

**NORTHAMPTON HOME ARP
ALLOCATION PLAN
DRAFT**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DCED)**

HOME-ARP ALLOCATION PLAN

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Introduction

Northampton County is an entitlement community under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Program.

During the FY 2021 program year, Northampton requalified for entitlement status as an urban county for FYs 2022-2024. The County is comprised of thirty-eight (38) municipalities, which includes two (2) cities, nineteen (19) boroughs, and seventeen (17) townships. All jurisdictions are members of the urban county entitlement program except for the City of Bethlehem, which is a federal CDBG and HOME entitlement community. The City of Easton, a previous federal CDBG entitlement community, and Northampton County entered into a cooperation agreement on 8/16/2018, and recertified during FY 2021, that recognized the City's decision to opt in as an urban county participant. By opting in, the City and County qualify for additional HUD funding as a HOME and ESG entitlement community.

Northampton County is currently in year four of its FY 2019-2023 Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The Five-Year Consolidated Plan identified the following priority needs and goals for the low- and moderate-income population of the County:

Housing Strategy –

Priority Need: There is a need for decent, safe and sanitary housing that is affordable and accessible to homebuyers, homeowners and renters.

Goals:

- HS-1 Housing Support – Assist low- and moderate-income households to access decent, safe and sanitary housing that is affordable and accessible for rent or for sale through housing counseling, down payment and closing cost assistance.
- HS-2 Housing Construction – Encourage the construction of new affordable housing units throughout the County for both owners and renters.
- HS-3 Housing Rehabilitation – Conserve and rehabilitate existing affordable housing units occupied by owners and renters in the County by addressing code violations, emergency repairs and handicap accessibility.

Homeless Strategy –

Priority Need: There is a need for housing for homeless persons and persons at-risk of becoming homeless.

Goals:

- HO-1 Housing – Support the Continuum of Care's efforts to provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, utility support, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing opportunities.
- HO-2 Operation/Support – Assist housing providers who operate or provide housing support services for the homeless and persons or families at-risk of becoming homeless.

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Other Special Needs Strategy –

Priority Need: There is a need for housing, services, and facilities for persons with special needs.

Goals:

- SN-1 Housing – Support an increase in the supply of decent, safe and sanitary housing that is affordable and accessible for the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, victims of domestic violence, persons with alcohol/drug dependency, and persons with other special needs, through rehabilitation of existing buildings and new construction of housing.
- SN-2 Social Services – Support social service programs and facilities for the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, victims of domestic violence, persons with alcohol/drug dependency, and persons with other special needs.

Community Development Strategy –

Priority Need: There is a need to improve the community facilities, infrastructure, public services, and quality of life in the County.

Goals:

- CD-1 Community Facilities and Infrastructure – Improve the County’s public facilities and infrastructure through rehabilitation, reconstruction, and new construction.
- CD-2 Public Safety and Services – Improve and enhance public safety, public services, and public programs.
- CD-3 Connectivity – Improve connectivity throughout the County and surrounding municipalities through physical, visual, transportation, and accessibility improvements.
- CD-4 Clearance/Demolition – Remove and eliminate slum and blighting conditions throughout the County.

Economic Development Strategy –

Priority Need: There is a need to encourage employment and to promote economic opportunities in the County.

Goals:

- ED-1 Employment – Support and encourage job creation, job retention, and job training opportunities.
- ED-2 Development – Support business and commercial growth through expansion and new development.
- ED-3 Redevelopment – Plan and promote the development, redevelopment, and revitalization of vacant commercial and industrial sites and buildings.
- ED-4 Financial Assistance – Support and encourage new economic development through local, state, and federal tax incentives and programs such as: Tax Incremental Financing (TIF); Tax Abatement (LERTA); Payment in Lieu of Taxes (Pilot); Enterprise Zones/Entitlement Communities; Section 108 Loan Guarantees; Economic Development Initiative (EDI) funds; etc.
- ED-5 Access to Transportation – Support the expansion of public transportation and access to bus and automobile service to assist the transportation needs for employment and job training opportunities.

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Administration, Planning, and Management Strategy –

Priority Need: There is a need for planning, administration, management, and oversight of federal, state, and local funded programs.

Goals:

- AM-1 Overall Coordination – Provide program management and oversight for the successful administration of federal, state, and local funded programs, including planning services for special studies, environmental clearance, fair housing activities, and compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

“On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan into law, which provides over \$1.9 trillion in relief to address the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, public health, State and local governments, individuals, and businesses.

To address the need for homelessness assistance and supportive services, Congress appropriated \$5 billion in ARP funds to be administered through HOME to perform four activities that must primarily benefit qualifying individuals and families who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or in other vulnerable populations. These activities include: (1) development and support of affordable housing, (2) tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA), (3) provision of supportive services; and (4) acquisition and development of non-congregate shelter units. The program described in this notice for the use of the \$5 billion in ARP funds is the HOME-American Rescue Plan or “HOME-ARP.”

ARP defines qualifying individuals or families as those that are (1) homeless, as defined in section 103(a) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 11302(a)) (“McKinney-Vento”); (2) at risk of homelessness, as defined in section 401 of McKinney-Vento; (3) fleeing, or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; (4) part of other populations where providing supportive services or assistance would prevent a family’s homelessness or would serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability; or (5) veterans and families that include a veteran family member that meet the criteria in one of (1)-(4) above.” (Source: Notice CPD-21-10: Requirements for the Use of Funds in the HOME-ARP Program)

On September 22, 2021, Northampton County received a letter from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development notifying the County that its HOME Investment Partnerships - American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) allocation was \$2,338,781.00. To receive HOME-ARP funds, the County is required to create a HOME-ARP Allocation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify how the County can assist qualifying populations, which include individuals and families experiencing and at-risk of homelessness, by providing rental housing, supportive services, non-congregate shelter, tenant based rental assistance (TBRA), and non-profit operating and capacity building. The County started the planning process by consulting with stakeholders and organizations that serve homeless and at risk of homelessness populations to gather information and priorities for the preparation of the County’s HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

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Consultation

To develop the Allocation Plan, Northampton County consulted with public and private agencies and organizations that provide assisted homeless and at risk of homelessness services and housing. The County also consulted with local units of government in and around the County, as well as County residents. Input from the meetings and consultations were used establish the priority needs and strategies to be addressed with HOME-ARP funds.

The County's Department of Community and Economic Development acts as the single point of contact to coordinate efforts between public and assisted housing providers, as well as private and governmental health, mental health, and social service agencies. The County works with the following agencies to enhance funding and service allocations to address the housing and community development needs of the area:

- Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development - oversees the CDBG program and administers competitive HOME grants.
- Northampton County Department of Human Services - provides care and protection to County residents from infancy to old age, through consumer-focused programs designed to maintain and improve the quality of life for consumers and their families.
- Lehigh Valley RHAB CoC - oversees the Continuum of Care Network for Lehigh County and Northampton County.
- Northampton County Housing Authority and Easton Housing Authority - manage the Public Housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, create improvements to public housing communities, and develop affordable housing.
- Social Services Agencies - provides services to address the needs of low- and moderate-income persons.
- Housing Providers - rehabilitates and develops affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families and individuals.

Coordination with these entities is an ongoing process in order to capitalize on potential future funding opportunities, as well as potential project partnerships. As part of the ARP planning process, stakeholders were notified of the availability of HOME-ARP funds, invited to complete an online survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CNP78PK>) and participate in a meeting or phone call, and individually contacted to receive input on the Plan. The following organizations participated in the consultation:

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Greater Easton Development Partnership	Community and Economic Development Non-profit organization.	Survey	Need for affordable housing, down payment assistance, lease to own housing option; and financial literacy programs.
Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living	Non-profit organization that addresses the needs	Survey	Need for affordable rental housing; need for more shelter beds; need for more

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	of persons with disabilities.		housing subsidies and vouchers; need for rental maintenance enforcement; and need for housing for young people with disabilities.
Third Street Alliance	CoC member; Homeless services and housing provider; Public organization that addresses the needs of the homeless, those at risk of homelessness, and early childhood education provider.	Survey	Lack of available shelter beds in rural and suburban areas; need for affordable rental housing; need for legal services to assist with evictions; need for translation services; need for landlords willing to accept vouchers and housing subsidies; access to transportation that serves affordable housing; need for lead free housing; and need for housing to be code complaint.
Greater Shiloh Church	CoC member; Homeless services and housing provider; Public organization that addresses the needs of the homeless, those at risk of homelessness, civil rights and fair housing; and persons with disabilities.	Survey	Need for affordable permanent housing options for homeless households; need for educational services and resources for those at risk of homelessness; and need for housing choices and options.
Easton Area Community Center	Non-profit Community Youth and Senior Center.	Survey	Need for affordable rental housing, childcare, transportation, food security, after school program, and mental health support programs.
Easton Area Neighborhood Center	CoC member; and Homeless services and housing provider.	Survey	Need for affordable rental housing; need transitional housing; need financial support and supportive services for those at risk of homelessness; and need for housing and supportive services for domestic violence victims.
Lehigh Valley Habitat for Humanity	Non-profit housing and supportive services organization.	Phone Call	Need for affordable housing.
NAACP	Public organization that addresses civil rights and fair housing.	Survey	Need for affordable rental housing; need transitional housing; need financial support and supportive services for those at risk of homelessness; and need for housing and supportive services for domestic violence victims.
ProJeCt of Easton	Homeless service provider.	Survey	Need for affordable housing options; need for shelter beds, especially women and children beds; need for living wage jobs; and need for supportive services that support domestic violence victims, substance abuse, and mental health.
Turning Point of Lehigh Valley	Domestic violence services provider.	Survey	Need for affordable housing units; need for landlords willing to accept vouchers and housing subsidies; need for more permanent supportive housing; and need for enforcement of housing health and quality standards.

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Northampton County Network of Care	Local government and provider of veteran supportive services.	Survey	Need for additional shelter beds for homeless households; lack of stable income increases risk of homelessness; and mental health problems lead to housing instability.
Northampton County Dept. of Human Services	Local government and provider of emergency, veteran, children and youth, mental health, drug and alcohol, early intervention, developmental, and aging services.	Survey and Phone Call	Need for affordable housing options, especially for seniors and large households; need for accessibility at shelters; need for shelters that can serve serious mental illness; need for longer term temporary housing units/beds; and need for affordable personal care/assisted living housing.

The following feedback was received:

- The largest housing problem in the County and the surrounding region is housing affordability.
- Supportive services are necessary to reduce recidivism.
- There is a need for additional shelter beds.
- Lack of transportation; access to affordable childcare; lack of education; a lack of job skills; eviction history; unemployed or employed at nonliving wage job; and lack of support system.
- There is a need for first time homebuyer assistance, housing counseling, handicap accessible housing, availability of senior housing, availability of group home or communal living arrangements, rehabilitation assistance, abatement of lead based paint in housing units, and code compliance for housing. The CoC has recognized the increased demand to assist families at risk of homelessness or recently homeless through short term rental assistance, utility assistance and corresponding supportive services.

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Public Participation

Northampton County prepared the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan in compliance with the County's Citizen Participation Plan. The County held two (2) Public Hearings; one in person and one virtually. The hearings were held on: March 2, 2023 at 1 PM via Zoom; and March 2, 2023 at 3:30 PM at the regularly scheduled Economic Development Meeting in County Council Chambers. These Hearings provided residents, agencies, and organizations with the opportunity to discuss the County's Plan and to provide suggestions for funding priorities. The Public Hearing advertisement was published in The Express Times on February 13, 2023 and announced the "draft" Plan display period, as well. A "draft" of the HOME-ARP Plan was placed on public display at the following locations for review:

- County of Northampton Department of Community & Economic Development - County of Northampton Human Services Building 2801 Emrick Blvd, Bethlehem, PA 18020
- Bangor Public Library 39 S. Main Street, Bangor, PA, 18013
- Memorial Library of Nazareth & Vicinity Library 295 E. Center Street, Nazareth, PA 18064
- Northampton Area Public Library 1615 Laubach Avenue, Northampton, PA 18067
- City of Easton, Department of Community & Economic Development, 123 South Third Street, Easton, PA 18042
- County of Northampton website (www.northamptoncounty.org) Government section of the website under "Community and Economic Development"

The newspaper notice announced that the "draft" plan was available for review and comment for a period of 30-days starting on February 14, 2023, and ended on March 15, 2023. The County additionally notified the public of its opportunity to comment on the Plan through its website and social media accounts. Upon completion of the 30-day comment period, the County submitted the plans to the County Council for approval to submit the application to HUD. The County passed a resolution on March 16, 2023, approving the submission of the HOME-ARP Plan to HUD. The plans were electronically submitted through HUD's online IDIS system prior to March 31, 2023.

The following comments were received:

- There is a need for affordable housing in Northampton County

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Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis

Northampton County is a member of the Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board (LV-RHAB) under the Continuum of Care Network for Eastern Pennsylvania (Eastern PA CoC). The Eastern PA CoC is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED). The County's Department of Community and Economic Development staff attends the local CoC meetings and acts as the County's representative. The County coordinates its activities with the Continuum of Care and supports its applications for funds. The County helps the Eastern Pennsylvania CoC to address homelessness by working together to develop a framework to deliver housing and supportive services to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

The Lehigh Valley RHAB identifies regional and local homeless issues; coordinates regional planning; identifies regional housing gaps and needs, strategies, and priorities; provides input for Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SVF) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) applications; participates in completion of the CoC application; monitors Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) participation and implementation; and coordinates and follows-up on the Point in Time (PIT) count and Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR).

The RHAB Co-Chairs are currently representatives of the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley in Bethlehem, PA, (which is located partly in Lehigh County and partly in Northampton County), and the Third Street Alliance in Easton, PA, which is located in Northampton County. The LV- RHAB has representation from multiple interest groups including: CDBG/HOME/ESG Jurisdictions, Public Housing Authorities, domestic violence service providers, Veterans groups, youth service providers, Community Action Partnerships, homeless service providers, and faith-based organizations.

The following data was collected during the January 2022 Point-In-Time Survey conducted by the CoC specific to Northampton County. The Point-In-Time Survey was performed at the following locations throughout the Eastern PA CoC service area: hospitals, soup kitchens, day programs, street outreach, shelters, transitional housing of various types, and permanent housing which addresses the needs of the homeless.

Unsheltered:

- Total Households – 28
- Total Persons – 36
- Children under 18 years old – 0
- Young Adults 18 to 24 years old – 3
- Adults over 24 years old – 33

Transitional Housing:

- Total Households – 59
- Total Persons – 102

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- Children under 18 years old – 38
- Young Adults 18 to 24 years old – 15
- Adults over 24 years old – 49

Emergency Shelter:

- Total Households – 237
- Total Persons – 399
- Children under 18 years old – 114
- Young Adults 18 to 24 years old – 34
- Adults over 24 years old – 251

Northampton County is comprised of rural, suburban, and urban areas. In general, the homeless populations in the rural and suburban areas are white while the urban areas are black or hispanic. The majority of homeless persons are over the age of 25. During the 2022 PIT count there were 66 out of 921 (7%) chronically homeless persons; 36 out of 921 (4%) unaccompanied youth under the age of 25; 86 out of 921 (9%) severely mentally ill persons; 26 out of 921 (3%) chronic substance abuse persons; 2 out of 921 (~0%) persons with HIV/AIDS; 185 out of 921 (20%) persons with a disability; 64 out of 921 (7%) veterans; and 66 out of 921 (7%) victims of domestic violence.

The following tables summarize housing needs in the County:

Homeless Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

Homeless													
	Current Inventory					Homeless Population				Gap Analysis			
	Family		Adults Only		Vets	Family HH (at least 1 child)	Adult HH (w/o child)	Vets	Victims of DV	Family		Adults Only	
	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds					# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units
Emergency Shelter	51	17	70	-	0								
Transitional Housing	102	33	38	-	0								
Permanent Supportive Housing	18	5	75	-	16								
Other Permanent Housing	0	0	15	-	0								
Sheltered Homeless						74	216	33	16				
Unsheltered Homeless						0	28	4	11				
Current Gap										0	0	46	-

Data Sources: 1. Point in Time Count (PIT) January 2022; 2. Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Count (HIC) 2022; 3. Consultations

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Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

Non-Homeless			
	Current Inventory	Level of Need	Gap Analysis
	# of Units	# of Households	# of Households
Total Rental Units	32,682		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness)	1,895		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI (Other Populations)	1,425		
0%-30% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (At-Risk of Homelessness)		7,385	
30%-50% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (Other Populations)		5,885	
Current Gaps			9,950

Data Sources: 1. 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS); 2. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) 2015-2019 ACS

According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 53.7% of renter households in the County paid rents that exceeded 30% of their household income, 33.4% of owner households with a mortgage in the County had housing costs that exceed 30% of their household income, and 19.5% of owner households without a mortgage in the County had housing costs that exceed 30% of their household income.

Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking - Based on crime statistics and social service agency responses, it can be estimated that a total of 1,000 single person households and family households are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and are in need of supportive services and/or housing assistance.

Persons with Mental, Physical, and/or Developmental Disabilities - According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 12.6% of the population have a disability. Of the Under 18 Population, 4.7% have a disability. Of the 18-64 Population, 9.4% have a disability. For the 18-64 Age Group, 1.7% have a hearing difficulty, 1.6% have a vision difficulty, 4.2% have a cognitive difficulty, 4.7% have an ambulatory difficulty, 1.6% have a self-care difficulty, and 3.2% have an independent living difficulty. There is a need for accessible housing, employment opportunities, and supportive services.

The high cost of decent, safe and sanitary housing that is affordable and accessible in the County creates instability and an increased risk of homelessness for lower income families in the area. Many families are living from paycheck to paycheck and are paying over 30% of their income for housing, which may or may not be decent, safe, sanitary and accessible. Additionally, single earner households with children and persons in a household with a disability who are unable to obtain sustainable employment are at an increased risk. Unexpected crises such as loss of income or loss of a second income earner to the household and/or a medical or transportation emergency cost

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contribute to destabilizing low- and moderate-income households. Many of these residents' experience extreme rent burdens, become unstable, and face homelessness with a first-time crises or loss of income. The lack of available supportive housing and the cost overburden of housing as it relates to income/employment are the major housing issues linked with instability and an increased risk of homelessness. Families and individuals would greatly benefit from emergency housing assistance for rent or mortgage payments, as well as utility payment assistance to avoid homelessness. Additionally, job training, employment skills enhancement, and access to transportation would support LMI households to remain in their housing.

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HOME-ARP Activities

Northampton County identified the need for decent safe sanitary accessible affordable housing as the greatest need in the County. While there is a gap in shelter housing, this gap is directly related to the availability of all affordable housing units in the County. Housing providers noted that the lack of available long term housing delays the turnover in shelter housing. The County intends to use a top down housing first approach to house homeless or those at risk of homelessness. By increasing the supply of affordable housing, more housing choice will be created that will assist in moving households from shelters to permanent housing.

The County will conduct an open competition for HOME-ARP funds to create new affordable rental housing. The process will start with a request for proposals from housing and supportive service organizations that serve the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. Proposals will be ranked based on capacity, experience, scope, and investment return. The County will enter into subrecipient agreements with the housing and supportive services providers and monitor as agreed upon.

Northampton County developed its HOME-ARP Budget based on the identified needs from consultation with community stakeholders, agency surveys, the assessment of the data obtained from the Point In Time Count (PIT), Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Count (HIC), American Community Survey Data (ACS), HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), and other statistical data provide from the CoC and Northampton County Department of Human Services. The County will use the following budget allocation for HOME-ARP funds:

Use of HOME-ARP Funding

	Funding Amount	Percent of the Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	\$ 233,878		
Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	\$ 0.00		
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	\$ 0.00		
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	\$ 1,754,086		
Non-Profit Operating	\$ 116,939	5 %	5%
Non-Profit Capacity Building	\$ 0	0 %	5%
Administration and Planning	\$ 233,878	10 %	15%
Total HOME ARP Allocation	\$ 2,338,781		

The County allocated 10% of the funds for Supportive Services, 75% of the funds for the Development of Affordable Rental Housing, 5% of the funds for Non-Profit Operating, and 10% of the funds for Administration and Planning. Supportive services may include some of the following eligible services: childcare, education services, employment assistance and job training, food, housing search and counseling services, legal services, life skills training, mental health services, outpatient health services, outreach services, substance abuse treatment services,

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transportation, case management, mediation, credit repair, landlord/tenant liaison, services for special populations, and financial assistance costs. Development of affordable rental housing is for the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, development costs, relocation, and operating cost assistance/reserves. Non-Profit operating will provide the affordable housing management organization with housing and supportive services staffing costs. Administration and planning will set aside 10% of the allocation to cover the cost to administer the HOME-ARP program by the County.

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HOME-ARP Production Housing Goals

Northampton County identified affordable rental housing as the largest need that will be addressed with HOME-ARP funding. Additionally, the City's Consolidated Plan identified the following two (2) priority needs for the low- and moderate-income households of Northampton County:

Housing Strategy –

Priority Need: There is a need for decent, safe and sanitary housing that is affordable and accessible to homebuyers, homeowners and renters.

Goals:

- HS-1 Housing Support – Assist low- and moderate-income households to access decent, safe and sanitary housing that is affordable and accessible for rent or for sale through housing counseling, down payment and closing cost assistance.
- HS-2 Housing Construction – Encourage the construction of new affordable housing units throughout the County for both owners and renters.
- HS-3 Housing Rehabilitation – Conserve and rehabilitate existing affordable housing units occupied by owners and renters in the County by addressing code violations, emergency repairs and handicap accessibility.

Homeless Strategy –

Priority Need: There is a need for housing for homeless persons and persons at-risk of becoming homeless.

Goals:

- HO-1 Housing – Support the Continuum of Care's efforts to provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, utility support, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing opportunities.
- HO-2 Operation/Support – Assist housing providers who operate or provide housing support services for the homeless and persons or families at-risk of becoming homeless.

The County estimates that it will create eight (8) new decent safe sanitary accessible affordable housing units with HOME-ARP funding. The new rental units will provide affordable housing to eight (8) extremely low (0%-30% AMI) and very low income (30%-50% AMI) households. The HOME-ARP funds will also be used to provide supportive services through intensive case management and program referrals. The HOME-ARP funds will be distributed to the County and the housing management agency to administer, manage, and maintain the HOME-ARP housing.

Northampton County will leverage the HOME-ARP funds with other Federal, State, local, Foundation, private, etc. funding sources. The specific funding will be determined by the final activity scope.

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Preferences

Northampton County will not use preferences to provide a priority for the selection of applicants who fall into a specific qualifying population or category within a qualifying population to receive assistance. Prioritization, in the context of the coordinated entry process, refers to the coordinated entry-specific process by which all persons in need of assistance who use coordinated entry are ranked in order of priority. The coordinated entry prioritization policies are established by the CoC with input from all community stakeholders and must ensure that ESG projects are able to serve clients in accordance with written standards that are established under 24 CFR 576.400(e). In addition, the coordinated entry process must, to the maximum extent feasible, ensure that people with more severe service needs and levels of vulnerability are prioritized for housing and homeless assistance before those with less severe service needs and lower levels of vulnerability.

Northampton County will comply with all applicable fair housing, civil rights, and nondiscrimination requirements, including but not limited to those requirements listed in 24 CFR 5.105(a) when applying preferences through its referral methods. Persons who are eligible for a preference have the opportunity to participate in all HOME-ARP activities of Northampton County in which they are eligible, including activities that are not separate or different, and cannot be excluded because of any protected characteristics or preferential status.

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Referral Methods

The County of Northampton is part of the Eastern PA CoC, serving a total of thirty-three (33) counties. The thirty-three counties are organized into five (5) geographically dispersed Regional Homeless Advisory Boards (RHABs). Northampton County is covered by the Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board. The RHAB is made up of two (2) counties which include: Lehigh County and Northampton County.

The Eastern PA CoC utilizes a comprehensive Coordinated Entry process that is fully implemented in the Lehigh Valley. The Lehigh Valley Coordinated Entry coordinates access, assessment and referral to housing and services for families and individuals in Lehigh and Northampton Counties experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. Entry includes outreach services through Valley Youth House and three walk-in sites. The walk-in sites are operated by the Lehigh Conference of Churches in Allentown and Bethlehem and the Third Street Alliance in Easton.

Any family or individual experiencing a housing crisis in Lehigh or Northampton Counties can either call a toll-free hotline or visit a designated coordinated entry provider in Allentown, Bethlehem, or Easton. Veterans, people fleeing domestic violence, and transitional age or runaway youth will be immediately connected to appropriate services. Families and single adults will be assessed using a national best practice vulnerability and service prioritization tool called the VI-SPDAT. Consumers will then be referred and connected to appropriate housing and services as they become available.

The CoC has adopted HUD CPD 16-11, HUD's Notice on Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing, as well as the accompanying updated HUD CPD-17-01 Notice. This notice established Additional Requirements for a Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System. All qualifying populations that are eligible for a project or activity will be included in the CoC Coordinated Entry (CE) process. All households seeking service are provided fair and equal access regardless of their location or method by which they access the system.

Northampton County will follow the Coordinated Entry process for its HOME-ARP funds.

Limitations in a HOME-ARP rental housing

Northampton County will not limit eligibility for HOME-ARP rental housing.

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HOME-ARP Refinancing Guidelines

Northampton County does not intend to use HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily rental housing that is being rehabilitated with HOME-ARP funds.

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Definitions

The following definitions are applicable to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

(1) An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

(i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;

(ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or

(iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;

(2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

(i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;

(ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and

(iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks needed to obtain other permanent housing;

(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

(i) Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a);

(ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;

(iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and

(iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect), the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English

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proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment.

At Risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

(1) An individual or family who:

(i) Has an annual income below 30 percent of median family income for the area, as determined by HUD;

(ii) Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an Emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “Homeless” definition in this section; and

(iii) Meets one of the following conditions:

(A) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;

(B) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;

(C) Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living Situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;

(D) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;

(E) Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 people per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;

(F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or

(G) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan;

(2) A child or youth who does not qualify as “homeless” under this section, but qualifies as “homeless” under section 387(3) of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a(3)), section 637(11) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832(11)), section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6)), section 330(h)(5)(A) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)(5)(A)), section 3(l) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012(l)), or section 17(b)(15) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)(15)); or

(3) A child or youth who does not qualify as “homeless” under this section but qualifies as “homeless” under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)), and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of that child or youth if living with her or him.

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Fleeing, or Attempting to Flee, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, or Human Trafficking, as defined by HUD in the Notice

Domestic violence, which is defined in 24 CFR 5.2003 includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by:

- 1) A current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim (the term “spouse or intimate partner of the victim” includes a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of the relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship);
- 2) A person with whom the victim shares a child in common;
- 3) A person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
- 4) A person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving HOME-ARP funds; or
- 5) Any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

Dating violence which is defined in 24 CFR 5.2003 means violence committed by a person:

- 1) Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
- 2) Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
 - a. The length of the relationship;
 - b. The type of relationship; and
 - c. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

Sexual assault which is defined in 24 CFR 5.2003 means any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, Tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

Stalking which is defined in 24 CFR 5.2003 means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

- 1) Fear for the person’s individual safety or the safety of others; or
- 2) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

Human Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking, as outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), as amended (22 U.S.C. 7102). These are defined as:

- 1) Sex trafficking means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- 2) Labor trafficking means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

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Other populations requiring services or housing assistance to prevent homelessness and other populations at greatest risk of housing instability, as defined by HUD in the Notice

(1) Other Families Requiring Services or Housing Assistance to Prevent Homelessness is defined as households (i.e., individuals and families) who have previously been qualified as “homeless” as defined in 24 CFR 91.5, are currently housed due to temporary or emergency assistance, including financial assistance, services, temporary rental assistance or some type of other assistance to allow the household to be housed, and who need additional housing assistance or supportive services to avoid a return to homelessness.

(2) At Greatest Risk of Housing Instability is defined as household who meets either paragraph (i) or (ii) below:

(i) has annual income that is less than or equal to 30% of the area median income, as determined by HUD and is experiencing severe cost burden (i.e., is paying more than 50% of monthly household income toward housing costs);

(ii) has annual income that is less than or equal to 50% of the area median income, as determined by HUD, AND meets one of the following conditions from paragraph (iii) of the “At risk of homelessness” definition established at 24 CFR 91.5:

(A) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;

(B) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;

(C) Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;

(D) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;

(E) Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;

(F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution);

or

(G) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan.

Veterans and Families that include a Veteran Family Member that meet the criteria for one of the qualifying populations described above are eligible to receive HOME-ARP assistance.