



JANUARY 4, 2022

**2021-2025
CONSOLIDATED PLAN
&
2021
ANNUAL ACTION
PLAN AMENDMENT I
HOME-ARP
ALLOCATION PLAN
COBB COUNTY, GEORGIA**

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Introduction

In September 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the allocation of \$5,551,090.00 million to Cobb County, Georgia for a new grant called the Home Investment Partnerships Grant American Relief 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, administration and planning, and nonprofit operating and capacity building assistance. A certain portion of 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 County must develop and submit to HUD a HOME-ARP Allocation Plan, which describes the distribution of HOME-ARP funds and identifies any preferences for eligible activities. The development of the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan must also be informed through stakeholder consultation and community engagement. The following is the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

Consultation

Summarize the consultation process.

The County partners with public and private entities, which several were consulted with during the development of the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan. These consulted stakeholders have relevant knowledge that can speak to the needs, service gaps, and potential activities that would best benefit qualified populations. Stakeholders consulted included those who work with families or individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, and other vulnerable qualifying populations.

In the development of the allocation plan, the County consulted with stakeholders and asked for their input concerning the HOME-ARP grant, eligible activities, and the proposed budget. Stakeholders articulated their gap in services and/housing needs by providing written and verbal input. The County has synthesized feedback from participants and the following table will provide summaries of the feedback received. The County will continue to meet with stakeholders throughout the implementation of the HOME-ARP activities in an effort to assess the ongoing needs of stakeholders' clients. The County will also strive to collaborate with stakeholders to develop and effectuate strategies that will help end chronic homelessness.

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

Agencies/Organizations Consulted

Agencies/Organizations Consulted	Type of Agency/Organizations	Method of Consultation	Feedback
MUST Ministries, Inc.	Services-homeless	Homeless Strategy	The greatest challenge is affordability and available housing units. Majority of rent is above fair market and landlords are unwilling to participate in programs to subsidized rent. Service gaps: the length of time that we are actually subsidizing rent. Clients have trouble sustaining rent after assistance. More funding for supportive services: childcare, transportation: gas cards, bus passes, uber; and costs that may not necessarily be tied to specific programs or housing.

<p>Center For Family Resources Marietta/Cobb Continuum of Care</p>	<p>Services-homeless</p>	<p>Homeless Strategy</p>	<p>More affordable housing. Rental rates have significantly increased, and wages have not kept up. Many housing communities are being redeveloped and are no longer accepting housing vouchers. There is no affordable housing for low- and moderate-income populations. Many individuals are cost-burdened and spend more than half of their income on housing. We see a lot of people that are trapped in hotels. There is a lack of permanent supportive housing/long term placements for people with disabilities and those who are not veterans or have physical disabilities. Service gaps: Not enough shelter beds, for families with COVID. Other service gaps: Apartment communities have qualifications for individuals that are impossible to meet for someone who is just overcoming homelessness. They need to be provided in tandem to housing services. Transportation is a big issue as well.</p>
<p>Marietta Housing Authority</p>	<p>PHA</p>	<p>Public Housing Needs</p>	<p>Many homeless people have secured services and are maybe reaching the end of the program or are expecting to be kicked out of their current home. Service gaps: Credit reports prevent a number of individuals from securing housing after they are able to overcome homelessness; assistance with security deposits, fees for applying for housing, and background check fees can really slow or stop the process of applying for housing for someone who was recently homeless. Credit counseling and credit repair services could potentially be very helpful for individuals who are homeless and attempting to become self-sustainable.</p>

The Extension	Services-homeless	Homeless Strategy	There are limited resources. Services are important in helping a person overcome homelessness and get to stability, but those services take away from beds. Housing without services keeps a person floating and not progressing. 50/50 need for services and beds.; Service gaps include addiction services to address mental illness. Being able to meet needs on-demand would help with qualifying populations. Potential clients often don't stay motivated to seek assistance once they've been turned away or waitlisted for services.
Marietta Corps - The Salvation Army	Services-homeless	Homeless Strategy	We are in desperate need of homelessness prevention. Housing assistance funds are desperately needed right now. A lot of clients are asking for services outside of housing assistance and there are often no options for them. When the temperature drops a lot of homeless individuals don't have warming shelters to go to. We need more shelters built in the area.
Ser Familia, Inc.	Services-homeless	Homeless Strategy	Although Latino population do not end up completely homeless, due to finding housing with someone they know. We are seeing overcrowding in homes and that presents a myriad of problems, from issues with internet bandwidth to increased sexual abuse cases. There has also been a large increase in cases of domestic violence, which creates more need for shelter. Depression, anxiety and suicide ideation cases have also increased. They often work in industries that were affected immediately by the pandemic causing financial fragility. There is still a lot of need for rental assistance and recovering from the aftereffects of the

			pandemic, in families that are of mixed status. Case management support would benefit these populations so that these individuals have someone to help them access services they need, like childcare and anything related to mental health support and care.
Davis Direction Foundation, Inc.	Services-homeless	Homeless Strategy	The current need is safe, sober housing. Homelessness is difficult enough but being homeless and in recovery is even more difficult. We want to be able to give individuals the best chance to save their lives.; The biggest service gap is access to supportive services. Individuals are often unaware of where to go to get services. Food insecurity and housing are huge gaps. Housing vouchers are great, but housing vouchers without job skills, life skills training, other supportive services won't do much to address the deeper problems.

Table 1: Agencies/Organizations Consulted

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:** December 14, 2021 – January 3, 2021
- **Public hearing:** December 16, 2021

Cobb County held one public hearing for the consultation with citizens, municipal officials, non-profit agencies, public housing agencies, private developers, governmental agencies, and the Continuum of Care in preparation for the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan. During the public hearing, County staff discussed the development of the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan, which incorporated information and discussion of community needs and eligible activities related to HOME-ARP, along with an opportunity for the public to

provide comments on the proposed budget and activities. A list of eligible HOME-ARP activities and the County's proposed HOME-ARP budget was also presented. The public hearing was held on Thursday, December 16, 2021.

The public notice for the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan was published in the Marietta Daily Journal on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 in English and in Spanish in the Mundo Hispanico Newspaper. The public comment period on the Draft HOME-ARP Allocation Plan coincided with the public hearing, beginning December 14, 2021 and ending on January 3, 2022.

Describe any efforts to broaden public participation:

In an attempt to increase public participation, the County actively maintains communication with local nonprofits and housing developers and will adhere to the following actions to improve citizen participation:

Actions to improve participation

- Conduct public meetings in various communities throughout the County to ensure that meetings are held at a convenient location for residents of the County and/or virtually;
- Conduct workshops at various locations throughout the County; provide ADA accessibility for all persons with disabilities; and provide interpretation for limited English proficiency clientele;
- Use electronic and print media to solicit public participation through various media outlets including, but not limited to, the Marietta Daily Journal, Mundo Hispanico, and The GA Voice. This includes sending mass emails to County and Municipal employees, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses; advertising on the County's public access channel (Cobblin); posting advertisements in the County's electronic newsletter; and posting information on the Cobb County CDBG Program Office website;
- Translate public notices and related materials for limited English proficiency clientele;
- Review and respond to all citizen comments and incorporate such comments in

the Action Plan, as applicable;

- Analyze the impact of Action Plan program activities on neighborhood residents, particularly low and moderate-income persons;
- Accepts any comments or views of residents received in writing, or orally at a public hearing, during the preparation of the HOME-ARP allocation plan.

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

- Some of the needs highlighted during the Needs Assessment:
- Lack of affordable housing
- Limited stock of available housing
- Need more funding for supportive services and case management
- Limited resources
- Need more homeless bed and services
- Need more safe and sober housing
- High Rental Rates
- Lack of access to supportive services
- Food Insecurity
- Overcrowding & Cost Burdens

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

All comments were accepted.

Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis

To assess the unmet needs of HOME-ARP qualifying populations, the County evaluated the size and demographic composition of those populations. In addition, the County also identified gaps within its current shelter and housing inventory, as well as the service delivery system. In the needs assessment and gaps analysis, utilized current data, including Comprehensive Housing Affordability Data (CHAS), 2020 Point in Time Count (PIT Count), 2020 CoC Housing Inventory Count (HIC), or other data available data sources. The following information includes the basis for the Needs Assessment and gap analysis for HOME-ARP qualified populations.

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	24	81	60	n/a	n/a	21	64	7	13				
Transitional Housing	18	67	97										
Permanent Supportive Housing	76	281	252		368								
Other Permanent Housing	56	216	237		359								
Sheltered Homeless	20	65	15		9								
Unsheltered Homeless						4	105	18	6				
Current Gap										25	169	25	19

Data Sources: 1. Marietta/Cobb 2020 Point in Time Count (PIT); 2. Marietta/Cobb Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Count (HIC);

Table 2: Homeless Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

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	82,417	280,374	-197,957
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness)		14,500	
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI (Other Populations)		20,630	
0%-30% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (At-Risk of Homelessness)		45,395	
30%-50% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (Other Populations)		23,805	
Current Gaps			-197,957

Data Sources: 1. American Community Survey (ACS); 2. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS); National Low Income Housing Coalition Out of Reach Report 2021: Cobb County

Table 3: Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

The supply of rentals has increased between 2010 and 2018 by almost 20,000 units. There were 79,310 occupied units paying rent in 2010 and 98,590 occupied units paying rent in 2018. The median monthly rent in 2010 was \$934 and increased to \$1,236 per month in 2018. The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s “Out of Reach” 2019 Annual Report calculates the amount of money a household must earn in order to afford a rental unit based on the number of bedrooms in a rental unit at the Fair Market Rent (FMR), consistent with HUD’s affordability standard of paying no more than 30% of income for housing costs. Data is presented in the Renter Affordability table for the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Metro Statistical Area (MSA).

As noted in the 2019 Out of Reach Report, the NLIHC estimates that the median income for a renter in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta MSA is \$47,442.00. The Area’s Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,106 and in order to afford this level of rent and utilities, without paying more than 30% of income on housing. In order to afford a two-bedroom housing unit without spending more than 30 percent of one’s income on rent, one would need to work at a minimum of 117 hours per week or maintain at least 2.4 full-time jobs in Cobb County.

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

HUD requires HOME-ARP funds be used to primarily benefit individuals and families in specified HOME-ARP “qualifying populations.” Qualifying populations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 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

Homeless Populations

In accordance with HUD’s definition of homeless under the HOME-ARP grant, the County will consider a homeless family or individual to generally include:

- An individual or family who lacks a permanent and adequate permanent home
- A person or family who will imminently lose their permanent home due to a lack of resources or support
- A youth under the age of 25, even if accompanied by an adult, that does not have a permanent home

Cobb County coordinates integrated grant funded programs with mainstream services for which persons that are homeless or at-risk of homelessness may be eligible. Mainstream services include; housing programs, health programs, social services, employment programs, education programs and youth programs. Employment programs are a pivotal part in self-sufficiency and long-term housing sustainability. Shelters and human service providers are limited in their capacity to resolve the problem of homelessness unless due to the multiple issues of causation and the amount of funding available.

Individuals and Families at Risk of Homelessness

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, like moving two or more times during the last 60 days due to economic reasons.

Using HUD's 2014-2018 CHAS data, Cobb has 34,125 households with incomes at or below 30% AMI, which is 12.4% of all Cobb's households. Almost all households with incomes at or below 30% AMI are renter households. As shown in Table 3 above, there are approximately 14,500 renter households that earn 30% AMI or under and have one or more housing problems, which could include housing cost burden, overcrowding, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities. These households are considered to be at risk of becoming homeless.

Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence or human trafficking

For HOME-ARP, this population includes any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. It includes cases where an individual or family reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence due to dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return or remain within the same dwelling unit. Cobb County is rich with organizations, professionals and law enforcement whose goals are ending domestic violence and supporting the victims of these heinous crimes locally and at the state level. Persons experiencing domestic violence continues to high priority issue for the County. There are currently 2 domestic violence and abuse shelters and programs in Marietta, GA with 1 offering a hotline and 2 offering emergency shelter.

Residents living in housing instability or in unstable housing situations

HOME-ARP qualifying populations also include other populations who have previously qualified as homeless, are currently housed with temporary or emergency assistance, and who need additional housing assistance or supportive services to avoid a return to homelessness. In addition, HUD defines those at greatest risk of housing instability as households that have an annual income less than 30% AMI and are experiencing severe cost burden or have an income less than 50% AMI and meet a certain condition, like living in someone else's home or living in a hotel due to an economic hardship.

Many renters in Cobb County experience varied housing challenges. A total of 46.7% of all Cobb renters have housing problems or severe housing problems. In CHAS data, HUD defines housing problems as a household that has one or more of the following: lacking a kitchen or plumbing, having more than one person per room, or being housing

cost burdened at 30% of more. Of these problems, housing costs negatively impact most renters whose household income is at or below 50% AMI.

Cobb's Emergency Rental Assistance Program launched in February 2021. As of November 30, 2021, the County is still accepting applications for assistance to receive rent assistance because they were financial impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, experienced housing instability, and whose household income was at or below 80% AMI. This shows the extreme additional need in Cobb for rental assistance and wrap around or supportive services to assist households who are living in housing instability or that have recently received housing assistance due to COVID-19 impacts.

Describe the unmet housing and service needs of qualifying populations, including but not limited to:

- ***Sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations;***
- ***Those currently housed populations at risk of homelessness;***
- ***Other families requiring services or housing assistance or to prevent homelessness; and,***
- ***Those at greatest risk of housing instability or in unstable housing situations:***

Many of the needs of the qualifying populations are similar and include the need for a flexible response system, available housing that is affordable, wrap around services, and supportive services or assistance that could prevent homelessness or greater housing instability. The following reviews the needs of each qualifying population.

Homeless Populations

People experiencing unsheltered homelessness are at great risk of continued harm due to higher rates of morbidity and mortality resulting from pre-existing health conditions, exposure to the elements, lack of access to healthcare, and elevated rates of hospitalizations with longer, more complex hospital stays. Long periods of living without shelter also put individuals at a greater risk of social isolation and the chance of victimization. The process of resolving unsheltered homelessness is much more complicated and takes longer compared to that for people receiving crisis shelter.

It is important to connect people to permanent housing with the right level of services to ensure their success. Housing options must be flexible, client-centered, easily accessible and paired with support services necessary to help clients remain in housing

for the long-term. Returning to homelessness after a housing placement is re-traumatizing for the families and an inefficient use of assistance resources.

Individuals and Families at Risk of Homelessness

Individuals and families at risk of homelessness may need housing assistance that could vary from eviction assistance, diversion assistance, or rent and utility assistance in addition to other types of supportive services. Households who need assistance with maintaining or regaining housing to prevent homelessness will benefit from targeted services, like diversion services. However, diversion services, for instance require specialized outreach and engagement services targeted to high-risk populations and geographies to ensure people and communities at highest risk for homelessness are engaged with housing supports before experiencing literal homelessness. Services that may be needed to assist individual and families at risk of homelessness include

- Short-term subsidies to defray rent and utility arrearages for families that have received eviction or utility termination notices or are experiencing a hardship that may lead to homelessness
- Security deposits and first month's rent to permit homeless families to move into their own apartment
- Light case management services geared towards problem solving and rapid resolution for people receiving diversion services
- Mortgage payments
- Rapid resolution case management and/or mediation services

Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence or human trafficking

There are only 2 independently organized shelters throughout Cobb County that assist domestic violence victims, their family members and pets. In addition to housing accommodations, there are various additional services provided such as counseling and advocacy assistance. Domestic violence or human trafficking survivors often lack easy access to short-term shelter and quick access to medical and psychological services. In addition, there are only informal networks to connect survivors to job opportunities. Without economic independence, many survivors are caught in abusive relationships and the gains they make with traditional social services are not fully realized. Creating better access to short-term shelter and housing as well as increasing the supportive services available could help stabilize this qualifying population.

Residents living in housing instability or in unstable housing situations

Residents who have been previously homeless or are currently using some type of rental assistance may need the assistance to continue for a short or long period of time. Funding existing services and housing assistance programs is important to the housing stability of these individuals and families. In addition, Cobb County and the surrounding Metro Atlanta region has a lack of quality affordable housing available for residents in need causing cost burdens leading to housing instability. There is also a need to assist residents living in unstable housing situations increase their income, build savings, and acquire assets through additional supportive services in the community.

Identify and consider the current resources available to assist qualifying populations, including congregate and non-congregate shelter units, supportive services, TBRA, and affordable and permanent supportive rental housing:

Cobb County receives an annual allocation of almost \$5 million in federal formula grant funding such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Grant, the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). The County utilizes this grant funding to assist families with obtaining affordable homes, supportive services, rental assistance, emergency shelter and other services. These services can and often benefit qualifying populations. Although the County uses CDBG to fund public services to the greatest extent possible, which can help stabilize individuals and families by providing services like healthcare, childcare, job training, and homeless service; however, there is a cap of 15% of the total grant amount of CDBG that can be used for public services.

Since February of 2021, Cobb County has implemented the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program. This program provides comprehensive rental and utilities assistance to households who are at risk of losing their homes due to COVID-19. The ERA program was funded with over \$22.8 million. Although the current funds are expected to be exhausted by the end of 2021. The County Commissioners formally accepted \$7.2 million in ERA2 funds earlier this year. Unlike the ERA1 funding, these funds would be available through September 2025. The same five nonprofit organizations that are currently administering the program will distribute the funds.

The Marietta/Cobb Continuum of Care also receives over \$2.3 million in Continuum of Care (CoC) funding annually. This funding helps to keep approximately 5,000 formerly homeless people housed. The CoC Program is designed to:

- Promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness
- Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness
- Promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families
- Optimize self- sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness

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

The Marietta/Cobb Continuum of Care (COC) collaborates with non-profit organizations to analyze existing needs to assist in identifying funding gaps and other gaps in services. The Homeless Point in Time Count, organized by the Continuum of Care, annually assesses the characteristics of the homeless population in Cobb County. Members of the COC noted the following strengths and gaps in the County's institutional delivery system:

Strengths:

- High level of coordination amongst human service organizations

Gaps:

- Lack of transportation and job services
- Increase of community based mental health and substance abuse services
- Lack of rental assistance
- Lack of alcohol drug treatment facilities
- Not enough resources or financial assistance for mortgage assistance or utility, counseling and financial services.
- No tracking of data for chronically homeless men and women who reside under the bridges and in the woods.
- Limited number of shelters and little to no resources for elderly
- Need more shelters and affordable housing Consolidated Plan COBB COUNTY 100 Availability of services targeted to homeless

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:

The number one indicator of households falling into homelessness from a place of housing instability is a previous history of homelessness. Homeless assistance is generally the last resort for households in extreme poverty with few resources of their own and limited connections to others who could offer temporary, emergency support. Additionally, when other systems of care, like hospitals, behavioral health settings, child welfare, and criminal justice systems, are unable to address the reasons why people cannot stay housed, people have no alternative than turning to the homeless response system.

To prevent people from falling into homelessness, public systems for justice, anti-poverty, prevention, health (including behavioral health), child welfare and affordable housing must use data to identify how people are falling into homelessness and target prevention strategies and policies to address these areas.

Additionally, families with children, or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state, including those people who are doubled up in other people’s homes because they lack a home of their own, are not considered to be experiencing homelessness by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and are not eligible for its homeless assistance. These same families are, however, considered to be experiencing homelessness by the U.S. Department of Education and are eligible for additional educational services and supports. People are considered to be “at risk of homelessness” if they are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled-up situation, within the next 14 days and lack resources or support networks to remain in housing.

Identify priority needs for qualifying populations:

HOME-ARP qualifying populations often have many competing needs. The needs overlap but also vary amongst these populations, and the following information covers the priority needs for each of the qualified populations.

Homeless or At-Risk of Homelessness Populations

The Marietta/Cobb Continuum of Care (CoC) identifies and prioritizes the needs of the homeless population. The CoC's Plan outlines goals that address the needs of homeless veterans, people experiencing chronic or near chronic homelessness, homeless families, and youth. As identified in the Community Plan, families and individuals struggling with homelessness would benefit from an improved crisis response system. Although the needs of each group generally overlap, each of these subpopulations may have greater needs than others. Those who are experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness need more affordable housing and shelter options that provide short-term, mid-term, and long-term interventions. Those who are at-risk of homelessness have a strong need for homelessness prevention and stabilizing services, while those who are currently homeless or experiencing chronic homelessness need more street outreach and case management services.

Domestic Violence Populations

Families or individuals fleeing domestic or dating violence need increased safety measures to minimize the risk of returning to unsafe residential environments. This qualified population has a critical need for temporary shelter for safe harboring and supportive services to help them transition to permanent supportive housing. These families and individuals also need supportive services to assist them like the legal advocacy, childcare, employment services, and case management.

Residents living in housing instability or in unstable housing situations

Many residents who are living in unaffordable or unsafe homes have many needs and face compounded challenges. These households need support with staying housed. While many families may gain stability through rental assistance, other families need more housing options that are safe and affordable. However, most of these households will also need a livable wage and supportive services to create long-term self-sufficiency.

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:

The gaps in services and programs needed to provide shelter, housing, and services were determined using data from multiple sources. The level of need for unsheltered and shelter households experiencing homelessness was determined by evaluating the

number of unsheltered households and the level of resources available to adequately house the families or individuals with permanent supportive housing and critical long-term supportive services to achieve housing stability.

For households that are currently housed but have challenges maintaining their home, the level of need was measured by the amount of inventory that had affordable, safe, and adequate living conditions and the number of renter households that are experiencing severe housing cost burdens. These households need assistance that helps them stay housed without incumbering them with the cost of their home.

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:

As with HOME funds, the County will use HOME funds to promote public/private partnerships as a vehicle for preserving and expanding the stock of affordable homes. HOME-ARP funds may be leveraged with private and public funding sources to support activities for supportive services, tenant-based rental assistance, and the development of non-congregate shelters.

The County will continue to support eligible activities through nonprofit partners to assist very low-income households and qualifying populations. HOME-ARP funds will be awarded to nonprofit or for-profit organizations, based on the merit of proposals or applications received prior to or during the grant implementation period. For development activities and supportive services, greater preference is given to proposals or applications that have other sources of equity and financing and are in line with the County's priorities.

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:

Cobb County will not allocate funds to a subrecipient or contractor to administer the entire HOME-ARP grant.

Use of HOME-ARP Funding

Funding Category	Funding Amount	Percent of the Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	\$528,426.50		
Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	\$3,600,000.00		
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	\$590,000.00		
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	\$ 0.00		
Non-Profit Operating	\$ 0.00	5%	5%
Non-Profit Capacity Building	\$ 0.00	0%	5%
Administration and Planning	\$ 832,663.50	15%	15%
Total HOME ARP Allocation	\$5,551,090.00	100%	

Table 4: Use of HOME-ARP Funding

Additional narrative, if applicable:

Table 6 shows the HOME-ARP budget, which indicates the amount of HOME-ARP funding that is allocated for each eligible HOME-ARP activity type including administrative and planning costs within HOME-ARP statutory limits.

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 County has identified activities that will assist families and individuals of the most vulnerable qualified populations. The gap analysis shows that there is a need to strengthen the County's crisis response system to identify those experiencing homelessness, prevent homelessness when possible, connect people with housing quickly, and provide services when needed. One of the major gaps in the County's homeless inventory is access to affordable housing. People experiencing 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 interim housing can help to fill this gap to strengthen the crisis response system. Unlike other existing funding sources, like HOME grants, the HOME-ARP grant provides an opportunity to assist households with temporary supportive housing through the acquisition and development of non-congregate shelters. These shelters will not only help those experiencing homelessness, but they will also assist families or individuals who fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence and sexual assault.

Many of the families or individuals who receive assistance to mitigate homelessness or to flee violent circumstances require wrap-around services with their housing because of the compounding challenges they face. The County will continue to support organizations that provide supportive services to help program participants achieve self-sufficiency.

Among the most vulnerable qualified populations in jeopardy of housing instability are families and individuals who have challenges with housing affordability. Almost 30% of all renters in Cobb County cannot afford their home because they are either cost burdened or severely cost burdened. Cost burdened households spend between 30% and 50% of their income on housing cost while severely cost burdened households spend over 50% of their income on housing costs. To help keep families housed and address affordability challenges within the housing inventory, the County will fund activities that provide rental assistance to qualifying populations. Tenant-based rental assistance will be administered by local nonprofits or public agencies that support families or individual who are at-risk of homelessness.

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:

Cobb County anticipates supporting a total of 200 affordable rental housing units for qualifying populations.

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:

Cobb County does not intend to use HOME-ARP funds to produce new rental housing.

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:

During and after the housing crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, HOME-ARP qualifying populations in Cobb County need support to improve their resilience. These vulnerable families and individuals experience compounded obstacles, including housing cost burden or living in poor housing conditions. Because of this, the County will use HOME-ARP to help house or keep these families or individuals housed through eligible activities such as non-congregate shelter, rental assistance, and supportive services.

Based on the need and gap analysis, the County will prioritize families and individuals that are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. In addition to housing instability, homeless individuals are more susceptible to acute health concerns, physical or sexual assault, and drug and alcohol abuse, making them some of the most vulnerable populations and in need of specialized and intense services. Because of the great need for supportive housing to assist both adult and youth homeless individuals, the County will prioritize those who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Housing or shelter assistance will support these families or individuals leaving homelessness. The County will also give priority to families or individuals who fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence and sexual assault. With the increase in domestic violence following the COVID-19 pandemic, more families will require housing and supportive services.

If a preference was identified, explain how the use of a preference or method of prioritization will address the unmet need or gap in benefits and services received by individuals and families in the qualifying population or category of qualifying population, consistent with the PJ's needs assessment and gap analysis:

To improve the quality of life for program participants, the County will support activities that prioritize families and individuals who are the most vulnerable within the qualified populations who are likely to have great compounded challenges that require more intensive supportive services to achieve and maintain housing stability. These qualifying populations require assistance transitioning to housing, including permanent supportive housing, along with short-term or long-term supportive services like case management, healthcare, legal services, and other supportive services. With better housing options and wrap-around services, these families will have a higher likelihood of becoming self-sustaining over time.

If a preference was identified, describe how the PJ will use HOME-ARP funds to address the unmet needs or gaps in benefits and services of the other qualifying populations that are not included in the preference:

Other qualified populations like veteran households or households who are at or below 50% AMI and experiencing housing problems will be eligible to receive rental assistance or supportive services. As stated in prior sections, these families and individuals have difficulty affording a rental home and have a great risk of having housing instability. The County will fund eligible activities that also support the stabilizations of these households, which will alleviate affordability challenges, overcrowding, and unsafe living conditions.

HOME-ARP Refinancing Guidelines

Cobb 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.