

CITY OF WORCESTER, MA



CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE & EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER) REPORTING ON YEAR ONE OF THE 2020-2025

CONSOLIDATED PLAN:

7/1/20 – 6/30/21



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CR-05 - Goals and Outcomes

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

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

During this Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) period (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021), Worcester made progress toward many of its five year community development goals and priority needs.

To help low-to moderate income populations that may be homeless, at risk of homelessness, living with HIV/AIDS, or struggling with housing security, the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) implemented eight (7) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program contracts with six (6) local project sponsors totaling \$ 385,068 for 400 homeless or at-risk of homelessness households. This is considerably LESS funding for ESG programs compared to prior year. The Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program generated five (5) contracts with four (4) agencies worth \$631,793 to assist approximately 140 households with supportive services, project- and tenant- based rental assistance, and/or homeless prevention services throughout the Worcester Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA). The HOME funded Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program provided \$165,000 to provide 50 single adults experiencing homelessness with the opportunity of stable housing in conjunction with supportive services.

Affordable housing activities made steady progress in meeting the outcomes outlined by the 5-Year Consolidated Plan Goals. In conjunction with the City of Worcester Department of Inspectional Services (DIS), one (1) large blighted building is in progress of being demolished with \$101,444 of Community Development Block CDBG funds. The Systematic Housing Inspections Program (“Sweeps” program) run in conjunction with DIS utilized \$30,940 in CDBG to inspect 364 units of housing. The first time homebuyer down payment assistance program utilized \$15,000 to assist three (3) households with a purchase of their first home. This assistance is capped at \$5,000 per person for this activity. During the first year action plan period \$696,086 of CDBG funds and \$858,420 of HOME funds were expended toward the rehab 42 housing units (11 homeowner units and 31 rental units) and the construction of 1 new home owner units. These funds were used to assist with energy improvements, reduce lead hazards, repair code violations, and for safe and healthy rental units for low- to moderate- income populations. Due to COVID there was less activity in traditional housing activities, but with the recovery funds allowing none traditional funding mechanism with the funds we were able to fund other activities. This includes the Emergency Rental Assistance program, which provided rental assistance for those affected by the pandemic. This year \$215,506 in CDBG-CV funds were used to assist 120 households pay rental arrears. This successful program will continue as

long as the funding stream will allow.

Regarding public service activities, a total of 7,005 low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons were assisted through 28 CDBG funded programs worth \$1,219,118 during the first year action plan period. This includes 17 CDBG funded programs worth \$653,436 that were contracted through first year CDBG entitlement funds which provided services to 4,882 low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons to address identified needs for health services, case management, homelessness prevention, youth programming, food and housing security, legal assistance, after school programming, recreational activities, financial assistance and elder transportation. Another 11 programs worth \$565,682 were also funded during this period with CDBG emergency COVID-19 stabilization funds to assist 2,123 LMI persons with food, hot meals, youth recreation, homelessness prevention, transportation and case management services. CDBG Public Service funds leveraged more than \$1,656,164 in other public and private resources during this period.

CDBG funds help City of Worcester provide much needed public facility improvements. During the last year, \$1,596,000 in CDBG funds were allocated to public facilities improvement projects including \$36,000 for Senior Center Kitchen Improvements, \$250,000 to the YWCA of Central Mass for Parking Lot Reconstruction and Paving, \$300,000 for Green Island Infrastructure Improvements, and \$1,010,000 for Low-Mod Neighborhood Street Improvements. CDBG expenditures for public facilities during the first year action plan period totaled \$318,610 including \$200,000 for the YWCA for elevator modernization and bathroom/ADA upgrades, \$93,036 for Friendly House installation of gymnasium air conditioning, and \$25,574 towards repaving/reconstruction of Lamartine and Lodi Streets within the Green Island neighborhood. CDBG funds help to incentivize business creation, expansion, and enhancement through loans, grants, and technical assistance. During the last year, 7 business employing 9 persons were assisted with \$110,000 in CDBG. In addition, 274 businesses were assisted with \$1,885,800 in CDBG emergency COVID-19 stabilization funds from April through June 2020 (just prior to this CAPER reporting period). Thus a total of 281 businesses employing 786 persons have been assisted with \$1,995,800 in CDBG from April 2020 to June 2021. These CDBG funds in turn leveraged more than \$2,078,705 in other private and public funds.

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

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

Goal	Category	Source / Amount	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Complete
Affordable Housing Development & Preservation	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Rental units constructed	Household Housing Unit	75	0	0.00%	15	0	0.00%
Affordable Housing Development & Preservation	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Rental units rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	90	31	34.44%	18	31	172.22%
Affordable Housing Development & Preservation	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Homeowner Housing Added	Household Housing Unit	75	1	1.33%	1	1	100.00%
Affordable Housing Development & Preservation	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	125	11	8.80%	25	11	44.00%
Affordable Housing Development & Preservation	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers	Households Assisted	50	3	6.00%	10	3	30.00%
Affordable Housing Development & Preservation	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing	Households Assisted	100	30	30.00%	30	30	100.00%

Economic Development & Business Assistance	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Facade treatment/business building rehabilitation	Business	50	2	4.00%	5	2	40.00%
Economic Development & Business Assistance	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Jobs created/retained	Jobs	50	9	18.00%	9	9	100.00%
Economic Development & Business Assistance	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Businesses assisted	Businesses Assisted	50	7	14.00%	5	7	140.00%
Expanded Resources for Homeless Prevention	Homeless	ESG: \$	Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing	Households Assisted	330	100	30.30%			
Expanded Resources for Homeless Prevention	Homeless	ESG: \$	Homelessness Prevention	Persons Assisted	0	0		66	0	0.00%
Healthy and Sustainable Housing	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Buildings Demolished	Buildings	15	1	6.67%	3	1	33.33%
Healthy and Sustainable Housing	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Housing Code Enforcement/Foreclosed Property Care	Household Housing Unit	4235	364	8.60%	847	364	42.98%
Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs	HOPWA: \$ / ESG: \$762726	Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing	Households Assisted	125	35	28.00%	25	35	140.00%

Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs	HOPWA: \$ / ESG: \$762726	Homelessness Prevention	Persons Assisted	350	95	27.00%	70	95	136.00%
Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs	HOPWA: \$ / ESG: \$762726	Housing for People with HIV/AIDS added	Household Housing Unit	50	0	0.00%	10	0	0.00%
Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs	HOPWA: \$ / ESG: \$762726	HIV/AIDS Housing Operations	Household Housing Unit	550	33	6.00%	110	33	30.00%
Improvements and Preservation of Public Facilities	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	98325	17068	17.36%	98325	17068	17.36%
Neighborhood Stabilization & Revitalization	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	1953	1953	100.00%	1953	1953	100.00%
Public Services for Low-Moderate Income Persons	Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	5081	3542	69.71%	5081	7005	137.87%

Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons	Homeless	ESG: \$	Homeless Person Overnight Shelter	Persons Assisted	3345	971	29.03%			
Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons	Homeless	ESG: \$	Homelessness Prevention	Persons Assisted	0	0		669	971	145.14%
Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons	Homeless	ESG: \$	Other	Other	500	81	16.20%	100	81	81.00%

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

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

Beginning in the summer of 2019, the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) engaged in a citizen participation process to identify community needs and provide community input on activities and programs to fund. Ten community needs assessment public meetings were held in different parts of the City, with at least one in each of the City Council districts. The meetings were attended by 141 total participants from neighborhoods with underserved, low-income, diverse, and minority residents. All meetings were intentionally held at locations accessible for potential and actual beneficiaries. The public meetings were advertised broadly through the City’s media office as well as through door-to-door neighborhood outreach with at least one bilingual staff member. At each of the meetings, two bilingual staff persons were present that were able to provide translation and/or facilitation in Spanish and Vietnamese. In addition, a special public hearing was also held in the Green

Island neighborhood in July 2019 to focus attention on the needs of that, very low- income, inner-city neighborhood (65 persons participated).

Cont. from intro

CR-10 - Racial and Ethnic composition of families assisted

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

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

	CDBG	HOME	ESG	HOPWA
Race:				
White	7601	14	0	0
Black or African American	2527	15	0	0
Asian	1013	1	0	0
American Indian or American Native	104	2	0	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	94	0	0	0
Total	11339	32	0	0
Ethnicity:				
Hispanic	4245	8	0	0
Not Hispanic	7094	24	0	0

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

Narrative

Above reports from IDIS PR-23 accomplishment reports. Please see attached HOPWA CAPER and ESG SAGE CAPER 2020-21 analysis for racial and ethnic populations assisted with HOPWA and ESG.

CR-15 - Resources and Investments 91.520(a)

Identify the resources made available

Source of Funds	Source	Resources Made Available	Amount Expended During Program Year
CDBG	public - federal	6,719,045	3,314,300
HOME	public - federal	2,454,497	945,526
HOPWA	public - federal	762,726	237,300
ESG	public - federal	390,206	146,118

Table 3 - Resources Made Available

Narrative

With respect to the CDBG program, the Five Year Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) estimated there would be approximately \$6.71 million of funds available for year 1. Worcester ended up expending \$3.31 million of CDBG funds last year. During the year 945k of HOME funds were expended on multiple projects.

Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
Green Island Revitalization Initiative	36	36	Census Tract 7325.00
Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	55	97	Census Tracts > 51.0% LMI

Table 4 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Narrative

The City of Worcester is comprised of 44 U.S. Census tracts, of which 26 tracts had 51.0% or more of their populations being persons of Low-Moderate Income (LMI) - defined by HUD as households whose incomes were 80% or less of the metropolitan area median income as adjusted for family size. One of these tracts, 7325.00, was ranked as one of the top 5 of the city's most distressed and the with high levels of poverty, crime, problems with idle youth including gangs and drugs, foreclosed properties, absentee property ownership, vacant/boarded-up buildings, empty lots and other economic distress factors. This tract (7325.00) is the focus of the Green Island neighborhood, which works across multiple City departments in concert with key community institutions and stakeholders to improve the quality of life in that area.

The city's focus on targeted, strategic neighborhood development and revitalization is exemplified by the targeting of allocations to programs that serve Low-Moderate Income census tracts particularly in the Green Island neighborhood. Overall 95% non-administrative, First Year Annual Action Plan (7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021) funds were targeted to activities located or that serve the above reported 26 LMI Census Tracts, of which 36% of allocated funds will directly serve the Green Island neighborhood.

Leveraging

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

The HOME Match report below shows the Match requirement of the program was met with an excessive match to be carried over to next year. Through the CARES Act process a waiver was given for a 100% reduction in the HOME match requirement for this year.

Public facilities improvements are now focused on the Green Island neighborhood. The City has committed \$1,372,516 to Green Island through 2019-2021 CDBG allocations to assist with upgrades of infrastructure including road and/or sewer/drainage reconstruction within a distressed neighborhood in which 78% of residents are low- to moderate-income and which suffers from dilapidated roads/sidewalks, aging and maintenance deferred housing, chronic issues with flooding and drainage, as well as possibly pollution and contamination. The investments are being made in support of the recent construction of a new, multi-million dollar baseball stadium and over 180,000 sq.ft. of new, mixed-use development immediately adjacent to the Canal District and the Green Island neighborhood. Neighborhood infrastructure investments will provide a community benefit and complement other anticipated investments while helping to mitigate and offset any new development impacts. During the just completed reporting year, street improvements were underway on Lamarine and Lodi Streets and planned for several other streets within Green Island. The projects encompass street resurfacing, new curbs and sidewalks.

Nonprofit facilities benefitted from the investment of CDBG funds which in turn leveraged other public and private resources as exemplified by the YWCA which began a large-scale \$24 million renovation of its historic building in January 2020. This renovation includes an update of the building envelope, all major building systems and program spaces to improve client physical comfort/safety, meet accessibility requirements, and incorporate energy efficient features. City CDBG funds have been allocated to this project including \$100,000 for Elevator Modernization (completed) and \$100,000 for ADA Upgrades of all Bathroom Facilities (underway). An additional \$250,000 in CDBG allocated in 2020-2021 for Parking Lot Reconstruction and Paving. Other nonprofit facilities renovations supported with CDBG during the last program year included \$93,036 for HVAC Gymnasium Installation at Friendly House.

Fiscal Year Summary – HOME Match	
1. Excess match from prior Federal fiscal year	3,280,825
2. Match contributed during current Federal fiscal year	0
3. Total match available for current Federal fiscal year (Line 1 plus Line 2)	3,280,825
4. Match liability for current Federal fiscal year	0
5. Excess match carried over to next Federal fiscal year (Line 3 minus Line 4)	3,280,825

Table 5 – Fiscal Year Summary - HOME Match Report

Match Contribution for the Federal Fiscal Year								
Project No. or Other ID	Date of Contribution	Cash (non-Federal sources)	Foregone Taxes, Fees, Charges	Appraised Land/Real Property	Required Infrastructure	Site Preparation, Construction Materials, Donated labor	Bond Financing	Total Match

Table 6 – Match Contribution for the Federal Fiscal Year

HOME MBE/WBE report

Program Income – Enter the program amounts for the reporting period				
Balance on hand at begin-ning of reporting period \$	Amount received during reporting period \$	Total amount expended during reporting period \$	Amount expended for TBRA \$	Balance on hand at end of reporting period \$
0	65,017	65,017	87,107	0

Table 7 – Program Income

Minority Business Enterprises and Women Business Enterprises – Indicate the number and dollar value of contracts for HOME projects completed during the reporting period						
	Total	Minority Business Enterprises				White Non-Hispanic
		Alaskan Native or American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
Contracts						
Dollar Amount	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-Contracts						
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dollar Amount	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	Women Business Enterprises	Male			
Contracts						
Dollar Amount	0	0	0			
Number	0	0	0			
Sub-Contracts						
Number	0	0	0			
Dollar Amount	0	0	0			

Table 8 - Minority Business and Women Business Enterprises

Minority Owners of Rental Property – Indicate the number of HOME assisted rental property owners and the total amount of HOME funds in these rental properties assisted						
	Total	Minority Property Owners				White Non-Hispanic
		Alaskan Native or American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dollar Amount	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 9 – Minority Owners of Rental Property

Relocation and Real Property Acquisition – Indicate the number of persons displaced, the cost of relocation payments, the number of parcels acquired, and the cost of acquisition						
Parcels Acquired		0		0		
Businesses Displaced		0		0		
Nonprofit Organizations Displaced		0		0		
Households Temporarily Relocated, not Displaced		0		0		
Households Displaced	Total	Minority Property Enterprises				White Non-Hispanic
		Alaskan Native or American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 10 – Relocation and Real Property Acquisition

CR-20 - Affordable Housing 91.520(b)

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

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	0	92
Number of Non-Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	89	94
Number of Special-Needs households to be provided affordable housing units	25	40
Total	114	226

Table 11 – Number of Households

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of households supported through Rental Assistance	55	162
Number of households supported through The Production of New Units	16	1
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	43	61
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	0	2
Total	114	226

Table 12 – Number of Households Supported

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

In Table 12 above the Goal for Number of households supported through rental assistance was 281. During the year 30 households were supported through rental assistance, getting approximately to the goal. For the Number of households supported through the production of new units there was a goal of 9 units. For this there was 1 new owner unit produced out of the goal of 9. For the Number of households supported through the rehab of existing units there was a Goal of 47 units of which we achieved 61 units rehabbed (16 Homeowner units and 45 Rental units). Overall this number is expected

to fall in line with expectations or will be adjusted in coming ConPlan years. For this year there was a goal of 15 households supported through the acquisition of existing units. During the year there were 2 households assisted through the acquisition of existing units. The programs was temporarily halted due to Coronavirus. In addition a program for City employees was also offered through other funding sources.

Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.

Outcomes achieved will be analyzed and used to adjust future annual action plans. These changes will be reflected in the next Consolidated Plan.

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

Number of Households Served	CDBG Actual	HOME Actual
Extremely Low-income	25	31
Low-income	30	2
Moderate-income	2	0
Total	57	33

Table 13 – Number of Households Served

Narrative Information

The beneficiary information provided above is from the PR-23 CDBG and PR-23 HOME program.

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

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

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

There are several agencies conducting outreach efforts in the City of Worcester. Collaborations with the City of Worcester, Worcester County Continuum of Care and the City's Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) to support outreach efforts and case management services that connect the unsheltered homeless population with emergency shelters, permanent housing, and the supportive services necessary to maintain their housing.

The City has continued its strategies in reaching out to the sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons and assessing their individual needs. City ESG funds supported salary costs for .5 FTE Outreach Case Manager who works as part of the City of Worcester Quality of Life Task Force to conduct assessment of individual needs, enable access to mainstream resources, and housing referrals for households without children that are unsheltered. In one year, the outreach case manager contacted an estimated 186 individuals living in places not meant for human habitation; of those 186 individuals, 45 engaged with the Outreach Case Manager to develop a housing placement to achieve or maintain ongoing stability. In addition to ESG Outreach, there are homeless outreach services offered through a variety of different service providers in the City that offer immediate and long term assistance to unsheltered persons by frequenting locations such as the downtown corridor of Union Station, the Public Library, other parks and roadways prone to panhandling and loitering throughout the City, soup kitchens, and food pantries to identify and engage with such individuals/families. The goal is to engage with people over time; and encourage those who typically refuse services, that they may accept help through long-term engagement of the street outreach workers focused on mental health assessments, treatment, advocacy, and benefit assistance. Community organizations continue to engage with partners and stakeholders to create a holistic system of outreach. Engaging with hospitals, law enforcement, detox centers, and other services who commonly encounter homeless individuals. Without disclosing sensitive personal information, the partners then strategize using common resources and learning from success stories on how to ensure the safety and improved life condition of the individuals and the community. Outreach to homeless families focuses on collaboration with first responders, local governments, and neighborhood centers that most frequently encounter newly homeless families. All outreach workers in the community are connected to one another and other housing service providers through the Coordinated Entry & Assessment Working Group facilitated by the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care. As part of broader efforts to eliminate chronic homelessness, the City Manager's Task Force for Sustaining Housing First Solutions developed a plan to provide the appropriate level of supportive housing to chronic homeless people on the streets, in encampments or in shelters within the community. Recommendations for achieving and sustaining a functional zero of adult chronic homelessness include but are not limited to:

(Cont.- below)

Progress Cont.-

1. Public, Nonprofit organizations, and private landlords should work together to produce 103 housing units by December 30, 2019, and continue to preserve and develop adequate units for those who become chronically homeless in future years. 2. All community housing entities and mainstream support service providers should become part of the Worcester City & County Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry System (CES), aimed at providing housing subsidies with individualized support services prioritized for chronically homeless individuals. 3. The Coordinating Council has been exploring and are establishing a pilot program of an early warning system that includes a homeless prevention fund, an adequate triage and assessment system of diversion, alternative residential or service referral, and reunification/relocation where appropriate, and rapid re-housing to prevent people from becoming homeless or to limit shelter stays. Housing Supply 4. The City and Coordinating Council are in motion to produce a variety of housing units, from individual scattered sites to small (e.g., 10-15 units) and moderate-sized (e.g., 25 units) congregate sites, which would include on-site resident managers, to accommodate the various current needs of clients and anticipate the need in future years. 5. The City and the Coordinating Council have identified sources of capital for the development of housing for the chronic homeless, including the enhancement of a Worcester-based low interest loan fund. 6. The City is assisting providers by identifying properties appropriate for expanding housing units, and when possible, donate City-owned property. The Coordinating Council continues to advise the City on regulations and zoning that promotes development of appropriate housing.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The City's one-year plan to address emergency shelter and transitional shelter needs for the homeless were encompassed in Strategic Plan Goal 8: Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons, and Goal 9: Housing Opportunities for People Living with HIV/AIDS. These actions were supported by both ESG and HOPWA funds through the following activities.

ESG Shelter funds support shelter Case Management for Triage and Assessment services at the primary shelter for unaccompanied homeless adults and the operations of transitional housing for victims fleeing domestic violence and. In total, 1,552 unaccompanied adults experiencing homelessness benefitted from ESG emergency shelter funds through the Triage and Assessment Center, while 22 individuals fleeing from domestic violence benefited from emergency shelter operations funds. Each of these activities helped address the shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless populations because of the crisis intervention nature of the program support. They supported the operations and case management of facilities to ensure the safety and stability first, followed by reentry skills such as employment before the transition to permanent housing so that individual needs can be addressed towards greater housing outcomes. These programs recognize that permanent housing is the ultimate goal, but some populations that are particularly at risk may need enhanced stabilization and case management.

HOPWA funds supported the operations and supportive services associated with Transitional Housing needs, including the intensive case management costs for HIV positive women with or without children, and special needs population including those being discharged from institutions, or with severe mental

health and substance abuse barriers. HOPWA Supportive Services served 12 women in the Maranda's House and Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Program (HOAP) programs. The Summit House program in Willimantic, CT served 9 individuals by providing transitional housing support with clear goals towards employment, volunteer engagement, and self-sufficiency.

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

In working towards Goal 7: Expand Resources for Homelessness Prevention, HOPWA dollars were used to support 10 low income individuals with an HIV/AIDS diagnosis in avoiding homelessness through the provision of short term rent, utilities and mortgage (STRMU) assistance as well others were provided with Permanent Housing Placement (PHP) Support to stabilize in permanent housing through the payment of first and last month's rent, thus avoiding homelessness and stabilizing in permanent housing.

Through the case management services funded by the City's allocation of ESG funds, many of these prevention services were supported. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does provide information for youth in foster care or leaving foster care. It coordinates with many service providers and provides resources and education on many subjects, such as your rights, services, education, health, and relationships. The Answer Book was written to help youth reach adulthood more prepared to live safely, successfully, and independently. However, often times, there are individuals that fall into homelessness or are in precarious situations and are at imminent risk of homelessness. Similarly, for those exiting the criminal justice system, many are at-risk of homelessness. Providers around the country are finding that rapid re-housing can be an effective intervention to help young people experiencing homelessness. These providers are using the same core components of rapid re-housing as adult rapid re-housing programs: housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management and services, but tailoring each component according to where young people are in their life journeys.

To address the potential homelessness youth, in partnership with the Continuum of Care, and agencies such The Bridge of Central Massachusetts, South Middlesex Opportunity Council and LUK, Inc., resources targeting include but not limited to youth who are at risk of aging out of the foster care system without permanency or who have aged out. This collaboration continues to formalize working relationships between these organizations to provide comprehensive and outcomes-oriented services for youth and young adults who are or have been involved in the state systems who are facing barriers to stability as young adults.

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 28-member task force, set up by City Manager Edward Augustus, continues to meet quarterly to continue the ongoing examination of the community's needs and resources to address adult chronic homelessness. The Task Force's ultimate goal is to develop a plan for actions and resources to sustain a long-term system of permanent supportive housing in the city

The City's Plan continues to Address Homelessness strives to expand on the successful "housing first" model, which moves away from extensive and costly shelter stays, and to focus on homeless prevention to stabilize vulnerable individual adults, families, youth and young adults. The City's ultimate goal is to quickly stabilize those in our community who are homeless so they can ultimately obtain safe and affordable permanent housing. The City recognizes the need to develop units for individuals and families through innovative strategies including rehabilitating existing housing stock along with furthering efforts to prevent homelessness, and improve the delivery of comprehensive service strategies that address the health, employment, and long term self-sufficiency skills targeted to specific populations struggling with homelessness and other special needs.

All HUD-funded programs include financial eligibility criteria and are targeted to very low-income and extremely low-income households. Local providers such as the Bridge of Central Massachusetts offer essential services to prevent homelessness and work closely with Individuals (include chronically homeless individuals) and families, families with children, unaccompanied youth ages 18 - 24 (with a particular emphasis on LGBTQIA+ youth), and individuals with dually diagnoses mental health and addiction challenges ESG Rapid Rehousing funds provide short term and medium term rental assistance as well as housing relocation and stabilization services. Rapid rehousing funds throughout the program year..

HOPWA funds focus on stabilization in the transition to permanent housing by providing supportive services to 146 individuals with an HIV/AIDS diagnosis in the Worcester Eligible Metropolitan Service Area. HOPWA programs for Tenant Based Housing Assistance and supportive services focused on the attainment of permanent housing through mobile vouchers. Additional permanent housing was facilitated through facility based programs and Permanent Housing Placement rental startup assistance.

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

Actions taken to address the needs of public housing

The Worcester Housing Authority (WHA) owns and manages approximately 3,000 Public Housing (PH) units and administers 3,934 housing vouchers in its federal Housing Choice Voucher and state MRVP programs as well as managing the properties and programs of the Holden Housing Authority through a Management Agreement. In 2020, the WHA completed a property wide feasibility study by EJP Consulting. The WHA is reviewing the recommendations of EJP for the WHA to maintain the long-term affordability of each program. Additionally, in 2021, the WHA solicited a request for proposals to conduct a physical needs assessment of 5-10 properties as recommended by the EJP report.

The WHA is underway with its redevelopment plan for its public housing portfolio investment of \$4.5 million. This redevelopment plan included concrete repairs, sidewalk repairs, and major landscape work as well as roof replacement, elevator replacement at two locations and energy conservation measures. In addition to these improvements, the WHA is replacing floors and kitchens at some of its family developments. WHA continues to address the needs of public housing tenants and applicants through reasonable accommodation requests.

The success of the WHA Transitional Housing Program continues to be recognized by the Worcester community. All participants of this program are referred to the WHA from state-funded homeless shelters and are provided with opportunities to get their lives back on track; having successful and enriched lives. Through the dedication of the case manager, participants are provided with an array of services tailored to their individual needs. Many participants who have benefited from this program have transitioned into conventional tenancies with the WHA, moved on into jobs and careers, and have relinquished their dependency on public assistance and services as a means of survival. Over the past few years, the WHA has developed and implemented a self-sufficiency program called "A Better Life". This program provides intensive case management to families. The program requires that all adult household members go to work, attend a school or perform community service for a minimum of 30 hours a week. The comprehensive case management focuses on five major areas: education, employment, health, finances, and family challenges.

A Place to Live

In 2019, the WHA partnered with the City of Worcester and local agencies to mitigate and bring a long-term solution to the chronically homeless population to the City of Worcester. This project is mainly funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the City of Worcester and it's expected to be completed by 2022. The first project featuring the modular construction of micro-units, "A Place to Live" presents the idea of creating a more conducive space for individuals to improve their lives while also having their privacy. Using modular housing to construct a three-story, 10,000 square feet building comprised of 24 micro-units at 38 Lewis Street. Each occupant will have their own apartment, equipped with a fully functional bathroom, kitchen, and sleeping quarters. Additionally, WHA will provide wraparound services in partnership with South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), which will assign an in-house case manager, whose purpose is to help each candidate

become financially independent and self-sufficient.

Tiny Homes

The WHA has agreed to be a funding partner, through the issuance of project based vouchers, to the East Side CDC for their “Tiny Homes” project. Located at the old Worcester Academy fields on Stafford Street in Worcester. The East Side CDC’s goal is to build between 18-30 homes to provide housing to the chronically homeless population. These are small houses, with neighbors in their own private homes.
(cont. textbox)

Actions Cont.

Other Developments InitiativesThe WHA is also a funding partner for SMOC, which is currently building 18-20 units in downtown Worcester, in the Main South area. The units will be targeted towards the chronically homeless population, who will also benefit from SMOC’s wrap-around services and help them work towards self-sufficiency. The WHA is providing SMOC with 8 to 12 project based vouchers to make the project viable and provide a constant subsidy.

Gateway CitiesThe WHA received funding from DHCD for the revitalization of Great Brook Valley and Curtis Apartments through the WHA’s Inspire to Grow Project. This project is centered on creating the Economic Opportunity Center (EOC) and expanding the WHA’s public housing portfolio. The EOC will house the Family and Resident Service staff, Housing Managers Office, the GBV branch library, a childcare facility for the Worcester Comprehensive Education and Care Network programs, a community room for public meetings, an office for the Resident Council, classrooms, Step-Up Apprenticeship Program, and a new computer lab. The construction of the EOC building will facilitate our residents to work towards their goals while receiving the proper assistance under one roof. In addition, the relocation of the staff offices to the EOC, whose offices are currently scattered throughout the Great Brook Valley area, allows the conversion of the current offices to an estimated 30 new units, with 6 of those units being new wheelchair-accessible units.

CMHThe WHA received 73 emergency section 8 vouchers under the Emergency Housing Voucher Program. The vouchers will be issued to people who are chronically homeless and victims of domestic violence, and a majority of these vouchers are expected to be issued to disabled people. The WHA is partnering with Central Mass Housing Alliance relative to this program.

TerraaponicsStarting in 2020, the WHA partnered with EvanLEE Organics, LLC (the distributor and creator of the terraaponics indoor growing system) to begin a pilot program that allows WHA to grow healthy food year-round. Through the Terraaponics Program, WHA aims to supplement the refrigerators of food-insecure residents and to help them learn healthier behaviors that will improve their overall health. The WHA also aims to enrich and transform the lives of the residents. Another WHA goal with the creation of the Terraaponics is to successfully instruct WHA resident apprentices in the planting, care, maintenance, and all other aspects of terraaponics crops and gardening practices, adding to their skill sets and preparing them for graduation from the Step-Up Apprenticeship Program and the workforce. The WHA will purchase over 240 new growing racks to increase the capacity of the Terraaponics Program. Aiming to move into a new 6,159 square foot facility at the WHA’s new headquarters at 630

Plantation Street in 2022.

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

The WHA continues its mission in providing decent, safe, and affordable housing for low-income people; economic and educational opportunities to promote and sustain an environment in which families can achieve self-sufficiency and improve their quality of life. Through various self sufficiency programs, the WHA provides its resident with opportunities in employment, job training and education. Through its "Step Up" Apprenticeship and Clerical Apprenticeship programs, the WHA has provided many residents with an opportunity of gaining meaningful employment, some for the first time in their lives. The WHA continues to believe that education is the key to success and GED and ESL classes are held on site, as well as two computer and homework centers in an effort to promote the importance of education. Additionally, WHA continued the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program to assist families with the transition from renting to home ownership. FSS participants are provided assistance with resources and referrals for credit counseling, banking information and their escrow accounts and may use these funds as a resource to help with down payments and/or closing costs or other expenses related to the purchase of a new home. The WHA has long realized that a portion of its success is dependent upon the satisfaction of its residents. Continuing its efforts in fostering partnerships with them, the WHA has encouraged the formation and organization of tenant organizations. These recognized tenant organizations are the conduit through which ideas and issues are presented to the WHA administration and through which policy, operational and program changes and enhancements are presented to its residents. The Executive Director meets monthly with the WHA Jurisdiction wide Resident Council to discuss policy changes, program implementation and other areas of the WHA operation that have a direct effect on the people it serves. The WHA recognizes and appreciates the knowledge, life experiences and ideas that it receives from its resident population. CAPER 25 OMB Control No: 2506-0117 (exp. 06/30/2018)

Keeping its communities safe and crime free is the Worcester Housing Authority's first priority. To be successful, the WHA needs to rely on partnerships with the Worcester Police Department and its residents. To that end, the WHA has 15 active Crime Watch groups that represent 15 of its largest communities. All of its Crime Watch groups meet regularly and are attended by key WHA personnel, members of the WPD and tenant leaders. Representatives from City government, the District Attorney's office and other agencies also attend. These meetings are open to any resident of the WHA.

The WHA will continue in its proactive approach in providing decent, safe affordable housing and be innovative in its programming and services that it provides its residents. It will also explore new opportunities that will hopefully increase the numbers of affordable housing opportunities for its residents and the community at large.

Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs

The Worcester Housing Authority (WHA) was not classified as a troubled Public Housing Authority (PHA),

but was classified as a High Performing PHA during the reporting program year by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD).

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

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

The City of Worcester continues to work on addressing barriers to affordable housing. The City is firmly committed to creating an environment where its residents have equal access to the housing of their choice, and fair housing laws are respected. The City's Office of Human Rights and Disabilities works to eliminate bias, bigotry, and prejudice through outreach, education, mediation, and advocacy. Its goal is to ensure that all Worcester residents and visitors of all abilities have access to programs and services by providing information and referral, advocacy, outreach and educational programs.

Worcester Fair Housing Project (WFHP)

The Worcester Fair Housing Project (WFHP), a joint project between Community Legal Aid (CLA) and the City of Worcester, provides advice and representation to anyone in Worcester County who has been the victim of housing discrimination. The WFHP has assisted clients in a range of discrimination claims, including racial harassment, refusal to rent due to family status, refusal to remove lead paint, interference with housing subsidies, and discrimination based on disability.

In addition to litigation, the WFHP conducts education workshops on fair housing laws for tenant groups, social service providers, property owners, and other community members. The WFHP also trains civil rights investigators to "test" whether housing discrimination is occurring in the county, to support litigation or promote equitable settlements for project clients.

The Worcester Fair Housing Project's work plan consists of intake, investigation, enforcement, education, and outreach activities. For its intake component, the Project will take 360 complaints by persons who have experienced discrimination in their search for housing, their efforts to maintain their current housing, or their attempts to access affordable housing programs. For its testing component, the Project recruited and trained 55 testers and performed 150 complaint-based and audit paired tests. For its enforcement component, the Project assessed the 360 complaints it received, assist 90 clients requesting reasonable modifications or accommodations; obtain favorable pre-filing closings in 45 cases; litigate 45 cases and reach successful resolutions in 30 of those cases; mediated 12 cases and reached successful resolution in 9 of them; and monitored 15 settlement agreements.

For its education and outreach component, the Project's staff, including employees of CLA and the City of Worcester, will conducted housing workshops throughout the region; conducted fair housing trainings for the City of Worcester's Human Rights Commissioners and for CLA employees; publicized the Project in various media outlets; and created and distributed brochures and posters about classes protected under the Fair Housing Act. Much of this work was made possible through the HUD Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP), which partner's organizations with HUD to help people identify government agencies that handle complaints of housing discrimination. In addition to funding organizations that provide direct assistance to individuals who feel they have been discriminated against while, attempting to purchase or rent housing, FHIP also has four initiatives that promote fair housing laws and equal housing opportunity awareness through competitive grants to eligible organizations.

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

Challenges to meeting underserved needs in the past year stemmed primarily from increasing demand for program activities combined with decreasing amounts of funding. In order to maximize efficiency and achieve a greater impact, the City's Executive Office of Economic Development conducts funding overview and technical assistance workshops for parties interested in applying for HUD entitlement funds through CDBG, HOPWA, and ESG in the fall of each year. These annual workshops, designed to focus and facilitate discussion with interested parties in order to define the key social service issues and community needs in Worcester, identify gaps in service, brainstorm potential strategies to address needs and gaps. The workshops, also designed to foster dialogue among agencies/departments to enhance collaboration, and the sharing of information.

The City of Worcester collaborates with Ascentria Care Alliance to provide language bank services for more than 90 different languages - significantly improving access to city services for people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The contract with Ascentria provides for interpreters to be available either onsite or by telephone for City employees interacting with the public - including at City Hall and on site during situations like code inspections and public safety situations. This policy is part of a larger effort by the City Manager and numerous City departments to make municipal government more inclusive, diverse and reflective of the community it serves.

The language policy will ensure meaningful communication between LEP persons and the City by providing for interpretation and translation services at no cost to the LEP person being served. Communication services, provided for information contained in private documents, including applications, statements, ordinances and relevant forms. Written translation for vital documents, including consent and complaint forms, applications for programs, activities or to receive city government benefits or services, etc., are also provided.

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

The Worcester Lead Abatement Program was awarded a \$5.6 million Lead Hazard Reduction Control Grant from the HUD Office of Healthy Homes in 2019 for the lead paint and soil abatement of low income and very low income housing units, as well as the provision of primary prevention services in the form of outreach and education to low- and moderate-income families with children under age six. The City plans to continue these efforts through subsequent rounds of HUD Healthy Homes funding, and anticipates addressing lead-based paint hazards in 76 housing units over the next year. Previously the city had a \$3.71 million 2015 LHRD grant from HUD.

The City's Housing Development Division (HDD) administers the Worcester Lead Abatement Program that can provide up to \$10,000 per unit to assist with lead abatement in approved properties with low-to moderate-income tenants. HDD also coordinates the Massachusetts "Get the Lead Out" loan program funded by MassHousing for additional abatement assistance over the \$10,000 per unit threshold.

In addition, any CDBG funded housing rehabilitation project over \$25,000 will be deleaded in conjunction with the rehabilitation activities to take place. For projects between \$5,000 and \$24,999, a lead report will be obtained prior to rehabilitation work taking place.

At the completion of the 2015 LHRD grant cycle, the city had assessed 314 units for lead hazards and

completed deleading in 269 units of Low/Moderate Income Housing totaling \$3,350,619 in HUD Lead funding as well as using CDBG funding in the amount of \$356,633 as match funding. Since the beginning of the 2020, the city has assessed 76 units. The 2019 LHR grant cycle aims to assess 300 units for lead hazards and to complete lead abatement in 238 units of housing before 2024.

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

Given the high proportion of residents living in poverty, the City focuses on using its HUD entitlement program funds for initiatives and projects that provide the maximum benefit to very low, low and moderate income individuals and households. The City's anti-poverty strategy seeks to support programs that provide job and life skills training and other advancement opportunities, and is part of a coordinated effort to create jobs and improve the local economy. This two-pronged approach helps families achieve and maintain economic security and self-sufficiency. In addition, the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) continues coordinating with the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB) around programs and initiatives that support the City's goal of reducing poverty.

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

In July of 2014, the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care (CoC) formed its Board, which is the primary planning and decision-making body on homeless assistance in Worcester County. The Board consists of committees for HMIS Data collection, Program Outcomes and Monitoring, Mainstream Resources, Veterans, and Coordinated Entry. The Program Outcomes and Monitoring Committee is chaired by a representative from the City of Worcester's Department of Health & Human Services, and has set in motion the development of system performance measures that will better institutionalize monitoring, evaluation, and progress towards ending homelessness in Worcester and Worcester County. The Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc. (CMHA), the lead agency for the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care (CoC) in partnership with the City of Worcester and CoC-funded agencies convenes coordinated Assessment & Entry for Homeless Persons. The purpose of the Coordinated Entry system is to improve the quality of the CoC and greater Worcester's homeless housing and service system, and to improve outcomes for individuals and families in the continuum that are threatened with or experiencing homelessness. Two Work Groups convene weekly to develop the coordinated entry policy, with one group focused on the needs of homeless families and the other on homeless individuals (including veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth). The work groups implement processes that prioritize individuals and families with the greatest needs (especially chronically homeless households) for housing and service assistance, and attempt to minimize barriers to entry because of lack of employment or income, drug or alcohol use, or having a criminal record. The City and the CoC encourage a Housing First model, but recognize that some housing and service resources are required by funding agencies or providers to give preferences to certain populations including sub groups determined by age, disability, or gender. The Coordinated Entry system ensures appropriate access to housing based on individual needs and assessments, and promotes effective referrals and partnerships throughout the homeless services system.

Finally, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is additionally managed by the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc. (CMHA) and supported in part by ESG dollars. The HMIS allows for streamlined data collection among ESG and CoC-funded entities. These data have been used, in addition to annual and quarterly point-in-time counts, to track the number of homeless individuals and families both sheltered and unsheltered throughout Worcester County. These data have been critical in the resource allocation process, as resources have been strategically allocated to areas of highest need within the homeless services system.

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

The Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) works to foster strong relationships and enhance cooperation and coordination between public and private service and housing providers. Development of the Consolidated Plan benefitted from input from a broad range of stakeholders who contributed through interviews and focus groups, in addition to those who were represented at public meetings and hearings. Entities participating in the process included agencies and groups with expertise in areas such as housing, youth services, case management, mental health, education, employment assistance, basic needs, and health services. As a means of gaining input, individual and group consultations were held in the fall of 2016 with providers of public and affordable housing, and services for homeless, special needs, and low-income populations. The workshops was designed as focus and update groups to discuss what each agency defines as the key homeless and social service issues in Worcester, to identify gaps in service, and to brainstorm potential strategies to address needs and gaps. The workshops were also designed to foster dialogue among agencies/departments to enhance collaboration and the sharing of information.

The City of Worcester actively participates in ongoing efforts to enhance coordination with private industry, businesses, developers, and social service agencies in order to foster economic development. EOED, through the Business Assistance Division, plays a leadership role in the Worcester Business Resource Alliance (WBRA), a centralized network of business professionals, technical assistance providers, lenders, and community development organizations that collectively provide services to entrepreneurs and small business owners and managers. EOED also meets regularly with neighborhood business associations, and coordinates with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and Worcester Business Development Corporation. At the state level, EOED has strong partnerships with the Mass. Office of Business Development and MassDevelopment, as well as relationships with the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center and the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP).

Refugee Resettlement

Worcester is Massachusetts' top destination for resettlement for persons escaping persecution in their countries of origins. In response to growing recognition about the specific impediments faced by refugee populations in housing, the City of Worcester established the Worcester Refugee Housing Working Group. Attendees of this working group include:

- City departments that work on different aspects of housing, such as the Housing Division of Economic Development, Inspectional Services, and the Office of Human Rights;

- the Attorney General's Office;
- the three resettlement agencies in Worcester;
- Community Legal Aid; and
- An assortment of other non-profit agencies and community members.

-Cont. below

Coordination cont.-

The working group stated mission is to support safe, sustainable and welcoming short and long-term housing needs of refugees in the City of Worcester. Working group meetings are an opportunity to share and collaboratively work together to solve housing challenges such as rental discrimination, public health, sanitation and environmental/healthy homes concerns, and obstacles to long term affordable housing. Beyond the unquantifiable impact that the information and resource sharing between member agencies of this working group has had, the working group has also resulted in numerous know your rights, research and advocacy initiatives. The working group, for example, has organized multiple trainings for refugees and agency staff at Ascentria Care Alliance in order to discuss fair housing, code enforcement, and affordable housing options in Worcester. The working group has also collaborated with the Clark University Department of International Development, Community & Environment for the 2017-2018 academic year on a research project examining refugee housing trends and housing (in) stability beyond the 90-day initial resettlement period. The Worcester Fair Housing Project, a grant project between the City and Community Legal Aid, has also played a central role in doing outreach to non-profits, churches, healthcare facilities, and other community spaces in Worcester to disseminate information about fair housing.

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

Please see attached the results of the impediments to fair housing attached to this report.

CR-40 - Monitoring 91.220 and 91.230

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

The City of Worcester has an internal management plan to assure the proper and compliant implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Annual Plan activities. Procedures have been put in place to assure proper compliance with all program requirements for the CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, and ESG entitlements.

Project managers are responsible for monitoring their assigned projects and activities. Priority is given to new projects or organizations. Monthly “desk audits” of grant subrecipients’ programs allow project managers a chance to track the timeliness of expenditures and the status of program outcomes, through subrecipient Project Cash Requests (PCR) documentation. Additionally on-site monitoring provides an opportunity for staff members to ensure subrecipients are in compliance with Federal regulations and are actively working to achieve the objectives outlined in their grant agreements and the Annual Action Plan. Site visits also allow subrecipients to receive technical assistance and provide feedback about program administration. By carefully examining subrecipients’ performance through desk audits and onsite monitoring, the City can conduct a risk assessment to identify which subrecipients require more comprehensive monitoring. High-risk sub-recipients might include those new to the CDBG, HOME, ESG, or HOPWA programs, those who experienced turnover in key staff positions or a change in goals or direction, those with previous compliance or performance problems including failure to meet schedules, submit timely reports, or clear monitoring or audit findings, and those undertaking multiple CDBG, HOME, ESG, or HOPWA funded activities for the first time.

An on-site monitoring schedule is prepared based on this risk assessment. First, the assigned monitor will contact the agency to explain the purpose of monitoring and schedule a date and time for the onsite visit. Once this is completed, a confirmation letter is sent before the scheduled visit to confirm all aspects of the monitoring and to explain what can be expected.

During the actual visit, a thorough review of the subrecipient’s files ensures they comply with all regulations governing their administrative, financial and programmatic operations and that they are achieving their performance objectives within schedule and budget. A clear written record of the on-site visit is kept by using one or more of the City of Worcester/HUD monitoring checklists. The assigned monitor will fill out the form during the visit. At the end of the visit, the monitor concludes the visit by reviewing the tentative conclusions from the monitoring. Once the on-site visit is completed, the monitor prepares a formal written letter describing the results of the visit, providing recognition of the subrecipient’s strengths and weaknesses. If the subrecipient is experiencing problems or is failing to comply with regulations, these issues will be specifically outlined in the monitoring follow-up letter, along with recommendations or requirements to address and rectify problems. If a concern or finding is issued for noncompliance with Federal rules and regulations, the monitoring follow-up letter will

provide recommendations on how the situation can be remedied. When a finding is issued, the monitoring follow-up letter will identify a deadline for when the specific issues must be corrected. The monitor will then follow-up with the organization to make sure the corrections have been made.

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

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

Beginning in the summer of 2019, the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) engaged in a citizen participation process to identify community needs and provide community input on activities and programs to fund. Ten community needs assessment public meetings were held in different parts of the City, with at least one in each of the City Council districts. The meetings were attended by 141 total participants from neighborhoods with underserved, low-income, diverse, and minority residents. All meetings were intentionally held at locations accessible for potential and actual beneficiaries. The public meetings were advertised broadly through the City's media office as well as through door-to-door neighborhood outreach with at least one bilingual staff member. At each of the meetings, two bilingual staff persons were present that were able to provide translation and/or facilitation in Spanish and Vietnamese. In addition, a special public hearing was also held in the Green Island neighborhood in July 2019 to focus attention on the needs of that, very low-income, inner-city neighborhood (65 persons participated).

The Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) traditionally serves as the formal citizen body that provides input on funding applications submitted as part of the city's CDBG RFP process. The CDAC is a citizen advisory committee comprised of ten members, with two from each of Worcester's five council districts. The CDAC met three times in 2020 to review and evaluate CDBG proposals and listen to presentations and ask questions of applicants that submitted proposals in response to the RFP.

HOPWA proposals were vetted by the city administration together with the HOPWA Advisory Committee. This committee is composed of experts in community health and the HIV/AIDS field in Worcester County and Connecticut. The process was similar to CDAC in its review, including holding a remote public meeting to introduce the HOPWA process and guidelines, a technical assistance meeting for interested applicants, and a review and ranking session held in public at City Hall.

ESG proposals were vetted by an ESG RFP Review Committee that was comprised of members of the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care (CoC), and local funders of such social services such as the United Way. The ESG RFP Review Committee also followed a similar process to the CDAC in its review, including holding a remote public meeting to introduce the ESG process and guidelines, a technical assistance meeting for interested applicants, and an RFP review and ranking session at City Hall.

The City of Worcester Draft Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development (2020-2025) and First Year Annual Action Plan (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) was made available for a public review and comment period from October 5, 2020 to October 13, 2020 at the City of Worcester Office of Economic Development and was posted on the City’s website. A public hearing was also held on October 7, 2020 by the Worcester City Council Public Health and Human Services Committee to discuss the Draft Consolidated Plan / Draft Annual Action Plan recommendations and to respond to interested parties. The hearing was televised and posted for review by the City’s Cable TV network.

Citizens Content Cont.

Citizens Comment Describe the efforts to provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports. This draft of the proposed Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 was released for citizen review and comments as advertised in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette on September 14, 2021 for a 15-day public comment period from September 15, 2021 through September 29, 2021. The Draft CAPER was also made available during regular business hours between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at one or more of the following locations: 1. Neighborhood Development Division, 455 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608; 2. The City of Worcester website, Neighborhood Development Division documents page.

CR-45 - CDBG 91.520(c)

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

The City of Worcester first year action plan funds were modified to account for the impact of the coronavirus. Extra funds were awarded for CDBG, ESG, and HOPWA programs to address a wide range of impacts from the virus.

Regarding public service activities, an additional 11 programs worth \$565,682 were funded during this period with CDBG emergency COVID-19 stabilization funds to assist 2,123 LMI persons with food, hot meals, youth recreation, homelessness prevention, transportation and case management services. These programs were added to 17 CDBG funded programs worth \$653,436 that had been already been contracted through first year CDBG entitlement funds which provided services to 4,882 low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons to address identified needs for health services, case management, homelessness prevention, youth programming, food and housing security, legal assistance, after school programming, recreational activities, financial assistance and elder transportation. Altogether, a total of 7,005 low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons were assisted through 28 CDBG funded programs worth \$1,219,118 during the first year action plan period.

Regarding business assistance, 274 businesses were assisted with \$1,885,800 in CDBG emergency COVID-19 stabilization funds from April through June 2020 (just prior to this CAPER reporting period). Thus a total of 281 businesses employing 786 persons have been assisted with \$1,995,800 in CDBG from April 2020 to June 2021

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

No

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

CR-50 - HOME 91.520(d)

Include the results of on-site inspections of affordable rental housing assisted under the program to determine compliance with housing codes and other applicable regulations

Please list those projects that should have been inspected on-site this program year based upon the schedule in §92.504(d). Indicate which of these were inspected and a summary of issues that were detected during the inspection. For those that were not inspected, please indicate the reason and how you will remedy the situation.

Per the relief granted through the CARES Act waiver, annual on-site inspections of affordable HOME units have been suspended through December 2020. The coronavirus and has directly effected the onsite inspections of units. Those that have been inspected prior to March of 2020 were in compliance. On September 30, 2020, HUD waived the physical inspection requirement at 24 CFR 578.75(b)(1) until December 31, 2020, which HUD then extended until March 31, 2021, so long as recipients and subrecipients could meet certain criteria outlined in the waiver. HUD again extended the waiver on March 31, 2021 until June 30, 2021, so long as recipients and subrecipients could meet the criteria outlined in the waiver.

Provide an assessment of the jurisdiction's affirmative marketing actions for HOME units. 92.351(b)

City of Worcester shall require all rental and homebuyer projects/programs containing five (5) or more HOME-assisted housing units to develop and follow affirmative marketing procedures. The affirmative marketing procedures must be approved by City of Worcester prior to marketing any HOME-assisted housing unit. The affirmative marketing procedures must continue throughout the period of affordability and must contain the following:

- Targeting: Identify the segments of the eligible population which are least likely to apply for housing without special outreach efforts.
- Outreach: Outline an outreach program which includes special measures designed to attract those groups identified as least likely to apply and other efforts designed to attract persons from the total population.
- Indicators: State the indicators to be used to measure the success of the marketing program as well as the manner and frequency in which those indicators will be reviewed.
- Staff Training: Demonstrate the capacity to provide training and information on fair housing laws and objectives to staff.
- Projects/Programs are required to make a good faith effort to carry out the provisions of their approved affirmative marketing procedures. Good faith efforts are documented activities such as:
 - Advertising in print and electronic media that is used and viewed or listened to by those identified as least likely to apply.
 - Marketing housing to specific community, religious or other organizations frequented by those least likely to apply.

- Developing a brochure or handout that describes the facility and any services to be provided as well as the accessibility for persons with physical disabilities.
- Insuring that the sales/management staff has read and understands the Fair Housing Act and the purpose and objectives of the affirmative marketing procedures.

In addition, all programs/projects should use the Equal Housing Opportunity logo on-site or slogan in press releases and advertisements and display a fair housing poster in their management office. The program/project must keep files documenting affirmative marketing efforts which will include: copies of correspondence, public advertisements, lists of areas in which flyers have been distributed, contacts with other Equal Opportunity agencies, and any other relevant documents.

During the routine HOME monitoring visits, City of Worcester has reviewed the affirmative marketing files as well as the indicators that the program/project used to measure the success of the affirmative marketing procedures. City of Worcester will indicate any corrective action that is required in the City's monitoring report.

In the event that a project/program violates the City of Worcester Affirmative Marketing Policy, City of Worcester will counsel the owner about the proper program procedures to ensure future compliance. If there is a second incidence of noncompliance, or in any event of willful noncompliance, the owner will be required to seek counseling from the City of Worcester Fair Housing Center. Upon further noncompliance, the owner will be barred from future participation in City of Worcester HUD-funded programs and face possible foreclosure of the lien.

The City of Worcester's HOME program will also require that property owners market available units to low-income residence through the Worcester Housing Authority. The WHA has partnered with www.Gosection8.com, which provides an enhanced program to list rental properties on line. Listings are available to potential Housing Choice Voucher tenants seeking apartment units, duplexes or single-family homes in the private market in the City of Worcester. Like the Neighborworks Homeownership website, www.Gosection8.com will help to market available units further to regional rental prospects.

Refer to IDIS reports to describe the amount and use of program income for projects, including the number of projects and owner and tenant characteristics

\$65,017.09 of HOME program income was expended for the HRI Matheson Rhab project. The project consists of the rehabilitation of six existing buildings consisting of 70 units. The work included interior unit and common area renovations, replacement of windows, elevator refurbishing, replacement of HVAC, mechanical, and other building systems, exterior masonry work, and additional improvements.

Describe other actions taken to foster and maintain affordable housing. 91.220(k) (STATES ONLY: Including the coordination of LIHTC with the development of affordable housing). 91.320(j)

Worcester is currently at 9,977 Subsidized Housing Inventory Units, which is 13.4%. With 9,977 Subsidized Housing Inventory Units, this places Worcester 3rd in the State behind Boston and Springfield for the most Subsidized Housing Inventory available to the Community. Worcester has more subsidized housing inventory than the top 11 Subsidized Housing Inventory producing Cities & Towns in Worcester

County Combined (Fitchburg - 1486, Leominster - 1456, Gardner - 1356, Westborough - 974, Shrewsbury - 860, Webster - 722, Milford - 708, Northborough - 610, Clinton - 549, Southbridge - 499, & Southborough 472). The 13.4% is actually higher as the State only counts units which have a long term affordability (30 years or more). Some of the units which are currently affordable, but wouldn't make the list are units where long term affordability wouldn't make sense. These include First time home buyers and units which receive smaller amounts for rehab to make sure units are in compliance with code violations. The direct benefit to the owner is making units more affordable through a grant or for a renter to occupy a safe unit, free of code violations, and affordable according to the HUD rental limits. All the HOME program funds less 10% for grantee program admin and about 20-25% on average of CDBG funds sub-granted to the Executive Office of Economic Development – Housing Division create or maintain affordable units throughout the City of Worcester. Over the last year 23 units of affordable housing have come online, with a commitment of at least 44 more units in the next 2-3 years.

CR-55 - HOPWA 91.520(e)

Identify the number of individuals assisted and the types of assistance provided

Table for report on the one-year goals for the number of households provided housing through the use of HOPWA activities for: short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance payments to prevent homelessness of the individual or family; tenant-based rental assistance; and units provided in housing facilities developed, leased, or operated with HOPWA funds.

Number of Households Served Through:	One-year Goal	Actual
Short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance to prevent homelessness of the individual or family	70	34
Tenant-based rental assistance	10	5
Units provided in permanent housing facilities developed, leased, or operated with HOPWA funds	10	0
Units provided in transitional short-term housing facilities developed, leased, or operated with HOPWA funds	35	25

Table 14 – HOPWA Number of Households Served

Narrative

Please see attached HOPWA CAPER for additional details and information.

CR-60 - ESG 91.520(g) (ESG Recipients only)

ESG Supplement to the CAPER in *e-snaps*

For Paperwork Reduction Act

1. Recipient Information—All Recipients Complete

Basic Grant Information

Recipient Name	WORCESTER
Organizational DUNS Number	065782578
EIN/TIN Number	046001418
Identify the Field Office	BOSTON

Identify CoC(s) in which the recipient or subrecipient(s) will provide ESG assistance

Worcester City & County CoC

ESG Contact Name

Prefix	Mr
First Name	James
Middle Name	A
Last Name	Brooks
Suffix	0
Title	Director of Housing Development

ESG Contact Address

Street Address 1	455 Main St.
Street Address 2	0
City	Worcester
State	MA
ZIP Code	01608-
Phone Number	5087994100
Extension	31427
Fax Number	0
Email Address	brooks@worchesterma.gov

ESG Secondary Contact

Prefix
First Name
Last Name
Suffix
Title
Phone Number
Extension
Email Address

2. Reporting Period—All Recipients Complete

Program Year Start Date	07/01/2020
Program Year End Date	06/30/2021

3a. Subrecipient Form – Complete one form for each subrecipient

Subrecipient or Contractor Name: WORCESTER
City: WORCESTER
State: MA
Zip Code: 01608,
DUNS Number: 065782578
Is subrecipient a victim services provider: N
Subrecipient Organization Type: Unit of Government
ESG Subgrant or Contract Award Amount: 28880.1

Subrecipient or Contractor Name: SOUTH MIDDLESEX OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL INC
City: Framingham
State: MA
Zip Code: 01702, 8313
DUNS Number: 030806830
Is subrecipient a victim services provider: N
Subrecipient Organization Type: Other Non-Profit Organization
ESG Subgrant or Contract Award Amount: 160184.01

Subrecipient or Contractor Name: CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING ALLIANCE INC
City: Worcester
State: MA
Zip Code: 01609, 2706
DUNS Number: 152234865
Is subrecipient a victim services provider: N
Subrecipient Organization Type: Other Non-Profit Organization
ESG Subgrant or Contract Award Amount: 15000

Subrecipient or Contractor Name: Veterans, Inc.
City: Worcester
State: MA
Zip Code: 01605, 2600
DUNS Number: 941967796
Is subrecipient a victim services provider: N
Subrecipient Organization Type: Other Non-Profit Organization
ESG Subgrant or Contract Award Amount: 22678.98

Subrecipient or Contractor Name: Restorer of Broken Bridges Church

City: Worcester

State: MA

Zip Code: 01608, 2022

DUNS Number: 069933726

Is subrecipient a victim services provider: N

Subrecipient Organization Type: Other Non-Profit Organization

ESG Subgrant or Contract Award Amount: 72678.98

Subrecipient or Contractor Name: The Bridge of Central MA

City: Worcester

State: MA

Zip Code: 01602, 3414

DUNS Number:

Is subrecipient a victim services provider: N

Subrecipient Organization Type: Other Non-Profit Organization

ESG Subgrant or Contract Award Amount: 48069.94

CR-65 - Persons Assisted

PER HUD Instructions this section to be replaced by SAGE CAPER

4. Persons Served

4a. Complete for Homelessness Prevention Activities

Number of Persons in Households	Total
Adults	
Children	
Don't Know/Refused/Other	
Missing Information	
Total	

Table 16 – Household Information for Homeless Prevention Activities

4b. Complete for Rapid Re-Housing Activities

Number of Persons in Households	Total
Adults	
Children	
Don't Know/Refused/Other	
Missing Information	
Total	

Table 17 – Household Information for Rapid Re-Housing Activities

4c. Complete for Shelter

Number of Persons in Households	Total
Adults	
Children	
Don't Know/Refused/Other	
Missing Information	
Total	

Table 18 – Shelter Information

4d. Street Outreach

Number of Persons in Households	Total
Adults	
Children	
Don't Know/Refused/Other	
Missing Information	
Total	

Table 19 – Household Information for Street Outreach

4e. Totals for all Persons Served with ESG

Number of Persons in Households	Total
Adults	
Children	
Don't Know/Refused/Other	
Missing Information	
Total	

Table 20 – Household Information for Persons Served with ESG

5. Gender—Complete for All Activities

	Total
Male	
Female	
Transgender	
Don't Know/Refused/Other	
Missing Information	
Total	

Table 21 – Gender Information

6. Age—Complete for All Activities

	Total
Under 18	
18-24	
25 and over	
Don't Know/Refused/Other	
Missing Information	
Total	

Table 22 – Age Information

7. Special Populations Served—Complete for All Activities

Number of Persons in Households

Subpopulation	Total	Total Persons Served – Prevention	Total Persons Served – RRH	Total Persons Served in Emergency Shelters
Veterans				
Victims of Domestic Violence				
Elderly				
HIV/AIDS				
Chronically Homeless				
Persons with Disabilities:				
Severely Mentally Ill				
Chronic Substance Abuse				
Other Disability				
Total (unduplicated if possible)				

Table 23 – Special Population Served

CR-70 – ESG 91.520(g) - Assistance Provided and Outcomes

10. Shelter Utilization

Number of New Units - Rehabbed	0
Number of New Units - Conversion	0
Total Number of bed-nights available	82,514
Total Number of bed-nights provided	82,514
Capacity Utilization	100.00%

Table 24 – Shelter Capacity

11. Project Outcomes Data measured under the performance standards developed in consultation with the CoC(s)

Project Outcomes Data is measured by recording data by individual client or household. Subrecipients provide the unduplicated number of families/ persons that will benefit from the activity (output) and the cost to provide the service. Included is an assessment of the outcomes for the ESG projects, tracking, and follow-up services, which have also been developed in consultation with the CoC. The evaluation plan measures the agency’s progress in achieving the performance goals of achieving mainstream benefits, household income, and ensuring housing stability.

CR-75 – Expenditures

11. Expenditures

11a. ESG Expenditures for Homelessness Prevention

	Dollar Amount of Expenditures in Program Year		
	2018	2019	2020
Expenditures for Rental Assistance	174,227	71,450	32,518
Expenditures for Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services - Financial Assistance	0	0	0
Expenditures for Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services - Services	0	0	0
Expenditures for Homeless Prevention under Emergency Shelter Grants Program	0	0	0
Subtotal Homelessness Prevention	174,227	71,450	32,518

Table 25 – ESG Expenditures for Homelessness Prevention

11b. ESG Expenditures for Rapid Re-Housing

	Dollar Amount of Expenditures in Program Year		
	2018	2019	2020
Expenditures for Rental Assistance	153,411	74,420	19,119
Expenditures for Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services - Financial Assistance	0	0	0
Expenditures for Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services - Services	0	0	0
Expenditures for Homeless Assistance under Emergency Shelter Grants Program	0	0	0
Subtotal Rapid Re-Housing	153,411	74,420	19,119

Table 26 – ESG Expenditures for Rapid Re-Housing

11c. ESG Expenditures for Emergency Shelter

	Dollar Amount of Expenditures in Program Year		
	2018	2019	2020
Essential Services	165,313	204,202	49,440
Operations	0	0	0
Renovation	0	0	0

Major Rehab	0	0	0
Conversion	0	0	0
Subtotal	165,313	204,202	49,440

Table 27 – ESG Expenditures for Emergency Shelter

11d. Other Grant Expenditures

	Dollar Amount of Expenditures in Program Year		
	2018	2019	2020
Street Outreach	5,637	34,080	17,188
HMIS	14,863	14,989	3,749
Administration	34,124	28,948	24,101

Table 28 - Other Grant Expenditures

11e. Total ESG Grant Funds

Total ESG Funds Expended	2018	2019	2020
	547,575	428,089	146,115

Table 29 - Total ESG Funds Expended

11f. Match Source

	2018	2019	2020
Other Non-ESG HUD Funds	0	0	0
Other Federal Funds	338,536	338,536	437,200
State Government	349,860	1,022,584	599,730
Local Government	39,084	370,000	9,918

Private Funds	46,236	212,395	197,306
Other	49,087	0	79,000
Fees	57,690	0	0
Program Income	0	0	0
Total Match Amount	880,493	1,943,515	1,323,154

Table 30 - Other Funds Expended on Eligible ESG Activities

11g. Total

Total Amount of Funds Expended on ESG Activities	2018	2019	2020
	1,428,068	2,371,604	1,469,269

Table 31 - Total Amount of Funds Expended on ESG Activities

Attachment

Impediments to Fair Housing Recommendations

HOUSING POLICY

Response/Recommendations

As highlighted in the Fair Housing Programs and Activities section above, the City of Worcester has been doing a tremendous amount of work in relation to affordable and fair housing through multi-pronged initiatives and programs, including those supported by annual HUD entitlement funding. However, the City should also consider focusing on producing a comprehensive affordable housing strategy/policy. Participants in the AI process generally agreed that there is too little coordination between the work of various governmental and quasi-government agencies, nonprofits, and advocacy groups in Worcester. Bringing the myriad of stakeholders together under a coherent, city-wide policy could have a major, beneficial impact. Although not all parties may have the same goals regarding housing production, it may be useful to see what each stakeholder is looking to achieve, and how the efforts could complement each other toward achieving common overall goals in a city wide framework. Within each group there also may be an opportunity to increase coordination in how, where, and what type of affordable housing is produced.

FAIR HOUSING TESTING AND REPORTING

Response/Recommendations

Worcester needs a partner in its efforts to identify, understand, and address housing discrimination. Unfortunately, the development of this AI was severely hampered by the failure of the local testing program at Community Legal Aid to provide data. The City should consider directing its own funds toward improved testing and accountability, if necessary by securing a partner willing to report substantive and detailed data on a predictable schedule.

AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Response/Recommendations

Many people are unaware of their fair housing rights, and many property owners are unaware of their fair housing responsibilities. The City has housing organizations and advocates, but not everyone is working together or working toward commonly understood and agreed-upon outcomes. A City-sponsored and organized annual fair housing conference could go a long way toward building awareness and consensus and positioning the City to take a leadership role in regional fair housing advocacy. The City of Worcester Office of Human rights seems to be the Department best suited to educate the public on Fair Housing Rights issues identified above. Additionally, through both the Human Rights Office, and non-profit partners, the City should coordinate strategic and grassroots outreach efforts to educate, empower, and raise awareness of Fair Housing rights, issues, and concerns. The outreach should have clear, transparent, and measureable annual goals. The items above should be reviewed and strategically incorporated into efforts regarding awareness of Fair Housing Rights.

ZONING & REGULATORY REFORMS

Response/Recommendations

- The City should consider allowing at least two-family density development in all residential districts in Worcester to maximize housing unit supply and opportunity.

- The City should continue efforts to reduce parking minimums and establish flexibility in parking requirements, particularly for multi-family housing and within mixed-use districts.
- The City should amend setback requirements to be more flexible and reflective of actual traditional building forms. For example, many triple decker buildings were historically constructed with little or no front set back, and side yards are often much smaller than what is required. Reducing or eliminating these could increase the value of those units and spur reinvestment opportunities.
- Evaluate whether height limitations are too restrictive, and propose changes as necessary: Many participants cited height restrictions as a key barrier to redeveloping triple-deckers in the city. Dimensional regulations should be reviewed to bring them more in line with the building stock the City actually has.
- The City should explore allowing multi-family development in additional areas of the city – particularly those areas with good transportation access or located in close proximity to mixed use or commercial zones. Comments from realtors and developers suggested that there are not enough areas of the City where new multi-family housing can be built. Additionally, changing the site dimensional requirements (setbacks, parking, etc.) to allow for the demolition and rebuilding of existing three-four family units in existing multi-family districts, would allow more parts of the City to experience multifamily re-development which might be more cost effective and attractive to the current and future market. These
- Existing City demographics, and citizen input, suggest the City should pursue strategies for increasing the availability of both smaller and larger unit sizes. There is significant market demand throughout the City for studio, one bedroom, micro-lofts and even SROs, as well as an under production, and need, for larger family-sized units, especially where public transportation is available.
- The City should consider allowing expanded opportunities to create additional dwelling units within existing buildings in certain circumstances.
- The City should revisit the prohibition on unrelated occupants. Currently the City limits sharing of dwelling units to no more than three unrelated occupants. This policy is said to limit the ability of landlords to fully lease up some properties, especially near colleges. However, the City needs to be mindful of fair housing protections for people with disabilities, such as adults living in group homes or sober houses.
- As the City has experienced a reinvigorated interest by developers for new development projects in the past 5 – 7 years, it should explore the feasibility and potential benefits of implementing an inclusionary zoning requirements, as well as mandatory mixed –income unit requirements for larger scale new projects that utilize any City financial assistance through tax incentives or other local government funds.

ADDRESSING HOUSING QUALITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD DISINVESTMENT

Worcester has a high number of deteriorated and abandoned properties and many are in neighborhoods where a high proportion of minorities and lower-income residents live. These properties range from old industrial buildings that are fully or partially vacant to poorly maintained and abandoned housing units.

The properties have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood by signaling disinvestment, presenting hazards to the neighborhood's residents' safety and health, and creating areas that may attract criminal activity. The existence of deteriorated and abandoned property in neighborhoods decreases property values and limits homeowners' abilities to grow equity in their homes and threatens the health of residents who live in this housing stock.

- Since 2013, using in large part federal entitlement funds like CDBG, the City has experimented with a "targeted" and strategic approach to neighborhood revitalization that has meant significantly investing in the housing and infrastructure of specific neighborhood over a dedicated amount of time. In contrast to more "scatter shot" approaches of investing in several projects and areas at the same time without any geographic or programmatic focus, this model has shown to be impactful and generate third party investment and cooperation by residents and institutional partners in the revitalization efforts, particularly as there is more certainty and resources brought to bear. A large component of these efforts has also involved improvements and upgrades to the community appearance and community safety. This approach has resulted in more transformative outcomes. The Union Hill neighborhood was the first area where this model was implemented, and the City should continue to implement this model in other low-to moderate income neighborhoods using federal, local, and leveraged private funds.
- The City should study the landscape of options for incentivizing housing maintenance and upgrades. There should be more resources beyond CDBG for interior and exterior repairs, for instance the possibility of a Neighborhood Challenge Grant for owner-matched cosmetic improvements to enhance housing curb appeal, and improve neighborhood identity and image through signage, art, or aesthetic improvements.
- The City needs to reassess its approach to code enforcement. On one hand, strict enforcement may unduly penalize the most vulnerable renters in Worcester, but on the other hand, inconsistent or weak enforcement simply encourages irresponsible landlords to ignore health, safety, and quality-of-life problems faced by their tenants. The City should also consider re-positioning and empowering the Inspectional Services Department to better provide pro-active code enforcement, including implementation of a "Rental/Landlord Registry" program that requires landlord owned units to pass inspection before approval for rental, and for re-inspection at least yearly. The program could and should also include a landlord training/educational component.
- The City administers a Chapter 139 process whereby dilapidated, abandoned, or unsafe properties that have been repeatedly cited by Code Enforcement become slated for receivership or demolition after the owners have been afforded an administrative hearing and appeal process. Too often properties become "stuck" in this process, with no tangible outcome or improvements expected or made within reasonable time frames. An audit or assessment of said program should be conducted to seek improvements to it, including but not limited to, potential funding pools to assist the owners in rehabbing and re-activating abandoned or unsafe residential units.

HOUSING COST BURDEN AND RACE

Response/Recommendations

It is recommended this topic be added to the list of items requiring further study.

FORECLOSURE POLICY

Response/Recommendations

It is recommended this topic be added to the list of items requiring further study.

LEAD PAINT ISSUES

Response/Recommendations

The City of Worcester Housing Development Division manages a \$5.6 million HUD lead abatement grant. A requirement of this grant is community outreach to homeowners and landlords. The city has partnered with the Realtor association of Central Massachusetts and Masslandlords in order to improve the communication of the rights and responsibilities of homeowners and landlords to follow both the Massachusetts lead law and well as federal fair housing and lead disclosure standards. Landlords are specifically made aware of their responsibility not to discriminate against tenant with children in order to skirt applicable lead laws. In addition, the program coordinates with both Worcester Headstart and Worcester Public School departments to ensure children under 6 receive lead testing prior to enrolling in school.

NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE UNITS

Response/Recommendations

It is recommended this topic be added to the list of items requiring further study.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC TRANSIT

Response/Recommendations

It would be a good time to re-vision the transit system and make sure it leverages all resources in the most needed areas. It is also recommended that there is further education and expansion of bicycle transit within the City. It is recommended this topic be added to the list of items requiring further study.

HIV/AIDS HOUSING OPTIONS

Response/Recommendations

It is recommended an update to the 2011 HOPWA Needs Analysis is conducted to determine the current State of the needs so actions can be tailored to relevant data.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The City should reconsider adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and establishing a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund.