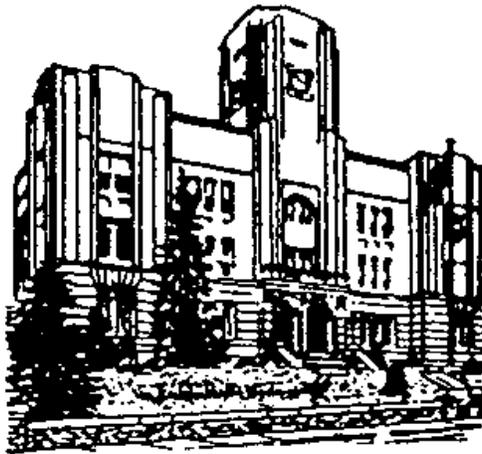


# FY 2024 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

## HAZLETON, PENNSYLVANIA



***Contact Person:***

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***Address:***

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**Hazleton, PA 18201**

Annual Action Plan

# October 2023

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## Executive Summary

### AP-05 Executive Summary - 24 CFR 91.200(c), 91.220(b)

#### 1. Introduction

The City of Hazleton has been a designated entitlement community by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for over 40 years. For Fiscal Year 2024, the City Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation from HUD is anticipated to be \$650,000. During 2024, the city of Hazleton will fund activities which provide suitable living environments.

#### 2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan

In FY 2020 the City created a new Five -Year consolidated Plan. This plan outlined the following goals which will be implemented through the 2024 program funding.

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Public Infrastructure and Facilities	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Public Facility and Infrastructure Improvements	CDBG: \$300,000/year	Public facilities 24,600 People
2	Reduce blight in the City neighborhoods	2020	2024	Other-Blight Reduction	Reduce Blight	CDBG: \$100,000	Buildings Demolished: 3 Buildings Demolished
3	Public Service	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Public Service	CDBG: \$20,000/year	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 10 Persons Assisted
4	Administration	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Planning/Admin	CDBG: 20% of grant/year	Other: 1

#### 3. Evaluation of past performance

The following highlights of past performance are based on the 2022 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) submitted to HUD in March 2023. The next CAPER for FY 2023 will be prepared for submission to HUD by March 2024. The contract for funds for FY 2023 was received in August 2023 even though the City has a January 1 start date.

The City, despite a program year period starting in January, did not receive its FY 2021 allocation from HUD until late in 2021. In FY 2022, the City achieved several milestones, including settling outstanding payments for streets completed in the previous year, procuring security cameras to enhance crime prevention efforts and collaborating with the Hazleton Housing Authority to expand the parking facilities at Vine Manor.

A significant change occurred through a Substantial Amendment, where initially proposed business loan program funds were reallocated to create a park, increasing outdoor recreational space for the community. Originally, these funds were designated for a business assistance program, but due to competing funding sources from DCED, Luzerne County, and Treasury, including PPP programs, the allocation was redirected.

To combat the challenges posed by COVID-19, the City allocated Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG CV) funds to support the development of Can-Do Park, expanding outdoor facilities to address pandemic-related needs. Additionally, COVID-19 relief funding was utilized by hiring a health officer to address pandemic-related concerns and purchasing essential fire safety supplies for the city's firefighters in response to the pandemic.

The City faces a substantial issue of vacant and abandoned properties, making them unsuitable for rehabilitation. As part of a five-year plan, the City intends to demolish up to ten of these properties.

Catholic Social Services (CSS) received a \$20,000 grant for operations and case management at a homeless shelter. However, the City experienced delays in providing a subrecipient agreement, attributed to HUD's funding award delays in 2022. CSS plans to utilize the funds in 2023. Notably, they assisted 229 individuals in 2022 and have already served 500 people to date.

The upgrades of security cameras in city parks is now complete. Originally funded in 2018 and 2019, this project faced delays due to supply chain issues in 2019 and 2020. The primary objectives were to enhance crime deterrence and reduce vandalism in City parks.

The aspiration to create new housing did not see progress in 2022. Achievement of this goal will depend on funding availability and the willingness of a developer to collaborate with the City to expand the housing inventory.

#### **4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process**

The City of Hazleton's goal for citizen participation is to ensure a broad participation of City residents and housing, economic, and service providers in the planning and implementation of the community development program. Citizen participation takes the form of advertised community meetings and public hearings.

The City of Hazleton engaged the services of a consultant, Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc., to assist with the preparation of the 2024 Annual Action Plan. The planning process for the preparation of the FY 2024 Annual Action Plan included outreach to many community organizations. As part of the Consolidated Plan, a meeting was also held with the Hazleton Housing Coalition which brings together a variety of agencies to discuss the housing and homeless needs of the city.

The public hearings were advertised in a local newspaper of general circulation, the *Hazleton Standard Speaker* and posted to the Spanish language social media outlets. Participation and applications for funding were solicited from local agencies by letter directed to those agencies. The public was invited to comment on the needs of the community through the two public hearings.

The City of Hazleton included language in the English newspaper advertisement to indicate that the plan could be made available in alternative languages or formats upon request to meet the needs of non-English speaking or disabled individuals. Local community agencies that serve low-income persons that also provide services to non-English speaking persons, low-income persons and persons with disabilities were sent the Action Plan with a request for comments.

A public needs hearing was held on September 11, 2023. A second public hearing was held on October 19, 2023. Both hearings were held through virtual platforms as meetings in person were still discouraged by the state and CDC. The public hearings were advertised in the *Hazleton Standard Speaker* and Spanish language publication, El Mensajero Magazine. Notification of both hearings was distributed within the community through letters, flyers and the City's website and posted at the City Clerk's Office in City Hall.

In agreement with 24 CFR 91.100(4), the City of Hazleton notified the adjacent units of government that it was completing this Annual Action Plan. A copy of the completed Annual Action Plan will be sent to the Luzerne County as well.

A summary of the Annual Action Plan was published in *Hazleton Standard Speaker* and *El Mensajero Magazine* on October 5, 2023, alerting interested persons as to the availability of the Annual Action Plan. The Annual Action Plan was available from October 6, 2023, to November 6, 2023 for a 30-day comment period and available for citizen review at the City Hall, Office of Community Development, 40 N. Church Street, and at the Hazleton Public Library at 55 N. Church Street. In addition, the document was placed on the City's web-site: <https://www.hazletoncity.org/departments/comm-econ-development>

**5. Summary of public comments**

Public comments will be added after the public comment period has elapsed.

**6. Summary of comments or views not accepted and the reasons for not accepting them**

Narrative to be added upon completion of the public comment period.

**7. Summary**

Narrative to be added after the close of the public comment period.

## PR-05 Lead & Responsible Agencies – 91.200(b)

### 1. Agency/entity responsible for preparing/administering the Consolidated Plan

Describe the agency/entity responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan and those responsible for administration of each grant program and funding source.

Agency Role	Name	Department/Agency
Lead Agency	Hazleton, PA	
CDBG Administrator	Hazleton, PA	Department of Community and Economic Development

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

### Narrative (optional)

### Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

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## **AP-10 Consultation – 91.100, 91.200(b), 91.215(I)**

### **1. Introduction**

The City of Hazleton actively consulted with a variety of non-profits, social service providers, community citizens, and other governmental agencies throughout the year. Invitations to the first public hearing were sent to different agencies and organizations to solicit participation. Additionally, meetings were held throughout the year with affordable/special needs housing providers, business associations, homeless providers, and health and human service providers.

### **Provide a concise summary of the jurisdiction's activities to enhance coordination between public and assisted housing providers and private and governmental health, mental health and service agencies (91.215(I))**

The Housing Development Corporation of NEPA offers several Programs and services for Luzerne County communities. Programs include homebuyers counseling and supporting housing service as well manages the development of affordable housing projects. The Hazleton Housing Coalition is comprised of a wide range of agencies involved in human services that meet regularly to discuss housing issues and immediate social needs in the community. Additionally, The Hazleton Housing Authority (HHA) oversees three public housing complexes and the Housing Choice Voucher program. The City is an active participant with the Coalition and HHA. This informal group is chaired by the United Way and is open to all stakeholders in the community.

### **Describe coordination with the Continuum of Care and efforts to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans, and unaccompanied youth) and persons at risk of homelessness.**

The Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) takes the lead agency role with the Luzerne County Continuum of Care (COC). Representatives from the City of Hazleton, specifically Catholic Social Services, participate in the process. During preparation of the Consolidated Plan, the City discussed the COC goals with the COC Coordinator and incorporated the goals of the COC in the Plan. A copy of the draft plan was provided to the COC for review and comment.

### **Describe consultation with the Continuum(s) of Care that serves the jurisdiction's area in determining how to allocate ESG funds, develop performance standards for and evaluate outcomes of projects and activities assisted by ESG funds, and develop funding, policies and procedures for the operation and administration of HMIS**

The City of Hazleton is not a HUD Entitlement recipient of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding. The City has pursued competitive ESG funding through the PA DCED and as such participates in the HMIS, but does not participate in decision making related to performance standards or outcomes. The City participates in the public participation process for the CoC NOFO to ensure consistency with the City’s Consolidated Plan.

**2. Describe Agencies, groups, organizations and others who participated in the process and describe the jurisdiction’s consultations with housing, social service agencies and other entities**

Annually, a wide range of stakeholders is consulted to determine the level of housing and social service needs. This consultation included housing and social service agencies as well as public agencies and private nonprofit organizations whose missions include the provision of affordable housing and human services to low- and moderate- income households and persons.

1	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	<b>Hazleton Housing Authority</b>
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	PHA Services - Housing
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Housing Need Assessment Public Housing Needs
	<b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b>	The PHA needs and housing needs in the community were discussed with the Director of the Hazleton Housing Authority by telephone.
2	<b>Agency/Group/Organization</b>	<b>Catholic Social Services</b>
	<b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b>	Services - Housing Services-homeless
	<b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b>	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy

<p><b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b></p>	<p>Homeless needs and housing needs in the community were discussed with the Director of the Catholic Social Services. CSS coordinates with the regional COC. CDBG funds will continue to support the operations and services at the homeless shelter.</p>
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**Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated**

**Identify any Agency Types not consulted and provide rationale for not consulting**

There were no agencies intentionally not consulted. The City evaluated broadband providers and flood hazard mitigation agencies during the preparation of the consolidated plan. No further consultation was warranted during the development of this Annual Plan.

**Other local/regional/state/federal planning efforts considered when preparing the Plan**

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
Continuum of Care	Commission on Economic Opportunity	The COC through the CEO ensure that the goals of the COC and the City’s goals are consistent.

**Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts**

**Narrative (optional)**

**AP-12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)**

- 1. Summary of citizen participation process/Efforts made to broaden citizen participation**  
**Summarize citizen participation process and how it impacted goal-setting**

**Citizen Participation Outreach**

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
1	Public Meeting	All residents	There were no participants in the public hearing.	All comments were received and document. Attached in appendix.	All comments were documented and included.	
2	Newspapers and social media outlets	Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: Spanish	The public hearing notices were run in two Spanish Language newspapers.	No comments were received.	No comments were received.	
3	Public Hearing	All residents				
4	Newspaper and social media outlets	Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: Spanish	The 2 <sup>nd</sup> public hearing notices were run in the Spanish Language newspaper.	No comments were received.	No comments were received.	

**Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach**

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## Expected Resources

### AP-15 Expected Resources – 91.220(c)(1,2)

#### Introduction

#### Anticipated Resources

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
CDBG	public - federal	Acquisition Admin and Planning Public Improvements Public Services	\$650,000.00			\$650,000.00	\$650,000.00	

Table 5 - Expected Resources – Priority Table

**Explain how federal funds will leverage those additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements will be satisfied**

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The City will use CDBG funds whenever possible to leverage other grants and funds from State and Federal sources. The City has received funding from the State's Local Community Account, set up to distribute the proceeds throughout the County from gambling establishments. The City also has been successful at leveraging state funds for recreation area and transportation improvements.

**If appropriate, describe publicly owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that may be used to address the needs identified in the plan**

The City does not have any land or property resources that will be used for CDBG needs.

**Discussion**

## Annual Goals and Objectives

### AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives

#### Goals Summary Information

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Public Infrastructure and Facilities	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Public Facility and Infrastructure Improvements	CDBG: \$399,625	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 24,600
2	Reduce blight in the City's Neighborhoods	2020	2024	Blight Reduction	Reduce Blight	CDBG: \$100,375	Buildings Demolished: 2 Buildings
3	Support public services	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Public Service	CDBG: \$20,000	Homeless Person Overnight Shelter: 30 Persons Assisted
4	Administration	2020	2024	Administration	Planning and Administration	CDBG: \$130,000	Other: 1

**Table 6 – Goals Summary**

#### Goal Descriptions

<b>1</b>	<b>Goal Name</b>	Public Infrastructure and Facilities
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	<b>Goal Description</b>	Street improvements including Section 108 loan repayments
2	<b>Goal Name</b>	Reduce blight in the City's Neighborhoods
	<b>Goal Description</b>	Remove blight by demolishing dilapidated, buildings that are a danger to the community as needed.
3	<b>Goal Name</b>	Support public services
	<b>Goal Description</b>	Case Management - Catholic Social Services will serve homeless persons
4	<b>Goal Name</b>	Administration
	<b>Goal Description</b>	Ongoing program oversight and management and citizen outreach

**Estimate the number of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income families to whom the jurisdiction will provide affordable housing as defined by HOME 91.215(b)**

The City has not elected to fund any housing projects with 2024 funds.

## Projects

### AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

#### Introduction

The City intends to assist in the implementation of four activities including street reconstruction, demotion of one property and fund homeless services. 2024 funding will also allow the City to continue repayment on a Section 108 loan and CBDG program administration

#### Projects

#	Project Name
1	Clearance/Demolition S/B
2	Public Facility & Improvement – Street Reconstruction
3	Public Facility & Improvement – Section 108 Loan Exempt
4	Slum/Blight Spot basis Hazelton Redevelopment Authority
5	Public Service Homeless Service
6	CBDG Administration

Table 7 - Project Information

#### **Describe the reasons for allocation priorities and any obstacles to addressing underserved needs**

The City has identified improving the quality of life as the priority need in the five-year plan. High priorities for FY 2020-2024 are improving public infrastructure, including sidewalk curb ramps and street improvements. Enhancing economic opportunity and improving and expanding housing opportunities for low- and moderate - income households.

The City has a predominantly low-income population which places demands on a limited tax base. The City is unable to allocate sufficient resources to improvements of infrastructure and facilities.

## AP-38 Project Summary

### Project Summary Information

1	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Clearance- Scattered Site</b>
	<b>Target Area</b>	City-wide
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Reduce blight in the City's Neighborhoods
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Reduce Blight
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$50,375
	<b>Description</b>	Removal of blighted, vacant buildings that pose a threat to health and safety.
	<b>Target Date</b>	12/31/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Estimated number of buildings to be demolished: 2
	Location Description	Scattered Site, Citywide
	Planned Activities	Demolition of vacant and blighted properties Matrix Code 04
2	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Public Facility &amp; Improvement – Street Reconstruction</b>
	<b>Target Area</b>	City-wide
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Public Infrastructure and Facilities
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Facility and Infrastructure Improvements
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$273,875
	<b>Description</b>	Resurface and reconstruct streets in low-income areas of the City.
	<b>Target Date</b>	12/31/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	City wide impact – all 24,600 residents
	Location Description	To be determined
	Planned Activities	Street improvements with curb ramps constructed at intersections as needed. Matrix Code 03K
3	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Public Facility &amp; Improvement – Section 108 Loan Exempt</b>
	<b>Target Area</b>	City-wide

	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Public Infrastructure and Facilities
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Facility and Infrastructure Improvements
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$125,750
	<b>Description</b>	Repay principal and interested owed to HUD for \$1 million loan to reconstruct City-wide streets
	<b>Target Date</b>	12/31/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Not applicable
	Location Description	City-Wide
	Planned Activities	Annual repayment of Section 108 loan. Matrix Code 19F
<b>4</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Slum/Blight Spot basis Hazelton Redevelopment Authority</b>
	<b>Target Area</b>	City-wide
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Reduce blight in the City's Neighborhoods
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Reduce Blight
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$50,000
	<b>Description</b>	Delivery costs associated with carrying out the removal of blighted, vacant buildings that pose a threat to health and safety.
	<b>Target Date</b>	12/31/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Estimated number of buildings to be demolished: 2
	Location Description	Scattered site Citywide
	Planned Activities	Demolition of vacant and blighted properties Matrix Code 04
<b>5</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Public Service - Homeless Service</b>
	<b>Target Area</b>	City-wide
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Support public services
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Public Service
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$20,000
	<b>Description</b>	Case Manager and Operations for Homeless shelter.
	<b>Target Date</b>	12/31/2024

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Approximately 30 people will be provided homeless shelter beds during the year.
	Location Description	200 W. Chapel Street
	Planned Activities	Case Manager and Operations for Homeless shelter. Matrix Code 03T
<b>6</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Administration</b>
	<b>Target Area</b>	
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Administration
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Planning and Administration
	<b>Funding</b>	CDBG: \$130,000
	<b>Description</b>	Ongoing program oversight and management and Citizen outreach
	<b>Target Date</b>	12/31/2023
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	N/A Admin
	Location Description	40 N. Church St. Hazleton
	Planned Activities	On-going program oversight and management and Citizen outreach Matrix Code 21A

## **AP-50 Geographic Distribution – 91.220(f)**

Description of the geographic areas of the entitlement (including areas of low-income and minority concentration) where assistance will be directed

While Hazleton’s population size has stayed roughly the same since 2000, its ethnic composition has shifted dramatically. Hispanic and Latino residents represented less than five percent of the city’s population in 2000. In 2020, the Hispanic/Latino community is an estimated 18,898 and now represents over half of Hazleton’s total population.

The growing Latino population coincided with a shrinking number of White, non-Hispanic residents. In 2016, White residents represented 48 percent of the population. As of 2020, a little more than 11,000 White residents make up only 38 percent of the city population.

Census Tract 2174 meets the threshold as an R/ECAP. As of the 2010 decennial census, the census tract designated as an R/ECAP, Census tract 2174, was home to 1,605 residents, 47.8 percent of whom were non-White. ACS data for 2016 indicates that just over half of the tract’s population live below the poverty line. Over 62 percent of the area identifies as Hispanic/Latino as of the most recent ACS data, indicating a higher concentration of this population than the citywide average of 52 percent. The area is also characterized by lower incomes, a higher proportion of renters, and a larger supply of multi-family housing.

As of 2018, Census tracts 2173 and 2175 were added to the list of areas that meet the R/ECAP threshold. According to the ACS 2020 5-year estimates, Census tracts 2173-2175 house 7,509 (30%) of Hazleton’s population. The majority who live in these three tracts are Hispanic (55%). A total of 25.7% earned an income below the poverty level in the last 12 months. Almost 75% of the population who earned below the poverty level were Hispanic.

Census tracts 2173-2175 are part of the Federal Opportunity zone.

### **Geographic Distribution**

<b>Target Area</b>	<b>Percentage of Funds</b>
Citywide	<b>100%</b>

**Table 8 - Geographic Distribution**

**Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically**

Assistance is not directed to any specific geographic area in the City. There are no target areas. The City is largely low income and racially diverse. The City will address the highest priority needs on a year by year basis.

**Discussion**

## Affordable Housing

### AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

#### Introduction

The City completed an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in 2018. The plan identified impediments due to language barriers, education of fair housing, inadequate supply of housing and lack of public transportation. To mitigate these negative effects; action items include fair housing education and outreach; updates to the City’s Language Access Plan; expanding affordable housing opportunities for members of protected classes; and advocacy for public transit systems that connect lower income neighborhoods to major employment centers and education facilities.

The City is working to improve employment opportunities so that residents can better afford housing. The LEP will be updated when updated data is available. The latest data, 2016 continues to under-represent the Hispanic population. However, the 2016 LEP does reflect the need to do outreach in Spanish which the City has started to do by advertising in a local Spanish newspaper publication. The City is looking to partner with a developer to provide expanded housing opportunities. Further, the City is working to improve employment opportunities so that residents can better afford housing.

Public policies have not been identified that have a negative effect on housing affordability. The City has land use policies and investment strategies that do not limit or impede private investment. The most significant barrier to affordable housing in the City of Hazleton is lack of income. Despite the comparatively low rents and low-cost housing for sale, households in the City of Hazleton are still cost- burdened.

<b>One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported</b>	
Homeless	0
Non-Homeless	0
Special-Needs	0
Total	0

**Table 9 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement**

<b>One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through</b>	
Rental Assistance	0
The Production of New Units	0
Rehab of Existing Units	0
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	0

**Table 10 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type  
Discussion**

## **AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)**

### **Introduction**

#### **Actions planned during the next year to address the needs to public housing**

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

HHA has an active resident council (Hazleton Coalition of Resident Councils) that reviews agency plans and provides input on any planned capital improvements and services.

HHA has administered a ROSS Grant for homeownership utilizing Catholic Social Services to provide financial literacy and self-sufficiency. HHA has created a partnership with Catholic Social Services, Pennsylvania Association of Resident Councils, Commission on Economic Opportunity, Consumer Credit Counseling Services and many other community agencies to promote homeownership for public housing residents. In addition, HHA is administering a Homeownership Program utilizing its Housing Choice Vouchers. Two families are participating in the program and have purchased homes.

#### **If the PHA is designated as troubled, describe the manner in which financial assistance will be provided or other assistance**

The HHA is not “troubled”. The Hazleton Housing Authority is a Standard Performing agency.

### **Discussion**

## **AP-65 Homeless and Other Special Needs Activities – 91.220(i)**

### **Introduction**

The City is part of the Luzerne County Continuum of Care (CoC).

### **Describe the jurisdictions one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including**

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

The Give Hope team at the VOAPA performs Street Outreach activities for the CoC, including all of Luzerne County and the Cities of Hazleton and Wilkes Barre. Outreach efforts are targeted to community "hot spots"—areas known to have large or small populations of unsheltered individuals such as “tent cities”, under bridges, along the railroad tracks, abandoned buildings, and community parks - to locate and then engage with any person they meet. Through conversations with the people encountered, VOA’s trained outreach workers identify if the person is unsheltered and homeless; complete a thorough assessment of the individual’s physical, behavioral, and mental health needs; housing and employment status; and other needs. The outreach staff then works to connect the individual to the relevant community-based services for shelter or service offered in our partner network. Outreach staff maintains contact with the person to provide extensive case management, including follow-up and individualized support. For persons experiencing homelessness who may be least likely to request assistance, the Give Hope street outreach workers are trained to provide trauma informed care and remain aware of the many co-occurring conditions the individuals they encounter experience.

Street Outreach efforts are coupled with the CoC coordinated assessment process in which the agency that is first approached by a homeless household will conduct an intake and screening to determine the household’s needs. Referrals to appropriate providers will direct the household to the provider that can best meet those needs. Outreach is conducted by a number of agencies, including mental health providers and an HIV/AIDS provider.

In 2024, the City will continue to participate in the Hazleton Housing Coalition (HHC) to better represent Hazleton on the Luzerne County CoC and to coordinate services locally. The HHC meets periodically to discuss current homelessness issues.

#### **Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons**

The successful coordination of the community service providers in making sure any homeless family with children is provided with shelter means that there are no families on the street. This

coordination operates with outreach through HELPLINE (the County's 24-hour information and referral network), police departments and HHC member agencies such as Children & Youth Services and Commission of Economic Opportunity (CEO). The City has applied for ESG funds through the Commonwealth of PA for a day-shelter facility in 2022. Comments received at the September 14, 2022, public needs hearing indicate the need for emergency shelters, especially for families.

Catholic Social Services opened a permanent homeless shelter in early 2019 and also provides transitional housing for youth aging out of foster care who have mental health diagnoses. New Roots opened a day shelter with support from the Pennsylvania ESG CV program. PA DCED ESG continues to provide operational support for the day center. New Roots offers several services for those impacted by substance use disorders and their families. They offer recovery support, fellowship, and community-based self-help programming with weekly group meetings. They also offer job development programs that include interviewing practice, resume building, career counseling, and have computer labs. New Roots also holds gatherings, wellness education, and family events.

When a homeless family with children is identified, they are initially referred to one of the family shelters. If that shelter is inappropriate due to the shelter being full or unable to accept the family due to age of a male child, or the family is a two-parent family with children, CEO has the ability to provide emergency sheltering services with hotel/motel vouchers. If a family is in need of sheltering after hours, Annual Action Plan 30 holidays or weekends, HELPLINE will authorize lodging in a hotel/motel. This network has been in existence since 1972 and remains effective in its operation to quickly identify and shelter homeless families with dependent children.

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

The Luzerne Co. CoC has in place mechanisms to work with the service providers in the county to improve outcomes and stability upon leaving shelter, reducing the time that individuals and families are homeless, and preventing homelessness. The coordinated assessment process helps move those that are homeless or seeking prevention services to connect to the appropriate provider. Individual service and shelter providers are working at improving family

stability through identification of barriers to stability that are identified in the assessment process.

Catholic Social Services will provide case management at the homeless shelter and transitional housing to help homeless persons find jobs and housing and stay housed within the community. CDBG funds are allocated to support this case manager.

The CoC prioritizes permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing both of which offer services to help homeless individuals and households achieve and maintain stability once housed.

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

Additional funding for prevention is needed to keep families and individuals from becoming homeless. Due to COVID, additional funding from various federal agencies allocated through the CARES Act has been available in the community for food and other services, but these resources are dwindling if not exhausted.

The Hazleton Housing Coalition will continue to work on developing funding streams and coordination that will maximize the funding that is available. The Coalition has several key initiatives: prepare a City housing plan, create better connections to local services, increase case management and counseling services needed to prevent homelessness and reduce the number of persons who return to homelessness. Discharge planning to create a housing plan, connection to local services, case management and counseling is used to prevent homelessness and a return to homelessness.

## **Discussion**

## **AP-75 Barriers to affordable housing – 91.220(j)**

### **Introduction:**

Hazleton is facing an ongoing housing problem - not enough housing. The large influx of Puerto Ricans and Spanish-speaking immigrants to the community has put a strain on housing resources.

### **Actions it planned to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment**

The City completed an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in 2018. An action plan identified impediments due to language barriers, education of fair housing, inadequate supply of housing and lack of public transportation. To mitigate these negative effects; action items include fair housing education and outreach; updates to the City's Language Access Plan; expanding affordable housing opportunities for members of protected classes; and advocacy for public transit systems that connect lower income neighborhoods to major employment centers and education facilities.

The City is working to improve employment opportunities so that residents can better afford housing. The LEP will be updated when updated data is available. The latest data, 2016 continues to under-represent the Hispanic population. However, the 2016 LEP does reflect the need to do outreach in Spanish which the City has started to do by advertising in the two local Spanish newspaper publications. The City is looking to partner with a developer to provide expanded housing opportunities. Further, the City is working to improve employment opportunities so that residents can better afford housing.

Public policies have not been identified that have a negative effect on housing affordability. The City has land use policies and investment strategies that do not limit or impede private investment. The most significant barrier to affordable housing in the City of Hazleton is lack of income. Despite the comparatively low rents and low-cost housing for sale, households in the City of Hazleton are still cost burdened.

The City completed an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in 2018. The AI identified four impediments:

1. Lack of knowledge among landlords and residents about what constitutes discrimination and reasonable accommodation obligations
2. Persons with limited English proficiency may not be able to fully access the City's housing and community development services and programs due to language barriers

3. An inadequate supply of affordable housing exists as evidenced by high demand for accessible units, cost burden borne by renter households, disproportionately greater need among Black and Hispanic households with incomes greater than 50% AMI
4. The public transportation system in Hazleton restricts housing choice and access to employment and education opportunities for residents who are transit-dependent

Along with the AI, the City developed an action plan to mitigate these negative effects. Action items include fair housing education and outreach; updates to the City's Language Access Plan; expanding affordable housing opportunities for members of protected classes; advocate for public transit systems that connect lower income neighborhoods to major employment centers and education facilities.

**Discussion:**

## **AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)**

### **Introduction:**

The City is limited by what can be accomplished by the limited resources at its disposal to address the scope actions outside of the projects funded by CDBG and other grants. We are working to improve living conditions in the city through improved jobs, public improvements, blight reduction and communication among residents.

### **Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs**

The City of Hazleton will work with social service agencies and the County of Luzerne to identify and develop strategies to meet the needs of underserved populations. The City is not a social service delivery agency and does not address social service needs directly. However, should specific funding requests for programs that address such needs be recommended to the City of Hazleton, City Council will consider those requests.

### **Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing**

A majority of the City's housing stock is affordable, but often in poor condition. The City of Hazleton recognizes the need to enforce the current codes and ordinances pertaining to housing maintenance. While not implemented by the City, Luzerne County is the recipient of Whole Home Repair Program funds through PA DCED. Funds will be used to make repairs to eligible homeowner and renter-occupied properties to help improve the County's housing stock. Properties located in the City of Hazleton would be eligible to receive assistance.

### **Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards**

As of April 22, 2010, all contractors in the nation who work in homes constructed prior to 1978 must have an EPA Certification and have at least one person on each job site that has taken the EPA Certification 8-hour class on lead-based paint safety. The City will make available through the Building Code office the EPA Paint, Renovate, Repair, and Painting booklet available for interested residents.

The City's housing rehabilitation guidelines provide for the administration of the housing program in a manner consistent with the regulations. The City incorporated the EPA Paint and Renovation guidelines into its program as well. While the program is currently not active, if reinstated, Lead-based paint will be part of it.

### **Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families**

The City of Hazleton will continue to invest in job-creating activities with an emphasis on the hiring of low-income residents. The City will continue to pursue economic development in all forms to increase the supply of good-paying jobs available to City residents.

The City will support applications to HUD and other agencies for funding for such programs. While not implemented by the City, Luzerne County is the recipient of Whole Home Repair Program funds through PA DCED. Award of these funds a workforce development component aimed at providing education in the construction and rehabilitation trades. Such program is designed to provide low-income workers with job training education and experience.

In the award of contracts, the City will continue to implement the Section 3 Plan which promotes the utilization of firms owned by low-income persons.

### **Actions planned to develop institutional structure**

The City of Hazleton Office of Community Development (OCD) is the facilitator for the activities described by the Consolidated Plan (CP). The City of Hazleton has the authority to apply for and administer CDBG funds and other grants. The City will also support other activities by providing certifications of consistency with the CP.

The CDBG funds are administered by Director of Community Development. The Director is able to effectively and efficiently coordinate community development activities in the City of Hazleton. The staff of the OCD will continue to avail themselves of HUD training and technical assistance to provide more efficient and comprehensive program management and oversight.

The Hazleton Housing Authority is another public entity in the community that utilizes funding from HUD. HHA's board is appointed by the Mayor. HHA's board hires its executive director and is responsible for managing its funds.

### **Actions planned to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies**

During FY 2024, the City will continue to work with shelter organizations, affordable housing development groups, CoC and Hazleton Housing Coalition and local non-profit agencies to coordinate services and funding for important social programs and physical improvements in the City. The City funds and coordinates with Catholic Social Services as well as the Commission

on Economic Opportunity on the needs of homeless and near homeless in the City and other special needs populations.

**Discussion:**

## Program Specific Requirements

### AP-90 Program Specific Requirements – 91.220(l)(1,2,4)

#### Introduction:

#### Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Reference 24 CFR 91.220(l)(1)

Projects planned with all CDBG funds expected to be available during the year are identified in the Projects Table. The following identifies program income that is available for use that is included in projects to be carried out.

1. The total amount of program income that will have been received before the start of the next program year and that has not yet been reprogrammed	0
2. The amount of proceeds from section 108 loan guarantees that will be used during the year to address the priority needs and specific objectives identified in the grantee's strategic plan	0
3. The amount of surplus funds from urban renewal settlements	0
4. The amount of any grant funds returned to the line of credit for which the planned use has not been included in a prior statement or plan.	0
5. The amount of income from float-funded activities	0
Total Program Income	

#### Other CDBG Requirements

1. The amount of urgent need activities	0
2. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income. Overall Benefit - A consecutive period of one, two or three years may be used to determine that a minimum overall benefit of 70% of CDBG funds is used to benefit persons of low and moderate income. Specify the years covered that include this Annual Action Plan.	80.7%

