



5 Year Strategic Plan

This document includes Narrative Responses to specific questions that grantees of the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership, Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS and Emergency Shelter Grants Programs must respond to in order to be compliant with the Consolidated Planning Regulations.

NAME OF JURISDICTION: Somerset County, NJ

Consolidated Plan Time Period: 2010-2014

GENERAL

Executive Summary

On behalf of the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Department of Human Services, the Community Development Office is pleased to present the 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan and 2010 Action Plan, which details the proposed uses of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds in Somerset County. The plan also highlights the County's collective effort to improve the quality of life for residents of Somerset County, with special attention to programs and services for those who have special needs.

The Somerset County Department of Human Services, along with the Board of Social Services and the Comprehensive Emergency Assistance Services (CEAS) Committee continue to work toward providing services to those that are either homeless or imminently homeless. In response to HUD's initiative to end chronic homelessness within ten years, the Board of Chosen Freeholders adopted a Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in 2005. The plan reflects a multi-pronged approach that has as its main goals the development and implementation of a systematic approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data and identify needs/gaps in services for the homeless, the improvement of county-wide coordination at all levels of service delivery for homeless families and individuals in the County, the expansion of opportunities that lead to permanent housing for the homeless and increased knowledge, linkage, and usage of mainstream services. Inter-agency cooperation and collaboration are vital to this effort and under the compassionate leadership of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, as well as the County's Department of Human Services, this task is within reach. In the time since the Plan was adopted, the number of chronic homeless in Somerset County has decreased from fifteen to eight individuals.

Now that the Statewide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Collaborative has selected the AWARDS Software Package to meet HUD's mandate to implement a HMIS, two subgrantee recipients are using the system to manage their data collection and case management processes. The Continuum of Care subcommittee of the CEAS Committee will continue to encourage other agencies to participate in the use of the selected HMIS. The Somerset County Board of Social Services also uses the program to collect data on clients of the Social Services for the Homeless (SSH) and Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) Programs.

Somerset County has a vibrant non-profit community that continues to provide the highest level of services to its residents. This year, CDBG funds will be used to complete sewer rehabilitation and sidewalk rehabilitation projects in five communities throughout the County, to improve handicapped accessibility and perform other improvements at numerous community buildings, and for the County housing rehabilitation program. CDBG funds will also be used to provide financial counseling and other supportive services to seniors, the homeless and abused spouses and children as well as provide employment training and job coach services to veterans and recreation and life skills programming to youth.

HOME funds will support new construction, substantial rehabilitation and down payment assistance. In addition, the Board of Chosen Freeholders will continue to provide additional services through the Non-Profit Purchase of Service. The Board of Chosen Freeholders also voted to enact the provisions of the New Jersey Homeless Trust Fund and it is likely that funds will become available some time during Program Year 2010. Community Development, in partnership with the County Board of Social Services, will continue to administer the Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Program. The program currently has twenty-nine clients enrolled and though most of the clients are near the end of their twelve-month term, there are still funds available to avoid eviction and to provide security deposits.

Alternatives/ADTI will use PY2010 HOME funds make improvements to a detached-single family home that provides permanent supportive housing to three mental health consumers. Somerset Hills YMCA will use PY 2010 HOME funds along with PY 2009 HOME funds to finance the construction of a home in Bernards that will provide housing for six developmentally-disabled adults. The home is contiguous to the grounds of the YMCA Health and Wellness Center' consumers who live in the home will also be employed at the YMCA. Valley Brook Village, LLC will use PY 2010 HOME funds toward the construction of a 91-unit apartment complex on the campus of the Lyons VA in Bernards. These units will provide housing to veterans as they leave the Domiciliary and the Hope for Veterans Program. Community Hope will use HOME funds toward the acquisition of a two-family home that will provide housing for four developmentally disabled adults. Finally, the Somerset County Coalition on Affordable Housing will continue to provide down payment assistance to fifteen first time homebuyers utilizing ADDI funds.

The County has several processes in place to evaluate its performance toward meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan. First, there is the formal evaluative process that is integral to the preparation and submission of the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report. In addition, CD staff use IDIS reports which detail the use of program income, status of projects, and the amount of funds drawn to evaluate performance. Moreover, CD staff has found that IDIS reports which summarize beneficiary data are extremely helpful to identify the number of people that are being served and, by extension, determining the level at which the County is meeting its goals and objectives. Finally, there are other indicators, including the number of open CDBG and HOME projects, the County's Timely Spending Ratio, and the productivity of the County's Housing Rehabilitation programs, which are useful measures of the County's performance toward meeting goals and objectives outlined in the 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan.

Demographic Profile

Somerset County is located in Central New Jersey, with close proximity to both New York City and Philadelphia. Its 305 square miles are a mix of suburban, urban and rural areas. There are major highways (Interstates 78 and 287 and Routes 202, 206, 22, 27 and 28) and mass transit options through NJ Transit bus and rail lines. There are numerous recreation activities, shopping centers, and historic and cultural sites throughout the 21 municipalities. This makes Somerset County a desirable place to live and work. Due to these reasons, many corporations have located offices or headquarters within the county.

Somerset County has experienced a population increase of 23.8% between the 1990 and 2000 Census Survey; the most recent U.S. Census Bureau figures estimate the County's total population to be 326,869. In addition, the County has become more diverse. Asian persons represent 12% of the total population; African American persons represent 8% of the population; and persons of Hispanic origin represent 14% of the population. A language other than English is spoken at home by 37% of the population. This trend has created a need for the County, municipalities and non-profit agencies to modify their outreach, to create new programs, and to provide bilingual staff.

While the value of homes throughout the State of New Jersey has declined, the cost of housing in Somerset County remains high and continues to present challenges to homeowners. According to recent figures from the National Association of Realtors, the median sales price for an existing single family home in Somerset County was \$404,700 for the first quarter of 2010 (most current statistics) compared to \$373,000 for the first quarter of 2009 which represents a increase of 8.5%. These statistics show that housing costs in the area have risen slightly although the country is experiencing a down market. Although the County continues to encourage and support homeownership through the First Time Home Buyer's Club, the dream of homeownership continues to evade many of the County's low and moderate-income residents.

Although the housing market is experiencing a slight upturn after many down quarters, access to affordable rental housing remains difficult for residents of the County. As one might expect, low and moderate-income residents face the greatest challenge. In Somerset County New Jersey, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,409 compared to the average State of NJ for a two-bedroom rent of \$1,296. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities, without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a Somerset County household must earn \$56,360 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week with 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of \$27.10. (This data is from the National Low Income Housing Coalition 2009 Out of Reach Report).

In New Jersey, a minimum wage worker earns an hourly wage of \$7.25. In order to afford the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment in Somerset County, a minimum wage earner must work 149 hours per week compared to 134 hours for NJ overall (based on 52 weeks per year). In other words, a Somerset County household must include 3.7 minimum wage earner(s) working 40 hours per week year-round, compared with 3.4 for New Jersey, in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable.

In Somerset County 54% of renter households are extremely cost burdened and they pay more than 50% of their total gross income for rent plus utilities according to data from the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Fortunately, some County residents are able to receive rental subsidies through the Section 8 voucher programs operated by the Boroughs of Somerville and Manville, the Department of Community Affairs, and the Franklin Township Housing Authority. While there is some housing assistance available, the needs are far greater than the resources. In regard to existing units, over 62 percent of the housing within the County that is rented at rates that are affordable is more than thirty-years old. Over 47 percent of the housing units were built prior to 1970. Aside from general dilapidation, which can result in higher operating costs, there are other troublesome issues including lead paint, mold, and asbestos. These structures are primarily located in the municipalities of Bound Brook, Manville, North Plainfield, Raritan, Somerville, and South Bound Brook which are the areas that have the highest concentrations of low and moderate-income residents and are the locus of the County's designated Low/Mod areas, with the exception of one census tract each in Bernards, Bernardsville and Bridgewater.

There is a small, but growing homeless population in the County. Based on the data collected during the County's Annual Point in Time Count on January 27, 2010, homeless persons were identified. This number supports a strong, urgent need for more permanent supportive housing. Sources of income for this population are Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), GA Welfare and social security, while some reported they were still receiving wages. Finally, there is a disproportionate share of African-Americans (43.9%) who are homeless compared with the overall population of 8%.

With the generous assistance of the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Board of Social Services, the Department of Human Services, and the County's non-profit community, there is a wide array of services that are provided to seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities and other frail and/or at-risk subpopulations within the County. The challenge of Community Development in Somerset County continues to be the effective allocation and use of CDBG, HOME, and ADDI funds in an environment where the needs are much greater than the resources.

Strategic Plan

Mission:

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

MANAGING THE PROCESS

Consultation 91.200(b)

1. Identify the lead agency or entity for overseeing the development of the plan and the major public and private agencies responsible for administering programs covered by the consolidated plan.

RESPONSE:

The Somerset County Community Development Office is the lead entity for overseeing the development of the plan, although the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders is the final authority as it relates to accepting the funding and other recommendations that are included in the plan. The major public and private agencies responsible for administering programs covered by the consolidated plan are as follows:

- Adult Day Center of Somerset County- provides day programs for elderly and disabled members of the community.
- Alternatives, Inc.- provides assistance for individuals with special needs to live successfully in the community.
- Arc of Somerset County - serves the needs of people of all ages with developmental disabilities.
- Bound Brook- borough of 1.60 square miles with population of 10,155
- Bridgewater- township of 32.68 square miles with population of 42,940
- Community Hope Inc. – provides supportive housing for veterans and other special needs populations.
- Cooperative Housing Corporation- provides shared living residences and supportive services to seniors and developmentally disabled adults
- Curbing Hunger, Inc.- manages summer food collection program in cooperation with County Recycling
- Delta Community Supports- provides affordable housing and supportive services to developmentally disabled adults
- Homesharing - matches people wanting to share their homes with people seeking permanent housing.
- Interfaith Hospitality Network - provides shelter, meals, and assistance to homeless families and single women.
- Jewish Family Service – provides counseling, referral services and other services for persons of all faiths.
- Legal Services of Northwest Jersey – provides efficient and effective legal services to person of low economic means.
- Manville- borough of 2.5 square miles with a population of 10,343
- Martin Luther King Youth Center - provides educational, cultural, recreational, developmental, and nutritional programs to meet the needs of school-aged children of income-eligible families.
- Matheny School & Hospital – provides residential and out-patient medical and dental care to disabled individuals.
- Middle Earth - offers programs designed to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of youth.
- North Plainfield- township of 2.90 square miles with population of 21,103
- Raritan- borough of 2.02 square miles with population of 6,338

- Resource Center for Women and their Families - provides housing, counseling, and other services to victims of domestic violence.
- Somerset County Board of Social Services- administers entitlement and self-sufficiency programs
- Somerset County Coalition on Affordable Housing - provides programs designed to increase the availability and affordability of housing.
- Somerset Hills YMCA- provides health and wellness-related programs
- Somerset Valley YMCA- provides health and wellness services and programming at facilities in Somerville, Bridgewater, and Hillsborough
- Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children - provides short and long-term residences for abandoned, abused, and neglected children.
- Somerville- borough of 2.4 square miles with population of 12,423
- South Bound Brook- borough of .90 square miles with population of 4,492
- Volunteers of America - provides shelter for homeless families as well as permanent supportive housing.

2. Identify agencies, groups, and organizations that participated in the process. This should reflect consultation requirements regarding the following:

RESPONSE:

- Adult Day Center of Somerset County- provides day programs for elderly and disabled members of the community.
- Alternatives, Inc.- provides assistance for individuals with special needs to live successfully in the community.
- American Red Cross – provides transportation to medical appointments for elderly and disabled individuals, community health classes, and disaster services as needed.
- Arc of Somerset County - serves the needs of people of all ages with developmental disabilities.
- Bedminster- township of 26.70 square miles with population of 8,302
- Bernards- township of 24.5 square miles with population of 24,575
- Bernardsville- borough of 12.85 square miles with population of 7,345
- Board of Social Services- administers public assistance programs for County residents
- Bonnie Brae – residential treatment center for at-risk adolescent males that provides clinical, academic, and other supportive services.
- Bound Brook- borough of 1.60 square miles with population of 10,155
- Branchburg- township of 20.20 square miles with population of 14,566
- Bridgewater- township of 32.68 square miles with population of 42,940
- Catholic Charities - delivers a wide range of childcare, housing, and emergency assistance programs serving people of all faiths.
- CDC Properties - faith-based housing development corporation.
- Center for Great Expectations – provides transitional housing and services for homeless pregnant women and adolescents.
- Community Hope Inc. – provides supportive housing for veterans and other special needs populations. Cooperative Housing Corporation- provides shared living residences and supportive services to seniors and developmentally disabled adults
- Curbing Hunger, Inc.- manages summer food collection program in cooperation with County Recycling

- Delta Community Supports- provides affordable housing and supportive
- Developmental Disabilities Association - housing and supportive services agency for persons with special needs/development disabilities.
- Developmental Resources Corporation - housing and supportive services corporation for persons with special needs.
- Family & Community Services - provides a variety of counseling services to individuals and families
- Far Hills- borough of 5.0 square miles with population of 859
- New Jersey Community Development Corporation - faith-based community development corporation providing services to residents of Franklin Township and New Brunswick.
- Food Bank Network of Somerset County - collects and redistributes food to families of low economic means also provides funding to cover the costs of prescriptions and eyeglasses.
- Franklin Housing Authority- manages public housing located in Franklin Township
- Friends of the Carpenter - affordable housing development corporation serving North Plainfield.
- Franklin- Far Hills- township of 46.40 square miles with population of 50,903
- Franklin Township Food Bank - collects and distributes food to families in Franklin Township.
- Green Brook- Township of 4.70 square miles with population of 5,654
- Hillsborough- township of 54.7 square miles with population with 36,634
- Homesharing - matches people wanting to share their homes with people seeking permanent housing.
- Interfaith Hospitality Network - provides shelter, meals, and assistance to homeless families and single women.
- Jewish Family Service – provides counseling, referral services and other services for persons of all faiths.
- Legal Services of Northwest Jersey – provides efficient and effective legal services to person of low economic means.
- The Learning Gate Association, Inc. - provides affordable child care to infants and children through age 6.
- Literary Volunteers of America – provides literary and ESL training to individuals regardless of income.
- Manville- borough of 2.5 square miles with a population of 10,343
- Martin Luther King Youth Center - provides educational, cultural, recreational, developmental, and nutritional programs to meet the needs of school-aged children of income-eligible families.
- Matheny School & Hospital – provides residential and out-patient medical and dental care to disabled individuals.
- Middle Earth - offers programs designed to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of youth.
- Millstone- borough of .60 square miles with population of 410
- Monarch Housing Associates- non-profit affordable housing developer; provides technical assistance and consultation to Continuum of Care application and homeless planning/service initiatives
- Montgomery- township of 32.26 square miles with population of 19,000
- North Plainfield- township of 2.90 square miles with population of 21,103
- NORWESCAP - not-for-profit community action program that provides cost-effective, coordinated services to low-income people and families in Somerset, Hunterdon, Morris, Warren, and Sussex counties.

- Peapack- borough of 5.9 square miles with population of 2,433
- People Care Center - facility that offers affordable rental space to non-profit agencies; the County's "Home to Human Services".
- Raritan- borough of 2.02 square miles with population of 6,338
- Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity - provides modest, decent affordable homeownership opportunities to low-income families.
- Resource Center for Women and their Families - provides housing, counseling, and other services to victims of domestic violence.
- Rocky Hill- borough of .64 square miles with population of 662
- SHIP – provides services to homeless and low-income persons, including operation of mobile soup kitchen, as well as a drop-in center.
- Somerset Community Action Program - provides programs and resources to low and moderate income families and children contributing to all levels of development.
- Somerset County Board of Social Services-administers self-sufficiency and entitlement program
- Somerset Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependency - works toward the prevention of and education on alcoholism and drug dependency.
- Somerset County Coalition on Affordable Housing - provides programs designed to increase the availability and affordability of housing.
- Somerset County Government- includes a number of divisions that provide services to County residents including Youth Services, Veterans' Services, Consumer Affairs, Emergency Management, Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, Planning Board
- Somerset County Health Department- manages protection of environmental quality and enhancement of life
- Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children - provides short and long-term residences for abandoned, abused, and neglected children.
- Somerset Treatment Services – provider of evaluations, therapy, information and referral for drug and alcohol additions.
- Somerset Valley YMCA- provides health and wellness services at locations in Somerville, Bridgewater, and Hillsborough
- Somerville- borough of 2.4 square miles with population of 12,423
- South Bound Brook- borough of .90 square miles with population of 4,492
- Volunteers of America - provides shelter for homeless families as well as permanent supportive housing.
- Warren- township of 19.3 square miles with population of 14,259
- Watchung- borough of 6.2 square miles with population of 5,613
- Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church – provides affordable after school care to students in grades K-5 in North Plainfield.

Citizen Participation 91.200 (b)

- 3. Based on the jurisdiction's current citizen participation plan, provide a summary of the citizen participation process used in the development of the consolidated plan. Include a description of actions taken to encourage participation of all its residents, including the following:**

RESPONSE

Somerset County has a thorough Citizen Participation Plan, adopted in April 1995,

which meets all of the requirements outlined in 24 CFR 91.105. The intent of the Plan is to provide opportunity for and to encourage residents to participate in the development of the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments to the Action Plan, and the Annual Performance Evaluation Report. Generally, citizen participation is provided for and encouraged by distribution of program information and literature, public meetings and hearings, and public notices and advertisements.

So that County residents could provide input and indicate their preferences for Housing and Community Development needs and services, the Community Development staff held a series of public meetings in Somerville and Basking Ridge. All of the meetings associated with the 2010 CDBG and HOME allocation processes were advertised and open to the public.

Community Development staff also prepared and distributed an extensive Housing and Community Development Needs Survey. The County Public Information Office announced the survey with a press release, the survey document was distributed to community providers and available via the County website. Community Development Staff analyzed this data using a software tool created by the County's Management Information Service Department. A copy of the survey and summary of comments received (from both the public hearings as well as the survey) are attached at the conclusion of this narrative. Finally, CD Staff used anecdotal and empirical data (gained through participation on several committees including the Economic Development Incentive Program, Senior Housing Providers Workshop, Continuum of Care, NJ Homeless Management Information System Advisory Council and Policy Academy, NJ Urban Counties Community Development Association, CEAS, Homelessness Trust Fund) as well as elements of other County planning documents and processes to augment the information that was collected.

- 4. Provide a description of the process used to allow citizens to review and submit comments on the proposed consolidated plan, including how the plan (or a summary of the plan) was published for review; the dates, times and locations of a public hearing, or hearings; when and how notice was provided to citizens of the hearing(s); the dates of the 30 day citizen comment period, and if technical assistance was provided to groups developing proposals for funding assistance under the consolidated plan and how this assistance was provided.**

RESPONSE

So that County residents could provide input and indicate their preferences for Housing and Community Development needs and services and the 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan, Community Development staff held a series of public meetings in Somerville on June 3rd, 10th, and 24th and Bernards on the 17th. The public was made aware of these hearings via a series of press releases and announcements posted on the County website. The meetings were also mentioned at the May Human Services Advisory Council and Comprehensive Emergency Assistance Services meetings. Providers also received an email encouraging clients to attend and/or provide feedback.

The Consolidated Plan was advertised in a legal notice that appeared in the Courier News on June 1, 2010, with a comment period from June 1 to July 1, 2010. The notice and affidavit are included as an attachment to this report. The Consolidated Plan was also presented for public comment at Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders meeting on May 25, 2010 and June 8, 2010. All of the meetings associated with the 2010 CDBG and HOME allocation processes were advertised and open to the public. Finally, technical assistance was provided to groups developing proposals for funding assistance under the consolidated plan at an application workshop that the Community Development Office provided on October 14, 2009.

5. Provide a summary of citizen comments or views received on the plan and explain any comments not accepted and reasons why these comments were not accepted.

RESPONSE-

No comments were received.

HOUSING AND HOMELESS NEEDS

Housing Needs 91.205

6. In this narrative, describe the estimated housing needs projected for the next five year period for the following categories of persons: extremely low-income, low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income families, renters and owners, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, including persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, single persons, large families, public housing residents, victims of domestic violence, families on the public housing and section 8 tenant-based waiting list, and discuss specific housing problems, including: cost-burden, severe cost-burden, substandard housing, and overcrowding (especially large families) and substandard conditions being experienced by extremely low-income, low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income renters and owners compare to the jurisdiction as a whole. The jurisdiction must define the terms "standard condition" and "substandard condition but suitable for rehabilitation."

RESPONSE:

Please see Housing Need and Homeless Needs table for estimated housing needs. The following definitions are applicable to this report:

Standard Condition- A housing unit is considered to be in standard condition when it has the following:

- operable indoor plumbing;
- a usable flush toilet, bathtub or shower inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family;
- a safe electrical service;
- a safe or adequate source of heat;
- a kitchen and
- the ability to provides safe and adequate shelter.

Substandard Condition- A housing unit is considered to be in substandard condition when it:

- lacks an attributes of a standard condition unit;
- endangers the health, safety or well being of a family in its present condition;
- has one or more critical defects or
- has a combination of intermediate defects in sufficient number or extent to require considerable repair or rebuilding.

- 7. To the extent that any racial or ethnic group has a disproportionately greater need for any income category in comparison to the needs of that category as a whole, the jurisdiction must provide an assessment of that specific need. For this purpose, disproportionately greater need exists when the percentage of persons in a category of need who are members of a particular racial or ethnic group is at least ten percentage points higher than the percentage of persons in the category as a whole.**

RESPONSE:

Data from the 2010 Point in Time Survey show that there is a disproportionate number of African Americans who are homeless in Somerset County. While African Americans are approximately 8% of the County population, they are 43.9% of the County's homeless population. The Department of Human Services is aware of this disparity and will not only make providers of aware of the trend, but also consider this when programmatic decisions are made. Provider comments in response to this trend are included at the end of report.

Homeless Needs 91.205 (c)

- 8. Homeless Needs— The jurisdiction must provide a concise summary of the nature and extent of homelessness in the jurisdiction, (including rural homelessness and chronic homelessness where applicable), addressing separately the need for facilities and services for homeless persons and homeless families with children, both sheltered and unsheltered, and homeless subpopulations, in accordance with Table 1A. The summary must include the characteristics and needs of low-income individuals and children, (especially extremely low-income) who are currently housed but are at imminent risk of either residing in shelters or becoming unsheltered.**

Response

Please see the Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulations chart.

According to data from the 2010 Point in Time Survey, there are approximately 296 homeless adults in Somerset County and 157 homeless children. Of the homeless adults, the greatest number of them (108) live in transitional housing; 51 of the homeless adults live in emergency shelter. There are eight chronically homeless individuals in Somerset County. The survey also revealed that a disproportionate percentage of African Americans/Blacks were homeless (43.9 percent) in comparison with the overall County population of 8 percent.

There are four emergency shelters in Somerset County, including one dedicated to victims of domestic violence and another for children. When shelters are full, area motels and out-of-county shelters provide additional emergency. Unaccompanied veterans are often sheltered at the Veterans Administration Domiciliary program, where they also receive supportive services. Transitional housing is available for individuals with various special needs populations,

including those suffering or recovering from mental illness and/or alcohol/drug addiction and veterans. A limited amount of transitional housing exists for families. There is currently no permanent supportive housing for families, though Community Hope intends to include three units in the Valley Brook Village development that is included in the 2010 Action Plan.

Data from the Housing Needs Table shows that there are approximately 4,480 households in Somerset County that are at risk for homelessness. This estimate includes renters and owners who earn less than 30 percent of the area median income and have a housing cost burden that is greater than 50 percent of their income. This group includes 1,295 elderly households, 1,905 small and large related households, and 1,280 other households. It is estimated the 1,905 related families also includes approximately 3200 children, who are also at risk for homelessness.

9. Describe, to the extent information is available, the nature and extent of homelessness by racial and ethnic group. A quantitative analysis is not required. If a jurisdiction provides estimates of the at-risk population(s), it should also include a description of the operational definition of the at-risk group and the methodology used to generate the estimates.

Response

Of the 296 homeless adults that were counted in the 2010 Point in Time Survey, 13.6 reported themselves to be Hispanic. Following is a chart that reflects the race and ethnicity of the 296 homeless adults that were counted in the 2010 Point in Time Survey:

Race	%
American Indian	1.1
Asian (India, Orient, Middle East)	2.7
Black	43.9
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0
White	40.5
No response	5.7
Other	7.2

Non-homeless Special Needs 91.205 (d) including HOPWA

10. Estimate, to the extent practicable, the number of persons in various subpopulations that are not homeless but may require housing or supportive services, including the elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families), persons with alcohol or other drug addiction, victims of domestic violence, public housing residents, and any other categories the jurisdiction may

specify and describe their supportive housing needs. The jurisdiction can use the Non-Homeless Special Needs Table (Table 1B or Needs.xls in CPMP Tool) of their Consolidated Plan to help identify these needs.

Response

Please see the Non-Homeless Special Needs Table.

Lead-based Paint 91.205 (e)

11. Estimate the number of housing units* that contain lead-based paint hazards, as defined in section 1004 of the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, and are occupied by extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families.

Response

According to U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey data, roughly one-half (47%) of the housing units in Somerset County were built prior to 1979. Lead is identified in approximately one-third of housing units that receive funding through one or more of the County's program where lead testing is required. Based on this technique, it is likely that approximately 21,263 units will be found to have had lead paint applied to a surface in the unit.



HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS

Housing Market Analysis 91.210

12. Based on information available to the jurisdiction, describe the significant characteristics of the housing market in terms of supply, demand, condition, and the cost of housing; the housing stock available to serve persons with disabilities; and to serve persons with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Response

According to recent figures from the National Association of Realtors, the median sales price for an existing single family home in Somerset County rose 8.5% from \$373,000 in the first quarter of 2009 to \$404,700 in the third quarter of 2010. High housing costs also affect the rental market. The current Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom unit in Somerset County is \$1,409. This represents a 4.5 percent increase over the past year from the FY 2009 rent of \$1,349 for the same two-bedroom unit.

The high housing costs have made it extremely difficult for low and moderate-income households to obtain or maintain housing in Somerset County without having a substantial cost burden. In all renter households at or below 50 percent of the median family income, over 74 percent have housing costs that exceed 30 percent of their income. High cost burdens also affect low income homeowners, with over 75 percent of those households at or below 50 percent of the median income having a housing cost burden of greater than 30 percent. For our small related and large related families that are owners at this income level, over 60 percent exceed 50 percent of their income on housing costs. These are just a few illustrations on the high cost burden many families have in Somerset County.

The housing stock in Somerset County is in variable condition. Of the total housing units, 47 percent were built prior to 1970. Aside from general dilapidation, which can result in higher operating costs, there are other troublesome issues including lead paint, mold and asbestos in their older housing units. These structures are primarily located in the municipalities that have the highest concentration of low and moderate-income residents and are the locus of most of the County's designated service areas, namely Bound Brook, Manville, North Plainfield, Raritan, Somerville, and South Bound Brook.

The high housing costs also affect the housing stock that is available to serve persons with disabilities and persons with AIDS/HIV. Agencies such as the ARC of Somerset County, Cooperative Housing Corporation, Community Hope, Developmental Resources Corp. and Alternatives Inc. that own and operate various group homes serving individuals with physical and mental disabilities throughout the County find it difficult to expand their programs because of the high purchase cost of suitable housing. Although persons with AIDS/HIV and their families rent or purchase units throughout the County, there is no housing specifically dedicated to this population. Moreover, because the County is ineligible to receive HOPWA funding through its Urban County or HOME

Consortium processes, there is no dedicated funding stream to create housing for those living with AIDS and/or HIV.

13. Provide an estimate; to the extent information is available, of the number of vacant or abandoned buildings and whether units in these buildings are suitable for rehabilitation.

Response

Based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey data, it is estimated that there are approximately 6,581 vacant or abandoned buildings with housing units in Somerset County. The figure is derived from the number of housing units in the county and the corresponding percentage of units per structure from the same source. Of the 6,581 buildings, it is likely that 80%, or 5,296 are vacant due to economic factors and that of the remaining 2,952, 80%, or 2,361 would be suitable for rehabilitation as a means to provide marketable housing units. As units remain vacant for longer periods of time and continue to deteriorate, this number may decrease.

Public and Assisted Housing 91.210 (b)

14. In cooperation with the public housing agency or agencies located within its boundaries, describe the needs of public housing, including

- **the number of public housing units in the jurisdiction,**
- **the physical condition of such units,**
- **the restoration and revitalization needs of public housing projects within the jurisdiction,**
- **the number of families on public housing and tenant-based waiting lists and**
- **results from the Section 504 needs assessment of public housing projects located within its boundaries (i.e. assessment of needs of tenants and applicants on waiting list for accessible units as required by 24 CFR 8.25).**

Response

The Township of Franklin Housing Authority administers the public housing within the jurisdiction of the Township. Its inventory consists of 100 units of public housing and 134 Housing Choice Vouchers. The Section 8 housing wait list has been closed since 2000 because the revitalization project precludes new tenants from moving into the complex and because there has not been any resident turnover to make new units available to the general public. At the time of its closure, there were approximately 238 applicants on the waiting list.

During the 2005-2009 planning period, the Authority assessed its public housing stock and determined that it was in need of replacement. The Authority received permission from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to demolish and rebuild its public housing in September, 2009 and as a result, the Housing Authority is currently in the midst of a full revitalization of its public housing units.

15. Describe the number and targeting (income level and type of household served) of units currently assisted by local, state, or federally funded programs, and an assessment of whether any such units are expected to be lost from the assisted housing inventory for any reason, (i.e. expiration of Section 8 contracts).

Response

Somerset County currently has 3,454 units of affordable housing that have been built through sixteen municipalities to meet their New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) obligations. Of these, 1,964 units are owner-occupied and 1,490 units are rentals. There are 355 units that are age restricted for senior citizens. The units are split evenly among low income and moderate income and include a mix of one, two, and three bedroom units that serve individuals and families of all sizes. These units are deed restricted and have affordable rental prices and resale restrictions. The Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program, funded through both the CDBG and HOME programs provides rehabilitation assistance for approximately 20 units owned and occupied by low and moderate-income households on an annual basis. Some municipalities in the county, including Warren, Bernards Township, Bridgewater, Manville, and Raritan also operate their own housing rehabilitation programs. Franklin Township also operates a housing rehabilitation program with its CDBG funds. It is estimated that an additional 20 units a year are done through the municipal programs.

There are four Section 8 Voucher programs in Somerset County, including the State-run countywide program and programs in the municipalities of Franklin, Manville, and Somerville. There are a total of 972 Section 8 vouchers operated through these four programs. The various group homes and shared living homes owned and operated by non-profits agencies that serve special needs clients or populations including people with physical and developmentally disabilities, with severe mental illness, who have undergone treatment for alcohol and drug addiction, and the elderly are another source of affordable housing. Agencies often receive funding and in-kind services from state agencies and local governments to develop and operate these homes. There is no indication that any of these units will leave the inventory.

It is likely that the County will lose some of its deed-restricted affordable housing units in the near future due to a number of factors that are beyond control of the CD Office. Some of the units developed to meet COAH obligations have either twenty or thirty-year deed restrictions that are due to expire within the next few years. To further complicate matters, the County's housing rehabilitation program is dependent on the continued receipt of CDBG funds, which is entirely dependent on the federal budget. There is no question that a loss or significant reduction in CDBG funding would impact the number of units that could be improved through the program. Likewise the Section 8 program is dependent on the continued funding from the federal government. Finally, the 29 households that currently receive rental assistance through the Somerset County Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Program will be lost from the assisted housing inventory beginning in September 2010 because the funding is time-limited by HUD.

Homeless Inventory 91.210 (c)

16. The jurisdiction shall provide a concise summary of the existing facilities and services (including a brief inventory) that assist homeless persons and families with children and subpopulations identified in Table 1A or in the CPMP Tool Needs Table. These include outreach and assessment, emergency shelters and services, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, access to permanent housing, and activities to prevent low-income individuals and families with children (especially extremely low-income) from becoming homeless. This inventory of facilities should include (to the extent it is available to the jurisdiction) an estimate of the percentage or number of beds and supportive services programs that are serving people that are chronically homeless.

Response

Please see the Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulation chart for an inventory of the emergency shelter and transitional housing that is available for the homeless.

SERVICE INVENTORY
<p>Component: Prevention</p> <p>There are a number of services in place to prevent low-income individuals and families from becoming homeless. These services can all be accessed at the Board of Social Services, and include emergency rental assistance, emergency utility payments, emergency hotel and motel vouchers, and other basic needs. Other forms of assistance to prevent homelessness include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency assistance for low-income clients who are facing eviction through the Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Program. • Legal representation at Landlord/Tenant Court to assist low-income tenants who must appear in court because they face eviction; service is provided by Legal Services of Northwest Jersey. • Emergency support through the NJ Homeless Prevention Program, currently administered by NORWESCAP.
<p>Component: Outreach</p> <p>Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center (RHCMHC) manages Project for Assistance in Transitional Housing (PATH), which is federally funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Outreach is done by a staff of 2.5 FTE who provide community based case management services and service linkages for individuals who have serious and persistent mental illness and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including many who would be classified as chronically homeless.</p> <p>Easter Seals, New Jersey Behavior Health Division manages the Integrated Case Management program in Somerset County with a combination of funds from the NJ</p>

Division of Mental Health grant and Somerset Count. The programs offers community outreach services referrals and linkages to services such as SSI, SS Disability, food stamps, housing, medical and psychiatric care, counseling, vocational services, partial hospitalization services and rent assistance.

SHIP operates a Mobile Soup Kitchen that stops regularly in places that are frequented by street homeless. SHIP also operates a drop-in center that provides meals, food, clothing, and personal hygiene items and SHIP's Galley where lunch is served three days a week. Outreach services are also provided by SHIP's Mobile Medical Clinic.

Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children operates the Street SMART (Somerset Mobile Adolescent Resource Team) Program, which provides outreach services to youth aged 13-21 who are living on the street or in another unsafe environment. A team of two outreach counselors locates youth on the street and provides them with food, clothing, blankets, and educational and preventive materials (HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, rape, and safe sex), with the goal of having them agree to stay in the Somerset Youth Shelter or other appropriate housing.

Somerset Operation Shelter (S.O.S.), in cooperation with the county Board of Social Service serves as a 24-hour response through a toll free number. The S.O.S. Helpline provides after-hour, weekend and holiday coverage when the Board of Social Services in not open. S.O.S arrange for (emergency shelter, switch to transportation to shelter sites), and emergency meals. All callers are screened over the phone and arrangements are made for appropriate placement.

(2) Describe the outreach activities that occur for other homeless persons.

The RHCMHC program described above also services homeless clients not living in the street. Easter Seals through its Integrated Case Management program provides aggressive outreach services to persons involuntarily hospitalized at a psychiatric hospital. This team is responsible for participation in discharge planning and coordination of services, which includes residential placement upon discharge. Case management is provided for at least 18 months post hospitalization to ensure that basic needs are met and that individuals are linked to necessary services in the community. Case management is available 24 hours per day via pager and/or cell phone. The County also provides funds to the Integrated Case Management program to provide services to persons in need of service coordination who are at risk of hospitalization and are currently living in the community.

SHIP provides the same services described above to other homeless persons and others who are in need.

The S.O.S. program, as described above, is also available to homeless persons not living on the street, but in an unsuitable environment.

Outreach planned: In light of current budgetary restrictions and the fact that services in place are reasonably adequate, it is not likely that additional services will be offered by any provider.

Component: **Supportive Services**

Services in place: Please describe how each of the following services are provided in your community (as applicable):

Case Management – Board of Social Services, Easter Seals New Jersey, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, Alternatives, Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), Agape House, Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children, Resource Center for Women and Their Families, and the Center for Great Expectations provide intensive case management for their clients, helping them to access other services.

Life skills – Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) provides life skills training to their clients in emergency and transitional housing, plus maintains contact with clients in permanent housing. VOA Agape House (emergency shelter) provides life skill training, case management and other services to their clients. The VA Domiciliary program uses an interdisciplinary approach to provide veterans with the knowledge and skills needed to lead productive lives in the community. Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children has the Passages (residential) and Pathways (non-residential) programs to provide young people (ages 15-21) with independent living skills to prepare them for adult lives. Catholic Charities operates the STEPS for Financial Independence program which provide financial counselors to assist clients, primarily victims of domestic abuse, into making the transition from a dependent living and financial status to an independent, more self-sufficient one.

Alcohol and drug abuse treatment – Anderson House (women), Crawford House (women), and Freedom House (men) all provide residential treatment for drug & alcohol addiction. Carrier Clinic provides in-patient and outpatient treatment for both men and women. The Center for Great Expectation provides addiction treatment to the pregnant women living its facility. Somerset Treatment Services provides evaluations, therapy, methadone detox and crisis intervention. The VA operates the Domiciliary Substance Abuse Treatment Program for veterans with substance abuse. Somerset Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (SCADD) provides education and prevention services. SHIP also offers alcohol and drug abuse counseling. There are Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups organizing meetings throughout the County.

Mental health treatment – The Department of Human Services manages the Psychiatric Emergency Screening Service (PESS). PESS provides 24-hour, 7 day a week, (crisis intervention services and a crisis hotline) for county residents in the emergency room at Somerset Medical Center. One or more screeners are available on-site and also off-site through mobile outreach services. Crisis intervention services include screening for voluntary and involuntary hospitalization, mobile outreach, linkage to appropriate community resources as well as information and referral. Alternatives provide assistance to residents of permanent supportive housing programs. Carrier Clinic provides in-patient and outpatient services. Family and Community Services, Jewish Family Services and Women’s Health and Counseling provide counseling and referrals.

AIDS-related treatment – American Red Cross, SHIP, Somerset Treatment Services and Women’s Health and Counseling provide HIV counseling and testing.

Education – Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children makes provisions for residents of its Youth Shelter and Passages programs to attend high school, GED programs or college courses. The Somerset Home also manages the Pathways program, a school-based life skills for at risk youth attending Somerset County Vocational Technical High School (Vo-Tech). Vo-Tech provides 20 programs that provide occupational training and academic skills. Vo-Tech, in cooperation with Middle Earth, also operates the Twilight program, which provides students a “real work”

environment by teaching job training and character skills; participants receive a paycheck for their work. A main component of Twilight is the Linkages program, which provides on-site counseling for substance abuse, mental and health issue, and life skills through collaborations with social services agencies that serve youth. The Somerset County Technology Institute offers post-secondary education for varied vocational and technical fields, such as healthcare, commercial art, cosmetology, office administration and technology. The Institute offers an Adult Continuing Education program, along with internships and apprenticeships. The Jointure also offers continuing education program, including computer training and other vocation skills. Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County offers literacy classes and ESL training.

Employment assistance - Board of Social Services operates the County's "Work First New Jersey" program, which offers training, employment counseling, and intensive support for TANF and GA clients in the program. IHN provides job placement assistance to its clients. Crawford House, Anderson House, and Freedom House assist clients with job placement as part of their recovery process. Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center has a Supported Employment program that provides a simulated work environment to assist individuals, with severe mental illness develop marketable skills and ultimately transition into the competitive workforce. The Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board serves both Somerset and Hunterdon counties and operates a One Stop Career Center that delivers services to enhance long-term employment opportunities. outcomes through education, training and workforce development. The Visiting Nurses Association operates a Home Health Aide program, which provides the necessary education and training for individuals to enter the industry and to access training for the nursing profession. The Somerset County Business Partnership offers a job bank and business directory.

Child care - Child Care Connection provides referrals and recruitment and training for home child care. The Learning Gate, Holy Cross Pre-School, Somerset Valley YMCA, Somerset Hills YMCA are also sources of affordable child care. SCAP operates the County's Head Start program, providing free care for pre-school children, in addition to pre/after school care and daycare. Martin Luther King Youth Center and Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church offer after school care.

Transportation - As part of their 24-hour S.O.S. hotline, the Board of Social Services will provide transportation to shelter sites for all clients. Somerset County Transportation Division operates the SCOOT (serving Hillsborough, Manville, Somerville, Bridgewater, Bedminster) and DASH (serving Bound Brook, Bridgewater, South Bound Brook, Franklin) public transit buses. Both lines connect people to large employers, train stations, and shopping centers for nominal fees. These buses are handicapped accessible and are open for anyone to use. NJ Transit also has train and bus service in the County. The County also offers transportation to senior citizen and the disabled for medical appointments, nutrition/wellness centers, and shopping centers. American Red Cross also transports senior citizens and disabled individuals to medical appointments. The Somerset County Jail through a program with NJ Transit offers train trip vouchers upon discharge, so individuals can receive transportation to their housing destination. Several of the non-profits serving the homeless, such as Crawford House, Alternative, CGE, ARC of Somerset and IHN, will provide transportation for their clients to work, job interviews or other places they receive service or have appointments.

Other - The Food Bank Network operates a Working Wardrobe program providing clothes for working women and men. Richard Hall CMHC Partial Care Program operates

Thrift World that provides low cost clothing. Clothing and supplies for infants are provided by the Somerset County Food Bank Network, Board of Social Services, Catholic Charities and Pregnancy Aid. The Giving Network distributes and delivers household items, appliances, furniture and other items to those in need. United Way also provides infant supplies through its Baby Bundles Program and school supplies through its Stuff the Bus Program. Food and nutritional assistance are offered by The Somerset County Food Bank Network, Franklin Food Bank and WIC Program.

Services planned: In light of current budgetary restrictions and the fact that services in place are reasonably adequate, it is not likely that additional services will be offered by any provider.

How homeless persons access/receive assistance:

Case Management – The Board of Social Services is where the delivery of services to homeless originates. The Board can be reached by phone, though clients must be seen in person to access services. Once seen clients are screened for eligibility and enrolled in the appropriate entitlement program. Board staff also will refer clients to appropriate agencies and ensure that clients receive all of the supportive services to which one is entitled. While Easter Seals New Jersey, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, Alternatives, Resource Center for Women and Their Families, and the Center for Great Expectations, Agape House, IHN and Alternatives. While all of these agencies may meet clients through other means the Board of Social Services always screens clients and makes the referral that is necessary for clients to access service at these services.

Life skills – Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) and VOA Agape House clients are referred to them by the Board of Social Services or other homeless providers. Once in the shelter, they begin to receive the services. IHN also provides services when its former emergency clients move into their transitional housing or permanent housing. Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children receives referrals into their programs from DYFS, Board of Social Services, and through their Street SMART outreach program. The VA clients come from community referrals or self-referral. The remaining agencies, usually more community based, can be contacted directly or else have clients referred to them by other agencies.

Alcohol and drug abuse treatment – Anderson House (women), Crawford House (women), and Freedom House (men) are usually referred by other agencies, although they also can accept self-referrals. Carrier Clinic, Somerset Treatment Services and the VA can be contacted directly for services or else clients can be referred by other agencies. Alcoholics and Narcotic Anonymous groups can be contacted directly for services.

Mental health treatment – Most referrals come from the Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS) screening process, with the placement of the client to one of the agencies based on the individual's level of need.

AIDS-related treatment – American Red Cross, SHIP, Somerset Treatment Services and Women's Health and Counseling can be contacted directly for these services. SHIP also does outreach, informing people of these services when their Mobile Kitchen and service vehicles go to areas with pockets of poverty.

Education – Somerset Home has all its Youth Shelter and Passages clients enrolled in an education program. They publicize their Pathways program and receive referrals

from different agencies or schools. The Vo-Tech programs, the Somerset County Technology Institute, and The Jointure are known to all school districts in the County and also publicized through the media; students can apply to them directly or may be referred through another program or agency. To enroll in Literacy Volunteers of American programs, individuals can contact by phone or be referred by another agency.

Employment assistance - Board of Social Services directly refers their clients to the County's "Work First New Jersey" program. IHN, VA, Crawford House, Anderson House and Freedom House assist their clients as part of their program. First Baptist CDC's "Strive" program is open to anyone, with enrollment done through phone or in person. Richard Hall's Supported Employment program is through their own referral, another agency's referral or self referral.

Child care - All of the child care agencies can be contacted directly by phone or in person, or else referrals are made by another agency, such as Catholic Charities, which may be providing subsidized care.

Transportation - SCOOT, CAT, DASH, and NJ Transit are all public transportation and available to anyone. For service from American Red Cross and Somerset County Transportation (senior and disabled), appointments must be made at least a few days to a week in advance. The Jail provides their trip vouchers as part of their discharge policy.

Other - The Working Wardrobe and Thrift World provide drop-in service to clients. Paige Whitney, Catholic Charities, Pregnancy Aid and The Giving Network should be contacted by phone so they could arrange for the provisions of the supplies to suit the needs of the client.

Special Need Facilities and Services 91.210 (d)

17. Describe, to the extent information is available, the facilities and services that assist persons who are not homeless but require supportive housing, and programs for ensuring persons returning from mental and physical health institutions receive appropriate supportive housing.

Response

Please see the Non-Homeless Special Needs Table for an inventory of the facilities that assist persons who are not homeless but require supportive housing.

SERVICE INVENTORY

Component: Supportive Services

Services in place: Please describe how each of the following services are provided in your community (as applicable):

Case Management – Board of Social Services, Easter Seals New Jersey, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, Alternatives, Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), Agape House, Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children, Resource Center for Women and Their Families, and the Center for Great Expectations provide intensive case management for their clients, helping them to access other services.

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paycheck for their work. A main component of Twilight is the Linkages program, which provides on-site counseling for substance abuse, mental and health issue, and life skills through collaborations with social services agencies that serve youth. The Somerset County Technology Institute offers post-secondary education for varied vocational and technical fields, such as healthcare, commercial art, cosmetology, office administration and technology. The Institute offers an Adult Continuing Education program, along with internships and apprenticeships. The Jointure also offers continuing education program, including computer training and other vocation skills. Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County offers literacy classes and ESL training.

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Other - The Food Bank Network operates a Working Wardrobe program providing clothes for working women and men. Richard Hall CMHC Partial Care Program operates Thrift World that provides low cost clothing. Clothing and supplies for infants are

provided by the Somerset County Food Bank Network, Board of Social Services, Catholic Charities and Pregnancy Aid. The Giving Network distributes and delivers household items, appliances, furniture and other items to those in need. United Way also provides infant supplies through its Baby Bundles Program and school supplies through its Stuff the Bus Program. Food and nutritional assistance are offered by The Somerset County Food Bank Network, Franklin Food Bank and WIC Program.

Services planned: In light of current budgetary restrictions and the fact that services in place are reasonably adequate, it is not likely that additional services will be offered by any provider.

How homeless persons access/receive assistance:

Case Management – The Board of Social Services is where the delivery of services to homeless originates. The Board can be reached by phone, though clients must be seen in person to access services. Once seen clients are screened for eligibility and enrolled in the appropriate entitlement program. Board staff also will refer clients to appropriate agencies and ensure that clients receive all of the supportive services to which one is entitled. While Easter Seals New Jersey, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, Alternatives, Resource Center for Women and Their Families, and the Center for Great Expectations, Agape House, IHN and Alternatives. While all of these agencies may meet clients through other means the Board of Social Services always screens clients and makes the referral that is necessary for clients to access service at these services.

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Alcohol and drug abuse treatment – Anderson House (women), Crawford House (women), and Freedom House (men) are usually referred by other agencies, although they also can accept self-referrals. Carrier Clinic, Somerset Treatment Services and the VA can be contacted directly for services or else clients can be referred by other agencies. Alcoholics and Narcotic Anonymous groups can be contacted directly for services.

Mental health treatment – Most referrals come from the Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS) screening process, with the placement of the client to one of the agencies based on the individual's level of need.

AIDS-related treatment – American Red Cross, SHIP, Somerset Treatment Services and Women's Health and Counseling can be contacted directly for these services. SHIP also does outreach, informing people of these services when their Mobile Kitchen and service vehicles go to areas with pockets of poverty.

Education – Somerset Home has all its Youth Shelter and Passages clients enrolled in an education program. They publicize their Pathways program and receive referrals from different agencies or schools. The Vo-Tech programs, the Somerset County

Technology Institute, and The Jointure are known to all school districts in the County and also publicized through the media; students can apply to them directly or may be referred through another program or agency. To enroll in Literacy Volunteers of American programs, individuals can contact by phone or be referred by another agency.

Employment assistance - Board of Social Services directly refers their clients to the County's "Work First New Jersey" program. IHN, VA, Crawford House, Anderson House and Freedom House assist their clients as part of their program. First Baptist CDC's "Strive" program is open to anyone, with enrollment done through phone or in person. Richard Hall's Supported Employment program is through their own referral, another agency's referral or self referral.

Child care - All of the child care agencies can be contacted directly by phone or in person, or else referrals are made by another agency, such as Catholic Charities, which may be providing subsidized care.

Transportation - SCOOT, CAT, DASH, and NJ Transit are all public transportation and available to anyone. For service from American Red Cross and Somerset County Transportation (senior and disabled), appointments must be made at least a few days to a week in advance. The Jail provides their trip vouchers as part of their discharge policy.

Other - The Working Wardrobe and Thrift World provide drop-in service to clients. Paige Whitney, Catholic Charities, Pregnancy Aid and The Giving Network should be contacted by phone so they could arrange for the provisions of the supplies to suit the needs of the client.

Barriers to Affordable Housing 91.210 (e)

18. Explain whether the cost of housing or the incentives to develop, maintain, or improve affordable housing are affected by public policies, particularly those of the local jurisdiction. Such policies include tax policy affecting land and other property, land use controls, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limits, and policies that affect the return on residential investment.

Response:

There is no question that the cost of and development and maintenance of affordable housing are affected by public policies that emanate from the local level of government.

There are a number of current local policies and practices that may tend to restrict which type of housing may be developed in a certain area. Laws of this type make it difficult to develop affordable housing.

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

practice also has an inflationary affect.

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

State policy-The continued reevaluation of the qualifications and requirements of the Council on Affordable Housing's (COAH) obligation of municipalities to create affordable units, has deterred the creation of new, or rehabilitated affordable units. Municipalities remain uncertain how to properly invest funds set aside for the creation of affordable units under this legislation. The fate of the council and the creation of affordable housing in accordance with the Fair Housing Act of 1985 are to be determined.

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

STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan must describe how the jurisdiction plans to provide new or improved availability, affordability, and sustainability of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunity, principally for extremely-low, low-income, and moderate-income residents.

General Priority Needs Analysis and Strategies 91.215 (a)

19. In this narrative, describe the reasons for setting priorities for allocating investment among different activities and needs, as identified in tables* prescribed by HUD. 92.215(a)(1)

Response

Priorities for the investment of CDBG and HOME allocations reflect the results of a community-wide Housing and Community Development Need Survey along with input from the public. These priorities were originally created in 1997 and updated in 2005 and 2010 when the survey was released to the public. Results from the July 2010 show a slight but noticeable shift in respondent priorities. There was a decrease of importance that respondents assigned to the communal amenities like sidewalk and sewer improvements and community facilities like senior and youth centers and health/recreational facilities. There was also a noticeable increase in the importance that respondents assigned to basic needs including health, transportation, employment and energy-related services. For the first time, services to the homeless and down payment assistance also emerged as a high priority. The CDBG and HOME Consolidated Plan Priorities have been revised accordingly are attached at the conclusion of this report.

20. Describe the geographic areas of the jurisdiction (including areas of low income families and/or racial/minority concentration) in which assistance will be directed.

Response:

The County's Designated Service Areas (DSA) are the only geographic locations that are targeted for eligibility to receive assistance. In Somerset County, these DSAs are block groups where at least 40.5% of the residents earn less than 80% of the Area Median Income. In general, these are areas that are concentrated in the County's older boroughs and include block groups in Bound Brook, Manville, North Plainfield, Raritan, Somerville, and South Bound Brook. The only exceptions are the DSAs in Bernardsville and Bridgewater. The County's DSAs also reflect higher minority populations than other areas in the County. A list of the County's DSAs is located at the conclusion of this report.

Aside from Designated Service Area and other projects that are sited in eligible areas, there are some CDBG-funded projects in Bernards, Bridgewater, Green Brook and Peapack-Gladstone. There are also HOME-funded projects in Bernards and South Bound Brook; down payment assistance funds will be provided throughout the County.

21.If applicable, identify the census tracts for Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas and/or any local targeted areas.

Response:

There are no Neighborhood Revitalization Areas in Somerset County.

22.Describe the basis for allocating investments geographically within the jurisdiction (or within the EMSA for HOPWA) (91.215(a)(1)) and the basis for assigning the priority (including the relative priority, where required) given to each category of priority needs (91.215(a)(2)).

Response:

The County's Designated Service Areas (DSA) are the only geographic locations that are targeted for eligibility to receive assistance. In Somerset County, these are block groups where at least 40.5% of the residents earn less than 80% of the Area Median Income. In general, these are areas that are concentrated in the County's older boroughs and include block groups in Bound Brook, Manville, North Plainfield, Raritan, Somerville, and South Bound Brook. The only exceptions are the DSAs in Bernardsville and Bridgewater. The County's DSAs also reflect higher minority populations than other areas in the County. A list of the County's DSAs is located at the conclusion of this report.

Aside from Designated Service Area and other projects that are sited in eligible areas, there are some CDBG-funded projects in Bernards, Bridgewater, Green Brook and Peapack. There are also HOME-funded projects in Bernards and South Bound Brook; down payment assistance funds will be provided throughout the County.

23.If appropriate, the jurisdiction should estimate the percentage of funds the jurisdiction plans to dedicate to Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas and/or any local targeted areas.

Response:

The County does not have any Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas.

24.Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

Response:

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

service providers alike are largely constrained by the current economic climate and the strain it has placed on the budgeting processes.

In addition, there are several barriers that preclude program constituents from taking full advantage of CDBG and HOME-funded programs and activities. These barriers include language and/or cultural barriers that obstruct one’s willingness to accept publicly-funded social services as well as the ability of staff to communicate clearly with potential beneficiaries; lack of sufficient and affordable public transportation; deficiencies/gaps in the County and social service providers’ ability to make community members aware of services that are available; and the necessity of using federal income guidelines that do not take into consideration the high cost of living in New Jersey and more specifically Somerset County to determine eligibility.

Specific Objectives 91.215 (a) (4)

25. Summarize priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction intends to initiate and/or complete in accordance with the tables* prescribed by HUD. Outcomes must be categorized as providing either new or improved availability/accessibility, affordability, or sustainability of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunity. Goals and objectives to be carried out during the strategic plan period are indicated by placing a check in the following boxes.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Objective Category Decent Housing Which includes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Objective Category: Expanded Economic Opportunities Which includes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Objective Category: Expanded Economic Opportunities Which includes:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	assisting homeless persons obtain affordable housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	improving the safety and livability of neighborhoods	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	job creation and retention
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	assisting persons at risk of becoming homeless	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	eliminating blighting influences and the deterioration of property and facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	establishment, stabilization and expansion of small business (including micro-businesses)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	retaining the affordable housing stock	<input type="checkbox"/>	increasing the access to quality public and private facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	the provision of public services concerned with employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	increasing the availability of affordable permanent housing in standard condition to low-income and moderate-income families, particularly to members of disadvantaged minorities without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	reducing the isolation of income groups within areas through spatial deconcentration of housing opportunities for lower income persons and the revitalization of deteriorating neighborhoods	<input type="checkbox"/>	the provision of jobs to low-income persons living in areas affected by those programs and activities under programs covered by the plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	increasing the supply of supportive housing which includes structural features and services to enable persons with special needs (including persons with HIV/ADOS) to live in dignity and independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	restoring and preserving properties of special historic, architectural, or aesthetic value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	availability of mortgage financing for low income persons at reasonable rates using non-discriminatory lending practices

Somerset County, NJ 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan

<input type="checkbox"/>	providing affordable housing that is accessible to job opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	conserving energy resources and use of renewable energy sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	access to capital and credit for development activities that promote the long-term economic social viability of the community
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HOUSING

Priority Housing Needs

91.215 (b)

26. Describe the relationship between the allocation priorities and the extent of need given to each category specified in the Housing Needs Table (Table 2A or Needs.xls). These categories correspond with special tabulations of U.S. census data provided by HUD for the preparation of the Consolidated Plan.

Response

Priorities for the investment of CDBG and HOME allocations reflect the results of a community-wide Housing and Community Development Need Survey along with input from the public. These priorities were originally created in 1997 and updated in 2005 and 2010 when the survey was released to the public. Results from the July 2010 show a slight but noticeable shift in respondent priorities. There was a decrease to importance that respondents assigned to the communal amenities like sidewalk and sewer improvements and community facilities like senior and youth centers and health/recreational facilities. There was also a noticeable increase in the importance that respondents assigned to basic needs including health, transportation, employment and energy-related services. For the first time, services to the homeless and down payment assistance also emerged as a high priority. The CDBG and HOME Consolidated Plan Priorities have been revised accordingly.

27. Provide an analysis of how the characteristics of the housing market and the severity of housing problems and needs of each category of residents provided the basis for determining the relative priority of each priority housing need category, particularly among extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income households.

Note: Family and income types may be grouped in the case of closely related categories of residents where the analysis would apply to more than one family or income type.

Response

The following observations can be made from the Housing Needs Table:

- Overall, there are more owner households than renter households.
- As income increases, residents become less cost burdened as both renters and owners.
- As incomes increase, there is a shift to homeownership. The total number of rental households decrease and owner households increase.
- Large Related households, renters and owners, comprise the majority of households with extremely low income that are cost burdened.
- All Other households, renters and owners, comprise the majority of households with moderately low income that are cost burdened.
- All Other households comprise the majority of renters with moderate

- income that are cost burdened.
- Small Related households comprise the majority of owners with moderate income that are cost burdened.

The table demonstrates the need to housing-related assistance and to focus programs on the County's extremely low income residents as they represent a greater percentage of residents that are cost burdened throughout all income levels. For this reason along with the high housing costs in Somerset County, both the CD and the HOME Committee have placed the highest priority on projects that house County residents with the lowest incomes. This is best reflected in the he HOME Consolidated Plan Priorities. This is not to say that housing for County residents who have low or moderate incomes is not supported, only that both Committees understand that it is most difficult for those with the lowest incomes.

28. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

Response

Within Somerset County, there are a number of obstacles to meeting the underserved housing needs of CDBG and HOME Program beneficiaries. The following barriers have been identified: the shortage of affordable and other supportive housing opportunities, shortage of Section-8 vouchers to assist low income tenants, insufficient funding resources for housing programs, inflation and shortages in the region's housing market, inflationary cost trends in construction. Community resistance is a barrier to the provision of affordable housing for some special needs populations. Municipal land use laws also present a significant challenge to meeting underserved housing needs.

Specific Objectives/Affordable Housing 91.215 (b)

Note: Specific affordable housing objectives must specify the number of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income households to whom the jurisdiction will provide affordable housing as defined in 24 CFR 92.252 for rental housing and 24 CFR 92.254 for homeownership. (24 CFR 91.215(b)(2))

29. Identify each specific housing objective by number (DH-1, DH-2, DH-2), proposed accomplishments and outcomes the jurisdiction hopes to achieve in quantitative terms over a specified time period, or in other measurable terms as identified and defined by the jurisdiction.

RESPONSE:

Please see Housing Needs Table.

30. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by the strategic plan.

In Program Year 2010, the amount of CDBG funds requested was two times

greater than the amount of funds available; within the Public Services category, the amount requested was three times greater than the fifteen percent statutory cap will permit to be awarded. Likewise, the amount of HOME funds requested was two times greater than the amount of funds available. In order to maximize the return of limited funding and to provide as much support as possible, both committees opt to provide partial funding to projects that are presented for consideration. In fact, no PY 2010 project was awarded enough funds by either the CD or HOME Committee to completely sustain a project; every project in the Action Plan will require investment from other sources in order to proceed. As a result, every project in the Action Plan will leverage private and non-federal public resources in order to move forward. Following is a list of public and private sector resources that may be available to provide additional support to programs that are partially funded by the CDBG and HOME Programs and others that are offered within Somerset County.

(1) Federal

- A. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program - funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for housing rehabilitation, human services, handicapped accessibility, and general improvement projects that principally benefit persons who are low/moderate income or categorically eligible. Funds are also available for improvements to streets, sewers, parks, and sidewalks in Designated Service Areas. Administered by the County Community Development Office.
- B. Continuum of Care/ McKinney funds - funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to meet urgent housing needs of the homeless. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis through an application process that is announced in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Super NOFA. The application process is facilitated by the County Community Development Office.
- C. Emergency Assistance - funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for housing assistance to individuals in receipt of TANF and GA services. Administered by the Somerset County Board of Social Services
- D. General Assistance - funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the provision of cash assistance and work opportunities to individuals or couples without dependents under age eighteen. Administered by the Somerset County Board of Social Services.
- E. Food Stamps - food assistance for income-eligible families. Administered by the County Board of Social Services
- F. HOME Investment Partnership Program - funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation of affordable housing; also available for First Time Home Buyer assistance. Administered by the County Community Development Office.
- G. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program - funds for the provision of subsidies to help low-income families and individuals pay for home heating costs or heating costs associated with rent. In addition, households may also be eligible for emergency energy assistance and medically necessary cooling assistance. Administered by NORWESCAP.
- H. Post- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families - provides funding for outreach and provision of transitional benefits and services that are available to prevent recidivism. Administered by the County Board of Social Services.
- I. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families - funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human services for the provision of cash assistance and work

opportunities to individuals or couples with dependents under age eighteen. Administered by the Somerset County Board of Social Services.

- J. Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) - funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for nutritious food, nutrition information, access to healthcare, and referrals. In order to receive WIC, one must be income eligible and have nutritional or health needs. Administered by NORWESCAP.

(2) State

- A. Social Services for the Homeless- provides funds to shelter homeless individuals and families
- B. Social Services Block Grant- federal grant for the provision of services including but not limited to adult and child daycare, protective services, transportation and health-related services
- C. TIP Program: support services based on case-by-case needs providing linkages to social, medical and employment services funds for a Community Outreach Coordinator;
- D. Post TANF transportation funds: help assist working clients with transportation problems that may interfere with the maintenance of employment;
- E. WFNJ: funds for the provision of services to help TANF and GA clients return to the workforce;
- F. Workforce New Jersey Transportation Block Grant: funds to provide van service transportation for clients to and from their work activity programs, job interviews and job fairs; and special Initiatives: providing group and individual counseling to help deal with the stress of entering the work force for the first time as well as to deal with the issues of raising a family and maintaining employment.

(3) County-

- A. Non-Profit Purchase of Service - County procurement and provision of human services by a number of community- based organizations
- B. Economic Development Incentive Program - funds from the Board of Chosen Freeholders to expand economic opportunities and increase tax ratables in seven critical municipalities
- C. Somerset County Improvement Authority - a financing conduit for other Somerset County government entities
- D. HomeMaker Program - funds for the provision of home health aide services for income eligible seniors.
- E. Adult Protective Services - funds for the provision of intervention services persons over eighteen years of age to reduce incidence of abuse, neglect, and exploitation

(4) Private

- A. For Profit - various developers will construct Mount Laurel housing as part of a larger, market-rate development and/or will use private funds toward the rehabilitation of low/moderate income owner-occupied housing units.

- B. Individual Development Account - structured saving plan for individuals or families with dependents under age eighteen. Program provides match made available by participants from the banking community. Administered by NORWESCAP.
- C. Family Loan - reduced rate loans to individuals with dependents under age eighteen for expenses that are necessary to maintain employment. Loans are made available by participants from the banking community. Administered by NORWESCAP.

31. Indicate how the characteristics of the housing market will influence the use of funds made available for rental assistance, production of new units, rehabilitation of old units, or acquisition of existing units.

Response:

Somerset County’s housing market, which is one of the most expensive in New Jersey, have led both the CD and especially the HOME Committee to place the highest priority on projects that house County residents with the lowest incomes. This is not to say that housing for County residents who have low or moderate incomes is not supported, only that both Committees understand that it is most difficult for those with the lowest incomes. In addition, because funds are so limited, the Committee (HOME and CDBG) will only award funds to projects that are ready to begin immediately, so that funds are not wasted on projects that are not ready to proceed. Finally, because both grants are insufficient to award funding to all applicants, projects that leverage resources are considered most favorably and in fact, most projects can not be implement without significant investment from other sources.

32. If the jurisdiction intends to use HOME funds for tenant-based rental assistance, specify local market conditions that led to the choice of that option.

Response

2010 Fair Market Rent (FMR)	
Zero-Bedroom	\$1,155
One-Bedroom	\$1,198
Two-Bedroom	\$1,409
Three-Bedroom	\$1,768
Four-Bedroom	\$2,085

The high, fair market rents in Somerset County coupled with the recent economic downturn have made it difficult to rent in the county. In order to afford the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment in Somerset County, a minimum wage earner must work 149 hours per week. In other words, a Somerset County household must include 3.7 minimum wage earner(s) working 40 hours per week year-round in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable. These figures led the HOME Committee to conclude that tenant-based rental assistance would be an effective use of HOME funds. This decision is further supported by renter cost-burden data in the Housing Needs Table.

Public Housing Strategy

91.215 (c)

33. Describe the public housing agency's strategy to serve the needs of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families residing in the jurisdiction served by the public housing agency (including families on the public housing and section 8 tenant-based waiting lists).

Response

The Franklin Township Housing Authority is proceeding with the redevelopment of Parkside Village through construction of a two-phased, 140-unit, mixed-income, affordable housing community. Each phase will have 70 units; phase one will comprise a 70-unit three-story senior building; and phase two will be comprised of 70 units in 35 two-family buildings. The total project cost is still being refined, but it is estimated at approximately \$40 million using primarily state tax credits. Key benefits of the project include 1) net increase of 40 units to support the Township's COAH fair share housing obligation, 2) better land utilization, 3) larger units for residents, 4) improved access to the park, and 5) energy efficient units that will improve the quality of life for its residents. After financing is secured, construction is expected to start first quarter of 2010 and be completed by second quarter 2012.

In addition, the Housing Authority expects to increase its Housing Choice Voucher Program by 50% with the use of the Tenant Replacement Housing Vouchers and when its housing is reconstructed the Authority will maintain a total of 50 public housing units in the inventory of housing units under development, these units will provide housing for the extremely low income and low income residents of Somerset. The remainder of the development due to the financing of the development will consist of 110 units of mixed low and moderate income housing.

34. Describe the public housing agency's strategy for addressing the revitalization and restoration needs of public housing projects within the jurisdiction and improving the management and operation of such public housing.

Response

Presently, the Housing Authority is in the midst of a full revitalization of its public housing units. It is currently in the fourth year of its five year plan (2006-2011). During the planning period of 2005-2009 the Authority assessed its public housing stock and determined that it was in need of replacement. The Authority received permission from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to demolish and rebuild its public housing in September, 2009. The units will be managed privately and in partnership with the Housing Authority.

35. Describe the public housing agency's strategy for improving the living environment of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate families residing in public housing.

Response

The developer will be required to insure that public housing residents retain their ability to give input to management on their living conditions through regular monthly management and tenant meetings. The Authority will retain its responsibility for insuring that the private management company is in compliance with HUD regulations.

36. Describe the manner in which the plan of the jurisdiction will help address the needs of public housing and activities it will undertake to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership. (NAHA Sec. 105 (b)(11) and (91.215 (k)))

Response

The plan has a strong emphasis on empowerment through housing counseling, education and outreach, and certainly includes activities that will encourage public housing residents to participate in homeownership. County staff will take the following actions:

- a. Offer to make presentations at the Housing Authority related to homeownership, the ADDI Program and other forms of housing-related assistance.
- b. To the greatest extent possible, ensure that public housing residents are made aware of educational opportunities provided by SCCOAH and other organizations.
- c. Provide literature related to homeownership, the ADDI Program, and other forms of housing-related assistance.
- d. Encourage HOME subgrantees to include PHA residents in their outreach and affirmative marketing.

37. If the public housing agency is designated as "troubled" by HUD or otherwise is performing poorly, the jurisdiction shall describe the manner in which it will provide financial or other assistance in improving its operations to remove such designation. (NAHA Sec. 105 (g))

The Franklin Township Housing Authority is not a troubled housing authority.

HOMELESS

Priority Homeless Needs

38. Describe the jurisdiction's choice of priority needs and allocation priorities, based on reliable data meeting HUD standards and reflecting the required consultation with homeless assistance providers, homeless persons, and other concerned citizens regarding the needs of homeless families with children and individuals.

Response

Priorities for the investment of CDBG and HOME allocations reflect the results of a community-wide Housing and Community Development Need Survey along with input from the public. These priorities were originally created in 1997 and updated in 2005 and 2010 when the survey was released to the public. Results from the July 2010 show a slight but noticeable shift in respondent priorities. There was a decrease to importance that respondents assigned to the communal amenities like sidewalk and sewer improvements and community facilities like senior and youth centers and health/recreational facilities. There was also a noticeable increase in the importance that respondents assigned to basic needs including health, transportation, employment and energy-related services. For the first time, services to the homeless and down payment assistance also emerged as a high priority. The CDBG and HOME Consolidated Plan Priorities have been revised accordingly.

39. Provide an analysis of how the needs of each category of residents (listed in question #38) provided the basis for determining the relative priority of each priority homeless need category.

Response

The overwhelming need of each category (homeless families, homeless individuals, and chronic homeless) is to have access to affordable housing. Beyond that some will also need short-term rental assistance and supportive services to ensure that they maintain their housing. CDBG Consolidated Plan priorities include "Services to the Homeless" as a High Priority and the HOME Consolidated Plan priorities list "Transitional Housing" and "Permanent Supportive Housing" as a "High Priority".

40. Provide a brief narrative addressing gaps in services and housing for the sheltered and unsheltered chronic homeless.

Response

Data from the 2010 Point in Time Survey shows that there are only eight chronically homeless individuals in Somerset County. There is not a significant gap in services and housing for this population as they could likely be accommodated by the current system. The greater challenge with this population is finding a way to get chronically homeless County residents to accept traditional services.

Homeless Strategy 91.215 (d)

Homelessness

41. Describe the jurisdiction's strategy for developing a system to address homelessness and the priority needs of homeless persons and families (including the subpopulations identified in the needs section). The jurisdiction's strategy must consider the housing and supportive services needed in each stage of the process which includes preventing homelessness, outreach/assessment, emergency shelters and services, transitional housing, and helping homeless persons (especially any persons that are chronically homeless) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living.

Response

Somerset County's has a comprehensive strategy for developing a system to address chronic and other homelessness and the priority needs of homeless persons and families including the mental health, veteran, substance abuse, domestic violence, and subpopulations. The strategy, which ultimately seeks to ensure that clients have decent, affordable housing and supportive services as needed, includes efforts related to the development of all types of affordable, permanent housing, data collection, and education and outreach. The Department of Human Services also recognizes and is committed to the importance of advocacy as a tool to address chronic and other homelessness. To that end, department leaders and staff alike work tirelessly to raise community awareness of and sensitivity to the challenge of homelessness in Somerset County and to influence decision-makers.

To that end, the County Board of Chosen Freeholders will continue to support this mission by providing funding, through the CD Action Plans and County dollars, to programs that will increase the supply of affordable housing in Somerset County. In addition, the HSAC and the CEAS Committees will continue to research best practices, to provide information and encourage interagency collaboration and partnership, and to advocate for the creation and preservation of affordable housing. In the coming year, the Board of Chosen Freeholders will provide funding to a number of housing and supportive service projects that are targeted to help those that are chronically homeless become self-sufficient. Because the availability of supportive services to help the chronically homeless stay in their housing is also critical to Somerset County's strategy to end chronic homelessness, the Board of Chosen Freeholders will continue to provide funds to agencies that provide services to persons who are chronically homeless in Somerset County through the Non-Profit Purchase of Service and by supplementing the operating expenses of the Board of Social Services.

Since data and performance measurement are also vital to the County's strategy, there are a number of efforts to collect sound data relative to the County's homeless. Because the County is of the opinion that the implementation of a County-wide Homeless Management Information System to collect data over time

on the characteristics and service needs of the chronically homeless will help to end chronic homelessness, the County has entered into the Statewide New Jersey HMIS Collaborative, and will use County dollars to support the expansion HMIS usage in Somerset County. Use of such an application will introduce a higher level of efficiency, improve resource allocation, and minimize duplication of services, thereby making a contribution to ending chronic and other homelessness in Somerset County within ten years. CD Staff will also continue to participate in the HMIS Advisory Council. In addition, the CD Office will lead the County in at least one Point-In-Time Survey each year.

42. Describe the jurisdiction's strategy for helping extremely low- and low-income individuals and families who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Response

County administrators/decision-makers and the non-profit community are in agreement that the best strategy to help prevent homelessness for individuals and families with children who are at imminent risk of being homeless, is to intercede with the provision of financial or other assistance to avert the impending cause for homelessness. At the same time, the jurisdiction believes firmly that while various forms of emergency assistance are often necessary, they are not to replace the need for one to take action to improve one's circumstances and to move toward self-sufficiency. To that end, within Somerset County there is an array of services, such as, mortgage payments, rental payments, security payments and/or utility payments which are available through the Somerset County Board of Social Services, Catholic Charities, Municipal Welfare System, Alternatives, Food Bank Network of Somerset County, SHIP, Resource Center for Women and Their Families, Department of Community Affairs, Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Program, and the NJ Homeless Prevention Program. In addition, the faith community provides a number of resources to prevent homelessness. Emergency Support Services include the provision of food, clothing, transportation, child care as needed to assist families in securing other essential services, medically necessary prescription drugs and medical care to alleviate life threatening and public health conditions.

Local Salvation Armies, FISH organizations and area churches also provide an array of prevention services on an informal basis. The Somerset County Coalition on Affordable Housing (SCCOAH) provides information, referral, counseling and advocacy services designed to stop an individual/family from losing permanent housing. The need for an increase in prevention monies is clearly shown by the consistent increase in utilization of funds in the prevention categories. Funds are always expended before the end of the contract year. Somerset County also provides funding in order to bridge the gap between the need for services and State/Federal funding provided. This is significant as State & Federal funds continue to decline.

Chronic Homelessness

43. Describe the jurisdiction's strategy for eliminating chronic homelessness. This should include the strategy for helping homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing and

independent living. This strategy should, to the maximum extent feasible, be coordinated with the strategy presented in Exhibit 1 of the Continuum of Care (CoC) application and any other strategy or plan to eliminate chronic homelessness.

Response

In the time since the County adopted its Ten Year Plan to end Chronic Homelessness, the number of chronically homeless has decreased from fifteen to eight individuals. Somerset County's strategy for eliminating chronic homeless is as follows:

- Continue to make emergency shelter and supportive services to this population.
- Continue to collect and review data related to this population.
- Continue to meet regularly and to use relevant data to discuss trends and emerging issues.
- Continue to outreach and encourage this population to accept services

44. Describe the efforts to increase coordination between housing providers, health, and service agencies in addressing the needs of persons that are chronically homeless.(91.215(I))

Response

In order to enhance coordination between public and assisted housing providers and private and governmental health, mental health, and service agencies, the Community Development Office along with the County Department of Human Services will continue to review trend data and discuss the needs of the chronically homeless at CEAS and HSAC meetings.

Homelessness Prevention

45. Describe the jurisdiction's strategy to help prevent homelessness for individuals and families with children who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Response

County administrators/decision-makers and the non-profit community are in agreement that the best strategy to help prevent homelessness for individuals and families with children who are at imminent risk of being homeless, is to intercede with the provision of financial or other assistance to avert the impending cause for homelessness. At the same time, the jurisdiction believes firmly that while various forms of emergency assistance are often necessary, they are not to replace the need for one to take action to improve one's circumstances and to move toward self-sufficiency. To that end, within Somerset County there is an array of services, such as, mortgage payments, rental payments, security payments and/or utility payments which are available through the Somerset County Board of Social Services, Catholic Charities, Municipal Welfare System, Alternatives, Food Bank Network of Somerset County, SHIP, Resource Center for Women and Their Families, Department of Community Affairs, Homelessness Prevention Program, and the NJ Homeless Prevention Program. In addition, the faith community provides a number

of resources to prevent homelessness. Emergency Support Services include the provision of food, clothing, transportation, child care as needed to assist families in securing other essential services, medically necessary prescription drugs and medical care to alleviate life threatening and public health conditions.

Local Salvation Armies, FISH organizations and area churches also provide an array of prevention services on an informal basis. The Somerset County Coalition on Affordable Housing (SCCOAH) provides information, referral, counseling and advocacy services designed to stop an individual/family from losing permanent housing. A need for an increase in prevention monies is clearly shown by the consistent increase in utilization of funds in the prevention categories. Funds are always expended before the end of the contract year. Somerset County also provides funding in order to bridge the gap between the need for services and State/Federal funding provided. This is significant as State & Federal funds continue to decline.

Institutional Structure

- 46.** Briefly describe the institutional structure, including private industry, non-profit organizations, and public institutions, through which the jurisdiction will carry out its homelessness strategy.

Response

The lead entity for Somerset County's homelessness planning efforts, and the institutional structure for the County to carry out its homelessness strategy is the County's CEAS Committee. The CEAS Committee is a state-mandated effort that is comprised of state and local government representatives, non-profit agency representatives, and other community members who are interested in working to develop a comprehensive system of care for people who are coping with poverty and homelessness. This committee includes representation from and is regularly attended by NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, American Red Cross, Food Bank Network of Somerset County, SCCOAH, SHIP, Somerset County United Way, Volunteers of America, Interfaith Hospitality Network, HomeSharing, NJ Parole Board, and Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children. The CEAS Committee reports to the County's HSAC, which reports to the Board of Chosen Freeholders. In addition, the HSAC and CEAS Committees serve as points of contact for the NJ Department of Human Services and in that capacity prepare planning documents as well as status and evaluative reports. Both HSAC and the CEAS Committee also function as advocates for the County's vulnerable residents, partnering with other organizations to provide support for affordable housing programs, policies, and decisions.

In addition, a small group of representatives from the non-profit sector (particularly homeless and other emergency service providers) as well as County government meets under the auspices of the Continuum of Care subcommittee of the CEAS committee. Along with serving as a forum for County agencies to meet and discuss the coordination of services and emerging trends, this subcommittee has the indispensable task of meeting bi-monthly to consider and implement policies/procedures to create a stronger safety net for the County's most vulnerable residents. The CD Office provides staffing assistance to the Continuum of Care subcommittee and application process and facilitates meetings when

necessary. The newly-formed Homelessness Trust Fund Committee will also further County efforts to address homelessness by making recommendations to the Freeholder Board regarding the use of revenue from the Homeless Trust Fund.

Discharge Coordination Policy

47. Every jurisdiction receiving McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Supportive Housing, Shelter Plus Care, or Section 8 SRO Program funds must develop and implement a Discharge Coordination Policy, to the maximum extent practicable. Such a policy should include “policies and protocols for the discharge of persons from publicly funded institutions or systems of care (such as health care facilities, foster care or other youth facilities, or correction programs and institutions) in order to prevent such discharge from immediately resulting in homelessness for such persons.” The jurisdiction should describe its planned activities to implement a cohesive, community-wide Discharge Coordination Policy, and how the community will move toward such a policy.

Response

Mission Statement: The Somerset County Department of Human Services and the agencies that provide services within the County believe that to discharge individuals and families into homelessness is unacceptable and inappropriate. The purpose of this policy is to create an instrument that service-providing agencies and health care/correctional facilities can use to prepare a homeless individual or family (defined as one who occupies a space not fit for human habitation or currently resides in emergency shelter or transitional housing) for re-entry into the community and to connect the individual or family with the basic needs, supports, and services that are necessary to prevent a return to homeless and to promote self-sufficiency. The goals for the use of this instrument are that it be used in a manner that is time-sensitive, and that it provide for its consumer, a re-entry strategy that is culturally competent, consumer-driven to the extent possible and promotes sustainable independence and self-sufficiency.

Methodology: The Committee holds that a team approach is necessary if discharge planning is to be effective in Somerset County and therefore, will take steps to solicit feedback and incorporate input from stakeholders including homeless and formerly homeless individuals and families, service-providing agencies, state, county, and local government representatives, funding agency representatives, advocacy groups, and community members. In addition, the Committee is committed to regularly examine Somerset County’s discharge planning practices, and to make revisions to the DPP as necessary. A Memorandum of Understanding will serve as demonstration of an organization’s commitment to using the County’s Discharge Planning Instrument as part of its approach to providing services.

Responsible Entity: While the Committee accepts responsibility for managing the policy and the evaluation process, which includes convening regularly to

assess its efficacy and to make revisions when necessary, service-providing agencies and health care/correctional facilities are best suited to help individuals and families put proper linkages in place and therefore, are responsible for implementation of the DPP. The committee is of the opinion that this is best accomplished by the creation and maintenance of active dialogue and partnerships among participating agencies. Therefore, the Committee will meet regularly and provide a forum for participating agencies to exchange information among one another and to provide feedback to improve the County's DPP. The Board of Social Services will coordinate the activities that are necessary to maintain the County's DPP

Procedure: In order to be successful, participating agencies may choose to introduce the instrument to a consumer family or individual at the time of admission to allow ample time for the coordination of post-discharge services and linkages. Successful discharge planning must begin on admission and continue through to discharge and, whenever possible, include follow-up within six months. Because consumer involvement is integral to the success of discharge planning, participating agencies will, to the greatest extent possible, consider consumer preferences when completing the Discharge Planning instrument.

Current Status: At present, the group seeks to draw from elements of the County's Homeless Management Information System software to create an instrument that providers can use to garner data and personal information about clients who are receiving services. Once the policy is completed by the addition of such an instrument, the group intends to solicit participation through the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding. Moreover, it is anticipated that such a Memorandum of Understanding will be required for participation in the County's Non-Profit Purchase of Service process.

Specific Objectives/Homeless (91.215)

48. Identify specific objectives that the jurisdiction intends to initiate and/or complete in accordance with the tables* prescribed by HUD, and how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by the strategic plan. For each specific objective, identify proposed accomplishments and outcomes the jurisdiction hopes to achieve in quantitative terms over a specified time period (one, two, three or more years) or in other measurable terms as defined by the jurisdiction.

RESPONSE:

Please see Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulation Chart

Although other County divisions may do so, the CD Office does not traditionally apply for local public or private sector resources and therefore, can not say definitively how other resources will be used to identify needs covered by the strategic plan. Given what it known about the nature and extend of the County's housing and community development needs and the limited amount of CDBG and

HOME funds available, it is certain that local public and private resources will be used to partially support the objectives that are initiated in this Consolidated Plan to address identified needs through the creation and maintenance of affordable housing along with the funds to support the provision of services to the County's special needs populations. These services include but are not limited to: nutrition programs, outreach and referral, case management, utility assistance, rental subsidies, drug and alcohol counseling, employment and training services, mental health services, affordable child care, transportation, and medical assistance.



NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS

*Refer to Table 1B Non-Homeless Special Needs or the CPMP Tool's Needs.xls workbook

Priority Non-Homeless Needs 91.215 (e)

49. Identify the priority housing and supportive service needs of persons who are not homeless but may or may not require supportive housing, i.e., elderly, frail elderly, persons with disabilities (mental, physical, developmental, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families), persons with alcohol or other drug addiction by using the Non-homeless Special Needs Table.

RESPONSE

Please see the Non-Homeless Special Needs Chart

50. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs.

Response

Priorities for the investment of CDBG and HOME allocations reflect the results of a community-wide Housing and Community Development Need Survey along with input from the public. These priorities were originally created in 1997 and updated in 2005 and 2010 when the survey was released to the public. Results from the July 2010 show a slight but noticeable shift in respondent priorities. There was a decrease to importance that respondents assigned to the communal amenities like sidewalk and sewer improvements and community facilities like senior and youth centers and health/recreational facilities. There was also a noticeable increase in the importance that respondents assigned to basic needs including health, transportation, employment and energy-related services. For the first time, services to the homeless and down payment assistance also emerged as a high priority. The CDBG and HOME Consolidated Plan Priorities have been revised accordingly.

51. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

Response

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

In addition, there are several barriers that preclude program constituents from taking full advantage of CDBG and HOME-funded programs and activities. These barriers include language and/or cultural barriers that obstruct one's willingness to accept publicly-funded social services as well as the ability of staff to

communicate clearly with potential beneficiaries; lack of sufficient and affordable public transportation; deficiencies/gaps in the County and social service providers' ability to make community members aware of services that are available; and the necessity of using federal income guidelines that do not take into consideration the high cost of living in New Jersey and more specifically Somerset County to determine eligibility.

52.To the extent information is available, describe the facilities and services that assist persons who are not homeless but require supportive housing, and programs for ensuring that persons returning from mental and physical health institutions receive appropriate supportive housing.

Response

Please see the Non-Homeless Special Needs Table

SERVICE INVENTORY
<p>Component: <i>Supportive Services</i> Services in place: Please describe how each of the following services are provided in your community (as applicable):</p> <p><i>Case Management</i> – Board of Social Services, Easter Seals New Jersey, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, Alternatives, Resource Center for Women and Their Families, and the Center for Great Expectations provide intensive case management for their clients, helping them to access other services.</p> <p><i>Life skills</i> – <i>Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)</i> provides life skills training to their clients in emergency and transitional housing, plus maintains contact with clients in permanent housing. <i>VOA Agape House (emergency shelter)</i> provides life skill training, case management and other services to their clients. <i>The VA Domiciliary program</i> provides an interdisciplinary approach to provide veterans with the knowledge and skills needed to lead productive lives in the community. <i>Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children</i> has the <i>Passages (residential)</i> and <i>Pathways (non-residential)</i> programs to provide young people (ages 15-21) with independent living skills to prepare them for adult lives. <i>Catholic Charities</i> operates the <i>STEPS for Financial Independence</i> program which provide financial counselors to assist clients, most who are victims of domestic abuse, into making the transition from a dependent living and financial status to an independent, more self-sufficient one. Various organizations such as <i>Family Promise, Career and Life Planning Center for Displaced Homemakers, First Baptist CDC, Middle Earth</i> and <i>Somerset Community Action Program</i> provide family and life skills counseling and education programs.</p> <p><i>Alcohol and drug abuse treatment</i> – <i>Anderson House (women), Crawford House (women), and Freedom House (men)</i> all provide residential treatment for drug & alcohol addiction. <i>Carrier Clinic</i> provides in-patient and outpatient treatment for both men and women. <i>The Center for Great Expectation</i> provides addiction treatment to the pregnant women living at their facility. <i>Somerset Treatment Services</i> provides evaluations, therapy, methadone detox and crisis intervention. <i>The VA</i> operates the <i>Domiciliary Substance Abuse Treatment Program</i> for veterans with substance abuse.</p>

Somerset Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (SCADD) provides education and prevention services. There are Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups organizing meetings throughout the County.

Mental health treatment – *Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center manages the Psychiatric Emergency Screening Service (PESS) for the County. PESS provides 24-hour, 7 day a week, crisis intervention services and crisis hotline for county residents in the emergency room at Somerset Medical Center. One or more screeners are available on-site and also off-site through mobile outreach services. Crisis intervention services include screening for voluntary and involuntary hospitalization, mobile outreach, linkage to appropriate community resources as well as information and referral. Alternatives provides assistance to clients in permanent supportive housing by providing needed services to those with mental illness. Carrier Clinic provides in-patient and outpatient services. Family and Community Services, Jewish Family Services and Women’s Health and Counseling provide counseling and referrals.*

AIDS-related treatment – American Red Cross, SHIP, Somerset Treatment Services and Women’s Health and Counseling provides HIV counseling and testing.

Education – Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children has individuals in its Youth Shelter and Passages program attend high school, GED programs or college courses. The Pathways program is school based life skills for at risk youth attending Somerset County Vocational Technical High School (Vo-Tech). Vo-Tech provides 20 programs that provide occupational training and academic skills. They also operate the Twilight program, which provides students a “real work” environment by teaching job training and character skills. Twilight program participants also receive a paycheck for their work. A main component of Twilight is the Linkages program, which provides on-site counseling for substance abuse, mental and health issue, and life skills through collaborations with social services agencies that serve youth. The Somerset County Technology Institute offers post-secondary education for varied vocational and technical fields, such as healthcare, commercial art, cosmetology, office administration and technology. They offer an Adult Continuing Education program, along with internships and apprenticeships. The Jointure also offers a continuing education program, including computer training and other vocation skills. Literacy Volunteers of America offers literacy classes and ESL training.

Employment assistance - *Board of Social Services operates the County’s “Work First New Jersey” program, which offers training, employment counseling, and intensive support for TANF and GA clients in the program. IHN provides job placement assistance to its clients. Crawford House, Anderson House, and Freedom House assists clients with job placement as part of their recovery process. The First Baptist CDC operates the “Strive” employment training program. Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center has a Supported Employment program committed to assisting individuals with severe mental illness integrate into the competitive workforce. The Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board serves both Somerset and Hunterdon counties has implemented a One Stop System of service delivery through its partners to enhance access to a variety of program services and improve long-term employment outcomes through education, training and workforce development. The Visiting Nurses Association operates a Home Health Aide programs, which provides the necessary education and training for individuals to enter this industry. The Somerset County Business Partnership offers a job bank and business directory.*

Child care – *Child Care Connection provides referrals and recruitment and training for*

home child care. The Learning Gate, Holy Cross Pre-School, Somerset Valley YMCA, Somerset Hills YMC are also sources of affordable child care. SCAP operates the County's Head Start program, providing free care for pre-school children, in addition to pre/after school care and daycare. Martin Luther King Youth Center and Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church offers after school care.

Transportation – As part of their 24-hour S.O.S. hotline, the Board of Social Services will provide transportation to shelter sites for all clients. Somerset County Transportation Division operates the SCOOT (Hillsborough, Manville, Somerville, Bridgewater, Bedminster) and DASH (Bound Brook, Bridgewater, South Bound Brook, Franklin) public transit buses. Both lines connect people to large employers, train stations, and shopping centers for nominal fees. These buses are handicapped accessible and are open for anyone to use. NJ Transit also has train and bus service in the County. The County also offers transportation to senior citizen and the disabled for medical appointments, to senior center nutrition sites, and to shopping centers. American Red Cross also offers transportation services to senior citizen and disabled individuals for medical appointments. The Somerset County Jail through a program with NJ Transit offers train trip vouchers upon discharge, so individuals can receive transportation to their housing destination. Several of the non-profits serving the homeless, such as Crawford House and IHN, will provide transportation for their clients to work, job interviews or other places they receive service or have appointments.

Other – The Food Bank Network operates a Working Wardrobe program providing clothes for working women and men. Richard Hall CMHC Partial Care Program operates Thrift World that provides low cost clothing. Clothing and supplies for infants are provided by the Paige Whitney program, Catholic Charities and Pregnancy Aid. The Giving Network distributes and delivers household items, appliances, furniture and other items to those in need. United Way also provides infant supplies through its *Bundles Program* and school supplies through its *Stuff the Bus Program*.

Services planned: Crawford House is building a new facility that will increase their capacity served from 14 beds to 22 beds for homeless women recovering from alcohol and/or drug addiction.

The Board of Social Services is continuing efforts to coordinate with the Dept. of Labor on enhancing workforce development services for Work First NJ clients.

How homeless persons access/receive assistance:

Case Management – The Board of Social Services is the main entry point into the CoC system. They can be reached through phone or drop-in. They will refer clients to appropriate agencies and make sure they are receiving all of the supportive services to which one is entitled. Easter Seals New Jersey, Richard Hall Mental Health Center, Alternatives, Resource Center for Women and Their Families, and the Center for Great Expectations clients are referred to them by the Board of Social Services, some other agency or through direct contact.

Life skills – *Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) and VOA Agape House clients are referred to them by the Board of Social Services or other homeless providers. Once in the shelter, they begin to receive the services. IHN also provides services when its former emergency clients move into their transitional housing or permanent housing. Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children receives referrals into their programs from DYFS, Board of Social Services, and through their Street SMART*

outreach program. The VA clients come from community referrals or self-referral. The remaining agencies, usually more community based, can be contacted directly or else have clients referred to them by other agencies.

Alcohol and drug abuse treatment – Anderson House (women), Crawford House (women), and Freedom House (men) are usually referred by other agencies, although they also can accept self-referrals. Carrier Clinic, Somerset Treatment Services and the VA can be contacted directly for services or else clients can be referred by other agencies. Alcoholics and Narcotic Anonymous groups can be contacted directly for services.

Mental health treatment – Most referrals come from the Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS) screening process, with the placement of the client to one of the agencies based on the individual's level of need.

AIDS-related treatment – American Red Cross, SHIP, Somerset Treatment Services and Women's Health and Counseling can be contacted directly for these services. SHIP also does outreach, informing people of these services when their Mobile Kitchen and service vehicles go to areas with pockets of poverty.

Education – Somerset Home has all its Youth Shelter and Passages clients enrolled in an education program. They publicize their Pathways program and receive referrals from different agencies or schools. The Vo-Tech programs, the Somerset County Technology Institute, and The Jointure are known to all school districts in the County and also publicized through the media; students can apply to them directly or may be referred through another program or agency. To enroll in Literacy Volunteers of American programs, individuals can contact by phone or be referred by another agency.

Employment assistance - Board of Social Services directly refers their clients to the County's "Work First New Jersey" program. IHN, VA, Crawford House, Anderson House and Freedom House assist their clients as part of their program. First Baptist CDC's "Strive" program is open to anyone, with enrollment done through phone or in person. Richard Hall's Supported Employment program is through their own referral, another agency's referral or self referral.

Child care – All of the child care agencies can be contacted directly by phone or in person, or else referrals are made by another agency, such as Catholic Charities, which may be providing subsidized care.

Transportation – SCOOT, CAT, DASH, and NJ Transit are all public transportation and available to anyone. For service from American Red Cross and Somerset County Transportation (senior and disabled), appointments must be made at least a few days to a week in advance. The Jail provides their trip vouchers as part of their discharge policy.

Other – The Working Wardrobe and Thrift World provide drop-in service to clients. Paige Whitney, Catholic Charities, Pregnancy Aid and The Giving Network should be contacted by phone so they could arrange for the provisions of the supplies to suit the needs of the client.

53.If the jurisdiction plans to use HOME or other tenant based rental assistance to assist one or more of these subpopulations, it must justify the need for such assistance in the plan.

Response

2010 Fair Market Rent (FMR) ⁴	
Zero-Bedroom	\$1,155
One-Bedroom	\$1,198
Two-Bedroom	\$1,409
Three-Bedroom	\$1,768
Four-Bedroom	\$2,085

The high, fair market rents in Somerset County coupled with the recent economic downturn have made it difficult to rent in the county. In order to afford the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment in Somerset County, a minimum wage earner must work 149 hours per week. In other words, a Somerset County household must include 3.7 minimum wage earner(s) working 40 hours per week year-round in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable. These figures led the HOME Committee to conclude that tenant-based rental assistance would be an effective use of HOME funds. This decision is further supported by renter cost-burden data in the Housing Needs Table.

Specific Special Needs Objectives 91.215 (e)

54.Identify each specific objective developed to address a priority need by number and contain proposed accomplishments and outcomes the jurisdiction expects to achieve in quantitative terms through related activities over a specified time period (i.e. one, two, three or more years), or in other measurable terms as identified and defined by the jurisdiction.

RESPONSE: Please see the Non-Homeless Special Needs Chart

55.Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by the strategic plan.

Response

Although other County divisions may do so, the CD Office does not traditionally apply for local public or private sector resources and therefore, can not say definitively how other resources will be used to identify needs covered by the strategic plan. Given what it known about the nature and extend of the County’s housing and community development needs, one may presume that local public and private resources will be used to address identified needs through the creation and maintenance of affordable housing along with the funds to support the provision of services to the County’s special needs populations. These

services include but are not limited to: nutrition programs, outreach and referral, case management, utility assistance, rental subsidies, drug and alcohol counseling, employment and training services, mental health services, affordable child care, transportation, and medical assistance.

In addition to these services, the CD Office will, through the provision of advocacy, training and technical assistance, make every effort to encourage others in County government, municipalities and non-profit to apply for funding that compliments HUD's overriding objectives to provide safe, decent affordable housing, to create a suitable living environment, and to promote economic opportunities.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Priority Community Development Needs 91.215 (f)

*Refers to Table 2B or to the Community Development Table in the Needs.xls workbook

56. Identify the jurisdiction's priority non-housing community development needs eligible for assistance by CDBG eligibility category specified in the Community Development Needs Table* – i.e., public facilities, public improvements, public services and economic development.

Response

Please see the Housing and Community Development Activities Chart

57. Describe the basis for assigning the priority given to each category of priority needs provided on Table 2B or the Community Development Table in the jurisdiction's priority non-housing community development needs eligible for assistance by CDBG eligibility category specified in the Community Development Needs Table* – i.e., public facilities, public improvements, public services and economic development the CPMP Tool's Needs.xls worksheet.

Response

Priorities for the investment of CDBG and HOME allocations reflect the results of a community-wide Housing and Community Development Need Survey along with input from the public. These priorities were originally created in 1997 and updated in 2005 and 2010 when the survey was released to the public. Results from the July 2010 show a slight but noticeable shift in respondent priorities. There was a decrease to importance that respondents assigned to the communal amenities like sidewalk and sewer improvements and community facilities like senior and youth centers and health/recreational facilities. There was also a noticeable increase in the importance that respondents assigned to basic needs including health, transportation, employment and energy-related services. For the first time, services to the homeless and down payment assistance also emerged as a high priority. The CDBG and HOME Consolidated Plan Priorities have been revised accordingly.

58. Identify any obstacles to meeting underserved needs.

Within Somerset County, there are a number of obstacles to meeting the underserved needs of CDBG and HOME Program beneficiaries. In the housing, homeless, and special needs area, the following barriers have been identified: the shortage of affordable and other supportive housing opportunities, shortage of Section-8 vouchers to assist low income tenants, insufficient funding resources for housing programs, inflation and shortages in the region's housing market,

inflationary cost trends in construction, and community resistance. With respect to non-housing community development needs, the principal impediments are inadequate funding levels and resistance to increasing property taxes to provide projects and services in areas where there is need.

In addition, there are several barriers that preclude program constituents from taking full advantage of CDBG and HOME-funded programs and activities. These barriers include language and/or cultural barriers that obstruct one's willingness to accept publicly-funded social services as well as the ability of staff to communicate clearly with potential beneficiaries; lack of sufficient and affordable public transportation; deficiencies/gaps in the County and social service providers' ability to make community members of services that are available; and the necessity of using federal income guidelines that do not take into consideration the high cost of living in New Jersey and more specifically Somerset County to determine eligibility.

Specific Community Development Objectives

59. Identify specific long-term and short-term community development objectives (including economic development activities that create jobs), developed in accordance with the statutory goals described in section 24 CFR 91.1 and the primary objective of the CDBG program to provide decent housing and a suitable living environment and expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

Response

Please see Community Development Needs Table

The County has specific long term community development objectives that have been developed in accordance with the statutory goals described in 24 CFR 91.1. Relative to the CDBG goal to provide decent housing, the County has a long-term goal to increase the supply of affordable housing at all income levels through the provision of grant funding, advocacy, and technical assistance. In the next Program Year, the goal is to create an additional 90 units of affordable housing and maintain at least eighteen units through the County's Housing Rehabilitation Program. Please see the Community Development Needs Table as well as the Housing Needs Table for more detail relative to the County's goals toward meeting this objective during each successive year of the 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan.

Concerning the programmatic goal of creating economic opportunities, the County hopes to create economic opportunities through its long-term goal to provide down payment assistance to at least at 70 income-eligible first time homebuyers and to provide employment and training assistance to at least 250 County residents. During Program Year 2010, the goal is to provide down payment assistance to at least fourteen income-eligible first time homebuyers and to provide employment and training assistance to at least 48 County residents. Please see the Community Development Needs Table for more detail relative to the County's goals toward meeting this objective during each successive year of the 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan.

Finally, to meet the goal of providing a suitable living environment, the County has a long term goal of completing six facilities and improvement projects, five senior center projects, three homeless facilities projects, seven youth center projects, eight park/recreational facilities projects, four sidewalk projects, four street improvement projects, thirteen sewer improvements projects, three childcare center and three abused and neglected children projects. The short term goal is to complete twelve projects of this kind during Program Year 2010. Please see the Community Development Needs Table for more detail relative to the County's goals toward meeting this objective during each successive year of the 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan.

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas 91.215(g)

60.If the jurisdiction has one or more approved Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas, the jurisdiction must provide, with the submission of a new Consolidated Plan, either: the prior HUD-approved strategy, or strategies, with a statement that there has been no change in the strategy (in which case, HUD approval for the existing strategy is not needed a second time) or submit a new or amended neighborhood revitalization strategy, or strategies, (for which separate HUD approval would be required).

Response

There are no Neighborhood Revitalization Areas in Somerset County.

Barriers to Affordable Housing 91.215 (h)

61.Describe the strategy to remove or ameliorate negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing, except that, if a State requires a unit of general local government to submit a regulatory barrier assessment that is substantially equivalent to the information required under this part, as determined by HUD, the unit of general local government may submit that assessment to HUD and it shall be considered to have complied with this requirement.

Response

Strategy to Remove effects of Public Policies

- a. Public Policy/Decision Making- The County will continue to seek opportunities to provide input in the decision-making process as it relates to public policies that affect the implementation of Fair Housing Laws. The new Affordable Housing Planning Grant provided by the Board of Chosen Freeholders will be useful to navigate some of the traditional land use laws that complicate the development of affordable housing. In addition, the County's HSAC and CEAS Committees advocate for and support policies intended to further the causes of affordable housing at the federal, state, and local levels.

- b. Actions to Overcome Private Sector Impediments- The County continues to contract with the SCCOAH and Legal Services of Northwest Jersey (formerly Somerset Sussex Legal Services) to provide fair housing counseling and legal representation to low and moderate income residents of the County who are the victims of housing discrimination. Moreover, the County participates in and, to the greatest extent possible, provides support to SCCOAH as the agency provides training and educational opportunities during Fair Housing Month and through out the year. Some of these workshops include *Rental Realities, Credit when Credit is Due, Step-by-Step, Spanish Step by Step, First Home Club, First Time Homebuyer's Expo and Seminar, Delinquency and Foreclosure Counseling, and Reverse Mortgage Counseling*. Without fail, the County's Human Services department sponsors Housing Month activities. Past trainings include a panel discussion on the uses of Section 202 and 811 funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, an information session by Habitat for Humanity, and guest speakers from Family Promise as well as the National Coalition for the Homeless. The CD Office continues to communicate with other agencies (for example- Board of Realtors, SCCOAH) to identify and address impediments to Fair Housing. Finally, the Fair Housing Brochure is disseminated to local banks, realtors, non-profit and municipal organizations, county divisions, and CD sub grantees for display and distribution.

- c. Actions to Overcome Market/Community-Based Impediments- The CD Office, through the County Speakers Bureau, makes presentations on Fair Housing to the public and community organizations. The County also maintains contracts with both Legal Services of Northwest Jersey as well as the Somerset County Coalition on Affordable Housing for the provisions of fair housing counseling and legal representation when there are legitimate discrimination issues. Also, CD Staff routinely make presentations in the community focusing on topics such as homeownership, County-funded Housing Rehabilitation Programs, and other matters pertinent to housing and community development. In addition, The County will continue its aggressive effort to cultivate and increase capacity among its affordable housing developers through outreach and technical assistance. The CD Staff continues to work with non-profit housing agencies around Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Certification, identifying innovative approaches to all phases of housing that are part of the County's Continuum of Care, and alternative financing mechanisms.

Lead-based Paint 91.215 (i)

62. Describe the jurisdiction's plan to evaluate and reduce lead-based paint hazards and describe how lead based paint hazards will be integrated into housing policies and programs, and how the plan for the reduction of lead-based hazards is related to the extent of lead poisoning and hazards.

Response

The Community Development Office is committed to addressing lead-based paint in all housing rehabilitation programs. Both of the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program, which used both CDBG and HOME funds, the County has contracted with a consultant to administer the program. This consultant is certified by the NJ State Department of Community Affairs as a lead evaluation contractor. Lead paint inspection procedures are outlined in the Housing Rehabilitation's Program Policy and Procedure Manual and are compliant with the federal regulations dated September 15, 1999. In summary, the third party administrator, or its authorized agent will evaluate lead hazards through a risk assessment. In situations where painted surfaces will be disturbed a paint inspection using an XRF analyzer is done. If lead paint hazards are indicated the rehabilitation is completed using either interim controls or abatement in compliance with HUD regulations.

Antipoverty Strategy 91.215 (j)

63. Describe the jurisdiction's goals, programs, and policies for reducing the number of poverty level families (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually)

Response

The County's anti-poverty strategy is a multi-pronged approach that seeks to meet individuals and families where they are and to bring them toward self-sufficiency. The County is of the opinion that the causes of poverty can be traced to a number of environmental and economic factors and that when one is entrenched in poverty, it can be very difficult to extricate oneself without meaningful, continued assistance directed toward addressing the root causes of poverty. With that in mind, the County and its human service community endeavor to impact the following areas: access to affordable medical/dental care and prescription assistance, housing counseling relative to homeownership, tenant responsibilities, and personal financial management; one's ability to earn a living wage; one's ability to secure affordable child care; access to housing that is affordable for all income levels. In addition, to the activities of the County's Human Services Department and non-profit human service providers, the following resources will enhance the County's anti-poverty strategy:

a. Social Service programs- The County will continue to provide direct support for social service programs that will positively impact persons living in poverty within the County. These programs include but are not limited to: counseling services, child care subsidies, temporary housing assistance, adult protective services, and income maintenance.

b. Office on Aging- The Somerset County Office on Aging will assess the needs of older persons and plan programs and services to meet those needs. Office will also offer information and referral services, outreach, nutrition centers and home-delivered meals, wellness and care coordination, legal counseling and assistance for employees who are dealing with aging parents. All of these services will enhance the quality of life that for elderly residents of the County, who often live below the poverty level.

c. Social Services- The Board of Social Services and the Department of Human Services will provide financial assistance and referral services to appropriate County and State agencies for needy families who live below the poverty level.

d. Work First New Jersey (WFNJ)- The Somerset County Board of Social Services, through a subcontract with the Department of Labor, will manage the WFNJ Program. Board staff will provide case management, skill assessment, job development and job readiness training to recipients of Temporary Aid to Needy Families and General Assistance funding. The subsequent transition from public assistance to gainful employment produces a positive impact on the County's overall effort to reduce the number of families in poverty.

e. Private Industry Council (PIC)- The County does not have a Private Industry Council. The Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board will undertake efforts that were previously undertaken by this entity.

f. Division of Employment and Training- The County does not have a Division of Employment and Training. Employment and training services will be provided by a number of quasi-governmental entities within the County. For example, the Somerset County Technical Institute offers programs in office administration, commercial art, allied health/practical nursing, and ten technologies (including fiber optics, commercial art/multimedia, electronics and computer technology to high school graduates. In addition, the Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board has a mission to meet the labor force needs of local businesses through the Workforce Investment System; to use the Workforce Investment System's services in an effort to improve the quality of life for the employers, employees and residents in both Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, and to increase the skills and earnings of the "graduates" of the Workforce Investment System. These programs will collectively reduce the number of families that live in poverty within the County

g. Vocational and Technical School- Somerset County Vocational and Technical Schools provide twenty shop programs for full and part time students, an alternate high school program, Adult Continuing Education Programs, and a training program for at-risk youth.

h. NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation-It is the mission of the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NJDVRS) to enable eligible individuals with disabilities to achieve employment consistent with their strength, priorities, needs, abilities, and capabilities. NJDVRS accomplishes this mission with the use of counseling staff who serve as rehabilitation and are trained to help people with disabilities become employed.

64. Identify the extent to which this strategy will reduce (or assist in reducing) the number of poverty level families, taking into consideration factors over which the jurisdiction has control.

Response

It is estimated that this strategy will reduce the number of families living under the poverty level by at least ten percent.

Institutional Structure 91.215 (k)

65. Provide a concise summary of the institutional structure through which the jurisdiction will carry out its consolidated plan, including private industry, non-profit organizations, community and faith-based organizations, and public institutions.

Response

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

In regard to the institutional structure, the CD Office staffs the CDBG and HOME Programs, and in that capacity facilitates the competitive application process, provides technical assistance to current and potential subgrantees, monitors subgrantees for compliance with federal regulations, and prepares status and evaluative reports for submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Each of the grant programs is augmented by a committee whose purpose is to assess and consider housing and community development needs and to recommend to the Board of Chosen Freeholders Annual HOME and CDBG Action Plans that reflect those needs. Each of these committees also considers and puts forth policy recommendations that are necessary to meet the intended goals of various federal mandates and directives and to ensure that each of the grant programs are administered in a fashion that is most advantageous to the County and its residents. The by-laws of the HOME Committee state that its membership will be comprised of two freeholders, one representative of the Department of Human Services, and at least three community members. The by-laws of the CD Committee state that its membership will be comprised of two representatives from each participating municipality (one appointed by the Governing Body and one appointed by the Chief Executive). In addition, the committees consider and put forth policy recommendations.

Once the Action Plan is approved by the Board of Chosen Freeholders and submitted to and approved by HUD, the CD Office provides subgrantee agreement training to the non-profit organizations and municipalities that carry out the activities in the Action Plan. The ability of subgrantees to implement the County's Annual Action Plan is supported by CD Staff who work closely with subgrantees by providing training, technical assistance, and interpretive guidance, by participating in committees and other activities, and by facilitating the exchange of information and interactions that are necessary to meet community needs. Finally, throughout the course of the year, CD Staff, along with other Human Services representatives collaborate with one another in a coordinated monitoring process that is specifically designed to promote a comprehensive, cohesive approach to grant management and information-sharing at the County level.

66. Provide an assessment of the strengths and gaps in the delivery system.

Response

The delivery system for both the CDBG and HOME Programs has several strengths that include community outreach, technical assistance, emphasis on customer service, and citizen participation. Community Development staff are also now involved in the provision of services of the Housing Rehabilitation Program. Gaps in the delivery system are the need to increase brand recognition and to make the administration of the CDBG, HOME and Continuum of Care Programs more seamless.

67. Describe efforts to enhance coordination with private industry, businesses, developers, and social service agencies, particularly with regard to the development of the jurisdiction's economic development strategy. (91.215(I))

Response

The County experience has been that economic development is best accomplished through the development of a strong partnership with the private sector. In order to enhance coordination between private industry, businesses, developers, and social service agencies, the Community Development Office along with the County Department of Human Services will continue to facilitate and encourage opportunities to exchange ideas and information and to forge collaborative efforts to respond to community problems.

Coordination 91.215 (I)

68. Describe the efforts to enhance coordination between public and assisted housing providers and governmental health, mental health, and service agencies.

Response

In order to enhance coordination between public and assisted housing providers and private and governmental health, mental health, and service agencies, the Community Development Office along with the County Department of Human Services will continue to facilitate and encourage opportunities to exchange information and to forge collaborative efforts to respond to community problems.

69. Describe efforts in addressing the needs of persons that are chronically homeless with respect to the preparation of the homeless strategy.

Response

- The County's homeless strategy includes the following initiatives to address this population.
 - Continue to make emergency shelter and supportive services to this population.
 - Continue to collect and review data related to this population.
 - Continue to meet regularly and to use relevant data to discuss trends and emerging issues.
 - Continue to outreach and encourage this population to accept services.

70. Describe the means of cooperation and coordination among the state and any units of general local government in the metropolitan area in the implementation of the plan.

In order to foster cooperation with the State, County staff participate in Human Services Advisory Council Committee meetings, which are attended by state and local government representatives. Staff also participate in varied initiatives including Regional Sustainability Planning and Regional Center Partnership where there is also representation from state and local government. Likewise, Community Development and other County staff support special initiatives convened for the purpose of information sharing covering topics such as Economic Development, Redevelopment and Transportation Planning. Finally Community Development and other County staff have provided and will continue to provide support to entities with a County wide service area including the Business Partnership of Somerset County, Raritan Valley Community College, and the Somerset County Improvement Authority.

71. Describe efforts to enhance coordination with private industry, businesses, developers, and social service agencies, particularly with regard to the development of the jurisdiction's economic development strategy.

In order to foster cooperation with private industry, business, developers, and social service agencies, the County maintains private and public sector representation on committees such as the Agricultural Development Board and Homelessness Trust Fund and participates in varied initiatives including Regional Sustainability Planning and the Regional Center Partnership. The County also supports special initiatives convened for the purpose of information sharing covering topics such as Economic Development; and has provided support to entities with a County wide service area including Business Partnership of Somerset County, Raritan Valley Community College, Somerset County Improvement Authority.

72. Describe the jurisdiction's efforts to coordinate its housing strategy with local and regional transportation planning strategies to ensure to the extent practicable that residents of affordable housing have access to public transportation.

Community Development staff will participate in the Somerset County Regional Sustainability Initiative, which includes access to both affordable housing and public transportation as goals. As a participant, staff will:

- Ensure that affordable housing developments are considered in the development of public transportation routes,
- Ensure that the employment and other transportation needs of low and moderate advocate are considered when new transportation routes are considered,
- Support and encourage public/private partnerships to meet the transportation needs of low and moderate income County residents,
- Support and encourage transportation routes that provide service to underserved areas, and in addition,

- Support non-traditional transportation options, and
- Advocate for and provide support for new public transportation initiatives.

Monitoring 91.230

73. Describe the standards and procedures the jurisdiction will use to monitor its housing and community development projects and ensure long-term compliance with program requirements and comprehensive planning requirements.

Response

The County is of the opinion that Monitoring should be directed toward examining programmatic, financial, and regulatory performance and compliance. Primary objectives are (1) to ensure that subgrantees comply with all pertinent regulations governing their administrative, financial, and programmatic operations and (2) to ensure that subgrantees achieve their performance objectives within schedule and budget, and (3) to assess capabilities and/or any potential needs for training or technical assistance in these areas. Moreover, monitoring sessions provide a unique opportunity to get feedback, to inquire as to training needs, and to seek direction relative to how the CD Office can better serve its subgrantees. A copy of the monitoring tool for non-profit agencies is attached at the conclusion of this document, along with the County's timely spending policy.

MONITORING PROCEDURES

Monitoring should be directed toward programmatic, financial, and regulatory performance. Primary objectives are (1) to ensure that subgrantees comply with all pertinent regulations governing their administrative, financial, and programmatic operations and (2) to ensure that subgrantees achieve their performance objectives within schedule and budget, and (3) to assess capabilities and/or any potential needs for training or technical assistance in these areas.

Division-wide Protocol

1. Subgrantees are evaluated and monitored as part of the post-award assessment process that immediately follows subgrantee agreement training. Evaluation of the nature of activity, proposed plan for carrying out activity, the organization's capacity to do the work, and the possibility of potential conflicts of interest are within the post-award assessment. CD Office staff use this assessment to create monitoring schedules, to provide individualized technical assistance, and to create a timeline for outreach and follow-up.
2. Reports must be current prior to approval of any payment request. Reports may be monthly or quarterly, as mutually established between the County and the subgrantees prior to contract execution. Report forms are provided to the subgrantees with the executed contract, to ensure that all required information is included.
3. Technical assistance will be provided as requested or with subgrantees identified as inexperienced with CDBG/HOME/ADDI or with agency management.

CDBG/HOME Projects and Programs

1. Establish an annual monitoring plan in conjunction with Department of Human Services Coordinated Monitoring Process/Policy.
 - a. Identify subgrantees most likely to encounter challenges and provide technical assistance attention to them. This identification may be due to recent personnel turnover, past performance, or the nature of the particular project.
 - b. Establish a schedule for on-site visits. Smaller subgrantees or subgrantees that have been monitored in the past and are managing well can be monitored through file evaluation when necessary although the CD Office concedes that this is not the most efficacious method for monitoring subgrantees.
 - c. If on-site monitoring is deemed appropriate, staff will use the Coordinated Monitoring Form to conduct on-site monitoring reviews.
 - d. Write subgrantees with findings, concerns and areas worthy of commendation. Provide deadlines for compliance with correcting deficiencies. Include positive feedback.
2. Single Audit requirements.
 - a. Notify subgrantees in writing of requirements under the Single Audit Act.
 - b. Review Audit Report. Letter of review sent to subgrantees. Assure all findings have been cleared by subgrantees.

HOME/ADDI Projects and Programs

Rental Projects

The County or its agent will:

1. Perform on site inspections to determine compliance with property standards no less than once every three years for projects containing 1 to 4 units; once every two years for projects containing 5 to 25 units; and once per year for projects with 26 or more units.
2. Review income eligibility data collected in accordance in accordance with IRS 1040 methodology. Agency staff will submit *HOME Beneficiary form*, along with *HOME Annual Occupancy Report* on a yearly basis with the understanding that third-party verification is to be maintained on-site.
3. Verify that rents on HOME assisted units conform to current HOME Program rent considerations.

Ownership Projects and Programs

In the event that the County receives a notice of default or notice of foreclosure for a single family residence, County staff will attempt to contact the homeowner to determine the nature of the default, and if appropriate provide technical assistance and/or referral information; should a foreclosure occur, staff will pursue recapture of HOME/ADDI funds. Regarding requests for the County to provide Subordinations of Mortgage, it is the policy of the Board of Chosen Freeholders to do so as the long as the amount of the new mortgage, combined with the amount of HOME assistance

provided, does not exceed 80% of the unit's appraised value and that the new loan is not characterized by any predatory lending practices.

OTHER NARRATIVES AND ATTACHMENTS

74. Include any Strategic Plan information that was not covered by a narrative in any other section. If optional tables are not used, provide comparable information that is required by consolidated plan regulations.

Not applicable

75. Section 108 Loan Guarantee

If the jurisdiction has an open Section 108 project, provide a summary of the project. The summary should include the Project Name, a short description of the project and the current status of the project, the amount of the Section 108 loan, whether you have an EDI or BEDI grant and the amount of this grant, the total amount of CDBG assistance provided for the project, the national objective(s) codes for the project, the Matrix Codes, if the activity is complete, if the national objective has been met, the most current number of beneficiaries (jobs created/retained, number of FTE jobs held by/made available to LMI persons, number of housing units assisted, number of units occupied by LMI households, etc.)

The County does not operate any Section 108 Loan Guarantee project.

76. Regional Connections

Describe how the jurisdiction's strategic plan connects its actions to the larger strategies for the metropolitan region. Does the plan reference the plans of other agencies that have responsibilities for metropolitan transportation, economic development, and workforce investment?

Somerset County's 2010-2014 strategic plan complements the larger strategy for the metropolitan region. First, like other regional initiatives, it solicits community input and then uses that input as the basis for determining priorities for grant funds. The County's Strategic Plan also shares many of the objectives that are part of the Somerset County Regional Sustainability Initiative including affordable housing, economic development, public transportation, transportation for elderly disabled residents, and support for the welfare to work program. To ensure that these initiatives continue to complement one another and that the concerns of low and moderate income County residents are considered, Community Development staff will participate in the Somerset County Regional Sustainability Initiative will continue to participate in the Regional Sustainability Initiative and :

- Ensure that affordable housing developments is considered in the development of public transportation routes,
- Ensure that the employment and other transportation needs of low and moderate advocate are considered when new transportation routes are proposed,
- Support and encourage regional public/private partnerships to meet the transportation needs of low and moderate income County residents,
- Support and encourage regional and local transportation routes that provide service to underserved areas, and in addition, and
- Support non-traditional transportation options.