



**UNION
COUNTY**
north carolina

2023-2024 CDBG Annual Action Plan



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The Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Action Plan is presented to you in a format that is prescribed by HUD. Data and narrative are entered into a federal database system called the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) and the Annual Action Plan report is then downloaded into a Word format. The Annual Action Plan template in IDIS has a series of prescribed questions that align with the CDBG Consolidated Plan program regulations. The report you are reviewing is the result of that data entry process and is the prescribed and recommended format by HUD. If you have any questions about this format, please do not hesitate to contact Clayton Voignier at clayton.voignier@unioncountync.gov. Thank you for your interest and time spent reviewing this report.

Prepared for
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Executive Summary

AP-05 Executive Summary - 24 CFR 91.200(c), 91.220(b)

1. Introduction

The Consolidated Plan is a required planning document that all jurisdictions that receive U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) federal funds are required to produce. The Consolidated Plan provides an assessment of community needs, a market analysis, and engages the public to establish goals, prioritize needs, and then establish strategies to address community needs. It also lists the proposed activities to be undertaken to assist low- and moderate-income residents of Union County, the City of Monroe, and the Towns of Marshville, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wingate, Stallings, Fairview, Indian Trail, Mineral Springs, and Wesley Chapel under the County's CDBG program. This document is the third Annual Action Plan that is tied to the 2021-2025 Union County Consolidated Plan, and it provides details on how the County intends to allocate CDBG funds for the upcoming fiscal year (FY23-24).

This Annual Action Plan covers the time period beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024. Union County will receive \$1,092,632 for this upcoming program year.

2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan

The current Consolidated Plan, had set forth the following priorities as program goals:

- Improve public facilities and infrastructure
- Support delivery of public services
- Promote affordable housing
- Support growth in economic development

There are three main community development goals for FY 2023-2024:

1. Provide support for vulnerable populations and communities through public service activities. The outcomes for this goal are providing services mainly for presumed benefit population through educational and supportive programs.
2. Increase and preserve affordable housing. The outcomes for this goal are affordable housing development through land and infrastructure development in a targeted neighborhood, and septic system repair and replacement for income eligible owner-occupied single-family homes.
3. Improve public facilities. The outcome for this goal to improve recreational opportunities, and public facilities in a qualified census tract.

3. Evaluation of past performance

Union County is continuously evaluating past performance to guide in the process of setting goals

or determining which projects to fund with limited CDBG resources. Through the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), which is submitted at the end of each program year, the County evaluates the progress, performance and accomplishments regarding projects that were funded with CDBG funds.

During Program Year 2022 the following projects/activities were completed and met their required goals:

Planning and Administration:

- Several CDBG Fair Housing trainings through Legal Aid of North Carolina
- Maintenance of the CDBG Subrecipient Manual
- CDBG Subrecipient oversight and project management
- “Engage Union County” - a new county wide electronic citizen participation system.

Completed Programs/Activities:

- Senior Nutrition Program: The program provides meals to food insecure seniors living in Union County. (CDBG and CDBG-CV)
- Union Council on Aging - Home Assistance for Seniors Program: providing In-Home Services, that are offered at no cost to clients, which enables economically disadvantaged seniors an opportunity to receive assistance with tasks that are essential to remain living independently in their homes.
- Common Heart – Economic Empowerment and Development Program: providing access to food and crisis assistance, while connecting families to Economic Empowerment programs to build stability and self-sufficiency to those in poverty, and encourage relationships, connections, and social capital among individuals of all economic classes.
- Turning Point Inc. – Domestic Violence Program - providing a 24/7 crisis line, safe shelter, victim/court advocacy, case management, children’s programs, parenting classes, individual and group counseling, and financial & relocation assistance for victims who cannot remain in our community due to safety concerns.

4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process

The Citizen Participation Plan sets the policies and procedures for involving low-mod income residents in critical planning issues and funding recommendations related to the CDBG program. The plan outlines the process through which the public can access information, make recommendations, request and receive technical assistance, and receive timely responses to questions raised.

The County understands the importance of citizen consultation in order to set its long-term goals and priorities under the Consolidated Plan, and short-term goals under the Annual Action Plan. The County also engages citizens and other public and non-profit agencies in consultation efforts throughout the program year and those efforts are incorporated into the County's Annual Action Plan. It offers multiple opportunities for participation during the drafting of the Annual Action Plan

(AAP) and Consolidated Plan, as well as the Request for Proposal (RFP) Process. These opportunities include public hearings, public notices, website postings, social media posts, and emails to Union County local municipalities and non-profit service providers.

During the first stage of the Annual Acton Plan for FY 2023-2024, Union County held a FY 2023-2024 CDBG Kick Off Meeting/Information Session on Thursday, December 15th, 2022. All participating jurisdictions and local service providers were invited via email.

The second stage of the Annual Action Plan was the release of the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and the CDBG application for the FY 2023-2024 application round on Wednesday, January 4th, 2023. The NOFA and the CDBG application were also published on the County's CDBG webpage (www.unioncountync.gov/CDBG). Email follow ups were sent to all participating jurisdictions and service providers with the attached pdf version of the power point presentation of the FY 2023-2024 CDBG Kick Off Meeting/Information Session.

Technical assistance was offered to potential CDBG applicants in the form of a virtual workshop on Wednesday, January 18th, 2023, along with one-on-one meetings being provided upon request.

The third stage of the Annual Action Plan included the Union County Annual Action Plan FY 2023-2024 CDBG Working Group Meeting in the form of a consultation, which was conducted on Tuesday, February 7th, 2023. Invitation for consultation included public and private agencies and organizations, elected and appointed government officials and neighborhood organizations.

As the last stage of the public participation opportunity regarding this Annual Action Plan, citizens were provided an opportunity to submit comments during the 30-day public comment period, which began March 15th, 2023, and ended on April 17th, 2023.

The primary purposes of these public forums/hearings were to assess community needs and problems in an effort to determine the most critical needs to be addressed by the CDBG program, and to present for public comment and review the program activities, which have been selected by Union County to resolve the identified needs.

5. Summary of public comments

Union County makes it a priority to engage citizens and other public and non-profit agencies in consultation efforts throughout the program year. The following comments were received during the public hearing:

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

All comments were accepted by the jurisdiction.

7. Summary

CDBG projects were evaluated carefully in order to meet priority goals and objectives identified in the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and recommended for funding for the 2023 program year. The 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan is a collection of community feedback, community stakeholder involvement, consideration of countywide goals and policies, and County staff coordination and communication with community entities and resources. The Annual Action Plan used each element to design the most effective approach to the allocation of CDBG funds for the upcoming program year.

CDBG funds will be spent on public service programs benefiting low-, mod-income residents, infrastructure and public facility improvements, affordable housing related activity.

Union County will continue to address the identified barriers to affirmatively further fair housing, as listed in the 2022-2026 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice document, through the projects selected for funding as well as other means.

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

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

Describe the agency/entity 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	Union County	County Manager's Office

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

Narrative (optional)

Union County as an entitlement community under the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is required to submit a Five-Year consolidated Plan and an Annual Action Plan. The Board of County Commissioners is responsible for authorizing the submission to the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The County Manager’s Office is the lead entity charged with preparing the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan (AAP) and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). In this capacity, the County works in cooperation with other key government agencies, non-profit agencies and for-profit agencies addressing affordable housing, and other community development issues. Collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders are indispensable to the community’s success in addressing the needs of low and moderate-income residents and improving the quality of life for all the residents. These partnerships help to ensure that all residents, regardless of race, gender, age, income level or disability, have equal access to affordable housing, community development resources, jobs and services available in the county.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

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AP-10 Consultation – 91.100, 91.200(b), 91.215(I)

1. Introduction

In preparing the Annual Action Plan, the County consulted with and gathered information from a variety of community agencies. The goal of the consultation process was to gather data in order to help determine any updates in the priority needs of county residents. Furthermore, the goal was to find ways to better coordinate with service providers and local municipalities in the county in order to improve the availability of and access to services, housing and quality of life for community members.

During the planning process for this Annual Action Plan, the County organized public and

individual meetings with the community. County staff and the County's consultants met with service providers, community groups, nonprofit agencies, and municipalities within the County that have chosen to participate in the CDBG program to discuss and gather input on the community development needs identified in the County. Great emphasis was placed on consulting with social service agencies that serve low-income individuals and families with housing and other basic needs.

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(I))

In an effort to obtain the views and input of local residents and groups in order to solicit ideas and suggestions for the potential uses of the County's FY2023 CDBG allocation, the County invited local service providers and local municipality leaders for a meeting that took place on Tuesday, February 7th, 2023, at 2:00 pm. Invitations were emailed directly to local non-profit organizations and municipal leaders. The outreach list that the County compiled included the following agencies:

- Nonprofit service providers that cater to the needs of low and moderate-income households and persons with disabilities or special needs;
- Housing program providers;
- Public service agencies;
- Economic development organizations;
- Government staff of participating jurisdictions; and
- Community and neighborhood groups.

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.

Union County is not a Continuum of Care County; rather local providers are members of the North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care. The regional committee is the Piedmont Regional Continuum of Care (PRCC) which encompasses five counties, including Union County. The Union County Community Shelter is the lead local Coordinating Agency for Union County. The PRCC recently developed a regional homeless strategy, which was utilized in this planning process to provide information on homelessness and resources available within Union County. Union County Community Shelter was consulted to gather information and data on the County's Continuum of Care efforts.

The Community Shelter of Union County is the only homelessness services provider in Union County and serves all demographics, including single adult men, women, and family units. They are the only full-service emergency shelter and soup kitchen providing three meals daily in Union County and provide mobile food pantry services to all people in Union County. The target

population includes people experiencing homelessness or at imminent threat of homelessness and people experiencing food insecurity.

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

Not applicable; the County currently does not receive ESG funding. The Union County Community Shelter is a direct recipient of ESG funds.

2. Describe Agencies, groups, organizations and others who participated in the process and describe the jurisdiction’s consultations with housing, social service agencies and other entities.

Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated

1	Agency/Group/Organization	City of Monroe
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Other government - Local
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Economic Development 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?	This member government was consulted regarding the full spectrum of community development needs within their jurisdiction.
2	Agency/Group/Organization	Union County Community Shelter
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Non-profit organization
	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?	This organization was consulted regarding homelessness, transitional housing, affordable housing needs and other related community development needs within the county.

3	Agency/Group/Organization	Town of Fairview
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Other government - Local
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Economic Development 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?	This member government was consulted regarding the full spectrum of community development needs within their jurisdiction.
4	Agency/Group/Organization	Common Heart, Inc.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Non-profit organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Economic Development 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?	This organization was consulted regarding homelessness, transitional housing, affordable housing needs and other related community development needs within the county.
5	Agency/Group/Organization	Union Anson Habitat for Humanity, Inc.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Non-profit organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Market Analysis Economic Development 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?	This organization was consulted regarding homelessness, transitional housing, affordable housing needs and other related community development needs within the county.

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

Union County made a conscious effort to include all relevant organizations, agencies, and local municipalities in the consultation process. There were no specific agency types that were purposely not consulted during the development of the Annual Action Plan. Union County will be continuing to outreach to agencies within the program year as the Annual Action Plan is implemented.

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	Union County Community Shelter	Assist persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
2022-2026 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice	Union County	Affirmatively further fair housing.
2021-2025 Consolidated Plan	Union County	Long term strategies for community development activities.

Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts

AP-12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)

1. Summary of citizen participation process/Efforts made to broaden citizen participation.

The FY 2023-2024 CDBG Application Kick Off Meeting was held on Thursday, December 15th, 2022 at 11:00 am via Zoom. The meeting was published on the Union County’s CDBG webpage, and direct emails were sent to past, current, and potential subrecipients, and all local municipalities.

Union County offered a CDBG Application Workshop to anyone interested in applying for CDBG funds for the upcoming program year, which took place on Wednesday, January 18th, 2023, at 11:00 am virtually. Along with the workshop, the County provided one-on-one meetings for anyone interested in applying for the CDBG program.

A draft 2023 Annual Action Plan was released to the public on Tuesday, March 14th, 2023, for a 30-day public comment period, which started on Wednesday, March 15th, 2023, and ended on Monday, April 17th, 2023. Union County held an in person meeting on Thursday, April 13th, 2023, to engage citizens about county wide community development needs and priorities. The public hearing notice was published in the local newspaper, Enquirer Journal, on March 14th, 2023. The meeting notice was also posted on the Union County and Centralina Regional Council websites. During the public meeting, a presentation included an overview of the CDBG Entitlement Program, purpose of the Annual Action Plan, anticipated funding allocation, priorities of the five-year Consolidated Plan, and list of projects that had been funded in the past.

In order to encourage and increase citizen participation among county residents, Union County is in the process of launching a new county wide electronic citizen participation system that allows residents to get instant notification about community development related activities, planning documents, such as the Consolidated Plan, Citizen Participation Plan, Annual Action Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Document, scheduled public hearings all related exclusively to the Community Development Block Grant Program. Residents will have the opportunity to submit comments about the program and priorities throughout the entire year. Traditionally, there have been several ways for individuals to submit their public comments, including public hearings, emails, and phone calls. Now, Union County is adding another way for residents to participate and offer their feedback and input – **Engage Union County**. Engage Union County is a community engagement platform that provides capacity and support for focused participation in a safe, information-rich environment through an integrated range of online community engagement feedback tools. This platform allows Union County CBDG to broaden and enhance our citizen participation through greater, more diverse and more flexible opportunities to provide input and feedback, which will ultimately lead to greater inclusion and transparency for our residents. The program will be launched on or about March 15, 2023.

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
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1	FY23-24 CDBG Kick Off Meeting/Informational Session – Website/Email	Non-targeted/broad community/Other past and current subrecipients	The virtual meeting was held on Thursday, December 15 th , 2022, to kick off the FY 23-24 CDBG program and application process.	None	None
	Website/Email	Non-targeted/broad community/Other: past and current subrecipients	An information about the meeting was advertised on the Union County website. Also, mass email was sent out to service providers, past and current subrecipients, and all local municipalities.	N/A	N/A
2	FY23-24 CDBG Application Workshop	Non-targeted/broad community/Other: past and current subrecipients	A CDBG workshop was held on Wednesday, January 18 th , 2023 for potential program applicants.	None	None
	Website/Email/NOFA	Non-targeted/broad community/Other: past and current subrecipients	Individuals attending the workshop had an opportunity to discuss their programs/projects and ask questions about the new CDBG application.	N/A	N/A

3	Public Meeting	Non-targeted/broad community	A virtual public hearing was held on Thursday, April 13 th , 2023, to gain input from residents on the development of the 2023 AAP.
	Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/broad community	A notice was placed in the local newspaper, Tuesday March 14 th , 2023 notifying local residents of an upcoming public hearing and the availability of the draft 2023 AAP for a 30-day comment period (March 15-April 17).	N/A	N/A

Expected Resources

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

Introduction

Union County will be receiving \$1,092,632 in CDBG funding for FY 2023-2024. Union County does not collect any program income through its HUD funded projects. The CDBG funds can be used for a wide range of activities, including housing rehabilitation, economic development, public improvements, and social services, but are restricted in location to the unincorporated areas of Union County and participating Towns within the County. There is an opportunity for additional funding for the County through a federal initiative related to the ARPA program. Union County will start the 2022 program year, and year two of the Consolidated Plan with continuation to focus on its key priorities program areas listed in its five-year strategic plan, which include:

- Improve Public Facilities and Infrastructure (high priority)
- Support Delivery of Public Services (high priority)
- Promote Affordable Housing (high priority)
- Support Growth and Economic Development (low priority)

The funds outlined in the priority table reflect actual dollar amounts provided to Union County from HUD. The expected amount “Available Remainder of ConPlan” shows a projected dollar amount for the remaining year three to five of the Consolidated Plan based on FY 2023 estimated dollar amount.

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	\$1,092,632	\$0	\$2,016,626	\$3,109,258	\$2,185,264	The \$2,185,264 includes the estimated amount for year

		Planning Economic Development Housing Public Improvements Public Services							4-5 of the Consolidated Plan based on the estimates dollar amount of annual allocation shown for FY 23-24.
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Explain how federal funds will leverage those additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements will be satisfied.

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. Match fund sources include contributions derived from other eligible federal and nonfederal sources and the value of third-party in-kind contributions, (i.e., volunteers, personnel, office space, materials, equipment, and supplies). However, while matching funds are not required, applications will receive favorable scoring based on leveraging funds. Leveraging is a way to increase project efficiencies which often come with combining sources of funding. Union County will continue encouraging subrecipients to use matching funds in order to stretch CDBG dollars.

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

It does not apply.

Discussion

Union County's FY 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan covers the time period from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. The County's FY 23-24 entitlement amount is \$1,092,632. While HUD's CDBG allocations are critical, they are not sufficient to overcome all barriers and address all needs that low-income individuals and families face in attaining self-sufficiency. The County will continue to leverage additional resources and partnerships to successfully provide support and services to the populations in need.

Annual Goals and Objectives

AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives

Goals Summary Information

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Improve Public Facilities and Infrastructure	2021	2025	Non-Housing Community Development	Unincorporated Union County Monroe	Public Facilities and Infrastructure	CDBG: \$1,568,651.05	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 4,865 Persons Assisted 27 Households Assisted

2	Support Delivery of Public Services	2021	2025	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Elderly	Marshville Mineral Springs Wesley Chapel Indian Trails Monroe Stallings Weddington Waxhaw Fairview Union County ETJ	Public Services	CDBG: \$816,746.95	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 6484 Persons Assisted
3	Promote Affordable and Fair Housing	2021	2025	Affordable Housing	Union County	Fair Housing Affordable Housing	CDBG: CDBG: 173,500	Low/Moderate income Housing Benefit: 27 households

Table 6 – Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

2023-2024 Annual Action Plan Goals		
1	Goal Name	Improve Public Facilities and Infrastructure
	Goal Description	Upgrade road infrastructure and park facilities county wide.
2	Goal Name	Support Delivery of Public Services
	Goal Description	Continue ongoing County support for community and supportive services, with special emphasis on services for the homeless, seniors, at-risk youth, the disabled, veterans and other persons with special needs.
3	Goal Name	Promote Affordable Fair Housing
	Goal Description	Increased learning opportunities and coordination about fair housing issues with member governments, and other local organizations within service area or potential service area.
4	Goal Name	Promote Sustainable Affordable Housing Initiatives
	Goal Description	Support affordable housing initiatives and activities.

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

Below you will find the list of proposed projects for the upcoming CDBG fiscal year. Some projects have one activity, and others will consist of various activities. The information below shows the expected funding amounts and uses.

#	Project Name
1	CDBG Administration
2	CDBG Public Services
3	CDBG Housing Activities
4	CDBG Public Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements

Table 7 - Project Information

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

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan provides the framework for implementing a vision for creating a sustainable community and is designed to guide the County’s affordable housing, homelessness, community and economic development policies and programs over the County FY 2021- 2025 period. Projects funded through the Community Development Block Grant Fund (CDBG), work towards meeting the goals of the Consolidated Plan and to further Union County’s community vision. Funding priorities outlined in the Consolidated Plan remain unchanged. Each year the County issues a Notice of Funding Availability to request proposal for CDBG funded activities.

Factors that contributed to targeting funds for specific activities are:

- Stated needs, analysis, and objectives in the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan;
- The severity of the need;
- The availability of other funds to ensure project viability;
- Experience in working with federal funds and other government grants;
- 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;
- Project readiness in qualified census tracts with low- and moderate-income households.

The selected projects’ primary objectives are to strengthen neighborhoods, improve quality of life and provide needed public services to low- and moderate-income individuals, the elderly, and persons experiencing domestic violence and homelessness.

AP-38 Project Summary

Project Summary Information

1	Project Name	CDBG Administration
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Improve public facilities and infrastructure. Support delivery of public services Reduce barriers to affordable housing
	Needs Addressed	Public Facilities and Infrastructure, Public Services Fair Housing
	Funding	CDBG: \$218,500
	Description	Up to 20% of entitlement funds will be used for general program administration and planning.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	N/A
	Location Description	Countywide
	Planned Activities	General CDBG administration and planning.
2	Project Name	CDBG Public Services
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Support for vulnerable populations and communities
	Needs Addressed	Support vulnerable populations and communities
	Funding	CDBG: \$163,000
	Description	Public Services funds will be used for services provided mainly for presumed benefit population, such as elderly, domestic violence victims, economic and housing stabilization programs for vulnerable population, emergency shelter support services, along with prescription medication services for low-mod income individuals.

Target Date	6/30/2024
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Estimated number: Estimated number: 4,012 persons. Proposed activities will benefit low-moderate income families.
Location description	Countywide
Planned activities	Shelter operations and supportive services, domestic violence and sexual assault victims counseling, affordable prescription medication services, supportive programs/services for the elderly, economic empowerment programs along with economic and housing stabilization.

3	Project Name	CDBG Affordable Housing Activities
	Target Area	Union County
	Goals Supported	Increase and preserve affordable housing
	Needs Addressed	Affordable Housing
	Funding	CDBG: \$83,500
	Description	Funds will be used for the purpose of creating affordable housing through various CDBG eligible activities such as acquisition, and site improvements.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Estimated number: 25 households. Proposed activities will benefit low-moderate income families.
Location description	Countywide	
Planned activities	Acquisition and Site Improvements	
4	Project Name	CDBG Public Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements
	Target Area	Countywide
	Goals Supported	Support for vulnerable populations and communities
	Needs Addressed	Support for vulnerable populations and communities
	Funding	CDBG \$600,000
	Description	Funds will be used for the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or installation of public facilities and improvements.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	4,865 individuals
Location description	Countywide	
Planned activities	May include community revitalization, public facility activities and infrastructure work regarding streets and sidewalk depending upon the needs of the	

AP-50 Geographic Distribution – 91.220(f)

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

Union County is home to fourteen municipalities. Ten municipalities have chosen to participate in the CDBG program: Marshville, Monroe, Stallings, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wingate, Fairview, Indian Trail, Mineral Springs, and Wesley Chapel along with unincorporated areas in the county.

Union County has not established specific target areas to focus the investment of CDBG funds. In terms of specific geographic distribution of investments, infrastructure improvements and public facilities will be focused primarily in areas with concentrations of low-to-moderate income population.

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically

Geography was not used to determine funding allocation priorities for the county. There are no blighted areas in specific geographical areas that have disproportionate needs. Allocations and use of funds are determined through a competitive application process open to all eligible organizations.

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

Introduction

Union County’s CDBG Grant Program area consists of Marshville, Monroe, Stallings, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wingate, Fairview, Indian Trail, Mineral Springs, and Wesley Chapel and unincorporated areas. In accordance with the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, each entitlement community must “affirmatively further fair housing”. The County has identified gaps and improvements in its 2022-2026 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing process in order to take a more focused plan of actions to identify and overcome any barriers to fair/affordable housing choice for protected classes.

Finding safe and affordable housing is a complex challenge many communities face throughout the nation. Single family home prices and the price of rent has also skyrocketed throughout the State of

North Carolina, and it seems to be getting worse in this new post-COVID era. Union County recognizes that gaps do exist within the affordable housing realm and the challenges the community faces. In past years, the main focus was mainly on updating existing, and creating new infrastructure and public facilities to serve housing units across the County. In the last two program years, the focus began moderately shifting to help the community with affordable housing needs. Current institutional delivery systems with dedicated resources currently exist that provide for increasing and sustaining affordable housing units in Union County. However, these existing resources are not sufficient to address the affordable housing needs across the county and a more unified and holistic approach will need to be sought out in the future.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	0
Non-Homeless	0
Special-Needs	0
Total	0

Table 1 - 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	0
Rehab of Existing Units	0
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	0

Table 2 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type

Discussion

According to the Union County 2022-2026 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing document, the population in Union County has increased by twelve percent between 2015 and 2020, and by eighteen percent over the last decade. The population is projected to continue growing in the next three decades by another sixty percent. The demand to live in the county increases the pressure on the local housing, and one of the biggest challenges is the huge disparity between housing costs and what individuals with low- and moderate-incomes can afford to pay.

Almost half of the residents currently renting have rent costs that are 35 percent or more of their total household income. The median rent has increased by eighteen percent from 2015 to 2019, and it is at \$1,030 a month, while median home value increased by twenty-two percent, and it is currently at \$241,400 within the same time period.

Fostering and maintaining the existing supply of affordable housing continues to be of importance for the County, who will continue to develop policies that help foster the development of new affordable housing units. Additionally, Union County and its municipal partners will continue to support the efforts of local non-profit housing providers who carry out strategies to retain and create affordable housing options throughout the region.

There are 16 low-income housing apartment communities offering 619 affordable apartments for rent in Union County, which are broken down into three categories:

1. Income Based Apartments: 559 apartments. Tenants typically pay no more than 30% of their income towards rent and utilities.
2. Low Rent Apartments: 60 apartments that do not provide direct rental assistance but remain affordable to low-income households in Union County.
3. Housing Choice Vouchers: On average, Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers pay Union County landlords \$700 per month towards rent. The average voucher holder contributes \$400 towards rent in Union County.

As previously stated, there are 619 public, safe, and affordable rental units available for eligible low-income families and individuals. There was an estimated total of 61,177 families in Union County in 2019, with an approximate 3,354 families living below the poverty level. There are significantly more families living below the poverty level than the 619 safe, affordable rental units available in the County. (Source: ACS 2019 5-Year Estimates)

AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

Introduction

Union County does not maintain nor support any public housing. The Monroe Housing Authority (MHA) is the local entity with the sole responsibility for management and maintenance of public housing. MHA was established under the State of North Carolina General Statute 157 (Housing Authority Law) through a cooperation agreement with the City of Monroe, North Carolina on June 28, 1966. MHA administers the Public Housing (PH) and Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Programs funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the City of Monroe and Union County.

Its goal is to provide quality housing for community members and rental housing program participants.

Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families and individuals with a total number of 173 units. Monroe Housing Authority (MHA) has four Public Housing communities:

- Serenity Place - 44 units (Elderly and Disabled Site)
- Grace Gardens - 83 units (Family Site)

- Willow Oaks - 46 units (Family Site)

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

Not applicable.

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

The Monroe Housing Authority (MHA) offers a number of resident programs and supportive services designed to foster self-sufficiency and improve quality of life. The Monroe Housing Authority also partners with several community organizations that provide resources to assist clients.

The MHA's Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) Program offers supportive services to its Public Housing residents to increase their income, enhance their life goals, or overall become self-sufficient. Through ongoing one-on-one case management, the ROSS Coordinator assists ROSS Program participants in assessing barriers that may hinder self-sufficiency and helping them create goals to achieve success in career advancement, furthering education, or basic life skills.

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

Not applicable.

Discussion

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

Introduction

Homeless prevention resources are available in Union County. However, these services are concentrated within the City of Monroe. The resources available fall short of providing adequate services to meet the growing needs of both the emerging homeless population and residents who are at risk of becoming homeless. While gaps do exist, there are strong non-profit organizations working in coordination to ensure this population is served. The Community Shelter of Union County is the only homelessness services provider in Union County. They provide onsite emergency shelter to meet the shelter needs of people experiencing homelessness in the community, case management, education, and employment services. The organization helps people experiencing homelessness obtain new housing with rapid rehousing services.

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 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. Union County also partners with the Community Shelter of Union County to reach homeless persons across the County.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

Union County does not receive federal funding nor carry out shelter activities. Local non-profit organizations operate shelters and are working to find ways to obtain much needed resources to expand shelter space and homeless prevention programs.

The County works with the Community Shelter of Union County on addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless people. In their emergency shelter program, the organization embraces national best practices and HUD required low barrier and housing first strategies. They operate on a 60-day stay, with participants engaging in housing plans within the first week of shelter stay working with shelter, housing, and economic mobility case managers. The emergency shelter team includes client services director, six case managers, and sixteen shelter coordinators.

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

Homeless needs are addressed in the community through other organizations, including but not limited to the Union County Community Shelter. Union County also has representation on the Piedmont Regional Continuum of Care. The Community Shelter's continuum of care includes emergency shelter, food, rehousing, economic mobility, and post-housing services.

Through the Community Shelter of Union County, shelter participants are referred to the shelter's housing stability team to begin housing search and placement activities within one week of entry. The shelter budgets with the participants income to determine affordability for

long term success and help with upfront costs (deposits, short term rent and utility assistance) to help re-establish independence. The housing stability team includes two rapid rehousing case managers. The evidence based rapid rehousing strategies help clients maintain permanent housing long term. The shelter has great integrity with their eligibility elements and data collection to generate reliable statistical data using a statewide HMIS data collection tool and adopting best practices on policy, strategy, and activity.

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.

The Union County Community Shelter and Community Link operate several programs that provide support to people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Their work includes a focus on several special populations, such as veterans and people with a serious mental illness. The services provided through these programs include:

- Adult Emergency Shelter
- Emergency Family Shelter
- Soup Kitchen
- Hope Pantry
- Amazing Grace Program for Seniors
- Case Management
- Homeless to Rental Housing
- Travelers Aid for those recently released from jail
- Homeless to Housing for Veterans
- Homeownership Programs

Shelter participants are also encouraged to enroll in the economic mobility program which provides programming to increase earning potential and access to local employment opportunities to program participants.

In the soup kitchen, the shelter partners with over 150 community groups to help provide and serve meals to its participants. There are seven nutrition staff employed to oversee over 1,000 meal service opportunities per year and to receive pantry donations seven days a week. The food service manager and onsite operations director schedule mobile food pantry activities including procuring food for food insecure community households. The shelter's strategy is to provide 1 - 2 weeks of

groceries at a time to mobile pantry participants, and to offer three meals daily to any citizen expressing food insecurity in our soup kitchen.

Discussion

The Piedmont Regional Continuum of Care has developed a Regional Committee Plan that details a systematic approach for providing referrals to support resources to ensure clients are connected to community services that will assist them in addressing their current housing needs. This includes stabilizing housing for persons with developmental disabilities and providing transportation.

Union County is planning on continuing the partnership with the Shelter if Union County to provide continuous support for the homeless population.

AP-75 Barriers to affordable housing – 91.220(j)

Introduction:

Union County faces similar barriers to affordable housing that many other neighboring countries face in the region. The County is committed to removing or reducing barriers to affordable housing whenever possible and working together on the government level, and community level with other partners. The County continues to assess and address outcomes and recommendations of the 2022 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing.

Providing affordable housing is a very complex issue to overcome. There are several current barriers to increasing the affordable housing stock in the County. The list below highlights some of the current affordable housing issues:

- Land costs have been driven up by developers and speculators;
- Rising construction costs are a factor in the development of affordable housing;
- Scarce supply of construction and housing rehabilitation workforce;
- Lack of partnerships and support between public and private partners to efficiently leverage resources to build affordable housing or create mixed-income communities;
- Inadequate public transportation options that match appropriately priced housing options in specific communities.

Continued labor shortages and increased materials and construction costs add additional expense to affordable housing projects. This reduces available funds for developers to build cost-effectively and in turn reduces affordability.

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

The Union County 2022-2026 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing document lists resources and ideas on affordable housing projects, and initiatives that are worth researching further to address the affordable housing shortage countywide. The County also recognizes the importance of educating county residents about fair housing issues and is committed to providing fair housing training on a regular basis with the help of Legal Aid of North Carolina.

Union County started a septic tank repair program in FY22-23 using CDBG funds and started fostering a partnership with Anson County Habitat for Humanity.

AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction:

Providing affordable housing options and/or creating socioeconomically integrated communities are very complex tasks to work towards and achieve. In neighborhoods with pockets of racial and ethnic poverty the affordable housing stock is made up of mostly older units, that are more likely to be substandard and the cost of improvements is usually beyond the homeowners' means. There is a lack of transportation options between areas offering affordable housing and available jobs, along with a lack of services in these areas. Local governments face the option of either looking into ways of transforming racially or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into resource-rich areas or trying to create integrated mixed-income communities.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

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.

Union County will also ensure that marketing materials for County-funded programs are available in languages specific to the populations seeking information.

Whenever possible, the County will work to leverage CDBG funds and continue to work to identify additional opportunities.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

Union County is lacking in the development of new affordable housing. The County will begin by initiating partnerships with public and private housing developers and advocating for the development of affordable and mixed-income housing. Union County has started a septic system repair PILOT program with a goal of assisting up to fifteen homes in the county in program year 2022-2023 as a way of help maintaining affordable housing units in the community. The goal is to work towards building up a robust county-wide 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 to partner with. Additionally, Union County will continue being involved in discussions about local and regional public transportation initiatives.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

The County will complete an in-house review form to ensure compliance with all Federal statutes concerning lead-based paint in any Federally assisted capital project. Union County ensures the reduction of adverse health effects on area residents caused by rehabilitation of lead-based paint surfaces by providing educational materials to all housing contractors and citizens receiving housing rehabilitation assistance. The Union County Children's Environmental Health Childhood Lead Prevention Program protects and improves the health of children from the harmful effects of lead through the implementation of the North Carolina Rules Governing Lead Poisoning Prevention in Children, 15A NCAC 18A .3100. Union County Children's Environmental Health coordinates and assists in the environmental investigation of a child who has lead poisoning.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

Union County is dedicated to working with local agencies and units of local government to aid in reducing the number of poverty level families in the county. This will be done by educating and assisting impoverished families in becoming self-sufficient. There are various local organizations who provide essential support services for families living in poverty. CDBG funding will be allocated to support these local organizations to help achieve their public service goals.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

Union County manages the institutional delivery structure surrounding the acceptance and allocation of federal grant funds for Consolidated Plan programs. The goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan could not have been developed without residents' informed assistance.

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

The County continues to have conversations with local housing service and program providers, housing developers, various local non-profit agencies and local municipalities on how to coordinate resources and build stronger partnership among local public and private housing and social service agencies within the county.

- Union County has been tasked with creating a Fair Housing Advisory Council. The role of the Council will be to research affordable and fair housing methods, concepts and ideas that have the potential of being implemented in the future.

- Initiating conversation with Affordable Housing Developers.
- The County will continue working with the State of North Carolina and regional and local transportation organizations to overcome transportation related barriers.

Discussion

Even though CDBG funding is limited, the County will continue working with local agencies, units of government, and other local partners. The goal of Union County's CDBG program is to continue the conversation on how to increase the quality of life of residents, especially those who live in poverty. The County will continuously look for opportunities to improve existing programs or create new ones.

Program Specific Requirements

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

Introduction:

The following provides details on program specific requirements for the Community Development Block Grant.

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

<p>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</p>	100
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