

CITY OF GREAT FALLS

2021 HOME-ARP Funding Plan

As an amendment to the 2021 Annual Action Plan



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2021 HOME-ARP Funding Plan

Consultation

A community partner survey was conducted at the start of the HOME-ARP planning process. The survey consisted of several different questions specific to qualifying populations and how they provided services to those individuals. It also provided a section for additional comments as it pertains to the use of HOME-ARP funding. Each organization was asked to describe the qualifying populations which they serve. They were asked to identify the unmet housing and service needs they see within those populations that they serve. They were asked to identify the services which their organization provides to qualifying populations. They were further asked to identify what they see as priority needs in the community and to narrow it down to the one greatest priority need within the HOME-ARP eligible scope of activities. The survey proved to be a very valuable piece of the consultation process and a full copy of each survey can be found in the attachments.

Community partners from 17 organizations were invited to participate in the survey, which was conducted from October 6 – October 22, 2021. A total of 9 organizations responded to the survey. The survey was distributed to organizations from the following categories, Continuum of Care (CoC), Homeless service providers, Domestic Violence service provider, Public Housing Authority, Other Public Agencies, Disability Service Providers, and Civil Rights & Fair Housing Organizations. Of those types of organizations consulted, the City was able to obtain insight from the CoC, the only Domestic Violence service provider in the community, housing organizations, the Public Housing Authority, a disability service provider, and Fair Housing in conjunction with the response from the PHA (which employs, along with the City, a part-time Fair Housing Specialist). There were a number of organizations consulted through the survey process that did not respond including the veteran's organization, a housing agency, youth service providers, health service providers, and homeless service providers.

The survey process provided some very valuable feedback and insight into the needs of the Great Falls community. The need for more affordable rental housing was in the forefront of the responses. More specifically, the need for more permanent supportive housing was routinely identified among survey results, with supportive services coming in second.

City staff also consulted with the Great Falls Continuum of Care (CoC) through Zoom meetings. City Staff participation in the monthly CoC meetings is something that is ongoing and has been a regular part of consultation. In addition to the survey feedback at the start of the HOME-ARP process there was a regular CoC meeting on 01/12/2022 that had a more robust conversation as to the needs of the community and how the HOME-ARP funding can best serve the community. The most identified need for the Great Falls community from that meeting was consistent with the earlier survey results which identified the need for affordable housing for individuals from all qualifying populations. Permanent housing is an ongoing focus of the CoC, and they reinforced this priority by identifying affordable rental housing as the preferred option for the use of HOME-ARP funds. There was also a discussion of the

need for an additional emergency shelter option in the community that is low barrier for those that can't utilize the existing shelter options due to various barriers such as substance abuse, mental health issues, violence or other unique situations. This also led to the discussion about the need for supportive services especially for behavioral health.

Though the Great Falls Public Schools did not participate in the survey efforts, they did participate in the consultation process through email and phone on 12/07/2021 and 12/08/2021. Through that communication they were able to offer information on the needs that pertain to students in the community and the need for housing. They reported that the need for affordable housing for homeless students is great along with the need for supportive services. Specific data points provided can be found in the needs and gaps analysis section of the document.

NeighborWorks Great Falls has worked in conjunction with the Great Falls Development Authority to conduct a housing assessment for the Great Falls Community. Though the assessment was not finalized prior to the consultation process and plan submission, they have reported the need for housing is great. Preliminary data is showing similar housing needs as the City has shown in the plan document. City staff also conducted in person meetings with NeighborWorks on 6/21/2021 and 8/18/2021. Both of those meetings were in regard to the need for more affordable housing units as well as services to those tenants to include case management services.

The Great Falls Public Housing Authority is part of the City of Great Falls local government, which is unique in most cases. Even more unique is that the Great Falls Housing Authority and the City of Great Falls employ a part-time Fair Housing specialist. In person meetings with the Great Falls Housing Authority are a near daily occurrence and have offered much insight into the need for dedicated housing, and more affordable units especially for those in the 0-30% AMI category. They also identified the need for supportive services as the top priority during our meetings. This was consistent with their survey response as well.

List of organizations consulted, and summary of feedback received from each entity.

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Great Falls Continuum of Care (CoC)	Continuum of Care (CoC) which also includes agencies from the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Agencies • Fair Housing • Domestic Violence • Homeless Shelters • Homeless Service Providers • Public Housing • Health/Mental Health • Civil Rights Organizations • Disability Services • Public Education • Youth Services • Veterans Services • Organizations that provide services for American Indian Populations • Local Government 	Survey & Monthly meetings via Zoom	Identified affordable rental housing, specifically permanent supportive Housing (PSH), followed by services for behavioral health.
Great Falls Public Housing Authority (PHA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Housing Agency (PHA) • Fair Housing 	Survey, In person & CoC meetings	Identified supportive services as the top priority, followed by PSH. Provided data included in this plan.
NeighborWorks Great Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Agency 	Survey, In person & CoC meetings	Identified affordable housing, specifically PSH, followed by case management services.
Habitat for Humanity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Agency 	Survey	Identified non-congregate shelter as the top priority, followed by housing.

YWCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Violence • Civil Rights • Shelter Services 	Survey, Email & CoC meetings	Identified affordable housing, specifically PSH, as the top priority. Also provided data points on individuals fleeing domestic violence, which are included in this plan.
Great Falls Rescue Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Shelter 	Survey & CoC meetings	Identified affordable rental housing as the top priority, followed by supportive services (workforce and substance abuse).
North Central Independent Living Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Services • Civil Rights 	Survey & CoC meetings	Identified affordable rental housing as the top priority, followed by tenant based rental assistance (TBRA).
United Way of Cascade County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Provider 	Survey & CoC meetings	Identified affordable housing and supportive services as the top priorities.
Center for Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Services • Civil Rights 	Survey & CoC meetings	Identified supportive services as the top priority, followed by housing.
Great Falls Public Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Education 	Survey, Email & Phone	No response was received to the survey, however data points on homeless students was provided via phone/email and included in the plan.
Great Falls Veterans Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran Services • Civil Rights 	Survey, Email & Phone	No comments received.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Agency • ESG 	Survey	No comments received.
Alliance for Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Service Provider 	Survey	No comments received.
Young Parents Education Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Provider 	Survey	No comments received.
St. Vincent De Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Provider • Veteran Services 	Survey	No comments received.
Great Falls Development Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Provider 	Survey	No comments received.
Alluvion Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Services 	Survey	No comments received.

Table 1 – Agencies Consulted

Public Participation

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

The City held a public needs hearing on December 7, 2021, which was held at the City Commission meeting. Anyone wishing to comment on the best use of HOME-ARP funds was invited to do so. The City's public comment period for the draft HOME-ARP Plan was from December 20, 2021 – January 18, 2022. All comments received during the public hearing and comment period are included as an attachment to this report; no comments were rejected. A public hearing was held on February 15, 2022, after which the City Commission voted unanimously to approve the HOME-ARP plan. All public comments were in favor of the plan. In addition to the tables, a narrative section in this Plan summarizes all comments received in the public participation process. A second public comment period of the City's draft HOME-ARP Plan was held from April 18, 2022 – May 17, 2022. There were no comment received during the second public comment period.

2	Mode of Outreach: PUBLIC NEEDS HEARING	
	Target of Outreach	Minorities, Persons with disabilities, Non-targeted/broad community, Residents of Public and Assisted Housing
	Summary of response/attendance	There were 7 commenters in attendance at the Public Needs Hearing, 3 of those in attendance also submitted their comments in writing prior to the meeting. Written comments have been included as an attachment. The remaining 4 commented in-person only, and a summary of their remarks is attached. One additional comment was received via email and is attached.
	Summary of comments received	Comments received were related to the use of HOME-ARP funds for affordable rental housing development with an emphasis on permanent supportive housing, as well as financial support for the services provided.
	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	No comments were rejected.
3	Mode of Outreach: INTERNET OUTREACH	

	Target of Outreach	Minorities, Persons with disabilities, Non-targeted/broad community, Residents of Public and Assisted Housing, Non-profit agency personnel, faith-based institutions
	Summary of response/attendance	The City's website and Facebook page were utilized to provide additional sources of Public Notice for the following: Public Needs Hearing on December 7, 2021; public comment period for the proposed HOME-ARP Plan from December 20, 2021 - January 18, 2022. Additionally, the proposed HOME-ARP Plan draft was posted on the website and promoted on Facebook to encourage additional public review, comment, and downloads.
	Summary of comments received	Comments received are included as an appendix.
	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	No comments were rejected.
4	Mode of Outreach: NEWSPAPER AD	
	Target of Outreach	Minorities, Persons with disabilities, Non-targeted/broad community, Residents of Public and Assisted Housing, Non-profit agency personnel, faith-based institutions
	Summary of response/attendance	Legal Advertisements were placed with the Great Falls Tribune to run on the following dates for the corresponding Public Notices: November 21, 2021 and November 28, 2021 for the public needs hearing; December 19, 2021 for the 30-day comment period from December 20, 2021–January 18, 2022; April 17, 2022 for the second 30-day comment period from April 18, 2022–May 17, 2022.
	Summary of comments received	Comments received are included as an appendix.
	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	No comments were rejected.
5	Mode of Outreach: PUBLIC HEARING	
	Target of Outreach	Minorities, Persons with disabilities, Non-targeted/broad community, Residents of Public and Assisted Housing
	Summary of response/attendance	There were 5 commenters in attendance at the Public Hearing.
	Summary of comments received	Comments received were in support of the proposed HOME-ARP plan and priorities.
	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	No comments were rejected.

Table 2 – Modes of Outreach

Describe any efforts to broaden public participation

In addition to standard legal notice placements in the Great Falls *Tribune*, the City utilized the City of Great Falls official web page and social media platforms to help broaden the participation process. Many media outlets in the community ran stories on the planning process, including how community members and interested parties could participate in the public hearings and public comment periods.

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

A full summary of all public comments received is included as an attachment to this plan. Below is a narrative of the feedback received during each opportunity for public input.

Comments from the December 7, 2021 Great Falls City Commission Meeting for the HOME-ARP Public Needs Hearing are below:

There were 7 commenters in attendance, with 1 commenter submitting comments through email. Comments were focused primarily on the need for rental housing that is affordable, and for more funded public services. They also spoke about the need for emergency shelters that are low barrier in the community. All comments were taken into consideration and no comments were rejected.

Pastor Jeff Wakeley, with First United Methodist Church, spoke about the homeless needs in the community. He spoke about what his church is doing in support of those in need at this time and how the City needs to step up and create a homeless shelter that allows everyone a place to sleep.

Shyla Patera with North Central Independent Living Services spoke about the need for accessible affordable housing stock. She also spoke about how it is hard to connect services for the persons she represents. She also spoke to the problems her clients are facing in staying housed due to them not meeting HUD requirements and not having the option of HUD housing.

Sheila Rice, a citizen, spoke about the need for permanent supportive housing. She states that this is the answer to homelessness. She also provided data from other communities and studies showing how permanent supportive housing has impacted communities in a positive way.

Sherrie Arey, the director of NeighborWorks Great Falls, spoke about the impacts of the pandemic and how it has directly impacted housing stability. She urged the City to create, preserve, and support affordable housing development. She also encouraged the use of funding for the support of services to residents.

Carrie Parker, with Helping Hands, spoke about the need for support services to those that are homeless and the need for educating the community on the root causes of homelessness. She stated the need for a long-term housing solution is needed with support to those tenants. She also stated that a short-term solution is needed for those out in the cold right now.

Nancy Donovan, a citizen, stated her concern of tax payer's dollars possibly being needed for long term support of any development.

Pastor Steven Underwood, with Central Christian Church, spoke about how housing solves homelessness and the need to be a housing first advocate.

Sandi Filipowicz, the Executive Director of the YWCA, submitted her comment prior to the meeting. She provided some statistics in her comments and further stated that they indicate a true need for emergency shelter in Great Falls.

Comments from the 30 day public comment period from December 20, 2021 – January 12, 2022 are below:

There were a total of 3 comments submitted during the 30 day comment period. Comments received identified the need for affordable housing, low barrier shelter options, and permanent supportive housing. All comments were taken into consideration and no comments were rejected.

Shyla Patera with North Central Independent Living Services wrote about the need for accessible affordable housing stock. She also identified the issues her clients are facing due to them not meeting HUD requirements and not having the option of HUD housing. She wrote that the need for more accessible spaces is great. She also wrote about the need for more broadband and ADA accessibility overall.

Michael Yegerlehner, a citizen, advocated for 3 categories; 1. Public or non-profit low barrier homeless shelter, 2. Public or non-profit permanent supportive housing, 3. Public or non-profit affordable housing.

Morgan Yegerlehner, a citizen, wrote to support the use of HOME-ARP funding for the development of a low barrier non-congregate shelter. She also stated that Great Falls needs affordable housing to prevent homelessness, but the safety net of a low barrier shelter also is needed.

Comments from the February 15, 2022 Great Falls City Commission Meeting for the HOME-ARP 2nd Public Hearing & Vote are below:

Sherrie Arey, Executive Director of NeighborWorks Great Falls, said she was there to speak in favor of the staff's recommendations for funding in the plan. She commended staff for their due diligence.

Reverend Jeff Wakeley, First United Methodist Church, said his hope was that the funds would be used for a homeless shelter, but that he is speaking in support of the proposed plan. He encourages the commission to support the plan so the funding can get into the community as soon as possible.

Michael Yegerlehner, a citizen, stated that he was majority in favor of the proposed plan.

An unknown citizen commented that there had been very good people that spoke before him, and that we should make an opportunity of people to become more rewarding to society.

Sheila Rice, a citizen, spoke in favor of the proposed plan. She stated that she believed the plan as proposed should be passed. She encouraged the Commission to act quickly on approving the plan and thanked staff for putting it together.

Comments from the Second 30 day public comment period from April 18, 2022 – May 17, 2022 are below:

There were no comments received during the second 30 day comment period.

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

All comments are included in the summary and full responses are in the attachments. No comments were rejected or not accepted.

Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis

Multiple data sources were used to complete the needs assessment and gap analysis sections of this plan. They include the 2020 Decennial Census; American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 5-year Estimates; Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data sets from 2011-2015 and 2014-2018; the 2020 Point-in-Time Count for homeless individuals; the local Continuum of Care's Housing Inventory Count (HIC); and direct consultation with community partners and stakeholders. The tables below provide an at-a-glance look at data City staff compiled and reviewed.

OPTIONAL Homeless Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

Homeless													
	Current Inventory					Homeless Population				Gap Analysis			
	Family		Adults Only		Vets	Family HH (at least 1 child)	Adult HH (w/o child)	Vets	Victims of DV	Family		Adults Only	
	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds					# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units
Emergency Shelter	157	0	121	0	0								
Transitional Housing	23	0	33	0	14								
Permanent Supportive Housing	0	0	0	0	0								
Other Permanent Housing						0	0	0	0				
Sheltered Homeless						113 26-HH	85	19	22				
Unsheltered Homeless						0	1	0	5				
Current Gap										+40	0	+63	0

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

Table 3-Homeless Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis

OPTIONAL Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

Non-Homeless			
	Current Inventory	Level of Need	Gap Analysis
	# of Units	# of Households	# of Households
Total Rental Units	12,250		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness)	1,175		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI (Other Populations)	4,080		
0%-30% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (At-Risk of Homelessness)		2,410 total With 1,825 of those having 1 or more housing problems	
30%-50% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (Other Populations)		1,735 total With 1,365 of those having 1 or more housing problems	
<i>Current Gaps</i>			-1,235 underserved 0-30% AMI renter HH Data Source: 2014-2018 CHAS

Table 4 – Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis

Data Source: 2011-2015 CHAS, Inventory; 2014-2018 CHAS, Level of Need & Gap Analysis

Table 3 above indicates there is a surplus of beds when looking at the number of beds available for emergency shelter options, it also indicates the need for a permanent supportive housing option in the community which would fall within the affordable rental category. While Table 4 above indicates a surplus of affordable units for 30-50% AMI households, there is an estimated deficit of 1,235 housing units for households earning 0-30% AMI. This deficit further limits housing choice for extremely low income households and those at risk of homelessness in Great Falls.

Housing Needs Assessment

Summary of Housing Needs

Demographics	Base Year: 2015	Most Recent Year: 2019	% Change
Population	59,565	60,442*	1.47%
Households	25,195	25,659	1.84%
Median Income	\$42,896	\$46,965	9.49%

Table 5 - Housing Needs Assessment Demographics

Data Source: 2011-2015 ACS (Base Year), 2019 ACS 5-year Estimate (Most Recent Year), *2020 Decennial Census

Income Distribution Overview

	0-30% HAMFI	>30-50% HAMFI	>50-80% HAMFI	>80-100% HAMFI	>100% HAMFI	Total
Owner Households	900	1,555	2,665	1,550	9,330	16,000
Renter Households	2,410	1,735	2,500	1,120	1,955	9,720
Total Households	3,310	3,290	5,165	2,670	11,285	25,720

Table 6 - Total Households Table

Data Source: 2014-2018 CHAS

Housing Problems Table

	Renter						Owner					
	0-30% AMI	>30-50% AMI	>50-80% AMI	>80-100% AMI	>100% AMI	Total	0-30% AMI	>30-50% AMI	>50-80% AMI	>80-100% AMI	>100% AMI	Total
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS												
Household has at least 1 of 4 housing problems	1,825	1,365	1,115	80	120	4,505	640	545	1,070	190	270	2,720
Household is cost burdened (housing expense >30% household income)	1,795	1,310	1,010	45	75	4,235	645	540	1,030	185	195	2,595
Household is severely cost burdened (housing expense >50% household income)	1,450	315	95	0	20	1,880	545	255	230	0	15	1,045

Table 7 – Housing Problems Table

Data Source: 2014-2018 CHAS

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

According to the most recent Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data from 2014-2018, there are 4,145 renter households with 0-50% AMI living in Great Falls. Of those renters, 3,190, or nearly 77%, are experiencing 1 or more housing problems; 3,105, or 75%, are cost burdened; and 1,765, nearly 43%, are severely cost burdened. These factors increase the risk of homelessness for the households described. Furthermore, households experiencing rent and mortgage cost burdens may have difficulty affording other necessities critical for basic quality of life, including food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.

The 2020 Point-in-Time Count reports that 198 individuals in Great Falls were experiencing homelessness at the time the survey was administered on January 30, 2020. That total includes 26 households with school-aged children living in emergency or transitional shelters. Together, those 26

households include 52 children ages 5-17, or 73 children ages birth-17. A reported 19 individuals from the 2020 Point in Time Count were veterans.

Additionally, the 2020 Point-in-Time count reflects a disproportionate rate of American Indian/Alaska Natives experiencing homelessness in Great Falls. American Indian/Alaska Natives make up approximately 6% of the city's total population, yet they represent 31% of those experiencing homelessness.

According to data released by the Great Falls Public School District (GFPS) in 2018, the District reported an increase in the number of homeless students. Any "child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" is considered to be experiencing homelessness by the Great Falls Public School District. During the 2017-2018 school year, the number of students believed to be experiencing homelessness was more than 350. A recent update from the Great Falls Public Schools shows that for the school year of 2019-2020 there were 550 students experiencing homelessness. This is an increase of 200 students experiencing homelessness since 2018. GFPS reports that since the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, 900 students have been served through student services, and the department has distributed 11,000 pounds of food. Of those 900 students served, 386 have been identified as homeless.

It is hard to obtain data specific to those fleeing, or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking as those are not specified in many data sources. However, after consultation with the local YWCA it was reported that they are at full capacity. They estimate that a total of 5 individuals were unable to be housed on average per night with 22 individuals and children being in their shelter at a time. These numbers are included in the needs analysis totals. They did not provide further data to the demographic composition of these individuals, however they are most likely included in the overall totals from the 2020 Point in Time Count.

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

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

While Table 4 above indicates a surplus of affordable units for 30-50% AMI households, there is an estimated deficit of 1,235 housing units for households earning 0-30% AMI. This deficit further limits housing choice for extremely low income households and those at risk of homelessness in Great Falls.

There is a robust network of public service organizations in Great Falls who work to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness. The City participates in the local Continuum of Care for Homelessness (CoC) group, which meets monthly to expand understanding of the services needed by those experiencing homelessness, to facilitate consolidation and coordination of

homeless services, and to improve service delivery. Additionally, Case Conferencing meetings are held twice monthly and provide a collaborative setting where services are coordinated for households experiencing homelessness.

Organizations such as Opportunities, Inc., Alluvion Health, YWCA, and others have expanded their case management services in the last year. Front door access for coordinated entry, or Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) intake, has increased and will soon include the Great Falls Rescue Mission. While access to services continues to increase and service delivery continues to streamline, identifying dedicated housing for qualifying populations continues to be a challenge because of the lack of available, affordable rental housing.

Homeless Populations

While the data shows that there is not a current need for a temporary shelter option to house those that are homeless in the community, it does show that there is a great need for a permanent supportive housing option as one does not exist in the community. The data also shows that there is a great need for those in the 0-30% AMI category to have affordable housing options available in the community as there is a deficit of 1,235 units in comparison to the number of renters that fall within that income category. This is why the City has identified the development of affordable rental housing as the first priority for the HOME-ARP funding allocation.

At Risk of Homelessness

According to the data presented above there is a clear need for more available and affordable rental options for those that are at risk of homelessness. For households that are currently housed but have challenges maintaining their home, the level of need was measured by the amount of inventory that is affordable, safe, and provides adequate living conditions, as well as the number of renter households that are experiencing severe housing cost burdens. These households need assistance to stay housed without becoming encumbered by the cost of their home. This is why the City has identified the development of affordable rental housing as the first priority for the HOME-ARP funding allocation.

Domestic Violence Populations

Data specific to those individuals fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence is not easily obtainable through many of the readily available data sources. However, the data that was provided by the local YWCA, which is the only domestic violence organization in the community, indicates that there is not enough housing available for these qualifying populations. The YWCA has reported that they are turning people away due to being at full capacity. On average, five individuals are turned away or referred to other options each day. The lack of housing options specifically dedicated to this qualifying population also indicates that they are without the services that come with housing specifically for this qualifying population. This is why the City has identified the development of affordable rental housing as the first priority for the HOME-ARP funding allocation.

Other Populations

There is an overall need for affordable rental housing options for the other populations eligible through the HOME-ARP program. This is clear in the data showing that there is lack of available, affordable, and safe housing options as a whole within the Great Falls community. This is why the City has identified the development of affordable rental housing as the first priority for the HOME-ARP funding allocation.

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

Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing

The **Great Falls Rescue Mission** (Rescue Mission) includes a men's shelter, women's shelter, and family shelter and is the primary emergency shelter provider in Great Falls. Overall, there are 52 beds available in the men's shelter and 65 beds in the women shelter. In an emergency such as life-threatening weather, the Rescue Mission provides additional mats on the floor and foldaway cribs to accommodate need. The Rescue Mission's Cameron Family Center can serve approximately 134 people experiencing homelessness, 70 of which, on average, are children.

The YWCA Mercy Home is the primary provider of emergency/transitional housing and supportive services for victims of domestic abuse and has the capacity to house 30 women & children at one time. The YWCA Great Falls website reports that from July 2018 to June 2019, the organization provided 156 women and children fleeing domestic violence with more than 4,071 shelter nights. Along with housing assistance, victims of domestic violence may require financial assistance for basic needs, counseling, legal assistance and training/education to assist with employment.

St. Vincent de Paul's Grace Home provides transitional housing for homeless men who are veterans, with the capacity to house 14 men at a time. During cold and/or inclement weather, Grace Home offers shelter services beyond its usual capacity.

The **Center for Mental Health** provides transitional housing for individuals with severe or serious disabling mental illness who demonstrate a need for additional supportive living services.

Opportunities, Inc., receives Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding and offers emergency assistance through rapid re-housing and homeless prevention services.

Supportive Services and Outreach

The **Great Falls Rescue Mission** conducts outreach to chronically homeless people through its day room program and provides sleeping mats to chronically homeless people during nights which have life-threatening weather. Emergency services include meals, shelter, and medical clinics.

Alluvion Health is a non-profit Federally Qualified Health Center and offers medical, dental, behavioral, and substance abuse disorder services. Additional services include care coordination, crisis management, and referrals to community and housing services.

In addition to its many supportive and wrap-around services for clients, the **Center for Mental Health** has an adult case manager who provides outreach and wellness checks for chronically homeless people.

Opportunities, Inc., provides support to chronically homeless people and those at risk of homelessness through intake screenings, referrals, case management, financial assistance and job training assistance. Opportunities, Inc., is the current HMIS lead for Great Falls.

The **YWCA** provides case management, service coordination, and supplies 30 different human service agencies with vouchers for chronically homeless people to use at its used clothing store.

The **Indian Family Health Clinic** provides community resource information through group sessions provided by staff members.

St. Vincent de Paul of North Central Montana provides weekly outreach to those experiencing unsheltered homelessness and through the food bank and charity services offered at their Angel Services Center.

Alliance for Youth has established a Youth Resource Center which serves youth ages 13-20 who are disadvantaged, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. Services offered include medical, dental, behavioral health care, substance abuse treatment, housing search support and advocacy. Additionally, drop-in centers operate in tandem with outreach programs, family engagement services, emergency shelters and transitional housing.

To date, the City of Great Falls as a Participating Jurisdiction does not allocate HOME funds to tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) programs.

In terms of affordable and permanent supportive rental housing, the current affordable housing inventory does not meet the present need, and there are no dedicated permanent supportive housing units or vouchers in Great Falls. A list of affordable and/or assisted properties is below. These units in addition to the 490 public housing units available through the Great Falls Housing Authority total 1,682 assisted housing units. Housing inventory gaps are detailed further in the following section.

HUD Multifamily properties in Great Falls:

- Aspen Village (60 units)
- Broadview Manor Apartments (20 units)
- Centennial Village (48 units)
- Park Manor (103 units)
- Parkview Apartments (83 units)
- Rainbow House (40 units)
- Sunshine Village (70 units)
- The Elmwoods (18 units)
- River Run Apartments (92 units)

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties in Great Falls:

- Autumn Run Apartments (121 units)
- Cascade Ridge Senior Living (39 units)
- Franklin School (40 units)
- Rainbow House Apartments (40)
- Sandstone Village (47 units)
- Soroptimist Village (55 units)
- Town Site NHS Apartments (20 units)
- Rockcress Commons (124 units)

Other assisted properties in Great Falls include but are not limited to:

- First Avenue Estates (12 units)
- The Voyageur (38 units)
- Meadowlark Apartments (18 units)
- The Portage (48 units)
- Southwind Estates (24 units)
- Sand Hills (16 units)
- Holland Court (16 units)

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

The gaps identified through this HOME-ARP plan development process remain consistent with what was identified through the community participation process of the City's Consolidated Planning efforts. That is, there is an overall need for affordable and permanent supportive rental housing, as well as for the continued expansion of case management and supportive services.

The amount of time it takes to transition from emergency shelter to permanent housing continues to increase as rental housing wait lists grow in the public and private sectors. Additionally, increased rents in the private sector make it difficult for housing voucher utilization.

During consultations with the Great Falls Housing Authority in early December 2021, a total of 148 households were on wait lists for public housing. Of that total, 125 (nearly 85%) are waiting on the availability of one-bedroom units, with average wait times being six months to one year for disabled and/or elderly applicants. These applicants receive placement preference. As result, for those on the one-bedroom waitlist who are not classified as disabled or elderly, length of wait time cannot be realistically measured.

For the approximately 300 households on GFHA's housing choice voucher (HCV) wait list, wait times are even longer. Currently, households who have recently been issued HCVs are requesting 60-90 day extensions in order to secure housing with landlords in the private market, often without success. As mentioned previously, increased rents in the current housing market make it increasingly difficult for voucher holders to utilize their vouchers, particularly one-bedroom voucher holders. While the HUD-established Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are somewhat competitive for two to four bedroom units, the one-bedroom FMRs, which determine rent limits for voucher utilization, remain well under the competitive market rate.

The GFHA is the only Public Housing Authority within the city of Great Falls. GFHA owns and operates one main public housing site and four scattered public housing sites. These properties include a total of 490 apartment units that range in size from 1-4 bedrooms. Additionally, GFHA has budget authority for 250 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs).

Homeless Populations

There was much participation during the community input opportunities that outlined the need for services to individuals that are homeless. There are individuals in the community who remain unsheltered due to barriers that exist. This is why the City has identified funding for supportive services as the second priority for the HOME-ARP funding allocation.

At Risk of Homelessness

These households need assistance to stay housed without becoming encumbered by the cost of their home. Housing cost burden also leads to the need for more supportive services to renters in order to remain or be successfully housed long-term. This is why the City has identified funding for supportive services as the second priority for the HOME-ARP funding allocation.

Domestic Violence Populations

Data specific to those individuals fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence is not easily obtainable through many of the readily available data sources. However, the data that was provided by the local YWCA, which is the only domestic violence organization in our community, indicates that there is not enough housing available for these qualifying populations. The YWCA has reported that they are turning people away due to being at full capacity. The lack of housing options specifically dedicated to this

qualifying population also indicates that they are without the services that come with housing specifically for this qualifying population. This is why the City has identified funding for supportive services as the second priority for the HOME-ARP funding allocation.

Other Populations

There is an overall need for affordable rental housing options for the other populations eligible through the HOME-ARP program. This is clear in the data showing that there is lack of available, affordable, and safe housing options as a whole within the Great Falls community. The lack of stable housing increases the need for supportive services for these individuals overall. This is why the City has identified funding for supportive services as the second priority for the HOME-ARP funding allocation.

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

The City will not further identify “other populations” within the qualifying populations already outlined.

Identify priority needs for qualifying populations:

The priority needs identified through recent ARPA-specific surveying, the public needs hearing, and personal consultation remain consistent with what was identified through the community participation process of the City’s Consolidated Planning efforts. That is, there is an overall need for affordable and permanent supportive rental housing, as well as for the continued expansion of case management and housing navigation services. This need has been identified for each of the qualifying populations that are eligible through HOME-ARP program which is why the City is focusing efforts on the development of affordable rental housing as well as supportive services.

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

The gaps in services and program needs to provide affordable rental housing and supportive services were determined using data from multiple sources as well as personal consultation with community providers. The need for affordable rental housing was determined by evaluating data sources and community partner input which supports the need for rental development that will be affordable and remain affordable. Additionally, the need for long-term supportive services or case management to achieve housing stability has been identified as a priority among qualifying populations.

For households that are currently housed but have challenges maintaining their home, the level of need was measured by the amount of inventory that is affordable, safe, and provides adequate living conditions, as well as the number of renter households that are experiencing severe housing cost

burdens. These households need assistance to stay housed without becoming encumbered by the cost of their home.

HOME-ARP Activities

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

Once the City has received the full HOME-ARP grant award from HUD, the City plans to open up for applications for a specified period of time to make it a more competitive process in awarding these funds. During that time any organization, developer, subrecipient, or Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) is eligible to apply. At the close of the application period, all applications received will be reviewed for completeness, eligibility, and their ability to deliver on the priority needs identified within this plan. Each applicant will also be reviewed for their ability to carry out the project meeting all eligibility criteria.

Award(s) will be made based on the applicant's project scope as it pertains to the outlined priority needs in this plan as well as the applicant's familiarity with utilizing federal funding and ability to comply with all federal and local requirements. Each project will be required to maintain a project specific waitlist of qualifying populations to be used for the tenant selection process.

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

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

Use of HOME-ARP Funding

	Funding Amount	Percent of Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	\$150,000		
Acquisition & Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	\$0		
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	\$0		
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	\$722,505.45		
Non-Profit Operating	\$0	0%	5%
Non-Profit Capacity Building	\$0	0%	5%
Administration and Planning	\$153,971.55	15%	15%
TOTAL HOME-ARP ALLOCATION	\$1,026,477.00		

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

There is currently no dedicated permanent supportive housing in Great Falls, which was largely identified as a top priority from the HOME-ARP survey, consultations, and from the public needs hearing. Many of the families or individuals who receive assistance to mitigate homelessness require wrap-around services with their housing because of the compounding challenges they face. The City will support organizations that provide supportive services to help eligible participants achieve self-sufficiency.

HOME-ARP Production Housing Goals

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

The City estimates that a total of 20 affordable rental units will be added to the current housing inventory using HOME-ARP funds. The City also estimates that additional HOME funding from its annual entitlement allocation will be utilized in these projects. This will increase the number of affordable housing units produced.

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

The City will prioritize the development of affordable rental housing while giving preference to Permanent Supporting Housing projects in the community, as this was identified as the greatest need in

addressing the current homelessness situation in Great Falls. The addition of permanent supportive housing to the housing inventory can make a big impact on those facing homelessness as there is an opportunity for wrap-around services within the housing unit that helps participants achieve self-sufficiency.

Preferences

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

- *Preferences cannot violate any applicable fair housing, civil rights, and nondiscrimination requirements, including but not limited to those requirements listed in 24 CFR 5.105(a).*
- *PJs are not required to describe specific projects to which the preferences will apply.*

The City has elected to not further narrow eligibility and will not be giving a preference to any one qualifying population over another.

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

N/A

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

N/A

HOME-ARP Refinancing Guideline

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

Appendices
