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**Beaufort County/Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium**

HOME-American Rescue Plan Grant

Allocation Plan

Lowcountry Council of Governments

Community and Economic Development - Affordable Housing

634 Campground Road

Yemassee, SC 29945

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**HOME-ARP Allocation Plan**

**Participating Jurisdiction (PJ):** Lowcountry COG **Date:** 10/4/2022

# Introduction

In September 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the allocation of $2,321,952 to Beaufort County/Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium (LCOG) for a new grant called the Home Investment Partnerships Grant American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP). The purpose of HOME-ARP funds is to provide homelessness assistance and supportive services through several eligible activities. Eligible activities include acquisition and development of non-congregate shelter, tenant based rental assistance, supportive services, HOME-ARP rental housing development, administration and planning, and nonprofit operating and capacity building assistance.

HOME-ARP funds must assist people in HOME-ARP "qualifying populations”, which include:

▪ Sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations

▪ Those currently housed populations at risk of homelessness

▪ Those fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence or human trafficking

▪ Other families requiring services or housing assistance or to prevent homelessness

▪ Those at greatest risk of housing instability or in unstable housing situations

To receive funding, the jurisdiction must develop a HOME-ARP Allocation Plan which describes the distribution of HOME-ARP funds and identifies any preferences for eligible activities. This plan will be submitted and approved by HUD. The development of the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan must also be informed through stakeholder consultation and public engagement. The following is the Beaufort County/ Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

# Consultation

***Summarize the consultation process:***

The Lowcountry COG’s stakeholder consultation process was developing and disseminating an online stakeholder survey in order to capture broad assessments of the community needs and areas for ARP allocation as well as specific insights gathered by agencies and other local leaders. LCOG emailed key stakeholders in the community for their input and feedback. The online survey was open from March 25, 2022 through April 30, 2022. The survey included seven ARP program-specific questions and one open ended comment section for community needs assessment. The survey received a total of 42 respondents, including those representing homeless services providers, the Continuum of Care (CoC), Fair Housing agencies, affordable housing developers, domestic violence advocacy groups, Veterans groups, and others. Some responders were from the same organization, those responses were merged and weighted appropriately.

***List the organizations consulted, and summarize the feedback received from these entities.***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agency/Org Consulted | Type of Agency/Org | Method of Consultation | Feedback |
| Continuum of Care Chairman of the Governing Council | Continuum of Care | Direct | Clear unmet need is lack of affordable housing and lack of shelters/beds for immediate housing needs of homeless or at-risk population. Supply of housing inventory that meets the needs of QPs is low and stagnant. Developing affordable rental housing could help meet some of these needs for years to come. |
| Beaufort Housing Authority | Public Housing Authority | Survey | Unmet needs: Lack of affordable housing units, lack of supportive services to assist residents to maintain (keep) their affordable housing when they receive it. Not just a financial service, but a service to assist with budgeting, housekeeping, life skills. The TBRA program would work if the units were available. There are organizations to assist with security deposits etc. such as United Way, EOC, Deep Well. What is needed is the units for the people to rent. |
| Lowcountry Council of Governments | Local Government | Survey | Unmet need: gap in housing inventory. In recent conversations that we have had particularly in our more rural areas is "The need is for available units to use voucher with more so than having a congregate shelter beyond having a temporary option" |
| Lowcountry Habitat for Humanity | Fair Housing Organization; Affordable Housing Developer | Survey | No shelter in Beaufort County. Rental assistance is a band aid. Fix the supply and affordability issues. |
| SC State Housing Finance & Dev. Authority | State Housing Authority | Survey | For housing inventory there are not enough units to place people. For service delivery there are often gaps in the ability to have enough staff to deliver services. Non-congregate shelters are needed in many areas of the state. Shortage of available affordable units. Can be addressed by new construction or rehab of affordable units. |
| Hopeful Horizons | Domestic Violence Service Provider;  Continuum of Care Member | Survey | Lack of emergency shelter options, lack of affordable housing, lack of TBRA programs, lack of PSH, lack of bricks and mortar transitional housing programs. First, we need more affordable units, though. We have a bunch of clients with EHVs who can't locate a place to rent. There isn't a shelter option for single people who are homeless. |
| Beaufort County School District | Public education- providing services to students experiencing homelessness | Survey | The lack of affordable housing forces too many families in Beaufort County to live in doubled-up, sometimes substandard housing situations. A shelter would be greatly beneficial to this community. |
| Town of Bluffton | Local Government | Survey | Affordable Rental Housing could be beneficial for teachers, police officers, recent college graduates, or those in the service industry. Rent needs to be affordable for a single income, so the development needs to be built as such. |
| One80 Place | Homeless Service Provider;  Continuum of Care Member | Survey | Supply of affordable rental units that meet habitability standards, lack of consistent shelter providers, few homeless service providers, tenant-based rental assistance targeted to these counties. Ongoing case management once someone is re-housed helps connect them to mainstream benefits |
| Jasper County Council on Aging | Senior Centers for Congregate clients and Home delivery meals | Survey | Unmet need: Rents are too high you can't rent anything under $1000.00 a month low-income people can't afford these high rents. We need shelters you see a lot of people walking the streets homeless. |
| City of Beaufort | Municipality | Survey | We have no shelters and no housing inventory that is affordable |
| Town of Hilton Head Island | Local Government | Survey | Needs: Quality long-term rental housing for workforce. Wide-range communication and education on the needs as well as availability of resources. |
| Coastal Empire Community Mental Center | Organization Serving People with Disabilities;  Continuum of Care Member | Survey | Unmet needs: Limited availability of homeless shelters and resources. Often, we have no places to refer individuals to for homeless needs. Extremely limited homeless resources, often those with substance use or mental health issues are turned away. |
| Friends of Hunting Island | Nonprofit community service | Survey | Urban areas in Beaufort are rapidly gentrifying. This is pushing low-income people out of their hometown because taxes rise rapidly too. Some stop-gap measure needs to be in place. In addition, many of the white people moving in do not support building more subsidized housing and there are long waits for people to get into affordable homes. I see several unhoused men in the community who need done shelter/bathroom, etc somewhere. |
| Osprey Village | Organization Serving People with Disabilities | Survey | Unmet needs: here’s no transitional housing. The little rental assistance. And no workforce housing inventory |
| Jasper County Neighbors United | Affordable Housing Agency | Survey | This region for years has been neglected and this segment of the population need affordable housing in Jasper, Hampton, Colleton, but due to inequitable funding and not having total knowledge and understanding of how a project of this magnitude show be incorporated into existing neighborhoods, it will never be accomplished because of NIMBY. More property needs to be acquired and more partnerships with for and nonprofits need to be created. No one entity can accomplish this alone and it needs to be a concerted effort for all parties to address this much-needed venture. |
| Southeastern Housing and Community Development | Community Development | Survey | Lack of quality housing (rental and homeownership), Lack of transitional housing, Lack of supportive services. A Moving to Work model of rental assistance would be most beneficial. Whereas assistance with current bills is great in order to mitigate the current crisis it is not helping long-term. |
| In His Name-Colleton | Homeless Service Provider | Survey | Colleton currently has little to no housing available for rent. Colleton also does not have any emergency shelter. |
| Estill Police Department | Law Enforcement Agency | Survey | There is no shelter. Housing inventory is limited. Many residents are not interested or able to afford purchasing a home. Homeless prevention. Financial management courses. |
| Department of Social Services | Government - Social Services | Survey | Definitely more construction of affordable housing. There should be more avenues where the counties and/or state can acquire/purchase abandoned homes for the "specific" purpose of renovation for the homeless. |
| Ross Innovative Employment Solutions | Veterans' Group | Survey | There are no shelters in the Lowcountry. The Lowcountry has enough vacant building to choice from and outfit to become a homeless transitioning facility. |
| Colleton Adult Learning Center | Adult Education Provider | Survey | Connecting counseling with additional partners to remove barriers to obtain stable housing. Establishment of more units across a variety of neighborhoods. |
| Town of Brunson | Local Gov’t | Survey | There is a large gap within the current shelter and housing inventory. We are in need of affordable rental housing in our area, It would be wonderful to address the need for acquisition, construction and rehabilitation with ARP funding. |
| Port Royal Police Department | Law Enforcement | Survey | Serious lack of affordable housing in the area. Most units are market rate due to the extra money that military members receive to live off base. Most people who are at risk of homelessness or who are fleeing domestic violence are unable to afford a market-rate unit on one income. There is also only one shelter in the area, and it is only for women fleeing domestic violence. There are no shelter options for men. Supportive services: case management, classes on budgeting, and bill paying |
| Town of Scotia | Local Gov’t | Survey | Lack of shelters. Rent assistance and utility would assist greatly. |
| Family Promise of Beaufort County | Homeless Service Provider;  Continuum of Care Member | Survey | Limited affordable housing in Beaufort and Jasper County. The non-congregate shelter can be used as short-term housing to prevent individuals or families from sleeping in their vehicles. |

# Public Participation

***Describe the public participation process, including information about and the dates of the public comment period and public hearing(s) held during the development of the plan:***

* ***Public comment period:*** *start date -* ***3/29/2022*** *end date -* ***4/28/2022***
* ***Public hearing: 4/28/2022***

***Describe any efforts to broaden public participation:***

In addition to the newspaper ad for the public notice and public comment period, LCOG also advertised the public hearing and posted the draft HOME-ARP allocation plan on the COG’s website (www.lowcountrycog.org) in order to be readily available for comment start date 7/6/2022 end date 7/22/2022.

A PJ must consider any comments or views of residents received in writing, or orally at a public hearing, when preparing the HOME-ARP allocation plan.

***Summarize the comments and recommendations received through the public participation process:***

None.

***Summarize any comments or recommendations not accepted and state the reasons why:***

None.

# Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis

**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 | 65 | 18 | 174 | 174 | 0 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Transitional Housing | 2 | 1 | 94 | 94 | 96 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Permanent Supportive Housing | 48 | 16 | 388 | 388 | 350 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other Permanent Housing |  |  |  |  |  | -- | -- | -- | -- |  |  |  |  |
| Sheltered Homeless |  |  |  |  |  | 18 | 225 | 84 | 7 |  |  |  |  |
| Unsheltered Homeless |  |  |  |  |  | 4 | 134 | 13 | 4 |  |  |  |  |
| ***Current Gap*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | -- | 132 | -297 | -297 |

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

**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 | 31,610 |  |  |
| Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness) | 7,988 |  |  |
| Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI (Other Populations) | 15,116 |  |  |
| 0%-30% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems  (At-Risk of Homelessness) |  | 2,665 |  |
| 30%-50% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems  (Other Populations) |  | 2,245 |  |
| ***Current Gap (0-30% AMI)*** |  |  | 5,323 |
| ***Current Gap (31-50% AMI)*** |  |  | 12,871 |

**Data Sources:** 1. American Community Survey (ACS); 2. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)

***Describe the size and demographic composition of qualifying populations within the PJ’s boundaries:***

**Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5**

The CoC releases an annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count that includes valuable data for addressing the needs of residents who are experiencing homelessness. The 2020 Charleston/ Low Country CoC count data was used to capture the most recent and relevant homeless population data due to alterations in methodology during the 2021 count to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is noted that the Continuum of Care’s jurisdiction includes additional counties not included in the jurisdiction so the data reflected in the PIT count is for the region, some numbers may not accurately capture the precise counts of the jurisdiction. Therefore, estimates and rates combined with stakeholder input have led the overall content of estimated composition.

According to the 2020 PIT count, Black or African American residents are the largest demographic of people experiencing homelessness. 49% of people experiencing homelessness are Black or African American, 44% are White/Caucasian, and the remainder are American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, or multi-racial. 4% percent of overall homeless are Hispanic/ Latino. 70% of homeless individuals identify as Male. 89% are over the age of 24 and 7.4% being under the age of 18, mostly in households with other adults. About 20% were reported as chronically homeless. 65 individuals reported having a mental illness, 53 reported having a substance use disorder, 97 are veterans, 13 are unaccompanied youth (18-24), and 11 are victims of domestic violence.

**Populations At-risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5**

HUD defines those at risk of homelessness as individuals and families who have an income below 30% of the area median income (AMI), do not have sufficient resources or support networks to prevent them from becoming homeless, or live with instability. Using HUD's 2014-2018 CHAS data, the Lowcountry COG has an estimated 9,650 households with incomes below 30% AMI. Nearly 47% of these households are renter households. Households at-risk of homelessness include an estimated 13,869 households who are severely cost burdened, paying over 50% of their income toward housing as well as 17,380 who are cost burdened (above 30%, less than 50%). Further, an estimated 25,469 LMI (<80% AMI) households within the 4-County region are considered cost burdened at the 30% mark, and another 12,769 LMI households are severe cost burdened—37% of total households within the Lowcountry COG. An estimated 5,595 households are extremely low income and severe cost burdened and are considered at greatest risk of housing instability.

**Housing Cost Burden and Extreme LMI Table**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **County** | **Cost Burdened**  (>30% Income towards housing) | **Severe Cost Burden**  (>50% Income towards housing) | **Households <30% AMI** | **Total Households** |
| Beaufort County | 12,925 | 10,560 | 6,780 | 70,605 |
| Colleton County | 2,140 | 1,425 | 1,440 | 15,145 |
| Hampton County | 695 | 394 | 530 | 6,925 |
| Jasper County | 1,620 | 1,490 | 900 | 9,980 |
| LCOG TOTAL: | 17,380 | 13,869 | 9,650 | 102,655 |
| LCOG as a % | 16.9% | 13.5% | 9.4% | 100% |

**Data Sources: HUD CHAS 2014-2018**

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

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence 42.3% of women and 29.2% of men in South Carolina experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner sexual violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes. Statistics from the South Carolina Crime Statistics reported by South Carolina SLED document that there was a total of 805 domestic violence victims in Colleton, Beaufort, Hampton, and Jasper counties during 2020.

Due to lack of resources, county level data of the number of domestic violence and human trafficking victims in the region are not available. In 2021, 206 human trafficking cases were reported to the Human Trafficking Hotline in the state of South Carolina. Across the state, victims are most frequently females, both adults and minors, experiencing sex trafficking. In 2021 Fresh Start Healing Heart, the only service provider in the region that specializes in serving human trafficking, served 11 victims. Eight victims were US adult females, one was a US minor female, and two foreign national females.

**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**

There is a large overlap between those at-risk of homelessness (above data) and households in need of assistance to prevent homelessness or at greatest risk of housing instability. Lack of affordability is the primary issue highlighted in data and consultation. The households in the 0-50% AMI range make up an estimated 23,010 households who are cost burdened or severely cost burdened. Extremely low-income households (0-30% AMI), 10,680 households are extremely cost burdened and require housing assistance to prevent homelessness or housing instability.

***Describe the unmet housing and service needs of qualifying populations:***

**Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5**

The primary unmet need as it pertains to homeless needs inventory is the availability of beds and units for adults who are experiencing homelessness. There is a need for nearly 300 beds in order to provide housing services for adults. Additionally, the bulk of the beds available are emergency shelters and may not help residents escape homelessness or address housing insecurity. During our consultation, respondents also highlighted the following unmet service needs for the homeless population: legal aid, housing search and counseling, mental health services, outpatient health services, substance abuse treatment services, and comprehensive case management.

**Populations At-risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5**

With approximately 51.3% (over 12,000 households) of the COGs household being cost burdened (whether owner or renter), the overall need is clear: more affordable housing. Lack of affordable housing inventory and a persistent affordability gap challenge both populations recovering from homelessness and those households at-risk of homelessness or housing instability. Those at-risk of homeless or housing instability often need short-term subsidies such as mortgage/rent assistance to avoid foreclosure or eviction, as well as utility assistance to avoid shutoff or security deposits to allow new rental contracts. Supportive services such as housing or financial counseling, landlord mediation for eviction proceedings will also benefit these groups, but as identified by many stakeholders, LMI populations are being priced out and facing housing challenges across the COG.

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

According to the 2022 Domestic Violence Counts Report for South Carolina conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence victims of domestic violence made 21 requests for shelter, housing, and other supportive services that providers could not provide. With approximately 81% of these unmet requests being for housing and emergency shelter. South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic and Violence and Sexual Assault reported that 736 domestic violence victims were turned away from shelter across the state due to lack of space in 2019.

Victims of domestic violence and single mothers were also highlighted as QPs needing particular support. Stakeholders highlighted consistent reporting that DV beds are not sufficient. Victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault face a lot of additional challenges: overcoming trauma to be able to remain stably employed and housed can require longer-term housing assistance; perpetrators who continue to stalk, harass, abuse and destroy property so that the victim is no longer safe in that housing or the landlord doesn't want the victim there anymore; landlords who are hesitant to rent to people with poor rental histories (even when Hopeful Horizons is paying the rent). They need specialized housing security, healthcare, and counseling services (to included networking and economic independence). Case management and financial assistance were highlighted as specific needs for this category.

South Carolina lacks specialized housing programs for both minor and adult human trafficking victims throughout the state. The consortium region has one victim service provider that provides shelter for human trafficking victims, and victims are referred to other resources when the residential facility is full. Local homeless shelters do not adequately meet the complex needs of victims.

**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**

The unmet needs for the populations needing assistance to prevent homelessness or at risk of greater housing instability mirror those from above, including rental payment assistance or utility deposit assistance and development of affordable rental housing units. Housing counseling, mental health services, and homeless prevention were highlighted during our consultation as service needs for those at greatest risk of housing insecurity. Healthcare assistance greatly benefits those at-risk of housing instability who are also disabled or elderly.

***Identify and consider the current resources available to assist qualifying populations, including congregate and non-congregate shelter units, supportive services, Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), and affordable and permanent supportive rental housing:***

The below local organizations and entities offer a variety of resources that assist the county’s QPs on an ongoing basis. The COG will consider and coordinate appropriately with organizations that can assist with the goals and implementation of selected activities described in HOME-ARP Activities section of this plan.

The **Beaufort Housing Authority** is the local public housing authority (PHA) in Beaufort County. Its mission is to provide quality affordable housing to low- and moderate-income families and individuals in a safe community environment and to assist those we serve to achieve self-sufficiency. Beaufort Housing Authority oversees 291 public housing units and 599 Housing Choice Vouchers including 8 HUD-VASH vouchers to house Veterans.

**Hopeful Horizons** provides safety, hope and healing to survivors of child abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault through evidence-based practices and lead in ending abuse through primary prevention and education. It operates a 6,000 square foot shelter that includes six bedrooms; a large living area; a children’s room; a spacious, modern kitchen where residents take turns preparing meals and a private, fenced-in play area for children. The shelter can house up to 24 residents. According to the 2021 Housing Inventory Count, Hopeful Horizons also has 118 Rapid Re-Housing beds to provide permanent housing for women and families fleeing domestic violence in the Lowcountry.

**Family Promise** provides shelter to 4 families or 14 individuals at a time in Jasper and Beaufort Counties. Different partner churches host families overnight throughout their stay. The Day Center, located in downtown Bluffton, is the hub of operations and a place for families to do their laundry, complete employment and housing searches in the computer center, complete goal sheets, attend life skills programs, and meet with a case manager.

**Fresh Start Healing Heart** provides safe housing and case management to victims of human trafficking. The top priority is providing a safe environment while victims receive services. Programming includes life skills courses, financial education, counseling, and support groups.

**One80 Place** provides shelter for homeless at all stages including the chronically homeless with support services and case management to connect to resources that lead to permanent housing. The service area includes Colleton, Hampton, Jasper, and Beaufort Counties. Individuals experiencing homelessness in these counties can access emergency shelter, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing programs. One80 Place also has a Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) to provide housing and supportive services to Veterans.

There are many social service agencies in the Lowcountry that provide outreach and supportive services to very low- and low-income individuals and families in order to prevent homelessness: **Lowcountry Community Action Agency, Bluffton Self Help, Deep Well Project, and HELP of Beaufort**. Services provided by these agencies include food assistance, emergency financial assistance, and job training.

The **Lowcountry Council of Governments Community & Economic Development Department** continues to prioritize the creation of quality, affordable housing as an integral component of its development programs. It uses portions of its CDBG and HOME grant funding allocation to increase affordable rental housing opportunities through rental units constructed and rental units rehabilitated, provide supportive services for low-moderate income (LMI) households, homeless households, and those at risk of homelessness.

***Identify any gaps within the current shelter and housing inventory as well as the service delivery system:***

Current gaps within the shelter, housing inventory, and service delivery systems include:

non-congregate shelter; sufficient case management to quickly resolve the household’s homelessness; staffing to allow for a reasonable caseload; non-congregate shelter beds for single adults, and permanent supportive housing. Multiple stakeholders highlighted the lack of shelters for DV victims/survivors as well as single men.

As noted above, the primary gap in the shelter and housing inventory is the availability of beds and units for adults with no children present. There is a need for 300 more beds for this population. There is also a need for units for households with children, there is a need for over 100 family units.

There is a shortage of affordable housing in LCOG. The availability of affordable housing units does not meet the needs of the qualifying population. There is a need for quality affordable housing units of multiple sizes in neighborhoods throughout the region. Stakeholders from multiple counties/organizations highlighted rising housing costs, gentrification, LMI households being priced out, and NIMBYism as key indicators of a need for more affordable housing.

***Identify the characteristics of housing associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness if the PJ will include such conditions in its definition of “other populations” as established in the HOME-ARP Notice:***

LCOG does not plan to formally adopt a definition of “other populations, it will focus its HOME-ARP activities to assist homeless populations, those at-risk of homelessness, and persons fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.

***Identify priority needs for qualifying populations:***

The analysis above and consultation with key stakeholders have identified the following priority needs:

1. Affordable Rental Housing Development
2. Rental Assistance
3. Acquisition & Development of Non-Congregate Shelter
4. Supportive Services

A lack of affordable housing availability has been highlighted via the data and stakeholder input. For homeless populations, priority needs include emergency shelter, rapid re-housing and supportive services to achieve housing stability. For households experiencing housing instability or who are at-risk of homelessness, priority needs include providing appropriate supportive services, including medical and mental health treatment, counseling, supervision, transportation, childcare, case management services, and other services essential for achieving independent living to help prevent homelessness and increase housing stability. Persons fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking have a particular need in emergency and transitional housing support as well as pertinent supportive services.

***Explain how the level of need and gaps in its shelter and housing inventory and service delivery systems based on the data presented in the plan were determined:***

To determine the level of need and gaps the LCOG looked at both qualitative and quantitative measures. Data from the US Census, CHAS , 2020 CoC Point in Time Count, and 2020 Housing Inventory Count were used in partnership with feedback and on-the-ground insights from key stakeholders in the area. The takeaways from data analysis and stakeholder input were incorporated into the needs assessment.

**HOME-ARP Activities**

***Describe the method for soliciting applications for funding and/or selecting developers, service providers, subrecipients and/or contractors and whether the PJ will administer eligible activities directly:***

The Lowcountry COG expects to administer programs directly. Once the COG has received the full HOME-ARP grant award from HUD, it will advertise the funds available throughout the region. Any organization, developer, subrecipient, or Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) is eligible to apply. Applications will be reviewed in the order received. All applications received will be reviewed for completeness, eligibility, and their ability to deliver on the priority needs identified within this plan. Each applicant will also be reviewed for their ability to carry out the project meeting all eligibility criteria.

Award(s) will be made based on the applicant’s project scope as it pertains to the outlined priority needs in this plan as well as the applicant’s familiarity with utilizing federal funding and ability to comply with all federal and local requirements.

***If any portion of the PJ’s HOME-ARP administrative funds were provided to a subrecipient or contractor prior to HUD’s acceptance of the HOME-ARP allocation plan because the subrecipient or contractor is responsible for the administration of the PJ’s entire HOME-ARP grant, identify the subrecipient or contractor and describe its role and responsibilities in administering all of the PJ’s HOME-ARP program:***

Lowcountry COG will administer the program. The COG used a portion of the HOME-ARP administrative funds to procure Civitas, LLC, a HUD grants management consultant to assist in the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan. Civitas assisted the consortium with data collection and analysis, stakeholder outreach, and Allocation Plan development.

PJs must indicate the amount of HOME-ARP funding that is planned for each eligible HOME-ARP activity type and demonstrate that any planned funding for nonprofit organization operating assistance, nonprofit capacity building, and administrative costs is within HOME-ARP limits. The following table may be used to meet this requirement.

**Use of HOME-ARP Funding**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Funding Amount** | **Percent of the Grant** | **Statutory Limit** |
| Supportive Services | $ 300,000 |  |  |
| Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters | $ 0 |  |  |
| Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) | $ 150,000 |  |  |
| Development of Affordable Rental Housing | $ 1,407,563 |  |  |
| Non-Profit Operating | $ 116,097 | 5 % | 5% |
| Non-Profit Capacity Building | $ 116,097 | 5 % | 5% |
| Administration and Planning | $ 232,195 | 10 % | 15% |
| **Total HOME ARP Allocation** | $ 2,321,952 |  |  |

***Additional narrative, if applicable:***

**Development of Affordable Rental Housing**

LCOG will allocate the bulk (61%) of its allocation to the development of affordable rental housing. Please see further information on page 18 in the *Housing* *Goals* section.

**Supportive Services**

The COG will allocate approximately 13% of HOME ARP funds towards Supportive Services in the amount of $300,000. By funding Supportive Services, the COG aims to increase housing stability and reduce levels homelessness and those at-risk of homelessness within the qualifying populations by providing a baseline support that addresses multiple challenges of these persons and households. Supportive Services activities will prioritize mental health services. Other services will include (but are not limited to):

* Case Management
* Substance Abuse Treatment
* Outpatient Health Services
* Rental Assistance

**TBRA**

A small portion ($150,000/6.4%) of the HOME ARP allocation will go towards assisting QP persons and households with rental assistance to prevent eviction, risk of homelessness or homelessness.

**Administration**

Ten percent of the allocation is set aside for costs of overall HOME-ARP program management, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation. Expenditures may include salaries, wages, and related costs of the LCOG’s staff and/or administrative services performed under third party contracts or agreements.

**Nonprofit Capacity Building and Operating Set-asides**

LCOG will use the 5% allowance for both Nonprofit Capacity Building and Operating so that agencies seeking to expand or improve their capacity to successfully carry out eligible HOME-ARP activities can have some additional funding support. Eligible costs include salaries for new hires and other employee compensation and benefits, costs related to employee training, or other staff development.

***Describe how the characteristics of the shelter and housing inventory, service delivery system, and the needs identified in the gap analysis provided a rationale for the plan to fund eligible activities:***

The community needs and gap analysis showed that there is a gap in our homelessness response system for supportive services, permanent affordable housing, and non-congregate emergency shelters facilities. The COG has identified activities that will assist individuals and families of the most vulnerable qualified populations. There are significant needs in throughout the region for each of the HOME-ARP eligible activities, and the lack of affordable housing in particular was emphasized by most stakeholders.

One of the major gaps in the COG’s homeless inventory is access to affordable housing. Households experiencing a housing crisis or fleeing an unsafe situation need to find a place to stay quickly. Access to this type of housing is a current gap in the system. Emergency shelter and bridge housing can help to fill this gap and strengthen the crisis response system; however, there is a limited capacity within the region to operate an NCS at the appropriate level.

Separate from the need for housing, there is a high need for assistance to reduce housing instability, which includes mental health, job development, legal aid and other supportive services. There are gaps in our service delivery system for our homeless population who have high mental health needs, including and those who struggle with substance abuse. Feedback also shows that there is a need to strengthen the regional crisis response system to connect those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with housing quickly, and provide services when needed. Case management and mental health were highlighted unmet needs. Based on the input received from service providers and the data collected, we are allocating a portion of funding to supportive services.

# HOME-ARP Production Housing Goals

***Estimate the number of affordable rental housing units for qualifying populations that the PJ will produce or support with its HOME-ARP allocation:***

LCOG estimates 16 new rental units throughout the region will be produced using HOME-ARP funds that will provide direct support to the qualifying populations in the region.

***Describe the specific affordable rental housing production goal that the PJ hopes to achieve and describe how it will address the PJ’s priority needs:***

The needs assessment highlighted the lack of affordable housing for the qualifying populations. The HOME\_ARP funds allow for the COG to take advantage of this one-time allocation in order to provide more long-term solutions for QPs. Projects will be financed with HOME-ARP rental housing funds; however, all efforts will be made to leverage other financing tools to maximize unit production.

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# Preferences

***Identify whether the PJ intends to give preference to one or more qualifying populations or a subpopulation within one or more qualifying populations for any eligible activity or project:***

The LCOG will not provide preferences to any population or subpopulation.

# HOME-ARP Refinancing Guidelines

The LCOG does not intend to use HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily rental housing.

# Supporting Documents