

CR-05 - Goals and Outcomes

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

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

The Town of West Hartford continues to maintain programs identified in its CDBG strategic and annual action plans in order to enhance suitable living environments in West Hartford. The Town of West Hartford also received and incorporated Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding (CDBG-CV funds), which are described in this annual report.

Fair Housing activities and Neighborhood Stabilization include numerous provisions for extremely low- and very low-income persons in the community. The West Hartford Housing Authority, a quasi-governmental agency, oversees all public housing (Section 8 vouchers) and provides qualified renters access to clean, affordable, and appropriate low-income housing. The CDBG West Hartford Housing Rehabilitation Program (HR), together with the West Hartford Building Code Department and the West Hartford Bloomfield Health District (WHBHD), also supports the maintenance of good housing stock suitable for a healthy living environment.

The Town continues to work with external agencies to facilitate supports for those in the community. The Community Renewal Team (CRT) provides case management for Energy Assistance. Greater Hartford Legal Aid supports those who may need housing counseling or other legal supports. Social workers complete referrals to Operation Fuel to assist families with heating and fuel payments and budgets. Social workers facilitate the Renters Rebate program for elderly and disabled persons providing a rebate when rent exceeds **30% of annual income**. They also collaborate with the CT Fair Housing Center (and other agencies, when needed) regarding Fair Housing rights and other housing issues, including COVID-19 and moratorium information. Given the rent and mortgage moratoriums during the pandemic, this partnership remained vital during the current year for an increased number of community residents.

The West Hartford Food Pantry is a vital program that contributes to the reduction of food insecurity in West Hartford. This program works in conjunction with Foodshare's Hunger Action Team to coordinate food provisions. Coordination of efforts has especially been vibrant since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

West Hartford operates a neighborhood community center, Hillcrest Area Neighborhood Outreach Center (HANOC) in the heart of the Town's lowest-income neighborhood. HANOC is the result of a collaborative partnership between the Town of West Hartford, The West Hartford Housing Authority and the West Hartford Board of Education. The community center is owned by the West Hartford Housing Authority and is leased and operated by the Town of West Hartford. Programming at the center is facilitated through the Town of West Hartford Social Services' Community Partnerships Division, and the West Hartford Board of Education.

Through CDBG funded programs, including Volunteer Services and Volunteer Medical Escort Program, transportation services are provided to those who are unable to use the Dial-A-Ride program.

The Town also continues to utilize funding for its infrastructure to support services to persons with disabilities, American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, support of youth, seniors, and/or substance abusers. The town participates in numerous boards and commissions such as the Clean Energy Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Fair Rent Commission, Advisory Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and

the West Hartford Prevention Council, etc. In addition, the Town continues its priority to maintain and improve existing public facilities and to encourage the development of upgraded facilities, particularly with regard to parks/recreation facilities and parking facilities serving low-income populations. A list of accomplishments is in the chart below.

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

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

Goal	Category	Source / Amount	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Complete
CDBG Administration	Administration	CDBG: \$	Other	Other	0	0		0	0	
Fair Housing Activities	Fair Housing	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	125	1976	1,580.8%	25	2	8%
Fair Housing Activities	Fair Housing	CDBG: \$	Other	Other		0				
Food Pantry	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	3625	3971	109.54%	950	2181	229.58%
Food Pantry	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public service activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	0				
HANOC	Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	1750	2311	132.06%	90	253	281%
HANOC	Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public service activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	0				

Housing & Neighborhood Stabilization	Affordable Housing Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Housing Code Enforcement/Foreclosed Property Care	Household Housing Unit	3500	4676	133.6%	700	0	0.00%
Housing Rehabilitation Program	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$		Household Housing Unit	0	0				
Housing Rehabilitation Program	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	100	44	44.00%	10	11	110.%
Public & Private Partnerships	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	10	14	140%	2	4	200.%
Public & Private Partnerships	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Other	Other	0	0		2	0	0%
Volunteer Services	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	0	0		330	319	96.66%
Volunteer Services	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public service activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	1125	1269	112.8%			

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

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

The Town of West Hartford continues to mirror HUD’s mission to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. While CDBG funding received from HUD does not directly and explicitly fund housing options for the community its CDBG efforts support and compliment housing efforts, including providing safety, quality of life, and other resources to members of the community with limited income, special needs, and the elderly.

During the fiscal period July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, the Building Department conducted 615 Building Code violation inspections in low- to moderate-income areas of town, the HR Program financed improvements to six low-income or elderly housing units and the WHBHD conducted 7 inspections relating to health concerns and living conditions for those in low-mod areas. Rectification of violations, whether for health or safety, is a priority in the community. This work continues to see increases, especially since housing stock in the community is older and well established and a third of the community is comprised of elderly residents who may see decreases in income sustainability. In the coming year, it is the objective of the Housing Rehabilitation Program to market resources to those community members, in particular the elderly.

The Food Pantry program tracks monthly the number of food bags distributed and the number of participating families. By June 30, 2023, the Food Pantry served 844 households or 2,181 individuals. In addition, 210 Households received food assistance in their homes, the delivery of which is organized by West Hartford Social Services – Community Partnerships Division. At the Hillcrest Area Neighborhood Outreach Center (HANOC), 200 breakfasts were served for low- and moderate-income (LMI) residents.

The HANOC program continued to support West Hartford’s lowest income area. In addition to food distribution, programs included a homework center for students, case management services, crisis intervention, Parents Group, Adult Computer Basics classes, other adult education programs, Camp Hillcrest, educational field trips, and more.

Through Volunteer Services Program, 319 residents were served. Volunteers provided transportation to local, routine medical appointments and escorted clients in and out of the buildings. Before the first ride, a West Hartford social worker will assess to determine eligibility for the program. Two weeks’ notice is required for scheduling and is dependent upon the availability of volunteers. This program is administered by Social Services’ Community Partnerships Division.

Additional contributions from the Town That Cares Fund (a fund maintained by the Town of West Hartford for donations to help those in need) temporarily supplied the funding shortfall. During the next fiscal year, the town has budgeted and utilized COVID-19 CARES Act funding through CDBG to maintain this surge of food demand during the remainder of the pandemic. Extreme care to document needs will be maintained.

Five CDBG-funded projects were completed during the last fiscal year: a handicapped lift installation at 902 South Quaker Lane; reconstruction of a basketball court at Kennedy Park/160 Oakwood Avenue; complete an ADA-compliant ramp installation at Hunter House; the reconstruction of various streets in LMI areas; and replacing damaged public sidewalks in LMI areas. Seven CDBG-funded projects are planned to be completed this upcoming year; Reconstruction of the bathhouse at Kennedy Park, Installation of Playscape at Flatbush Avenue, Installation of New Energy efficiency windows for SoomerWood/Hebrew Life Choice, Elevator Installation at 60 Starkel Road, Reconstruction of Wolcot Park bathrooms to ADA Compliant and installing new dehumidifier at cornerstone pool. The Director of Leisure Services and Social Services will lead this department to ensure that goals and priorities align with CDBG goals and the strategic plan and to use available funding efficiently and effectively. The Town of West Hartford continues to utilize CDBG funding to

address ADA needs within the Town and Public Schools, as evidenced by data later explained in this report.

CR-10 - Racial and Ethnic composition of families assisted

Describe the families assisted (including the racial and ethnic status of families assisted). 91.520(a)

	CDBG
White	58,998
Black or African American	14,057
Asian	5,878
American Indian or American Native	274
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2
Total	79,209
Hispanic	21,718
Not Hispanic	57,491

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

Narrative

The Town of West Hartford use CDBG funding based on the HUD guidelines National Objectives for low-to-moderate income persons and in low-to-moderate income areas. The table above represents the Town of West Hartford residents based on their race, who benefited from the CDBG funds during the program year of 2021-2022.

CR-15 - Resources and Investments 91.520(a)

Identify the resources made available

Source of Funds	Source	Resources Made Available	Amount Expended During Program Year
CDBG	public - federal	3,169,470.57	1,790,628.65

Table 3 - Resources Made Available

Narrative

The CDBG funding available was \$3,169,470.57, from which \$1,790,628.65 was expended. The CDBG-CV funding available was \$ 680,264.12, from which \$187,176.82 was expended.

Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
Hillcrest Avenue Neighborhood	7.41	3.8	
HUD-approved LMI areas	78.59	74.22	
West Hartford Housing Rehab	14	21.98	Municipality

Table 4 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

The CARES Act funding (CDBG-CV) enabled our community to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus by providing quality subsidized housing and expanding economic opportunities for low-and moderate-income persons. \$680,264.12 was available, and \$187,176.82 was expended during FY 2022. Two activities were established in conjunction with Prevent, Prepare, and Respond to COVID-19:

-Food Pantry; The food pantry expended \$151,898.82 in purchasing food for residents that were affected by COVID-19.

-Housing Stability; Through Housing Stability, our office helped five residents affected by COVID-19 to pay their rent. Through this activity, the Town of West Hartford expended \$15,478.00

Also, The town of West Hartford help one resident at 408 Bloomfield Avenue, affected by COVID-19 to take care of the lead, mold, and asbestos at her property. Through this project, we spend \$19,800.00. Available CDBG-CV funding for the upcoming FY is \$493,087.30.

For program year 2022-2023, West Hartford distributed its CDBG Entitlement funds to all residents living in the low-to-moderate income areas. Three public service programs were administered:

- Hillcrest Avenue Neighborhood – served by outreach center (HANOC)
- HUD-approved Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) areas.
- West Hartford. (Municipality)

Total CDBG funding to the Hillcrest Avenue Neighborhood area represents 3.8% of all CDBG funding. Housing Rehabilitation Program used 21.98% of all CDBG funding used last FY. CDBG funds are invested in the Town of West Hartford based on the LMI and ADA compliance. 74.22% of total CDBG funding was allocated for HUD-approved LMI areas in the Town of West Hartford. For public service were used 10.09% of the CDBG funding was used last FY. Services include support for HANOC, Volunteer Services, and the Food Pantry. For CDBG admin were used 5.96 % of the CDBG funding was spent last FY. The remaining 83.95% were spent on Capital Improvement projects in LMI areas, housing rehabilitation projects, and other services. Given the percentages above, West Hartford continues to prioritize the needs of its lowest-income census tracts and target areas. Over 99.46% of all CDBG funds are utilized for low-income residents or persons who need ADA assistance.

Leveraging

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

During the reporting period using Federal funds, West Hartford leveraged other funding sources as follows:

- West Hartford typically leverages \$5,000 from the Town of Bloomfield to support the placement of a West Hartford social worker for one-day each week in the Hartford Community Court. This social worker provides counseling, crisis intervention, and other brief and general social services to defendants arrested in West Hartford and Bloomfield for adjudication in that court. In 2021-22, Hartford Community Court was closed due to the pandemic and the service to Bloomfield was suspended. Services resumed starting July 1, 2021 and services rendered during the 2021-2022 fiscal year included 73 Community Court intake interviews/referrals.
- The CDBG funded Housing Rehabilitation Program continues to offers flexible funding opportunities to income eligible property owners (including grants and extremely low-interest loans).
- West Hartford utilizes \$7,000 of CDBG Funds for Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA). GHLA provides free legal services to low-income persons whose assets or resources meet the attached GHLA guidelines for eligibility. GHLA abides by the provisions of nondiscrimination under Title VI of The Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- The Town of West Hartford coordinates and offers several transportation services to the community. Dial-a-Ride provides transportation assistance to West Hartford residents who are age 60+ OR who are over 18 years old and have a qualifying disability. Residents can use this service up to three times per week for medical appointment, grocery shopping and social activities. West Hartford subsidizes the cost of this service with a state transportation grant. The fee for residents is limited to \$50 per year. Those with ongoing or urgent medical treatment can utilize the Medical Assistance Program (MAP) Program. There is a separate application for this program, including a physician's statement but there is no additional charge for current Dial-A-Ride clients.
- The West Hartford Social Services Department continues to prioritize the needs of low income and elderly residents. Social workers address their needs, such as mental health needs, substance abuse issues, food insecurity, lack of resources for heat, energy, and rent, etc.
- The West Hartford's Engineering Division, Building Division, and the Public Works Department prioritizes Capital Improvements Program projects based on community needs. These departments work integrally with the Administrator of CDBG activities to assure CDBG compliance with the Town of West Hartford goals.
- The West Hartford Bloomfield Health District (WHBHD) works in conjunction with the Building and Engineering department to assure code compliance, whether it be health or structure in nature.

CR-20 - Affordable Housing 91.520(b)

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

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	0	14
Number of Non-Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	41	0
Number of Special-Needs households to be provided affordable housing units	11	0
Total	52	14

Table 5 – Number of Households

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of households supported through Rental Assistance	600	550
Number of households supported through The Production of New Units	41	0
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	10	6
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	0	0
Total	61	579

Table 6 – Number of Households Supported

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

As with other state and federal agencies and private-sector owners, it is the separate mission of the West Hartford Housing Authority to create, preserve, revitalize and pursue affordable housing and serve a diverse mix of households. The Housing Authority and its affiliate, Trout Brook Realty Advisors, currently manages approximately 397 non-homeless affordable housing units in the community. It is not known the approximate number of the private sector and other agencies that provide affordable housing units to those in West Hartford.

One of the Town of West Hartford's mission is to create community development opportunities especially for low- to moderate-income earners when CDBG money is been used. The pandemic situation negatively impacted the results and achievement efforts in this area.

The objective for West Hartford Housing Rehabilitation (HR), derived from the Consolidated Plan, is to rehabilitate 20 housing units per year with a total of 100 units rehabilitated throughout the five-year plan. In this current year, 6 units (six single-family) were rehabilitated.

The decrease in units rehabilitated can be attributed to a change in how this program is operating. A construction consultant now oversees the construction administration portion of a housing rehabilitation project. Also, the pandemic situation hampered the program.

Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.

The realignment of the Housing Rehabilitation Program administrative needs will enable the CDBG Coordinator to pursue those LMI individuals or families who qualify for services. The number of housing units served will impact the need for either increased or decreased funding in future years.

In addition, the residual impact of COVID-19 will affect how future funds will be allocated. It is unknown how recovery from the pandemic, coupled with anticipated job opportunities, will affect CDBG spending in the short and long term. It is up to the WHHA and the Town of West Hartford to institute and prioritize community development and spending needs.

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

Number of Households Served	CDBG Actual	HOME Actual
Extremely Low-income	3	0
Low-income	2	0
Moderate-income	1	0
Total	6	0

Table 7 – Number of Households Served

Narrative Information

The Housing Rehabilitation Program assists qualified owners to reduce and abate hazardous materials (e.g. lead-based paint and asbestos), eliminate health and safety concerns, remove handicapped barriers, and improve the energy efficiency of the structure. Funding is provided in a combination of grants and a low-interest loan, with a \$25,000 cap for a single-family home. All programs require that the gross household income is at or below 80% of median income (e.g. family of 3, \$85,050 family of 4, \$94,500) for Hartford PMSA as prescribed by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In fiscal year 2022-2023, the Housing Rehabilitation Program (HR) fully functioned in the Division of Community Partnership within the Department of Social Services. Because of the previous year's reorganization, the CDBG Coordinator conducts intake for Housing Rehabilitation applications and corresponding responsibilities. In addition, The Town of West Hartford hired two consultants, one for lead related projects, and an architect for emergency replacement. These individuals work closely with the CDBG Coordinator to identify lead and emergency replacements, write the scope of work for emergency replacements and lead remediation, conduct walkthroughs with contractors, propose any additional work authorization or change orders, and approve work completed from the contactors. Since March 2020, COVID-19 has affected HR restrictions and protocols. Consultations with both consultants were delayed and rescheduled. In general, projects took longer to be completed or were still in process at the end of the fiscal year.

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

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

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

The Town of West Hartford has no emergency shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, or permanent housing for homeless persons and/or families within its municipal borders. West Hartford relies upon the Coordinated Access Network (CAN) through the United Way 211 system.

When West Hartford social workers receive referrals from the Police Department, Fire Department, and community members, the social worker does an assessment of overall needs, including an intake, to determine the person or family's needs. Social workers will assist with all possible resources. If there is no other recourse, these persons or families are directed to the 211 system to speak to a Diversion Counselor. This 211 process may include guiding the person or families to homeless facilities and services in the City of Hartford to meet the needs of the homeless population within West Hartford. That said, West Hartford social workers continue to support and respond with assistance, including providing other resources to help address the needs of the person or family.

However, social workers may not know the extent of the issue if a call to the office is not made; thus, data collected by the Hartford Coalition to End Homelessness is vital for tracking all persons. This non-profit organization takes the lead on Point In Time Count, Connecticut Counts, The Coordinated Access Dashboard. West Hartford has access to the Greater Hartford Area Data, but obtaining data specifically for West Hartford can be challenging.

West Hartford is focusing on a homeless prevention philosophy. In addition to fair housing programs and access to Greater Hartford Legal Aid, when needed, West Hartford Social Services works to avert evictions every year. West Hartford Social Workers work collaboratively with CT State Marshals and the West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District and families when evictions are scheduled. All persons facing evictions in West Hartford this year have been advised, assisted and diverted from utilizing homeless shelters. For the last year period, all evictions were postponed by the federal moratorium.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The regional approach to address homelessness is to centralize access to shelters through United Way 211 rather than each municipality managing placements of homeless in shelters. This approach helped with sheltering on time, bed assignments, and improving the distress of the homelessness.

To ensure that the homeless will get the service promptly, West Hartford Social Services participates in the Coordinated Access Network (CAN), a network of homeless service providers. Under CAN Leadership / Sub-Continuum of Care, four workgroups meet throughout the year: CAN Operations, Housing Matching for Individuals, Housing Matching for Families, Homeless Outreach, and Youth Engagement Team Initiative (YETI).

The coordination of this effort prioritizes the attainment of permanent housing and self-sufficiency by previously homeless persons or families who desire the goal of all service providers. The need for

permanent housing relates to the homeless population in general. Permanently affordable housing options are needed for persons or families to transition toward self-sufficiency and independence. The rental housing stock is the primary prerequisite to achieving this objective. For some families, the move to affordable homeownership models may also be a potential option. West Hartford addresses the needs of the homeless and near-homeless population through active participation in the Continuum and, wherever feasible, through the support of programs and projects within its borders; thus, meeting the objectives of its Consolidated Plan.

In addition, West Hartford is taking steps within the various departments to address the needs of potentially homeless or homeless individuals. The West Hartford Police Department works closely with the Social Services Department to find new methods to address needs. Annually, the Social Services Department provides training to all police on various measures to help the neediest populations. Palm-sized handouts have also been made available to patrol officers, which indicates services available to all persons in the community. In Fiscal Year **2022-2023**, West Hartford hired a Police Liaison Social Worker to help address concerns about mental health and substance abuse in the municipality. The collaborative relationship between law enforcement and social work is designed to lead to an enhanced public safety and psychosocial safety net. The Police Liaison Social Worker conducts specific outreach to people who panhandle in Town who may or may not be homeless. As previously stated, police and social workers refer persons to the United Way 211 Connecticut system (centralized point of access for homeless persons) in Greater Hartford, and offer one-on-one support in helping to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

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

West Hartford provides a full-service social services office. Residents are given the opportunity to work one-on-one with licensed professional social workers to resolve crisis situations and receive on-going case management services. Often, individuals, families with children, and seniors who come to WHSS need help with energy bills, emergency food, rent, or other urgent needs. West Hartford Social Services has a variety of resources (Operation Fuel, WH Food Pantry, The Commodities Program, The Town That Cares charity fund, Connecticut Energy Assistance Program, Rental Rebate, etc.) to assist in meeting the needs of these clients, many of whom subsist on a month-to-month basis, who barely earn enough to survive in their existing living situations.

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

West Hartford's efforts in this area have continued to focus on prevention. Through its fair housing program, and its referral process with West Hartford Social Services Department, Police, and Fire

Departments, which serves to prevent dozens of evictions per year, and through its ongoing network building with the region's shelters for homeless persons.

As previously stated, when West Hartford Social Workers are made aware of persons who face homelessness, either through a referral or an eviction or ejection notice, they offer resources and supports. If all else fails, persons are encouraged to contact 211 for a Diversion intake. The social worker continues to assist the family or persons until a move or transition is complete. Data for these individuals are tracked with internal systems.

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

Actions taken to address the needs of public housing

As stated previously in West Hartford's Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, and CAPERs (submitted since July 1, 2011), West Hartford Housing Authority (WHHA) operates as a quasi-governmental agency in conjunction with the Housing and Urban Development Public Housing Program. The Town of West Hartford no longer owns any housing units.

The West Hartford Housing Authority's mission is to create, preserve, revitalize and pursue affordable housing and community development opportunities in the Greater West Hartford region. They aim to serve a diverse mix of households and help residents maintain their independence by managing affordable, quality housing and providing housing assistance services.

While the WHHA works closely with local, state and federal agencies, it is an independent, public organization overseen by a 5-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the West Hartford Town Council.

The WHHA currently manages six multifamily properties in West Hartford totaling 397 units, of which 329 are designated affordable. WHHA managed properties include:

- Elm Grove Senior Apartments. 40 affordable units for residents age 55 and over. The complex has a community room, off-street parking, laundry facilities, and a garden. A Resident Services Coordinator is onsite three days a week providing information and assistance in linking clients to town and state programs. The waitlist for units is currently closed.
- Alfred E. Plant Elderly Apartments. 137 affordable units for residents age 55 and over. The complex has a community room, on-site covered parking, laundry facilities, and a private courtyard garden. A Resident Services Coordinator is onsite 3 days a week. The waitlist for units is currently open.
- The Goodwin Apartments. 47 units, 15 of which are designated affordable and 32 are market-rate. The complex offers off-street parking, in-unit laundry, and a community room. The waitlist for affordable units is currently closed.
- The Faxon Apartments. 67 units, 53 of which are affordable and 14 market-rate. The complex has off-street parking and laundry facilities. A Resident Services Coordinator is onsite 3 days a week. The waitlist for units is currently open.
- The Lofts at 616 New Park Avenue. 54-unit transit-oriented development, consisting of 43 affordable units and 11 market rate units. The development features off-street and covered parking, community and lounge spaces, gym, and in-unit laundry. A Resident Services Coordinator is onsite 5 days a week. The waitlist for units is currently open.
- The Residences at 540 New Park Avenue. 52-unit transit-oriented development, of which 41 are affordable units and 11 units are market rate. The development features off-street, community space, gym, and in-unit laundry. A Resident Services Coordinator is onsite 5 days a week. The waitlist for units is currently open.

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

WHA operates a Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program. It is designed to establish more financially stable families who can contribute financially and socially to the West Hartford community. Self-sufficient families add to the economic base of the community at large. They become customers to local businesses and stakeholders in their neighborhoods.

Families who participate in the Housing Choice Voucher FSS program are provided opportunities for education, job training, and other forms of social service assistance. The FSS program links families to needed services in order to meet individual goals. These services include:

- Financial literacy
- English as a Second Language (ESL) classes
- Job preparedness and job search assistance
- Career assessment and career development

Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs

Not applicable

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

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

West Hartford has adopted an ordinance to permit residential dwellings within the General Industrial (IG) and Restricted Industrial (IR) Districts to enhance and provide ability for "Mixed Use" projects. These projects promote housing opportunities that have not been currently available to the community. Such projects provide residents with transit opportunities and development, proximity to goods and services and better quality of life.

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

West Hartford's adopted a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), includes a Neighborhoods and Housing Section that seeks to "[E]ncourage [a] diversity of housing types and costs to provide access and availability of housing options to current and future residents." The POCD identifies a number of strategies and actions to support of this goal, including the following Strategy 4 and Strategy 5:

Strategy 4. Review the zoning ordinances, and revise as necessary, to encourage the availability of a range of housing types and affordability levels to meet the diverse needs of the community.

Actions:

- 4a. Conduct a Town-wide housing needs assessment.
- 4b. Review the multi-family zoning ordinances and identify potential areas for targeted modification and innovative opportunities that increase the availability of range of housing types and affordability levels.
- 4c. Review the single-family zoning ordinances and identify potential areas for targeted modification and innovative opportunities, such as accessory dwelling units, that increase the availability of range of housing types and affordability levels.
- 4d. Continue to support the efforts of nonprofit groups and for-profit developers to expand housing choice options in the community.

Strategy 5. Promote the maintenance, rehabilitation and improvement of the Town's existing housing stock.

Actions:

- 5a. Expand the Town's Housing Rehabilitation Program and its Elderly Assistance Program by identifying additional needed resources.
- 5c. Create more effective educational tools that highlight the Town's Housing Rehabilitations programs to increase resident participation.

In support of this Goal and its related strategies and actions, West Hartford adopted a permissive as-of-right accessory dwelling (ADU) ordinance which allows for the ADUs to be created in all single-family residential districts. Additionally, the Town created an Affordable Housing Advisory Working Group and under its direction has completed a town-wide housing needs assessment and is working towards the finalization of a Town's Affordable Housing Plan: a plan that will provide for additional actionable

policies and tools to advance the preservation and production of affordable housing units within the community.

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

The CDBG Coordinator in the Housing Rehabilitation Program works with residents to ameliorate their needs. Information on these services is on the Town of West Hartford's website under Town Departments/Housing Rehabilitation. In addition, the CDBG Coordinator directs residents in need of lead remediation to other institutions in Statewide, such as Connecticut Children Healthy Homes Program, to get the help they need.

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

West Hartford continues to work toward meeting needs of the underserved by the following:

- Support the continuance and/or expansion of existing public service programs for low income residents, including those which provide services to persons with disabilities, youths, seniors and/or substance abusers or which offer transportation services and employment training.
- WHHA provides affordable rental housing opportunities for extremely low and very- low income renters by increasing the supply and maintaining the availability of affordable rental housing in the Town.
- Increase the level and delivery of support services to the homeless and those at-risk of becoming homeless. West Hartford Social Services is the proactive first line service provider.
- Work to expand existing efforts to meet the needs of the Town's physically disabled population by supporting projects designed to make current facilities accessible or to provide new ADA compliant facilities/equipment.
- Maintain and improve existing public facilities and encourage the development of upgraded facilities, particularly with regard to parks/recreation facilities and facilities serving low-income populations.
- Support the continued maintenance and improvement of the Town's infrastructure, particularly with regard to street and sidewalk improvements, as well as storm drain improvements.
- Enhance and expand other community development efforts, particularly with regard to lead-based paint remediation/education and code enforcement activities.
- Continue existing administrative and planning activities necessary for the implementation of the objectives, actions and programs outlined in this Strategic Plan, including fair housing counseling, tenant-landlord counseling and/or public awareness.
- Provide Energy Assistance through Community Renewal Team (CRT) and Emergency Fuel and Emergency Utilities assistance to LMI residents in town. During the last year, 741 LMI residents benefitted from these three combined assistance programs with a total benefit of \$644,561.
- Assisted 574 LMI individuals with rebate funds for rent payments totaling over \$294,981.64. Social workers met with residents to complete the applications.
- Operation Fuel was able to help 29 residents with a total of \$15,491 for the last Fiscal Year.

- Emergency Utilities was able to serve four residents with a total of \$863.43 through the Town That Cares Fund.
- Emergency Fuel was able to help three residents with a total of \$935.23 through the Town That Cares Fund.

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

West Hartford is fortunate to have a comprehensive and effective delivery system of well-established programs and services. Continuous efforts to organize, maintain and enhance West Hartford's role and its responsibility to remain in compliance with state and federal ADA regulations. Continued efforts are made to streamline the administration of CDBG services. This effort is fluid and will continue into the new year with a focus on COVID-19 CARES Act funding expenditures.

Several ADA improvements were made throughout the town. West Hartford continues to implement improvements to parks, and facilities in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods, increasing access to parks and facilities for people with disabilities. Also, community-wide, The West Hartford Board of Education made several ADA-related school improvements throughout the year.

The Town of West Hartford Website is ADA compliant, and includes an "audio eye." This device converts audio capabilities into text for those who are hearing impaired.

To ensure the program implementation process continues to meet the needs of the Town's low- and moderate-income constituents, the Department of Leisure and Social Services and its staff continue to monitor best practices, including reporting procedures and development of new actions aimed at eliminating any gaps that may occur in the Town's service delivery system. These actions help to ensure that current service levels could be enhanced if an unfulfilled need or service gaps were identified.

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

The Town West Hartford works closely with the West Hartford Housing Authority (WHHA). Staff members of WHHA, The Town, and West Hartford Social Services continuously work to build trust, social capital and to enhance efficiencies. There is constant communication on an as-needed basis between Town staff and WHHA personnel to resolve cases of shared clients. West Hartford Social Services also monitors the WHHA process and protocols regarding tenant selection of units and other areas of concern and need.

West Hartford supports its commitment to fair housing education through its CDBG funding. Annually, the Social Services Department hosts two fair housing events (in order to meet its five-year goal), which are designed to inform the community of their rights and help the department determine the needs of the community in regard to housing. The overall goal is to develop a strategy to allow for more consensus-based resolutions to problems that could arise between landlords and their tenants. This strategy allows parties involved to avoid going to court or to the West Hartford Fair Rent Commission. An informational session on Fair Housing practices by the CT Fair Housing Center was facilitated by the Town Planner on July 20, 2020, through a virtual meeting. This discussion was about the Affordable Housing and Housing Choice: historical roots, current data, and zoning with guests from CT Fair Housing Center

and Partnership for Strong Communities.

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

Specific Fair Housing-related activities completed during the reporting period include:

- The Town of West Hartford continued to be a supporting partner to the West Hartford Housing Authority in all its development activity.
- Greater Hartford Legal Assistance provided legal services free of charge (housing-related matters) to 66 LMI West Hartford households (50 extremely low, 11 very low and low 5).

The Department of Social Services is notified of evictions or ejections by the State Marshal. The purpose is to provide immediate (crisis) intervention services to families in need at this final stage. A social worker contacts the individual or family to offer the following: counseling, referrals to other sources of housing, boxes for possessions, a storage unit paid by the Town of West Hartford for 15 days (if needed), and financial assistance through funding from the Town that Cares to either store their items or for other necessities. During the previous Fiscal Year 2020-2021 all evictions were postponed by federal Moratorium. In 2021-2022, 21 evictions and one ejection took place.

In situations calling for more technical or sophisticated consultation of a fair housing nature, West Hartford continues its financial support of Greater Hartford Legal Aid. During the last year, Greater Hartford Legal Aid served 66 LMI residents. The WH Social Services Department continues to assist residents in this area by offering alternative resources. The department refers residents to the West Hartford Fair Rent Commission, and also utilizes Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut and consultation with the CT Fair Housing Center. The Town's relationships with various organizations has provided the community with the services of expert housing advocates and attorneys for quick and informative consultations.

CR-40 - Monitoring 91.220 and 91.230

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

During the reporting period, West Hartford continued its practice of closely monitoring all CDBG-funded activities and programs, including the following:

- Comprehensive sub-recipient agreement with Greater Hartford Legal Aid. An annual on-site monitoring visit to the agency along with quarterly monitoring of internal CDBG programs and its corresponding activities and compliance occurred. This year, the visit occurred virtually due to following COVID-19 constraints and social distancing measures.
- Sub-recipient organizations completed and submitted to the Town of West Hartford formal documentation and reports which detailed the year's results for the CDBG funded programs.
- The Town's Housing Rehabilitation, Engineering and Planning and Zoning Departments adheres to strict compliance with applicable state and federal regulations in the area of procurement standards, hiring practices/affirmative action, prevailing wage requirements, hazardous material disposal and applicable zoning and building codes.
- The West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District (WHBHD) identifies property maintenance code violations in all areas of West Hartford and Bloomfield CT, including in low-and-moderate income neighborhoods, and tracks resolutions. As with other town departments, the WHBHD adheres to local ordinances establishing minimum standards for the maintenance of all premises. Buildings are inspected to assure that lighting, ventilation, electricity, heating and plumbing are installed correctly and properly maintained. WHBHD provides quarterly reporting on dwellings in the low mod districts in West Hartford. The WHBHD functions under the realm of town government and state standards.
- The Town's Leisure & Social Services and Financial Services Departments worked collaboratively to ensure that, in managing the accounting functions related to the use and expenditure of CDBG funds, quality financial records are kept in accordance with Standard Governmental Accounting Principles.
- West Hartford prepared and submitted to HUD performance reports as required including the CAPER reporting year-end performance.

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

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

All public hearings and milestone actions, such as submission to HUD of West Hartford's CAPERs and Annual Action Plans and Consolidated Plans are announced in the local newspaper (Hartford Courant) and posted in various locations on the Town's website prior to submission. For community members who have registered for the town Listserve, receipt of notice in that format is also provided. Public comment is

encouraged, in accordance with the Town's Citizen Participation Plan. West Hartford submits a public notice 15 days in advance of submission of all CDBG reports. This year, the Annual Action Plan and public notice of public hearings were published 30 days in advance. The hearings were held in person. The CAPER submission this year was published on August 25, 2022, and we are planning to submit the 2021 CAPER on or before September 30, 2022. On the same day, it was published on the Town's website as well. On Tuesday, August 30, 2022, one public hearing was conducted in person.

CR-45 - CDBG 91.520(c)

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

No such changes have been made.

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

No

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