



**2021 Consolidated Annual
Performance Evaluation Report
(CAPER)
UNION COUNTY, NC**

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Prepared for

Union County

Prepared by

Centralina Regional Council
10735 David Taylor Drive, Suite 250
Charlotte, NC 28262
www.centralina.org



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Executive Summary

Union County is required to submit a Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) per 24 CFR Part 91. This report is a summary of accomplishments and actions taken for activities stated in the prior year Action Plan. This is Union County's sixth CDBG program year as a federal entitlement community. The County became an entitlement community in August 2016. This CAPER pertains to the first year of the County's Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

The FY 2021-2022 CAPER is used by HUD and the County to evaluate progress and performance during the program year running from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. The 2021-2026 Consolidated Plan describes community needs and determines local priorities for using public resources to assist low- and moderate-income residents of Union County, the City of Monroe, and the Towns of Fairview, Indian Trail, Marshville, Mineral Springs, Stallings, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wesley Chapel, and Wingate. The success of the plan depends on the participation of numerous agencies and local governments in the collaborative implementation of the strategies. The Union County Manager's Office is the Lead Agency responsible for plan coordination and reporting.

This report also highlights the use of Federal and other local matching funds to meet the needs of the community.

The Program Year 2021 Annual Action Plan was the sixth developed under the County's CDBG program. Narratives detail the County's efforts to collaborate with intergovernmental agencies, affirmatively further fair housing, leverage funds, accomplish the objectives set forth in the Consolidated Plan and ensure program compliance.

The CAPER must be available for public review and comment for a minimum of 15 days. This report will be submitted to HUD within 90 days of the close of the program year.

CR-05 - Goals and Outcomes

Progress the jurisdiction has made in carrying out its strategic plan and its action plan.

91.520(a)

As a recipient of Community Development Block Grant funds, Union County is required to submit a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) within 90 days of the end of Union County's fiscal year, June 30, 2022 or by September 30, 2022. This report constitutes a summary of accomplishments and an accounting of the allocations and expenditure achieved by Union County as outlined in the County's FY 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan. The CAPER covers the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 and the first year of the County's five-year consolidated planning cycle. Projects listed in the FY 2021-2022 Action Plan are designed to address housing and community needs of low-and moderate-income Union County residents. During FY 2021-2022, many of the subrecipients were either providing public service activities to low-mod income residents or completing construction on a multi-

year sidewalk project. While not all milestones were realized during the program year, several annual action plan goals were accomplished.

CDBG funds provided the following accomplishments in FY 2021-2022:

- General program administration, including the completion and the submission of the 2022-2026 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing study, which is a comprehensive review of municipal housing, economic and transportation conditions, and public and private sector policies that ensure that housing choices and opportunities for citizens in a community are available. The goal of this analysis is to identify any barriers to fair housing choice for protected classes and to develop recommendations Union County can implement to address barriers that exist for fair housing choice for residents.
- Concord Avenue Sidewalk Project – the Concord Avenue Sidewalk multi-year project was completed this year. The project includes the design and construction of 1,880 linear feet of new ADA accessible sidewalk, ensures a safer pedestrian corridor, and connectivity to the Benton Heights Elementary School and existing services. The Concord Avenue Sidewalk Improvement Project is a great example of the power of collaboration between Union County federal CDBG funds, the grant administrative support services of Centralina, and the talent and voices of the staff and residents of the City of Monroe.
- FY 2019-2020 Heart for Monroe (CV1) – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization established the Rapid Response Team. They successfully kept up with the influx in nutritional needs due to the pandemic, and provided food boxes, supplies, school supply resources, and gently used clothes to families in need, veterans and seniors using CDBG-CV funds. Heart for Monroe works with the Council on Aging to deliver food boxes to seniors and veterans. The Team established multiple weekly drive-thru grocery & supply events and visited five (5) low-income neighborhoods throughout Union County delivering food and supplies to residents.
- FY 2019-2020 Loaves and Fishes (CV1) – This is a non-profit community pantry organization that provides food, at no charge, for a weeks' worth of nutritional meals for each Union County household having been screened and referred to them by social service agencies as having a crisis situation. COVID-19 funds were used to supplement operational food supply costs, purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff-volunteers, sanitation supplies for protective measures on premise of the pantry office and storage room, along with COVID-19 Preventative and Safety signage for onsite property areas.
- FY 2019-2020 Human Services Crisis Assessment (CV1) – With CDBG-CV funds, the program was able to provide rental assistance to adults experiencing economic hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FY 2019-2020 Crisis Assistance Ministries (CV1) – CDBG-CV funds were used to respond to the economic impact of COVID-19 that has put many low-and moderate-income individuals at risk of homelessness due to loss of jobs, wages, and businesses. The organization provided homelessness prevention services to adults in the community. Funds were also used to help with staff capacity

due to a higher demand for support services, and to purchase protective equipment in order to enforce preventative measures and social distancing.

- FY 2019-2020 Senior Nutrition Program (CV2) - Union County Senior Nutrition Program exists to promote, maintain and improve the health and well-being of older adults through the provision of a nutritionally balanced meal five days per week. The agency completed its project goals of purchasing an additional freezer to allow for storage of frozen meals. The agency utilized CDBG-CV funds that provided the ability to offer a box of five frozen meals every week to each of the 150 seniors who had been on the waiting list to benefit from services prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FY 2019-2020 Community Shelter (CV2) – This agency was able to provide additional support to the homeless population with emergency shelter services to appropriately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic using CDBG-CV funds by adjusting its policies and practices. In addition to the overflow shelter and maximum stay extensions, the organization purchased, deployed, and installed personal and corporate protective equipment including desk shields, masks, sanitizers, handwashing stations, disinfectants, and paper dining products to decrease the risk of infection and spread.
- FY 21-22 Council on Aging – In-Home Services are offered at no cost to elderly clients, which enables economically disadvantaged seniors an opportunity to receive assistance with tasks that are essential to remain living independently in their homes. It also provides clients with an opportunity to receive essential services that they aren't able to afford to pay for privately. In-Home Aides provide direct assistance with personal care, household chores, errands, and respite for family caregivers at no cost to clients. Staff conducts a home assessment of the living environment to determine if any changes can be made to further prevent falls and hospitalizations.
- FY 21-22 Turning Point Domestic Violence – The organization provides group and individual counseling for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Victims and their children are provided with all basic needs while in the shelter.
- FY 2021-2022 Common Heart - Common Heart expanding its Economic Empowerment program to help low-income families become more stable and build resources for economic development. The program is designed specifically for families who experience generational poverty to build upon the problem-solving skills that these individuals already possess.

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

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

Table 1 - Accomplishments – 2021 Program Year

Goal	Category	Outcome				
Improve Public Facilities and Infrastructure	Non-Housing Community Development	Indicator	Expected	Actual	Unit of Measure	Percent complete
		Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	1830	2265	Persons Assisted	123 %
Promote and Lead Intergovernmental Coordination	Affordable Housing Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	Indicator	Expected	Actual	Unit of Measure	Percent complete
		Other	1	1	Persons Assisted	100 %
Support Delivery of Public Services	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs	Indicator	Expected	Actual	Unit of Measure	Percent complete
		Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	370	4835	Persons Assisted	1306 %

Table 2 - Accomplishments - Strategic Plan to Date

Goal	Category	Outcome				
Improve Public Facilities and Infrastructure	Non-Housing Community Development	Indicator	Expected	Actual	Unit of Measure	Percent complete
		Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	220	2265	Persons Assisted	1029 %
		Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	10	0	Households Assisted	0 %
Promote Fair Housing	Affordable Housing	Indicator	Expected	Actual	Unit of Measure	Percent complete
		Other	1	1	Other	100 %
Promote and Lead Intergovernmental Coordination	Affordable Housing Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	Indicator	Expected	Actual	Unit of Measure	Percent complete
		Other	1	1	Other	100 %
Support Delivery of Public Services	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs	Indicator	Expected	Actual	Unit of Measure	Percent complete

		Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	4000	4835	Persons Assisted	120 %
Support Growth and Economic Development	Non-Housing Community Development	Indicator	Expected	Actual	Unit of Measure	Percent complete
		Other	1	1	Other	100 %

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

During the FY 2021-2022 time period, which is the first year of the 5-year Consolidated Plan, all funded projects were identified as the highest priority activities by the County. These projects included a sidewalk project that would be ADA compliant and provide access to transit options and services for mainly presumed benefit groups. All projects aligned with Public Services category aside from Concord Avenue Sidewalk Project, which is a Public Facilities and Infrastructure project. All projects met the following identified high priority goals:

- Continue ongoing County support for community and supportive services, with special emphasis on services for homeless persons, seniors, at-risk youth, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, veterans, and other persons with special needs.
- Improve public facilities and infrastructure to support future growth.
- Work to improve connectivity in existing neighborhoods by repairing or constructing sidewalks and require greater connectivity in new developments.

In the upcoming fiscal year, Union County will continue to complete projects already in the pipeline as well as embark on new initiatives that continue to support high priority goals.

CR-10 – 9/19/and Ethnic composition of Families Assisted

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

91.520(a)

	CDBG
White	2990
Black or African American	1708
Asian	13
American Indian or American Native	14
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4
Black/African American & White	77
Other Multi-racial	28
Asian & White	1
TOTAL	4835
Hispanic	1323
Not Hispanic	3512

Table 3 – Table of assistance to racial and ethnic populations by source of funds

Narrative

According to most recent Census data estimates released July 1, 2021, 243,648 people reside in Union

County, there are 77,791 households with an average size of 3.0 persons residing in a household, and 86,433 total housing units with an 82.7% owner-occupied housing unit rate. The median household income in Union County is estimated to be roughly \$82,557. Union County is made up of 80.2% White persons, 12.6% Black or African American, 4.2% Asian, 0.7% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 2.2% multi-racial, 12.0% Hispanic or Latin of any race, and 69.8% not Hispanic or Latino.

9 out of all the open CBDG and CDBG-CV funded programs administered in FY 2021-2022 collected racial and ethnicity data for program participants, 6 programs served a presumed benefit population. All other projects completed in FY 2021-2022 qualified as Area Wide benefit at the Census Block level, meaning demographic data was not required to be collected.

CR-15 - Resources and Investments 91.520(a)

Identify the resources made available

Source of Funds	Source	Resources Made Available	Amount Expended During Program Year
CDBG	public - federal	\$901,530	\$965,532.44
CDG- CV1	Public-federal	\$518,322	\$98,459.39
CDBG – CV2	public – federal	\$568,180	\$446,964.79

Table 4 - Resources Made Available

Narrative

Union County in accordance with the IDIS PR-26 report had \$901,530 available in CDBG resources for FY 2021-2022 for approved projects and administration and planning. According to the IDIS Report PR-50, Union County disbursed \$1,605,705.42 in CDBG and CDBG-CV funds, which includes \$758,051.05 in public facilities and improvements, \$720,913 in public services and \$126,741.37 general administration. The total remaining CDBG-CV program balance at the end of the FY2021-2022 is \$121,215.20 out of the \$1,086,502 total CV1 and CV2 funds received in FY 2019-2020.

The IDIS PR-23 Report indicates Union County disbursed \$126,741.37 in administrative funds, \$80,740.02 for public services, and \$758,051.05 towards facility improvements and infrastructure using only CDBG funds.

Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
Union County and member jurisdictions	100	100	Project area includes the unincorporated areas of Union County, the City of Monroe, and the Towns of Marshville, Stallings, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wingate, Fairview, Indian Trail, Mineral Springs, and Wesley Chapel.

Table 5 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Narrative

Union County is home to fourteen municipalities and of those, ten municipalities have chosen to participate in the CDBG program: Marshville, Monroe, Stallings, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wingate, Fairview, Indian Trail, Mineral Springs, and Wesley Chapel. Union County has not established specific target areas to focus the investment of CDBG funds. Applications for CDBG funds are received annually from participating municipalities and qualifying area non-profits. Applications were evaluated based on objectives set by HUD:

- The severity of the need.
- The availability of other funds to ensure project viability.
- How the project met national CDBG objectives and goals
- How well the project addressed local needs.
- How large the impact will be for residents, i.e., number of beneficiaries.

The County Manager’s Office reviews the applications and makes awards based on application ratings. The County Manager’s Office seeks to distribute funds equitably throughout Union County to best meet community needs.

Leveraging

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

CDBG funds are leveraged annually by subrecipients seeking state and private foundation grants in order to accomplish community development objectives. Unlike some other federal grant programs, CDBG regulations do not require matching funds on behalf of the Grantee. While there are no federal match requirements for CDBG funds, Union County highly recommends that organizations provide matching funds, if possible.

CR-20 - Affordable Housing 91.520(b)

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

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

The County's 2021-2022 Action Plan did not anticipate the provision of providing additional affordable housing units in the community. The County did anticipate providing resources to those at risk of becoming homeless through the Emergency Housing Assistance program administered by the Union County Community Shelter (UCCS) and is separate from the CDBG program. UCCS tracks beneficiaries and reports these metrics to the Piedmont Regional Continuum of Care. However, due to receiving additional CDBG-CV funds due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Union County was able to provide additional financial support to the Union County Community Shelter to assist them provide support to the homeless population with emergency shelter services to appropriately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The County is committed to demonstrate to HUD and the community that the County is affirmatively furthering fair housing. To that end, Union County has completed a fair housing study known as an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) to ensure that HUD-funded programs are being administered in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing for federally protected classes. As a result of the AI process, the County was able to fully examine the available demographic, housing and transportation data that helped implement set short-term and long-term goals over the next five years to affirmatively further fair housing choice for Union County residents. These goals employ a combination of education, data collection and development of partnerships with increased access to affordable housing and housing services:

1. **Increase fair housing resources and enforcement:** the goal is to increase the knowledge about Fair Housing laws and regulations among county residents, landlords, tenants, local agencies, organizations, and municipalities, and encourage updating existing Code Enforcement Ordinances to provide a baseline for effective enforcement strategies, that can be implemented.
2. **Increase fair housing education and outreach:** Union County has partnered up with the NC Justice Center to organize county-wide training sessions on fair housing issues several times a year, subject to HUD funding availability. The County is partnering with local housing agencies to educate tenants and landlords on fair housing rights.
3. **Increase supply of new affordable housing units:** Union County is currently lacking in the development of new affordable housing. The County is beginning to initiate partnerships with public and private housing developers and advocating for the development affordable and mixed-income housing.
4. **Increase preservation and accessibility modification of existing affordable housing stock:** Union County is starting a septic system repair program with a goal of assisting 7 homes in the county

as a way of maintaining affordable housing units in the community. The goal is to work towards building up a county-wide robust critical home repair program, using CDBG funds, and other available grant funds over the upcoming years. The County also plans on actively seeking out potential partnerships with existing local Community Housing Development Organizations.

5. **Provide better access to mobility and transportation services. Continue improving access to public infrastructure.** Union County is continuing to be involved in discussions about local and regional public transportation initiatives.

Union County provided the following outreach, trainings and networking opportunities to gather data and provide educational opportunities to community members, and housing organizations in FY 2021-2022 as part of the AIFH process:

- Fair Housing Surveys
 - Union County Residents in Spanish and English
 - Union County Staff
 - Union County Housing Providers
- Focus group made up of local housing-related organizations in Union County
- Two engagement events
 - Union County Farmer's Market
 - Vaccine Clinic
- Four advisory committee meetings
 - 7/26/2021
 - 11/10/2021
 - 3/9/2022
 - 4/27/2022
- Educational outreach through two Fair Housing Trainings with Legal Aid of NC
 - 2/17/2022
 - 3/9/2022
- Resources for Landlords - A Networking and Information Sharing Event
 - 3/9/2020

Union County has identified affordable housing as a high priority for the CDBG program and continues to recognize the existing gap within the affordable housing realm. However, given the limited funds made available, projects with housing benefits mainly centered on providing updated and new infrastructure and facilities to serve housing units in the City of Monroe in FY 2021-2022. Institutional delivery systems with dedicated resources currently exist that provide for increasing and sustaining affordable housing units in Union County. Therefore, due to the limited CDBG funding, affordable housing projects will only receive CDBG funds if excess funds are available. However, Union County began fostering a partnership with the Union Anson Habitat for Humanity to lay the foundation for using the CDBG program to support affordable housing initiatives countywide in future program years.

Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.

The County will continue to invest CDBG resources to provide improved water and sewer connections for residents and provide new and safe connectivity for neighborhoods through construction of sidewalks. Additionally, Union County will continue to invest the maximum allowable amount towards various public services to ensure vital services can be delivered to County residents. Furthermore, Union County will expand fair housing educational opportunities for residents, local organizations, and local municipalities, and begin fostering partnership to work towards its goal of preserving and maintaining the existing housing stock in the county.

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

Number of Households Served	CDBG Actual
Extremely Low-income	18
Low-income	9
Moderate-income	1
Total	28

Table 6 – Number of Households Served

Narrative Information

In FY 2021-2022, all projects funded except for one qualified via area wide benefit, based on census tract data provided by HUD. This data was not provided per family size or income strata, the income was provided based on total low-to-moderate income persons living within the census tract. An estimated 2,265 unduplicated low to moderate income individuals benefited from area-wide benefit projects funded during FY 2021-2022. Additionally, two CDBG-CV public service category projects, Crisis Assistance Ministry and UC Emergency Rental Assistance for Adult Only Households Project, tracked household income for 28 beneficiaries, this data is reflected in Table 6 above.

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

Evaluate the jurisdiction’s progress in meeting its specific objectives for reducing and ending homelessness through: Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs

As described in the Consolidated Plan, the County has been working with the Piedmont Regional Continuum of Care to reach the local homeless population during FY 2021-2022. The County will continue to work with and support the Piedmont Regional Continuum of Care, to reach the local homeless populations and assess their needs and identify resources to support the need.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

Union County has struggled for years to keep up with the growing number of families in need of shelter. In response to this need, a new shelter was constructed and opened in June of 2019. The new shelter has a 90-bed capacity compared to 28 in the old facility and has a designated area for kids to play. Union County will continue to work with area partners and the Union County Community Shelter to assess the needs of this population and develop measures to assist with those needs.

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

Homeless needs are addressed in the community through other organizations, including but not limited to the Union County Community Shelter. During the FY 2021-2022 Union County provided CDBG funds to Common Heart, Inc. to help individuals living in poverty, and on the verge of becoming homeless. The organization provided access to food and crisis assistance, while connecting families to its Economic Empowerment program in order to build stability and self-sufficiency to those in poverty, and encourage relationships, connections, and social capital.

Union County is planning on fostering a close partnership with the Monroe Housing Authority to explore opportunities to assist in supporting existing and new programs to avoid low-income residents becoming homeless.

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

The Consolidated Plan did not identify the need for transitional housing as a priority for the County's CDBG program as there are limited resources. No resources were dedicated during FY 2021-2022 to address this need.

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

Actions taken to address the needs of public housing

The Monroe Public Housing Authority is independent from Union County; therefore, the County does not participate directly in addressing public housing needs. Union County representatives do participate in various committees to help establish policies for improving delivery of housing services in Union County. The County's intent is to foster a deeper partnership with the Monroe Housing Authority to better assist

with its strategic planning and goal setting to help the organization achieve its objectives in supporting low-income residents in the community.

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

Union County recognizes the importance of building a solid infrastructure to support public housing residents to reach their dream of becoming homeowners. Monroe Housing Authority offers a number of programs and supportive services designed to foster self-sufficiency and improve quality of life for residents. The County is committed to collaborate with the Monroe Housing Authority on assisting its residents to become more engaged in participating in homeownership.

Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs

Not applicable.

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

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

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Choice is a strategic priority identified in the County's 2022-2026 Analysis of Impediment to Fair Housing Choice (AIFHC). As part of the County's plan to reduce impediments identified in its (AI) document, Union County partnered up with NC Legal Aid and hosted virtual trainings to educate the community on fair housing rights and responsibilities for citizens and stakeholders.

The demand to live in Union County continues to increase the strain on the County's housing market. One of the biggest challenges in the County is the huge disparity between housing costs and what people with low and moderate incomes can afford to pay. The housing market's response to the COVID-19 pandemic made the homeownership goals for first time homebuyers unattainable. Housing prices skyrocketed and demand outgrew the existing available housing supply. Union County will continue to develop policies that help foster the development of new affordable housing units. Additionally, Union County and its municipal partners will also continue to support the efforts of local housing providers, such as Union Anson Habitat for Humanity to strengthen and improve the existing housing stock.

Union County is in the process of establishing a Fair Housing Advisory Council (FHAC) comprised of a

diverse group of subject matter experts and service providers in the housing industry,

The Council will examine housing best practices and recommend specific solutions to the Board of County Commissioners that meet the fair and affordable housing needs in the County. The Council's planned activities include, but are not limited to:

- Explore housing issues and barriers existing countywide
- Partake in a long-term work plan to further fair and affordable housing in the County
- Research ideas for public awareness efforts around fair housing
- Conduct annual progress reports the Board of County Commissioners' review
- Advise the Board of County Commissioners on strategies to support fair and affordable housing in Union County

The desired outcomes of the Fair Housing Advisory Council will align with the goals of the Union County 2022-2026 AI study, which are listed below:

- Increase fair housing resources and enforcement
- Increase fair housing education and outreach
- Increase supply of new affordable housing units
- Increase preservation and accessibility modification of existing affordable housing stock
- Provide better access to mobility and transportation services
- Continue to improve access to public infrastructure

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

As described in the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Action Plan, the County works with local agencies to address obstacles to meeting the needs of underserved residents of Union County. Union County has recently connected with Union-Anson Habitat for Humanity to build a collaborative relationship that will meet underserved needs of the community. Moreover, Union County has partnered with NC Legal Aid's Fair Housing Project to provide educational opportunities regarding affordable housing to all residents and service providers. The County will continue to work with area agencies, the Piedmont Regional Continuum of Care agency, and other public and governmental agencies to find solutions that leverage the resources available and to efficiently and effectively meet program goals.

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

None of the activities undertaken as a part of the County's CDBG program for FY 2021-2022 had an impact on lead-based paint exposure. The County currently assesses housing built prior to 1978 for the homebuyers and the owner-occupier rehabilitation program through housing agencies. Pre-and post-testing and assessment are conducted as needed through these housing partners. In response to lead-based paint hazards and the limited resources available, Union County has planned a long-term response to include providing educational materials to all housing contractors and citizens receiving housing rehabilitation assistance and has established policies and procedures to reduce lead hazards.

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

Union County is continuing to work towards reducing the number of households with incomes below the poverty level by assisting programs that provide education and support toward self-sufficiency. There are many components to helping families living in poverty. It takes successful partnership with a variety of local organizations to provide the needed assistance to these individuals and families. The County provided CDBG funds to Common Heart Inc. to provide programming for individuals experiencing lifelong poverty and are on the verge of becoming homeless. Common Heart provides access to food and crisis assistance, while recruiting families to its Economic Empowerment program. This program builds stability and self-sufficiency for individuals and families who those experiencing poverty. The County will continue to seek out and support the efforts of local agencies who are working with consumers who may be at or below the poverty level.

The County continues to provide programs to address human service needs in the community. These services and programs included children and family services, adult services, daycare, Medicaid, child support, food and nutrition services, Work First program, Program Integrity and many others. These programs and services help to build a foundation upon which individuals and families can find a pathway to self-sufficiency.

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

Union County continues to operate the institutional delivery structure surrounding the acceptance and allocation of federal grant funds for HUD CDBG Consolidated Plan programs. The goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan have been developed with county residents' informed input.

Implementation of CDBG funds continues to be overseen by the County Manager's Office. The Union County Board of Commissioners approves projects and programs that meet the County's and the community's goals.

As part of the process of the 2022-2026 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing study, County staff regularly interacted with community members, housing organizations, public agencies, subrecipients and contractors to gain deeper knowledge about the current fair and affordable housing situation in the county.

Currently, Union County does not have an active CHDO, but hopes to foster a partnership with Union Anson Habitat for Humanity to increase homeownership opportunities for low-income families by providing property and/or site preparation work for new housing construction, and critical repair work for existing housing stock.

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

Actions taken during FY 2021-2022 included:

- Encouraging agencies to work together to apply for CDBG funds to leverage resources to the

fullest extent.

- Working with the Piedmont Regional Continuum of Care (PRCC) to address issues of poverty and homelessness.
- Providing continuous Fair Housing Trainings for community members, local agencies and organizations, and municipalities.
- Fostering meaningful partnerships with other community service providers to learn about community needs and help with aligning resources so they can better serve the community.

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

The focus of Union County’s efforts to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing is to raise community awareness of fair housing rights and illegal discrimination and increase low-income renters’ access to safe, decent and stable housing. In response to the five impediments identified in the 2022 AIFH report, Union County is in the process of establishing collaborative relationships with stakeholders and service providers in the affordable housing realm. Additionally, educational opportunities regarding fair and affordable housing were, and continue to be, offered by NC Legal Aid in partnership with Union County. Lastly, Union County staff is currently initiating a Fair Housing Advisory Council that aims to represent and serve the entirety of Union County.

CR-40 - Monitoring 91.220 and 91.230

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

The County, with input from HUD, developed a CDBG grant recipient agreement in accordance with applicable federal requirements. This agreement continues to structure the programmatic requirements and delivery expectations of the County’s CDBG program. The County encourages subrecipients to follow a monthly reimbursement process and constantly checks in on their progress. Frequent check ins allow to identify issues early on and assist the subrecipients in resolving those in a timely manner. Additionally, the CBDG program is managed in a respectful and positive way, that builds trust between the County and the subrecipients, which creates a “safe” environment where subrecipients feel supported.

Staff monitors federally funded projects that are implemented by the County through simple project tracking and management reporting systems. This process includes quarterly progress reports, financial reports, and meeting reports; and review of project expenditures on a quarterly basis to ensure they are in line with the project budget. At the end of the program year, a file audit is conducted for each CDBG activity. Staff performs audits of each subrecipients files via an assessment of the mirrored original files

the County maintains for each project. If files are found to be missing per the prescribed file checklist an email is sent to the subrecipient requesting them to complete the files.

The Union County Procurement Division maintains the Minority and Small Business Guidelines and Outreach Plan. Through the Procurement Division, Minority and Small Businesses are engaged through various procurement opportunities. Further, recipient agreements require good-faith efforts to provide minority and women-owned businesses an opportunity to participate in the performance of the contract.

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

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

Union County's Citizen Participation Plan is based on the understanding that residents play a vital role in improving the quality of life in their neighborhoods and, therefore, encourages residents to become involved in the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan process. When people become involved, they become a significant strength to improving neighborhoods.

The Citizen Participation Plan is also intended to fill a requirement by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which sets forth the City's policies and procedures for public involvement in the Consolidated Plan process and the use of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

The County published a notice in the Enquirer Journal on 9/1/2022, which advertised a 15-day comment period for the CAPER beginning 9/2/22 through 9/17/2022; for the purpose of soliciting input from the general public and CDBG stakeholders on the County's CDBG program. The same notice was posted on the County's website. The draft CAPER was made available for review in print at the County Manager's Office, also with Centralina Regional Council, and electronically on the County's website.

CR-45 - CDBG 91.520(c)

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

There were some delays in the implementation of project activities during FY 2021-2022 due to CDBG program administration staff turnover. The County worked diligently to reassess the existing administrative timeline and implemented changes, developed necessary procedures, materials, and reports for the program to ensure timely completion of each program components. In the upcoming years, the County expects that implementation of activities identified in the Annual Action Plan will be more efficiently and effectively carried out in a more consistent manner.

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

grants?

No.