entity responsible for preparing/administering the Consolidated Plan

The following are the agencies/entities responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan and those responsible for administration of each grant program and funding source.

Agency Role	Name	Department/Agency
CDBG Administrator	SOMERSET COUNTY	Community Development
HOME Administrator	SOMERSET COUNTY	Community Development

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

Narrative

The Somerset County Community Development Office is the lead entity for overseeing the development of the Plan, although the Somerset County Board of County Commissioners is the final authority as it relates to accepting the funding and other recommendations that are included in the Plan.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

Kimberly Cowart
Somerset County Community Development Office
27 Warren Street - 4th Floor
PO Box 3000
Somerville, NJ 08876

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

1. Introduction

Somerset County has a vibrant non-profit community that continues to provide the highest level of services to its residents. Through the CDBG and HOME programs, along with the Continuum of Care Committee, the County Community Development Office works closely with many of these agencies to address the needs of at-risk County residents.

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

In order to enhance coordination between public and assisted housing providers, and private and government health, mental health, and service agencies, the Community Development Office, along with the County Department of Human Services, works closely with numerous agencies as part of the Continuum of Care Committee. This Committee meets every other month to review data and discuss the needs of people experiencing homelessness and other disadvantaged residents of the County. On average, these meetings are attended by more than 35 people, representing over two dozen different agencies.

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

The Community Development Office and County Department of Human Services, along with representatives from the non-profit sector (particularly homeless and other emergency service providers), comprise the Continuum of Care Committee. Along with serving as a forum for County agencies to meet and discuss the coordination of services and emerging trends, this committee has the indispensable task of meeting bi-monthly to consider and implement policies and procedures to create a stronger safety net for the County's most vulnerable residents. The CD Office provides staffing assistance to the Continuum of Care committee and application process, and facilitates meetings.

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

The County does not receive ESG funds.

2. Agencies, groups, organizations and others who participated in the process and consultations

Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated

1	Agency/Group/Organization	ADTI Housing Corp
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-homeless
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Families with children Non-Homeless Special Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	ADTI provides assistance for individuals with special needs to live successfully in the community. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
2	Agency/Group/Organization	The ARC of Somerset County, Inc
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Children Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Education
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The ARC of Somerset serves the needs of people with developmental disabilities of all ages. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.

3	Agency/Group/Organization	THE CENTER FOR GREAT EXPECTATIONS
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Children Services-homeless Services-Health Services-Education Services-Employment
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Center for Great Expectations provides transitional housing and services for homeless pregnant women and adolescents. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
4	Agency/Group/Organization	Central Jersey Housing Resource Center
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Housing Service-Fair Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC) provides programs designed to increase the availability and affordability of housing. In addition, they are partners with the CD Office in administering the County's downpayment assistance grant program. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.

5	Agency/Group/Organization	Community Hope, Inc.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Education Services-Employment
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Needs - Veterans
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Community Hope provides supportive housing for veterans and other special needs populations. They also have education and employment programs for veterans. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
6	Agency/Group/Organization	Community in Crisis
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Health
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Substance Use Disorder Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Community in Crisis assists people with substance use disorders and seeks to prevent misuse of substances through education and support. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
7	Agency/Group/Organization	Easter Seals New Jersey
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-homeless
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs

	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Easter Seals NJ provides services and resources to people with disabilities. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
8	Agency/Group/Organization	Food Bank Network
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Regional organization Food Bank Neighborhood Organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Food Bank distributes food and other basic items to low-income people and those in need. They have worked with the Continuum of Care to provide food to various events targeting low-income residents. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
9	Agency/Group/Organization	Franklin Township - Somerset
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	PHA Other government - Local Business and Civic Leaders
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Public Housing Needs Economic Development
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Franklin Township is part of the Somerset County Consortium. They are consulted regarding various aspects of the County's housing plan.

10	Agency/Group/Organization	Freedom Trail
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-homeless Services-Health Neighborhood Organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Freedom Trail Self Help Center provides socialization, recreation, and self-help groups for individuals living with mental illness. In the past, they have hosted Somerset County's annual Point in Time Count, as well as numerous Project Homeless Connect and S.E.R.V. events. They are a part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
11	Agency/Group/Organization	Greater Somerset County YMCA
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Persons with Disabilities Regional organization Neighborhood Organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Greater Somerset County YMCA - which was recently formed by the merger of the Somerset Valley YMCA and the Somerset Hills YMCA - provides health and wellness-related programs and services at several facilities throughout the County. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.

12	Agency/Group/Organization	HOME of Somerset County
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Children Services-homeless
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	HOME of Somerset County (previously known as Interfaith Hospitality Network) provides shelter, meals, counseling and assistance to families and single women experiencing homelessness. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
13	Agency/Group/Organization	Homesharing Inc NJ
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	HomeSharing matches people wanting to share their homes with people seeking permanent housing. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
14	Agency/Group/Organization	JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF SOMERSET
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Health Health Agency
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Counseling services for low-income clients

	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Jewish Family Service provides counseling, referral services, and other services for persons of all faiths. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
15	Agency/Group/Organization	MARTIN LUTHER KING YOUTH CENTER INC.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Education
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Martin Luther King Youth Center provides educational, cultural, recreational, developmental, and nutritional programs to meet the needs of school-aged children of income-eligible families. They are frequent applicants for CDBG funding and the CD Office has regular contact with them.
16	Agency/Group/Organization	MATHENY MEDICAL & EDUCATIONAL CENTER
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Health Services-Education
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Matheny Medical & Educational Center provides residential and out-patient medical and dental care to disabled individuals. They are frequent applicants for funding and the CD Office has regular contact with them.

17	Agency/Group/Organization	Middle Earth
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Education Services-Employment
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Middle Earth offers programs designed to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of youth. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee. In addition, their Director is a member of the HOME and HTF Committees.
18	Agency/Group/Organization	Midland Adult Services
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Health
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Midland School is a comprehensive special education program dedicated to the academic, social, emotional, and career education needs of adults and children with I/DD. They are frequent applicants for funding and the CD Office has regular contact with them.
19	Agency/Group/Organization	NORWESCAP, INC.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Housing Service-Fair Housing

	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Norwescap is an organization that assists low-income people with finding affordable housing, maintaining their utility bills, and staying in their home longer. They also assist with rent and security deposits. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
20	Agency/Group/Organization	Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Health Other government - County
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Mental health assistance
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center is a comprehensive mental health center dedicated to the prevention, early detection, and treatment of those with mental health and behavioral health issues. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
21	Agency/Group/Organization	Safe + Sound Somerset
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Victims of Domestic Violence Services-homeless Services - Victims
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Strategy

	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Safe + Sound Somerset provides housing, counseling, and other services to victims of domestic violence. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
22	Agency/Group/Organization	Soldier On
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Health
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homelessness Needs - Veterans
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Soldier On is an organization committed to ending veteran homelessness by providing veterans with transitional housing and supportive services. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
23	Agency/Group/Organization	Somerset Community Action Program
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Education Neighborhood Organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Somerset Community Action Program (SCAP) provides supportive services to families in need, as well as a licensed day care center. SCAP is funded to provide anti-poverty activities. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
24	Agency/Group/Organization	Somerset County PESS/Bridgeway
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Health

	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Non-Homeless Special Needs Healthcare for individuals living with mental illness
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Bridgeway provides psychiatric rehabilitation services and facilitates recovery from mental illness and co-occurring problems. Several years ago, they took over as providers for Somerset County's Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS). They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
25	Agency/Group/Organization	St. Ann Social Ministry
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-homeless Neighborhood Organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homelessness Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	St. Ann is a Catholic Church with a social ministry that provides assistance to the neediest members of the community. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
26	Agency/Group/Organization	United Way of Northern New Jersey
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Health Services-Education Regional organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homelessness Strategy

	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The United Way of Northern New Jersey is the regional branch of the national organization. Their focus is on ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) residents who are unable to afford the basic necessities of food, childcare, health care, technology and transportation. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
27	Agency/Group/Organization	Veterans' Administration
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services-Health Services-Education Services-Employment Other government - Federal
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homelessness Needs - Veterans
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	The Veterans' Administration provides primary care and specialty health services, as well as education, job training, and housing, for veterans. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
28	Agency/Group/Organization	Visions & Pathways
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Children Services-Victims of Domestic Violence Services-homeless Services-Health Services-Education

	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Needs - Unaccompanied youth Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Visions & Pathways provides short and long-term residences for abandoned, abused, and neglected children. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
29	Agency/Group/Organization	Volunteers of America Delaware Valley
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-homeless Regional organization Neighborhood Organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Volunteers of America provides shelter for families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness, as well as permanent supportive housing. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee and are frequent recipients of CoC funding.
30	Agency/Group/Organization	Zarephath Christian Church
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Children Services-Health Services-Education Neighborhood Organization

	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Zarephath Christian Church is a faith-based church that provides assistance to community members who are in need. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.
31	Agency/Group/Organization	Zufall
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services-Health Health Agency
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Healthcare for low-income clients
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Zufall Health provides healthcare to mostly low-income and under-served people. They have received significant funding from the CDBG program and the CD Office works closely with them to improve the services that they offer. They are part of the County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee.

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

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

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
Continuum of Care	Somerset County Community Development Office	

Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts

Narrative

As part of the Somerset County Consortium, the Community Development Office coordinated efforts with Franklin Township in the implementation and creation of the Consolidated Plan.

AP-12 Participation - 91.401, 91.105, 91.200(c)

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

Somerset County has a thorough Citizen Participation Plan, adopted in April 1995, which meets all of the requirements outlined in 24 CFR 91.105. The intent of the Plan is to provide opportunity for, and encourage residents to participate in, the development of the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments to the Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). Generally, citizen participation will be provided for and encouraged by distribution of program information and literature, public meetings and hearings, and public notices and advertisements.

In order for County residents to provide input and indicate their preferences for Housing and Community Development needs and services, Community Development staff held a joint in-person/virtual (via Zoom) public meeting on June 20, 2024. This hybrid meeting was held to give the public the most options to attend and participate in the process. The public was made aware of this meeting via notifications in local papers and announcements made on the County website.

Citizen Participation Outreach

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
1	Public Meeting	Minorities Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: Spanish Non-targeted/broad community	There were no members of the public in attendance.	The proposed Action Plan received no comments.	The proposed Action Plan received no comments.	

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
2	Newspaper Ad	Minorities Non-targeted/broad community	The proposed Action Plan received no comments.	The proposed Action Plan received no comments.	The proposed Action Plan received no comments.	

Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach

Expected Resources

AP-15 Expected Resources - 91.420(b), 91.220(c)(1,2)

Introduction

For Program Year 2024, Somerset County anticipates receiving \$1,067,192 in CDBG funding and \$592,575.79 in HOME funding, including Program Administration costs. These amounts represent a slight increase in CDBG funds and a decrease of approximately \$80,000 in HOME funds as compared to PY 2023. In general, over the last several years, Somerset County has seen CDBG and HOME funding remain relatively steady.

In addition to the funding from HUD, Somerset County has a Homelessness Trust Fund (HTF) that provides funding for legal services, case management, and some housing construction projects. Over the last five years, the Fund - which is funded by a \$5 surcharge on real estate transactions - has averaged over \$100,000 per year. Due largely to a depressed housing market, the Fund only accumulated a little over \$58,000 during calendar year 2023.

PLEASE NOTE: Somerset County received its CPD allocation after already filing the Public Notice and submitting the Annual Action Plan Resolution to the Board of County Commissioners. Our actual allocation was 21 cents less than what was initially expected, based on the released amounts. That accounts for the slight discrepancy between what is listed in the Public Notice and what is listed here in the Action Plan. In addition, since the "expected resources" section for the projects in AP-35 does not allow for cents, there is a 79 cent discrepancy

between that and the amount listed in this section (AP-15).

Anticipated Resources

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
CDBG	public - federal	Acquisition Admin and Planning Economic Development Housing Public Improvements Public Services	1,067,192	0	30,774	1,097,966	0	
HOME	public - federal	Acquisition Homebuyer assistance Homeowner rehab Multifamily rental new construction Multifamily rental rehab New construction for ownership TBRA	592,576	0	52,817	645,393	0	

Table 2 - Expected Resources – Priority Table

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

In nearly every grant year, the amount of CDBG funds requested is greater than the amount of funds available; within the Public Services

category, the amount requested is often two times greater than the fifteen percent (15%) statutory cap will permit to be awarded. Likewise, the amount of HOME funds requested is often significantly greater than the amount of funds available. After a decrease in funding requests that was most likely related to the COVID pandemic and the inability of many organizations to do projects while their residents were quarantined, request amounts have returned to pre-pandemic levels. In general, in order to maximize the return of limited funding and to provide as much support as possible, the CDBG and HOME committees opt to provide partial funding to projects that are presented for consideration. This has become especially important recently, as other public and private funding sources have been diminished, while the need for funding has not.

Virtually all of the CDBG Public Service projects and many of the Public Facilities and Improvements projects will utilize additional resources. In addition, all of the HOME projects will leverage additional funding sources in order to be completed. The Somerset County HOME program has built up a large reserve of HOME Match funds by funding significant construction projects over the years. Many of the projects have received additional funding that amounts to several times the amount of the HOME funds granted. It is expected that the HOME projects funded in coming years (including those in 2024) will continue to leverage significant outside funding and easily satisfy the HOME Match requirements.

If appropriate, describe publically owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that may be used to address the needs identified in the plan

N/A

Discussion

Although other County divisions may do so, the CD Office does not traditionally apply for local public or private sector resources and therefore, cannot say definitively how other resources will be used to identify needs covered by the strategic plan. Given what is known about the nature and extent of the County's housing and community development needs and the limited amount of CDBG and HOME funds available, it is certain that local public and private resources will be used to partially support the objectives that are initiated in this Action Plan to address identified needs through the creation and maintenance of affordable housing, along with the funds to support the provision of services to the County's special needs populations. These services include, but are not limited to: nutrition programs, outreach and referral, case management, utility assistance, rental subsidies, drug and alcohol counseling, employment and training services, mental health services, affordable child care, transportation, and medical assistance.

Annual Goals and Objectives

AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives - 91.420, 91.220(c)(3)&(e)

Goals Summary Information

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless	2020	2024	Affordable Housing	Countywide	Affordable Rental Housing	CDBG: \$82,500	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 231 Persons Assisted
2	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled	2020	2024	Non-Homeless Special Needs	Countywide	Housing for Persons with Special Needs	CDBG: \$106,508	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 62 Households Assisted
3	Education/training for low-income persons	2020	2024	Education	Countywide	Youth Services Employment Training	CDBG: \$102,243	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 419 Persons Assisted
4	Public improvements in LMAs	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development Public Improvements	Countywide	Street Improvements	CDBG: \$299,212	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 15533 Persons Assisted

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
5	Improvements at public facilities	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Countywide	Youth Centers Health Services	CDBG: \$263,291	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 7110 Persons Assisted
6	Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing	2020	2024	Affordable Housing	Countywide	Affordable Housing for Purchase Affordable Rental Housing	HOME: \$444,432	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 8 Households Assisted

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
7	Administrative Costs	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development Administrative Costs	Countywide	Affordable Housing for Purchase Affordable Rental Housing Housing for Persons with Special Needs Parks & Recreational Facilities Street Improvements Youth Centers Transportation Services Senior Services Energy Conservation Health Services Youth Services Employment Training	CDBG: \$213,438 HOME: \$59,256	Other: 4 Other

Table 3 – Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

1	Goal Name	Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless
	Goal Description	
2	Goal Name	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled
	Goal Description	
3	Goal Name	Education/training for low-income persons
	Goal Description	
4	Goal Name	Public improvements in LMAs
	Goal Description	
5	Goal Name	Improvements at public facilities
	Goal Description	
6	Goal Name	Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing
	Goal Description	
7	Goal Name	Administrative Costs
	Goal Description	

AP-35 Projects - 91.420, 91.220(d)

Introduction

The County intends to use its Program Year 2024 CDBG funds to provide funding for eight (8) Public Services projects, nine (9) Public Facilities projects, and three (3) Public Improvements projects. In addition, the County expects to use its HOME funds to provide funding for one (1) acquisition and rehabilitation project for low-income residents and one (1) single-family home constructions project. The County also expects to have a reserve of CHDO funds for a future CHDO project.

In addition to the funding from HUD, Somerset County has a Homelessness Trust Fund (HTF) that provides funding for a rental assistance program, legal services, case management, and some construction projects. Over the last five years, the Fund - which is funded by a \$5 surcharge on real estate transactions - has averaged over \$110,000 per year. During calendar year 2023, the Fund accumulated a little under \$60,000. This decrease was largely due to a decline in the housing market and a corresponding decrease in the number of real estate transactions.

#	Project Name
1	Arc of Somerset County - Jerry Davis Center for Children & Families
2	Community Hope - Hope for Veterans Employment Training Program
3	Greater Somerset County YMCA - Safety Around Water Program
4	HomeSharing - Shared Affordable Housing
5	Jewish Community Center - J-Cares Intern Program
6	Middle Earth - Journeys Employment Readiness Component
7	Safe + Sound Somerset - Mobile Case Management
8	Visions & Pathways - Street Smart Outreach Program
9	Arc of Somerset - Old Stirling Bathroom Improvements
10	Jewish Family Service - Roof Replacement
11	Manville Borough - Library Improvements
12	Martin Luther King Youth Center - Bathroom Fixtures & Water Fountain Replacement
13	Midland Adult Services - Murphy Work Center Exterior Improvements
14	Our House - Group Home Generator Installation
15	Somerville Borough - Vanderveer Park Improvements
16	Visions & Pathways - Group Home Improvements
17	Youth Consultation Services - Sawtelle Group Home Improvements
18	Bound Brook Borough - Sidewalk Improvements (Hardy Avenue)
19	North Plainfield Borough - Sanitary Sewer Improvements (Jennings Lane)
20	South Bound Brook Borough - Sidewalk Improvements (Maple Avenue)
21	Bellagio Property Management LLC - Supportive Housing Acquisition & Rehabilitation
22	Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity - Acquisition/New Construction (2024)
23	Somerset County - CHDO Reserve Funds (2024)

#	Project Name
24	Somerset County - 2024 CDBG Program Administration Costs
25	Somerset County - 2024 HOME Program Administration Costs

Table 4 – Project Information

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

The Community Development Office issues a Request for Proposal (RFP) and the CDBG and HOME Committees review the respective proposals. The Committees use a ranking system to rank the proposals before and after presentations are made. One of the qualifications for proposals is that they meet one of the Priority Needs, which have been determined by a survey. The survey - which is made available to the public and is issued in both English and Spanish (and is available to be translated into many other languages on the County's website) - is given every five (5) years (prior to the submission of the 5-Year Consolidated Plan) and asks respondents to rank various community needs. Based on the responses to the survey, the needs are then ranked as "high," "medium," and "low" priority. Proposals that fall into the "high" priority category are encouraged and are given priority.

AP-38 Project Summary
Project Summary Information

1	Project Name	Arc of Somerset County - Jerry Davis Center for Children & Families
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled Education/training for low-income persons
	Needs Addressed	Youth Centers Youth Services
	Funding	CDBG: \$20,000
	Description	Funding to provide low-to-moderate income families with subsidized childcare services for children with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and wraparound family support interventions for identified parents who may present with daily challenges.
	Target Date	8/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Approximately 20-25 children and their families - all of whom will be low-to-moderate income - will benefit from this activity.
	Location Description	141 South Main Street Manville, NJ 08835
Planned Activities	Provides funds to low-/moderate-income families for subsidized childcare services for children with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and family support for identified parents who present with intellectual, developmental, physical or mental health challenges.	
2	Project Name	Community Hope - Hope for Veterans Employment Training Program
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled Education/training for low-income persons
	Needs Addressed	Employment Training
	Funding	CDBG: \$16,274
	Description	Funds to provide homeless veterans with an employment training program to assist them in securing and maintaining employment. Services include: employment skills assessments, preparing and updating resumes, computer skill training, conducting job searches, developing networking skills, interview preparation, and assistance with applying for federal aid for college and vocational training.

	Target Date	9/1/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 95 people will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	This project will take place on the campus of the VA New Jersey Healthcare System in Lyons, NJ. Address: 151 Knollcroft Road Building 53 Lyons, NJ 07939
	Planned Activities	Funds to provide homeless veterans with an employment training program to assist them in securing and maintaining employment. Services include: employment skills assessments, preparing and updating resumes, computer skill training, conducting job searches, developing networking skills, interview preparation, and assistance with applying for federal aid for college and vocational training.
3	Project Name	Greater Somerset County YMCA - Safety Around Water Program
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Education/training for low-income persons
	Needs Addressed	Youth Services
	Funding	CDBG: \$7,584
	Description	This project provides funds to teach fundamental water-safety skills, and to protect against youth drowning, to 2nd grade students in Manville elementary school. In an effort to overcome obstacles and barriers involved with families enrolling their children, the program is free to participants, with transportation provided by the school district to and from the lessons.
	Target Date	6/30/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 120 students will benefit from this project.

	Location Description	The program will be held at the Hillsborough YMCA location: 19 East Mountain Road Hillsborough, NJ
	Planned Activities	This program will teach fundamental water-safety skills to 2nd grade students.
4	Project Name	HomeSharing - Shared Affordable Housing
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Rental Housing
	Funding	CDBG: \$25,000
	Description	Funds to help match "seekers" (people seeking housing) with "providers" (people looking to share their home, usually for additional income). HomeSharing does initial client screening, background/reference checks, takes applications, and matches seekers with providers. They also monitor shared housing matches through follow-up calls and visits.
	Target Date	8/31/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 90 people will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	Potential matches will be made throughout the county. The office location is: 120 Finderne Avenue Bridgewater, NJ
Planned Activities	This project helps match "seekers" (people seeking housing) with "providers" (people looking to share their home, usually for additional income). HomeSharing does initial client screening, background/reference checks, takes applications, and matches seekers with providers. They also monitor shared housing matches through follow-up calls and visits.	
5	Project Name	Jewish Community Center - J-Cares Intern Program
	Target Area	Countywide

	Goals Supported	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled Education/training for low-income persons
	Needs Addressed	Youth Services
	Funding	CDBG: \$20,000
	Description	This project provides structured programming for people with special needs who are 21 years and older. They participate in a variety of social and recreational activities, including: cooking, swimming, exercising, yoga, arts and crafts, music therapy, computer skills, and more.
	Target Date	2/28/2026
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 54 special needs individuals will benefit from this program.
	Location Description	775 Talamini Road Bridgewater, NJ 08807
	Planned Activities	This project provides structured programming for people with special needs who are 21 years and older. They participate in a variety of social and recreational activities, including: cooking, swimming, exercising, yoga, arts and crafts, music therapy, computer skills, and more.
6	Project Name	Middle Earth - Journeys Employment Readiness Component
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Education/training for low-income persons
	Needs Addressed	Youth Services Employment Training
	Funding	CDBG: \$13,385
	Description	Funds to provide select youth in the "Journeys Program" with an employment readiness education, an employment experience, and the ability to obtain a head start on career planning.
	Target Date	8/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 40 youth will benefit from this program.

	Location Description	<p>Services will be provided at the following locations:</p> <p>Codrington Park 200 Thompson Avenue Bound Brook, NJ</p> <p>Manville High School 1100 Brooks Blvd Manville, NJ</p> <p>Franklin Youth Center 429 Lewis Street Somerset, NJ</p>
	Planned Activities	<p>The Employment Readiness Component (ERC) of the Journeys program will provide select youth in the "Journeys Program" with an employment readiness education, an employment experience, and the ability to obtain a head start on career planning. ERC youth will participate in employment readiness sessions on topics such as: job searching, creating a career plan, writing a resume, budgeting/financial literacy, interviewing skills, and more.</p>
7	Project Name	Safe + Sound Somerset - Mobile Case Management
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless
	Needs Addressed	<p>Affordable Rental Housing Crime Awareness</p>
	Funding	CDBG: \$17,500
	Description	<p>The Mobile Case Management (MCM) program provides specialized support, advocacy, and education for survivors by meeting them where they are, at off-site locations and safe houses. This improves accessibility for clients who want in-person meetings.</p>
	Target Date	1/31/2026
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 85 people will benefit from this activity.

	Location Description	Services will be provided at confidential locations in Somerset County. Safe+Sound's administrative offices are located at: 92 East Main Street Somerville, NJ 08876
	Planned Activities	The Mobile Case Management (MCM) program provides specialized support, advocacy, and education for survivors by meeting them where they are, at off-site locations and safe houses. The program will include: trauma-informed advocacy, financial empowerment education, connections to resources, support and emergency financial assistance that reduces barriers to permanent housing and promotes long-term sustainability.
8	Project Name	Visions & Pathways - Street Smart Outreach Program
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless
	Needs Addressed	Health Services Youth Services Employment Training
	Funding	CDBG: \$35,000
	Description	Funds for the agency's street outreach program in Somerset County. This program primarily assists runaway and homeless youth ages 13-24, although they will assist anyone who seeks help, regardless of their age. The program provides at-risk youth access to: emergency shelter, food, health care, and mental health services, as well as basic needs such as food and clothing, transportation, and educational support.
	Target Date	8/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that this program will assist 134 at-risk youth in Somerset County.
	Location Description	This program will be provided at: 16 Fourth Avenue Bridgewater, NJ 08807 49 Brahma Avenue Bridgewater, NJ 08807

	Planned Activities	The program provides at-risk youth access to: emergency shelter, food, health care, and mental health services, as well as basic needs such as food and clothing, transportation, and educational support. Staff will also work to educate youth about substance abuse, specifically the growing use of heroin and other opiates.
9	Project Name	Arc of Somerset - Old Stirling Bathroom Improvements
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Rental Housing Housing for Persons with Special Needs
	Funding	CDBG: \$45,000
	Description	Funds for improvements to the ADA bathrooms and flooring in a group home for eight (8) adults with developmental and physical disabilities.
	Target Date	2/28/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that eight (8) individuals will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	57 Old Stirling Road Warren, NJ 07059
Planned Activities	This project involves making much needed improvements to the ADA bathrooms and flooring in a group home for eight (8) adults with developmental and physical disabilities.	
10	Project Name	Jewish Family Service - Roof Replacement
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improvements at public facilities
	Needs Addressed	Health Services
	Funding	CDBG: \$36,000

	Description	Jewish Family Service (JFS) is a non-profit, non-sectarian social service agency that provides mental health counseling, senior services, career services, family mentorship and other services for approximately 1,400 individuals per year, the majority of whom are low/moderate-income. This project would provide funds to replace the roof on the JFS building. The roof is 17 years old and NJ roofing codes and standards have been updated since then. The project would lower costs associated with emergency leak patching, as well as increase safety for clients.
	Target Date	6/30/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 1,400 individuals will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	150 West High Street Somerville, NJ
	Planned Activities	This project involves replacing the roof on the Jewish Family Service building. The roof is 17 years old and NJ roofing codes and standards have been updated since then. The project would lower costs associated with emergency leak patching, as well as increase safety for clients.
11	Project Name	Manville Borough - Library Improvements
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improvements at public facilities
	Needs Addressed	Parks & Recreational Facilities
	Funding	CDBG: \$90,895
	Description	Funds for the rehabilitation and replacement of the PVC pipe network that runs from the roof of the Manville Library. The facility has incurred damage from roof leaks, increasing in frequency in recent years.
	Target Date	12/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 5,500 people will benefit from this project.

	Location Description	100 South 10th Avenue Manville, NJ
	Planned Activities	This project involves the rehabilitation and replacement of the PVC pipe network that runs from the roof of the Manville Library. The interior walls of the existing drainage system will be lined to allow contractors to address both the corrosion and joint issues without opening walls. Piping will be replaced to prevent further damage.
12	Project Name	Martin Luther King Youth Center - Bathroom Fixtures & Water Fountain Replacement
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improvements at public facilities
	Needs Addressed	Youth Centers
	Funding	CDBG: \$45,500
	Description	The Martin Luther King Youth Center is a non-profit After-School and Summer Camp program serving underprivileged children primarily from low-income families. This project would provide funds to replace all bathroom fixtures and sinks, and all water fountains, in all four (4) classrooms, and install hand dryers in each bathroom.
	Target Date	1/28/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 160 children will benefit from this activity.
	Location Description	1298 Prince Rodgers Avenue Bridgewater, NJ
Planned Activities	This project would provide funds to replace all bathroom fixtures and sinks, and all water fountains, in all four (4) classrooms, and install hand dryers in each bathroom.	
13	Project Name	Midland Adult Services - Murphy Work Center Exterior Improvements
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled Improvements at public facilities
	Needs Addressed	Housing for Persons with Special Needs
	Funding	CDBG: \$22,100

	Description	Midland Adult Services provides services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This project will provide funds to install additional lighting at the Patricia Murphy Work Center, improving safety, security and accessibility.
	Target Date	8/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 44 individuals will benefit from this activity.
	Location Description	60 Industrial Parkway Branchburg, NJ 08876
	Planned Activities	This project involves the installation of additional lighting at the Patricia Murphy Work Center in order to improve safety, accessibility and security. The scope of the project includes the installation of five (5) pillars for new light poles, the installation of five (5) light poles with LED fixture heads, and the trenching and conduit of power from the Work Center to the light poles.
14	Project Name	Our House - Group Home Generator Installation
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Rental Housing Housing for Persons with Special Needs
	Funding	CDBG: \$20,000
	Description	Funding for the installation of a generator at a group home for six (6) individuals with developmental disabilities.
	Target Date	5/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is expected that the six (6) individuals residing in the group home will benefit from this activity.
	Location Description	103 High Tor Drive Watchung, NJ
	Planned Activities	This project involves the installation of a generator at a group home for six (6) individuals with developmental disabilities.

15	Project Name	Somerville Borough - Vanderveer Park Improvements
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improvements at public facilities
	Needs Addressed	Parks & Recreational Facilities
	Funding	CDBG: \$90,896
	Description	Funds for the rehabilitation of Vanderveer Park, the most utilized outdoor recreation facility in Somerville. It has full handicap accessibility and has walkable access.
	Target Date	11/30/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is expected that 50 people per day will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	118 Veterans Memorial Drive East Somerville, NJ
Planned Activities	This project involves the rehabilitation of Vanderveer Park, the most utilized outdoor recreation facility in Somerville. Improvements include: milling/repaving the pickleball and tennis courts, and regrading the stone base; replacement of site fixtures and posting of safety signage; and replacement of lighting to improve safety and security.	
16	Project Name	Visions & Pathways - Group Home Improvements
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Assist persons at risk of becoming homeless Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Rental Housing Youth Centers
	Funding	CDBG: \$30,000
	Description	Funds to renovate/replace the roof, ceiling, gutter and basement flooring in a transitional living program for homeless youth ages 16 to 21. This project would ensure the property is in compliance with the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) of New Jersey and assist the program in retaining its State of NJ license compliance.
	Target Date	6/13/2025

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 12 homeless youth will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	16 Fourth Avenue Bridgewater, NJ 08807
	Planned Activities	This project will make improvements to the bathrooms in Passages, a transitional living facility for homeless youth. Improvements include renovating/replacing the roof, ceiling, gutter and basement flooring.
17	Project Name	Youth Consultation Services - Sawtelle Group Home Improvements
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Rental Housing
	Funding	CDBG: \$50,182
	Description	Funds for improvements to the kitchen in a group home for adults with developmental disabilities. This project would allow clients with various abilities to use the space.
	Target Date	2/28/2026
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	This project will benefit 4 individuals with developmental disabilities.
	Location Description	694 Burning Bush Road Bridgewater, NJ
	Planned Activities	This project involves improvements to the kitchen of a group home for 4 adults with developmental disabilities. The work will include: demolition, installation of new electric and plumbing, new flooring, sheet rock, new cabinets, and new doors.
18	Project Name	Bound Brook Borough - Sidewalk Improvements (Hardy Avenue)
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Public improvements in LMAs
	Needs Addressed	Street Improvements

	Funding	CDBG: \$99,704
	Description	Funds for improvements to the roadbed, curbs and sidewalks along Hardy Avenue in order to provide a better pedestrian travel way and bring them into compliance with Federal ADA guidelines.
	Target Date	1/31/2026
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 11,998 people will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	Hardy Avenue, from Talmage Avenue to Wheatland Avenue
	Planned Activities	This project will include improvements to the roadbed, curbs and sidewalks along Hardy Avenue. The sidewalks and ADA ramps will also be reconstructed in order to provide a better pedestrian travel way, as well as bring them into compliance with Federal ADA guidelines.
19	Project Name	North Plainfield Borough - Sanitary Sewer Improvements (Jennings Lane)
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Public improvements in LMAs
	Needs Addressed	Street Improvements
	Funding	CDBG: \$99,703
	Description	Funds for the rehabilitation of the sanitary sewer infrastructure north of Route 22, in the vicinity of Watchung Avenue, Jennings Lane, and adjacent streets.
	Target Date	12/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 405 people will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	This project will take place at various locations north of Route 22, in the vicinity of Watchung Avenue, Jennings Lane, and adjacent streets. It is located in Census Tract 520.02, Block Group 3, with the project service area extending into a small portion of Census Tract 523.00, Block Group 2.

	Planned Activities	This project involves the rehabilitation of the sanitary sewer infrastructure north of Route 22, in the vicinity of Watchung Avenue, Jennings Lane, and adjacent streets. This will include: the replacement of 40 linear feet of 8-inch diameter pipe, cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) lining of 1,200 linear feet of 8-inch diameter clay pipe, and rehabilitation of two (2) manholes.
20	Project Name	South Bound Brook Borough - Sidewalk Improvements (Maple Avenue)
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Public improvements in LMAs
	Needs Addressed	Street Improvements
	Funding	CDBG: \$99,805
	Description	Funds for replacing, and adding to, the sidewalks along Maple Avenue, between Edgewood Terrace and Main Street, to provide sidewalk and ADA access to Maple Park.
	Target Date	7/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 3,130 people will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	This project will take place along Maple Avenue, between Edgewood Terrace and Main Street.
	Planned Activities	This project involves replacing, and adding to, the sidewalks along Maple Avenue, between Edgewood Terrace and Main Street, to provide sidewalk and ADA access to Maple Park.
21	Project Name	Bellagio Property Management LLC - Supportive Housing Acquisition & Rehabilitation
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improve accessibility/living standard for disabled Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Rental Housing Housing for Persons with Special Needs
	Funding	HOME: \$292,002

	Description	Funds for the acquisition and rehabilitation of an existing home to be turned into a four(4)-bedroom permanent supportive housing group home.
	Target Date	8/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is expected that four (4) adults with developmental disabilities will benefit from being housed in this group home.
	Location Description	25 West High Street Somerville, NJ
	Planned Activities	This project involves the acquisition of property in Somerville, which will then be converted into a permanent supportive housing group home for four (4) adults with developmental disabilities.
22	Project Name	Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity - Acquisition/New Construction (2024)
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Housing for Purchase
	Funding	HOME: \$205,247
	Description	Funding for the acquisition of land and new construction of an affordable home for low-/moderate-income residents.
	Target Date	5/29/2026
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is expected that one (1) low-/moderate-income family will benefit from this project.
	Location Description	The location has not yet been determined. The agency is looking at a number of sites for sale in Somerset County.
	Planned Activities	This project will involve the acquisition of land and the construction of new housing for low-/moderate-income families.
23	Project Name	Somerset County - CHDO Reserve Funds (2024)
	Target Area	Countywide

	Goals Supported	Maintain/expand supply of affordable housing
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Housing for Purchase Affordable Rental Housing Housing for Persons with Special Needs
	Funding	HOME: \$88,887
	Description	These are funds designated for a CHDO activity. No CHDOs submitted applications for PY2024 funding, so these funds are being reserved for future CHDO projects.
	Target Date	8/31/2027
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Since these funds are for future projects, it is not known how many families will benefit.
	Location Description	Since these funds are for future projects, no location is known.
	Planned Activities	These are funds designated for a CHDO activity. No CHDOs submitted applications for PY2024 funding, so these funds are being reserved for future CHDO projects. Based on previous activities, it is likely these funds will be used to create supportive housing for individuals with special needs.
24	Project Name	Somerset County - 2024 CDBG Program Administration Costs
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Administrative Costs
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Housing for Purchase Affordable Rental Housing Housing for Persons with Special Needs Parks & Recreational Facilities Street Improvements Youth Centers Transportation Services Senior Services Energy Conservation Health Services Youth Services Employment Training Crime Awareness Lead-Based Paint Hazards

	Funding	CDBG: \$213,438
	Description	Funds for the administration of the PY2024 CDBG program.
	Target Date	8/31/2025
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	These are administrative costs.
	Location Description	27 Warren Street 4th Floor Somerville, NJ 08876
	Planned Activities	Funds for the administration of the PY2024 CDBG program.
25	Project Name	Somerset County - 2024 HOME Program Administration Costs
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Administrative Costs
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Housing for Purchase Affordable Rental Housing Housing for Persons with Special Needs Parks & Recreational Facilities Street Improvements Youth Centers Transportation Services Senior Services Energy Conservation Health Services Youth Services Employment Training Crime Awareness Lead-Based Paint Hazards
	Funding	HOME: \$59,256
	Description	Funds for the administration of the PY2024 HOME program.
	Target Date	8/31/2025

Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	These are funds for administrative costs.
Location Description	27 Warren Street 4th Floor Somerville, NJ 08876
Planned Activities	Funds for the administration of the PY2024 HOME program.

AP-50 Geographic Distribution - 91.420, 91.220(f)

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

The County's Low/Mod Service Areas (LMAs) are the only geographic locations that are targeted for eligibility to receive assistance. In Somerset County - at the time that the RFP was issued (January 2024) - these were block groups where at least 44.87% (uncapped, with the exception criteria) of the residents earn less than 80% of the Area Median Income. In general, these were areas that are concentrated in the County's older boroughs and include block groups in Bedminster, Bound Brook, Bridgewater, Hillsborough, Manville, North Plainfield, Raritan, Somerville, and South Bound Brook. The County's LMAs also reflect higher minority populations than other areas in the County.

Shortly before submission of this Action Plan, HUD issued revised percentages for the LMAs. Effective August 1, 2024, Somerset County's percentage will be 42.8% (uncapped, with the exception criteria) of residents earning less than 80% of the Area Median Income. This change eliminated the block group in Bedminster and added block groups in Bernards, Bernardsville, Green Brook, and Montgomery. In addition, a few of the prior block groups in other towns were eliminated, while others in those towns were added. A review of the anticipated projects for PY2024 found that none of these changes impacted any of the projects.

Aside from LMAs and other projects that are sited in eligible areas, there are CDBG-funded projects in Bound Brook, Branchburg, Bridgewater, Manville, North Plainfield, Somerville, South Bound Brook, Warren and Watchung, which will benefit categorically-eligible residents. There is also a HOME-funded project planned in Somerville, and a Habitat for Humanity project at a county location to be determined later.

Geographic Distribution

Target Area	Percentage of Funds
Countywide	100

Table 5 - Geographic Distribution

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically

The County's LMAs are where the lowest-income residents reside and where there is the greatest need for investment of funds.

Discussion

The County's Low/Mod Service Areas (LMAs) are the only geographic locations that are targeted for eligibility to receive assistance. In Somerset County - at the time that the RFP was issued (January 2024) - these were block groups where at least 44.87% (uncapped, with the exception criteria) of the residents

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Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing - 91.420, 91.220(g)

Introduction

As one of the most expensive places in the state to live, a top priority of Somerset County's housing plan is to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing for extremely low and low-income persons. To this end, the County will commit significant funding to projects that address these needs.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	6
Non-Homeless	8
Special-Needs	18
Total	32

Table 6 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	0
The Production of New Units	5
Rehab of Existing Units	18
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	23

Table 7 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type

Discussion

One of the top priorities of the County's housing plan is to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing for extremely low and low-income persons. To this end, the County will commit significant funding to projects that address these needs.

AP-60 Public Housing - 91.420, 91.220(h)

Introduction

The Housing Authority located in Franklin Township is within a municipality that has its own CDBG Program. This precludes the County from providing assistance through the CDBG Program, and HOME Program funds cannot be used because it is not possible to attach a lien to federal property.

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

The Franklin Township Housing Authority (FTHA) administers the public housing within the Township. It has a limited housing inventory and does not have plans to increase the number of accessible units. Currently, the FTHA has a total of 50 annual contribution contract (ACC) units, 90 non-ACC units, and 234 housing choice voucher (HCV) vouchers.

The Housing Authority will continue to partner with local non-profits to work with a private management company and the Authority to provide public housing residents with access to job training and social service programs that will help to move residents toward self-sufficiency. This will also provide families with access to programs that will improve their living environment.

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

Franklin Township has created an Affordability Assistance Program from its Housing Trust Fund to provide closing costs and down payment assistance for its affordable housing units and a loan program to prevent foreclosures for existing affordable housing owners who are experiencing problems with arrearages in taxes and/or association fees. The Township has partnered with the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC) to administer this program.

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

The Franklin Township Housing Authority is not designated as troubled.

Discussion

Public Housing in Franklin Township continues to be in the process of redevelopment. A number of developments have been built over the last several years, including Voorhees Station and the Soaries Residence, which combined for over 130 units of housing.

The Housing Authority is not troubled and will receive funding for the operation of its Section 8 program and public housing. The Township has also created an Affordability Assistance program from its Affordable Housing Trust Fund to provide closing costs and down payment assistance for its affordable

housing units and a loan program to prevent foreclosures for existing affordable housing owners who are experiencing problems with arrearages in taxes and/or association fees. This program is administered by the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC).

AP-65 Homeless and Other Special Needs Activities - 91.420, 91.220(i)

Introduction

The Somerset County Department of Human Services, along with the Board of Social Services and the Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee, continues to work toward providing services to those who are either experiencing homelessness or imminently homeless. Funding from the County Homelessness Trust Fund (HTF) is also available to support this effort.

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

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

The County agencies work closely with each other and with non-profit service providers to reach out to, and address the needs of, individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The Community Development Office coordinates several events during the year, including the Point in Time/Project Homeless Connect (PHC) event at the end of January, although these took place in a different form during the pandemic. The CD office is working on creating new events and ways to reach out to this population. These events are advertised at shelters, soup kitchens, the Board of Social Services, through providers, and word-of-mouth. Over the years, the CD staff has developed a good relationship and reputation with many of these people and the events are always well-attended. County agencies and providers meet with people experiencing homelessness, discuss their situation, assess their needs, and are often able to have them speak directly to other providers already on-site that same day. In addition, clothing, personal care products, food, and other basic need items are distributed.

Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were limited opportunities for events. In response, the County helped coordinate vaccination events aimed at reaching those most in-need (including those experiencing homelessness and low-income residents). Those events are still occurring, in an effort to vaccinate those who are most at risk and provide health services to them. In addition, as they did throughout the pandemic, County agencies continue to hold regular meetings and coordinate efforts to assist low-income persons and those experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The County agencies work closely with each other and with non-profit service providers to reach out to, and address the needs of, individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In an effort to achieve these goals, the County will:

- Continue to make emergency shelter and supportive services available and accessible to this

population;

- Continue to collect and review data related to this population in order to assess their needs and better address those needs;
- Continue to meet regularly and to use relevant data to discuss trends and emerging issues;
- Continue to perform outreach and encourage this population to accept services.

In addition, the Community Development Office coordinates several events during the year, including the Point in Time/Project Homeless Connect (PHC) event at the end of January. During these events, County agencies and providers meet with homeless people, discuss their situation, assess their needs, and are often able to have them speak directly to other providers already on-site that same day. In addition, clothing, personal care products, food, and other basic need items are distributed.

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

Somerset County's continuing strategy for addressing this important and ongoing issue includes:

- Continuing to make emergency shelter and supportive services available and accessible to this population;
- Continuing to collect and review data related to this population in order to assess their needs and better address those needs;
- Continuing to meet regularly and to use relevant data to discuss trends and emerging issues;
- Continuing to perform outreach and encourage this population to accept services;
- Continuing with the provision of life skills and other educational opportunities designed to assist one to become more self-sufficient.

In addition, the County utilizes the Continuum of Care Committee's Coordinated Entry system to monitor, advertise for, and fill openings that become available for people experiencing homelessness. The CoC Committee works closely with housing developers to ensure that units are specifically set aside for people experiencing homelessness, and then works to fill those units through Coordinated Entry. This process has resulted in dozens of set aside units over the last decade, provide

housing and security for many residents.

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

Some of the ways in which County agencies - both individually and in conjunction with non-profits - will work to address these issues are:

- Continue the provision of emergency assistance in the form of rental assistance, utility payment, food, and other basic needs;
- Continue with the provision of life skills and other educational opportunities designed to assist one to become more self-sufficient;
- Continue to meet regularly and to use relevant data to discuss trends and emerging issues;
- Continue to suggest innovative approaches to the challenges that face the County's most vulnerable populations;

Discussion

In response to HUD's initiative to end chronic homelessness within ten years, the Board of Chosen Freeholders (now referred to as the Board of County Commissioners) adopted a Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in 2005. Even though the time frame for the Plan has expired, the County continues to follow the goals and plans outlined in it. The Plan reflected a multi-pronged approach that had as its main goals the development and implementation of a systematic approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data and identify needs/gaps in services for people experiencing homelessness; the improvement of county-wide coordination at all levels of service delivery for families and individuals experiencing homelessness in the County; the expansion of opportunities that lead to permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness; and increased knowledge, linkage, and usage of mainstream services. Inter-agency cooperation and collaboration have been vital to this effort and under the compassionate leadership of the Board of County Commissioners, as well as the County's Department of Human Services, the County continues working toward this goal.

In the time since the Plan was adopted, the County has generally seen a drop in the number of

chronically homeless individuals and families in Somerset County.

AP-75 Barriers to affordable housing -91.420, 91.220(j)

Introduction

There is no question that the cost, development and maintenance of affordable housing is affected by public policies that emanate from the local level of government. There are a number of local policies and practices that may restrict which type of housing may be developed in a certain area. Laws of this type make it difficult to develop affordable housing.

Land use laws - Some Somerset County municipalities have 2-5 acre zoning requirements in order for housing to be developed. Such requirements are cost-prohibitive and limit the availability of conforming lots. In addition, some Somerset County communities restrict the eligible uses of existing housing and housing that would be developed. As a result, a housing developer's ability to create housing for certain uses or beyond a certain occupancy is restricted. This practice also has an inflationary effect.

Planning policy - Decisions related to the provision and location of public transportation and supportive social services may inhibit or concentrate affordable housing and decrease opportunities for disadvantaged persons. There is also a perception at the municipal level that affordable unit development equates to a loss of income because of an organization's tax-exempt status and the idea that housing that is managed by a non-profit organization is taken off of the tax rolls. Though such organizations may offer to make a payment in lieu of taxes, some municipalities consider this contribution to be insufficient.

State policy - The continued uncertainty surrounding the Council on Affordable Housing's (COAH) obligation of municipalities to create affordable units has deterred the creation of new or rehabilitated affordable units. Municipalities remain uncertain how to properly invest funds set aside for the creation of affordable units under this legislation.

Private sector real estate practices (for example: steering/blockbusting) that preclude equal housing opportunity, predatory lending practices, discriminatory provision of housing brokerage services, and failure to disseminate information on programs that may be used to provide financial assistance for housing opportunities all present barriers to affordable housing.

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

Public Policy/Decision Making - The County will continue to seek opportunities to provide input in the decision-making process as it relates to public policies that affect the implementation of Fair Housing Laws. In addition, the County's HSAC and COC Committees advocate for and support policies intended to

further the causes of affordable housing at the federal, state, and local levels.

Actions to Overcome Private Sector Impediments - The County continues to contract with the Central Jersey Housing Resource Center (CJHRC) and Legal Services of Northwest Jersey 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 participates in and, to the greatest extent possible, 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, Step-by-Step, First Time Homebuyer's Seminar, Financial Literacy, and Post Purchase. In addition, the County's Human Services department sponsors Housing Month activities. The CD Office continues to communicate with other agencies (for example: Board of Realtors, CJHRC, NORWESCAP, Legal Services) to identify and address impediments to Fair Housing. Finally, the Fair Housing Brochure is disseminated to local banks, realtors, non-profit and municipal organizations, county divisions, and CD subgrantees for display and distribution.

Actions to Overcome Market/Community-Based Impediments - The CD Office sponsors presentations on Fair Housing to the public and community organizations. Also, CD Staff meets regularly with community members on topics such as homeownership, the County-funded Rental Assistance program, 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. The CD Staff continues to work with non-profit housing agencies around Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Certification, identifying innovative approaches to all phases of housing that are part of the County's Continuum of Care, and alternative financing mechanisms.

Discussion

Within Somerset County, there are a number of obstacles to meeting the underserved needs of CDBG and HOME Program beneficiaries. In the housing, homeless, and special needs areas, the following barriers have been identified: the shortage of affordable and other supportive housing opportunities; shortage of Section-8 vouchers to assist low-income tenants; insufficient funding resources for housing programs; inflation and shortages in the region's affordable housing market; and community resistance to the development of affordable housing. With respect to non-housing community development needs, the principal impediments are inadequate funding levels and resistance to increasing property taxes to provide projects and services in areas where there is need.

In addition, there are several barriers that preclude program constituents from taking full advantage of CDBG and HOME-funded programs and activities. These barriers include language and/or cultural barriers that obstruct one's willingness to accept publicly-funded social services, as well as the ability of staff to communicate clearly with potential beneficiaries; lack of sufficient and affordable public transportation; deficiencies/gaps in the County and social service providers' ability to make community members aware of services that are available; and the necessity of using federal income guidelines that

do not take into consideration the high cost of living in New Jersey, and more specifically Somerset County, to determine eligibility. As a result, many working families are ineligible for CDBG and/or HOME programs.

AP-85 Other Actions - 91.420, 91.220(k)

Introduction

Somerset County is committed to serving the underserved populations in the County, especially those who are low and moderate-income, have special needs, or are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. County agencies work closely together and with other government agencies, non-profit service providers, and private entities and volunteers to form a comprehensive plan of action to assess and address the needs of this population.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

To address obstacles to meeting underserved needs the County will take the following steps:

- Continue to meet regularly and use relevant data to discuss trends and emerging issues;
- Continue to suggest innovative approaches to the challenges that face the County's most vulnerable populations;
- Continue to advocate for legislation, programs and services that will impact the ability of the "working poor" to become self-sufficient;
- Continue to raise awareness about programs and services that are available, with particular attention to ones that are underused;
- Administer County Homelessness Trust Fund assistance;
- Use volunteers to implement programs that are useful to this population;
- Continue to hold full Continuum of Care (COC) Committee meetings every other month, along with COC Executive Committee meetings in alternate months, to address ongoing and immediate needs.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

To foster and maintain affordable housing, the County will take the following steps:

- Continue to meet regularly and use relevant data to discuss trends and emerging issues;
- Continue to affirmatively market supply-side housing development opportunities;
- Continue to affirmatively market demand-side housing development opportunities including First Home Club, Matched Savings and homebuyer education programs (conducted by the Central Jersey

Housing Resource Center);

- Continue to advocate for legislation, programs and services that will impact the ability of the "working poor" to become self-sufficient;
- Continue to administer County Homelessness Trust Fund (HTF) assistance;
- Continue to use HOME and County HTF funds to fund projects that develop housing;
- Continue to use the County CoC Coordinated Entry system to fill units with people with the highest needs.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

To evaluate and reduce the number of housing units containing lead-based paint hazards, County staff will take the following action steps:

- Consult with County and local Health Departments to determine where applicable units are located within the County;
- Provide educational materials at housing-related training and other public events where County staff may be present;
- Consult with non-profit housing providers to ensure all existing units, as well as any newly-purchased/rehabilitated units, are lead-free.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

To reduce the number of families living at the poverty level, County staff will take the following actions:

- Continue working to increase access to affordable medical/dental care and prescription assistance;
- Continue the provision of housing counseling relative to homeownership, tenant responsibilities, and personal financial management;
- Continue to provide training and educational opportunities that will increase one's ability to earn a living wage;
- Continue the provision of supportive services in the form of housing, counseling, food and energy assistance, legal services, mental health services and counseling, affordable childcare, and health

services;

- Continue to administer County Homelessness Trust Fund assistance;
- Use volunteers to implement programs that are useful to this population.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

The institutional structure through which the County will carry out its Consolidated Plan is a partnership that includes County and municipal government staff and decision makers, as well as representatives from the non-profit and private sectors. The Somerset County Board of County Commissioners is the final authority in all matters related to the administration of the CDBG and HOME Programs.

With regard to the institutional structure, the CD Office staffs the CDBG and HOME Programs, and in that capacity facilitates the competitive application process, provides technical assistance to current and potential subgrantees, monitors subgrantees for compliance with federal regulations, and prepares status and evaluative reports for submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Each of the grant programs is augmented by a committee whose purpose is to assess and consider housing and community development needs and to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners Annual HOME and CDBG Action Plans that reflect those needs. Each of these committees also considers and puts forth policy recommendations that are necessary to meet the intended goals of various federal mandates and directives and to ensure that each of the grant programs are administered in a fashion that is most advantageous to the County and its residents.

The lead entity for Somerset County's homelessness planning efforts, and the institutional structure for the County to carry out its homelessness strategy, is the County's Continuum of Care (COC) Committee. The COC Committee is comprised of state and local government representatives, non-profit agency representatives, and other community members who are interested in working to develop a comprehensive system of care for people who are coping with poverty and homelessness. This committee includes representation from, and is regularly attended by: Central Jersey Housing Resource Center, Somerset County United Way, NORWESCAP, ARC of Somerset, Volunteers of America, the Veterans Administration hospital, HOME of Somerset County (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network), HomeSharing, Community Hope, ADTI/Alternatives, Monarch Housing, Center for Great Expectations, Catholic Charities, Visions and Pathways, Jewish Family Services, Zufall Health and others.

In addition, the County will:

- Encourage CDBG, HOME and Continuum of Care subgrantees to actively participate in interlocal and intergovernmental commissions and committees;
- Continue to participate in public/private partnerships for the provision of housing and community

development needs;

- Continue to encourage and facilitate public participation in Consolidated Planning activities;
- Through various committees, host training that will build capacity.

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

To enhance coordination between public and private agencies, County staff will take the following actions:

- Encourage CDBG and HOME subgrantees to actively participate in interlocal and intergovernmental commissions and committees;
- Continue to participate in public/private partnerships for the provision of housing and community development needs;
- Continue to encourage and facilitate public participation in Consolidated Planning activities;
- Continue to hold bi-monthly meetings of the Continuum of Care (COC) Committee;
- Continue to coordinate and participate in events that reach out to and serve at-risk residents, those who are experiencing homelessness, and other vulnerable populations.

Discussion

Somerset County has a vibrant non-profit community that continues to provide the highest level of services to its residents. Every year, CDBG funds are used for projects that provide counseling and other supportive services to people experiencing homelessness, abused spouses and children, and disabled citizens, as well as provide employment training and job coach services to veterans, at-risk youth and young adults, and others. CDBG funds will also be used to complete sewer rehabilitation and sidewalk rehabilitation projects in a number of communities throughout the County, as well as to improve handicapped accessibility and perform other improvements at numerous community buildings.

HOME funds will support acquisition and rehabilitation of group housing, as well as purchasing property on which low-/moderate-income housing will be constructed. In addition, the Board of County Commissioners will continue to provide additional services through the Non-Profit Purchase of Service. The Somerset County Homelessness Trust Fund, initially enacted by the Board of County Commissioners in April of 2010 and consistently renewed since then, is used to provide case management services to those who qualify, as well as to provide funding for projects that will address the County's need for housing for people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness.

Program Specific Requirements

AP-90 Program Specific Requirements - 91.420, 91.220(I)(1,2,4)

Introduction

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Reference 24 CFR 91.220(I)(1)

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

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

Other CDBG Requirements

1. The amount of urgent need activities	0
2. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income. Overall Benefit - A consecutive period of one, two or three years may be used to determine that a minimum overall benefit of 70% of CDBG funds is used to benefit persons of low and moderate income. Specify the years covered that include this Annual Action Plan.	100.00%

HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)

Reference 24 CFR 91.220(I)(2)

1. A description of other forms of investment being used beyond those identified in Section 92.205 is as follows:

The Community Development Office will continue to encourage subgrantees to solicit other funding to use in conjunction with funds granted through the HOME Investment Partnership Program. It is estimated that HOME projects that were awarded funding for Program Year 2024 represent a HOME

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match of over \$1 million of public and private sector contributions from a number of sources including revenue generated through fundraising. In order to ensure that the County's match requirement is met, CD staff will require that all HOME subgrantees submit match reporting information when a project is completed. The combination of match funds from the 2024 HOME Program, along with the County's excess match of over \$19.7 million, are more than sufficient to ensure that the County satisfies its match obligation. Once collected, this data will be summarized and reported in the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

2. A description of the guidelines that will be used for resale or recapture of HOME funds when used for homebuyer activities as required in 92.254, is as follows:

For homeownership activities, Somerset County uses both resale and recapture guidelines to ensure the affordability of units acquired with HOME funds. Resale provisions are applied to homebuyer activities that use HOME funds to finance construction costs. Recapture provisions are applied to homebuyer activities that use HOME funds to provide downpayment assistance. These resale and recapture guidelines will apply uniformly to subrecipients, state recipients, urban county or consortium members, CHDOs, or other entities, as applicable.

Somerset County uses resale guidelines to ensure that when a homeowner sells a HOME-assisted property during the period of affordability, the property is sold to another low-income homebuyer. These guidelines are applicable when HOME funds have been used as a development subsidy by an organization that builds a home that will be sold to low-income homebuyers. The County's resale provisions use the Consumer Price Index (New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, CPI-U) to calculate a reasonable rate of inflation and make allowances for the inclusion of the homebuyer's original investment, plus the cost of any improvements made to the home so that the seller receives a fair return for their investment. For the purpose of this policy, a fair return on one's investment is defined as the percentage change in the identified CPI-U over the period of ownership. It also noted that in certain circumstances, such as a declining housing market where home values are depreciating, the original homebuyer may not receive a return on their investment, because the home sold for less than or the same price as the original purchase price.

The specific types of capital improvements include new heating and cooling systems, new flooring, new fixed appliances, new roof or siding, and any other major improvements that add value to the home. The value for these improvements will be calculated using the actual costs of the improvements as documented by the homeowner's receipts. Finally, the resale cost of any such property must be approved by Community Development staff in order to ensure that sale price of the unit is sold at a price that is affordable to a reasonable range of low-income buyers. Somerset County defines a reasonable range of low-income buyers as individuals or families that earn between 40 and 70% of the area median income that will pay not more than 30% of their income for

Principal, Interest, Property taxes and mortgage insurance.

Recapture guidelines permit the HOME-assisted buyer to sell the unit at any time during the affordability period. These provisions are enforced by a written lien that is recorded by the Somerset County Clerk and subject to the limitation that when the recapture requirement is triggered by a sale (voluntary or involuntary) of the housing unit, the amount recaptured cannot exceed the net proceeds, if any. The net proceeds are the sales price minus superior loan repayment (other than HOME funds) and any closing costs.

Somerset County Recapture policy is to recapture the entire amount of HOME assistance that was provided as a direct subsidy. These provisions are included in the HOME Program Mortgage that is signed by the HOME-assisted buyer and recorded by the Somerset County Clerk. When the Community Development office receives notice that a HOME-assisted property is to be sold before the conclusion of the affordability period, staff will issue a statement that details (1) the amount that needs to be repaid in the form of a cashier's check payable to the Somerset County Treasurer, (2) where that check should be delivered, (3) how long it will take for County Counsel to prepare a Discharge of Mortgage, and (4) when the Discharge of Mortgage will be available to the assisted buyer.

3. A description of the guidelines for resale or recapture that ensures the affordability of units acquired with HOME funds? See 24 CFR 92.254(a)(4) are as follows:

For homeownership activities, Somerset County uses both resale and recapture guidelines to ensure the affordability of units acquired with HOME funds. Resale provisions are applied to homebuyer activities that use HOME funds to finance construction costs. Recapture provisions are applied to homebuyer activities that use HOME funds to provide downpayment assistance. These resale and recapture guidelines will apply uniformly to subrecipients, state recipients, urban county or consortium members, CHDOs, or other entities, as applicable.

When the County uses HOME funds to assist the cost of construction or rehabilitation of housing to be sold to a low-income household, the County will use Resale restrictions to ensure that HOME funds are used to preserve affordability of the HOME-assisted unit. The affordability period will be based on the total amount of HOME funds used to assist the property and the buyer. The homebuyer must sell to another Low-Income homebuyer (as defined by HUD), with the new home being affordable to the new buyer. The new homebuyer may not pay more than 35 percent of gross income for Principal, Interest, Taxes and Insurance (PITI). In certain circumstances, the County may permit the new homebuyer to assume the County loan and affordability restrictions, i.e., the County will not require the full repayment of the initial HOME subsidy. The HOME subsidy would be transferred to the new buyer in the form of a deferred repayment down-payment assistance loan.

The County's resale provisions use the Consumer Price Index (New York-Northern New Jersey-Long

Island, CPI-U) to calculate a reasonable rate of inflation and make allowances for the inclusion of the homebuyer's original investment, plus the cost of any improvements made to the home so that the seller receives a fair return for their investment. For the purpose of this policy, a fair return on one's investment is defined as the percentage change in the identified CPI-U over the period of ownership. It also noted that in certain circumstances, such as a declining housing market where home values are depreciating, the original homebuyer may not receive a return on their investment, because the home sold for less than or the same price as the original purchase price.

Recapture guidelines permit the HOME-assisted buyer to sell the unit at any time during the affordability period. These provisions are enforced by a written lien that is recorded by the Somerset County Clerk and subject to the limitation that when the recapture requirement is triggered by a sale (voluntary or involuntary) of the housing unit, the amount recaptured cannot exceed the net proceeds, if any. The net proceeds are the sales price minus superior loan repayment (other than HOME funds) and any closing costs.

Somerset County Recapture policy is to recapture the entire amount of HOME assistance that was provided as a direct subsidy. These provisions are included in the HOME Program Mortgage that is signed by the HOME-assisted buyer and recorded by the Somerset County Clerk. When the Community Development office receives notice that a HOME-assisted property is to be sold before the conclusion of the affordability period, staff will issue a statement that details (1) the amount that needs to be repaid in the form of a cashier's check payable to the Somerset County Treasurer, (2) where that check should be delivered, (3) how long it will take for County Counsel to prepare a Discharge of Mortgage, and (4) when the Discharge of Mortgage will be available to the assisted buyer.

4. Plans for using HOME funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily housing that is rehabilitated with HOME funds along with a description of the refinancing guidelines required that will be used under 24 CFR 92.206(b), are as follows:

Somerset County will not use HOME funds to refinance existing debt secured by multi-family housing.

5. If applicable to a planned HOME TBRA activity, a description of the preference for persons with special needs or disabilities. (See 24 CFR 92.209(c)(2)(i) and CFR 91.220(l)(2)(vii)).

Somerset County does not have any HOME TBRA activities.

6. If applicable to a planned HOME TBRA activity, a description of how the preference for a specific category of individuals with disabilities (e.g. persons with HIV/AIDS or chronic mental illness) will narrow the gap in benefits and the preference is needed to narrow the gap in benefits and services

received by such persons. (See 24 CFR 92.209(c)(2)(ii) and 91.220(l)(2)(vii)).

Somerset County does not have any HOME TBRA activities.

7. If applicable, a description of any preference or limitation for rental housing projects. (See 24 CFR 92.253(d)(3) and CFR 91.220(l)(2)(vii)). Note: Preferences cannot be administered in a manner that limits the opportunities of persons on any basis prohibited by the laws listed under 24 CFR 5.105(a).

All projects funded through Somerset County's CDBG and HOME programs must comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Any preferences or limitations on housing are specific to individual projects, such as group homes for individuals with developmental disabilities. In most cases, the residents for those homes are screened and placed by the State Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Somerset County uses an RFP process to solicit and fund applications for new construction or rehabilitation of units. The RFP is typically released in January with the applications due in late March. RFPs are available via the County website and directly from the Community Development Office. The CDBG and HOME Committees meet in late April/early May, during which time applicants make brief presentations and the Committees vote on funding. Applicants are given a score and the highest ranking applicants receive funding based on their score, the amount they requested, and the total amount of funding available.

For certain projects, there are limits on the beneficiaries. For example, homebuyer downpayment assistance - which has been funded through the ADDI program - benefits income-eligible first-time homebuyers. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Other projects, such as those by Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity (which builds houses for low-income homebuyers) and ADTI (which creates housing for low-income, developmentally disabled, consumers) are also limited to certain segments of the population.

