

CITY OF UTICA, NY

**HOME-ARP PLAN
PRESENTATION
(DRAFT)**



WHAT IS HOME-ARP?

- Utica was allocated **\$2,428,816** of HOME-American Rescue Plan Act (HOME-ARP) funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- In order to receive the HOME-ARP allocation, the City must develop a HOME-ARP Allocation Plan that will become part of the City's Annual Action Plan.

QUALIFYING POPULATIONS

FUNDS MUST PRIMARILY BENEFIT INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS IN FOUR QUALIFYING POPULATIONS:

1. Those that are experiencing homelessness
2. Those at risk of homelessness
3. Those fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
4. Populations with high risk of housing instability (including households that are low-income and highly cost-burdened; that have moved two or more times in the last 60 days; and that are living in a hotel/motel)



CONTINUUM OF CARE

A CONSORTIUM OF ALL MAJOR HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS OPERATING IN ONEIDA COUNTY. ALL DATA IS COLLECTED QUARTERLY AND REPORTED TO THE HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS) DATABASE.

The Continuum of Care's PIT count for **February 23, 2022** found that there were 244 people experiencing homelessness at that time. Within this group, 184 people (75%) were living in emergency shelters, 35 people (15%) were living in transitional housing, and 25 (10%) were unsheltered.

	Emergency Shelter		Transitional Housing	
Household Type	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Households without children	112	85%	12	63%
Households with at least one child and one adult	20	15%	7	37%
Households with only children	0	0%	0	0%
Total Homeless Households	132		19	
Persons in each household type				
Persons in households without children	121	66%	13	37%
Persons age 18-24	14	12%	1	8%
Persons over age 24	107	88%	12	92%
Persons in households with at least one adult and one child	63	34%	22	63%
Children under age 18	32	51%	13	59%
Persons age 18-24	4	6%	4	18%
Persons over age 24	27	43%	5	23%
Total Homeless Persons	184		35	

CONSULTATIONS

- Between June 2022 and February 2023, the City engaged in consultations to solicit input on how the funds could be spent to assist the four Qualifying Populations determined by HUD.
- **METHODS OF OUTREACH:**
 - virtual consultation
 - letters to relevant service providing agencies and local/regional government officials
 - an online survey for stakeholders and the general public
 - a public hearing (this event) followed by a 15-day public comment period



CONTACTED

- 1. Service agencies: **26**
- 2. Local/Regional Government Agencies: **4**
- 3. Local/Regional elected/appointed officials: **12**
- 4. Private Developers/Stakeholders: **6**
- 5. Neighborhood Associations: **4**

RESPONSES RECEIVED

- 1. E-mail responses: **8**
- 2. Conference Calls: **1**
- 3. Responses to Public Survey: **37**
 - a. Homeless Service Provider: **2**
 - b. Fair Housing Organization: **2**
 - c. Organization Service People with Disabilities: **1**
 - d. Other: **32**



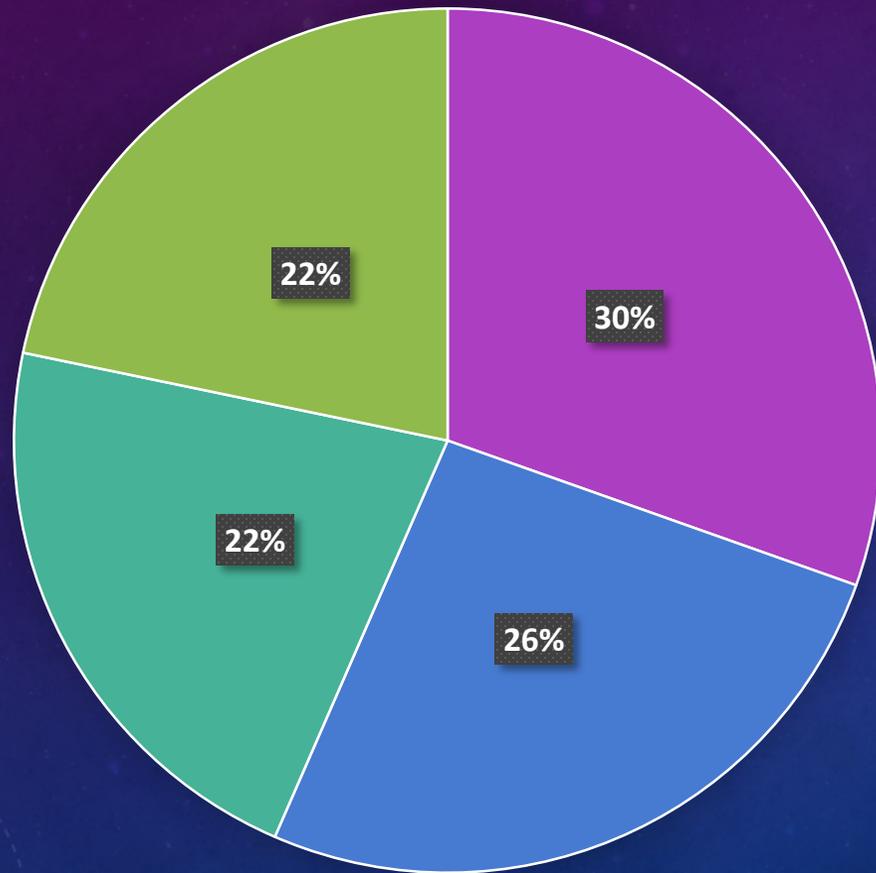
Q2. WHAT UNMET HOUSING AND SERVICE NEEDS DO YOU SEE AMONG "QUALIFYING POPULATIONS" IN THE CITY OF UTICA?

- Stronger and more "present" codes enforcement. We have sufficient housing, but there's a lot that is not habitable due to the codes violations.
- Rents that are much too high for this area. Rent control, Home improvement programs.
- Access to Child Care.
- Access to movers, storage or moving trucks.
- Options for at-risk transitional age (16-22) youth, seniors (65+).
- Additional options for victims of Domestic Violence, housing instability.
- Affordable housing for large families and/or single mothers with children.
- No-barrier temporary housing.
- Supportive housing that provides assistance in job training, budgeting, etc.
- Difficulty obtaining stable housing - even if they were to have a high rent burden. The rent that landlords are asking for has dramatically increased for the same units over the past two years. Many individuals are unaware that they may qualify for subsidized housing, and other individuals in subsidized housing are confused about what they need to do to keep that housing because property managers do not explain to tenants .
- Rental Housing Counseling Program, Eviction prevention, continued funding of walk-in centers for the homeless, financial literacy needs, more supports for homeless youth, self-advocacy training for homeless people, benefits advocacy, continued operation of the Green Team program.

Q3. WHAT GAPS DO YOU SEE WITHIN THE CURRENT SHELTER AND HOUSING INVENTORY, AS WELL AS THE SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM IN THE CITY OF UTICA?

- Lack of individualized rooms for at-risk population.
- High count of apartment buildings/units that need substantial rehab, risk of gentrification after rehab.
- Insufficient emergency housing options.
- Insufficient number of available shelter beds or housing inventory.
- Need more addiction treatment and mental health services.
- Need for no/low-barrier temporary housing.
- Codes enforcement is severely lacking, and many violations go unaddressed until the building is at the point of being condemned, leaving tenants unhoused through no fault of their own.
- Unmet need for case management for individuals experiencing housing instability.
- Does the City have service delivery? It's invisible. You need to increase it and share information more widely.
- Need more compassionate care for homeless people, more flexibility in the administration of government benefits, financial literacy and benefits training, more one bedroom units, community land trusts to preserve affordable housing, better public transit.
- Lack of shelters designed to accommodate families.

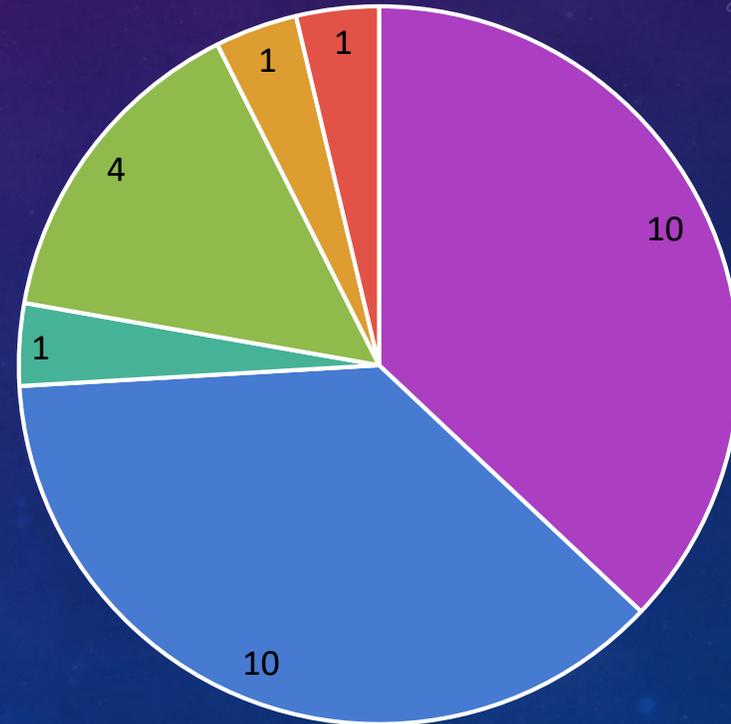
Q4. WHICH ELIGIBLE USE OF HOME-ARP FUNDS WOULD BE YOUR HIGHEST PRIORITY WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY? (SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY RESPONSES)



- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Services
- Acquisition/Development of Non-Congregate Shelter Units
- Development of Affordable Housing
- Rental Assistance

Q4. WHAT WOULD BE YOUR HIGHEST NEEDS PRIORITY WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY? (COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES)

- The development of new housing units
- The demolition and/or renovation of abandoned, burned out, or foreclosed property
- Infrastructure development. access to quality food
- Local jobs
- Better roads
- Local essential services



Q5. FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, WHAT SPECIFIC NEEDS DO YOU SEE IN OUR COMMUNITY? HOW DO YOU THINK HOME-ARP FUNDS COULD BE USED TO ADDRESS THOSE NEEDS?

- Strengthen the Codes department.
- Provide single-room emergency housing with privacy for personal hygiene and lavatories.
- Construct a Tiny Home community/communities, Low-cost solutions like shipping container conversions.
- More supportive housing like West Street Apartments.
- Give less-fortunate people the chance to live in better housing (deep subsidies).
- Contribute resources toward rental assistance or other beneficiary needs related to maintaining housing.
- Develop additional affordable Family and Senior rental options.
- Rehabilitate/demolish unsafe houses.
- Affordable housing with energy/environmentally-efficient systems.
- Lack of affordable housing options in Utica suburbs, on bus lines, and near services for individuals and families.

Q6. FOR RENTAL ASSISTANCE, WHAT SPECIFIC NEEDS DO YOU SEE IN OUR COMMUNITY? HOW DO YOU THINK HOME-ARP FUNDS COULD BE USED TO ADDRESS THOSE NEEDS?

- Deep Subsidies for Senior Citizens
- Rental assistance paired with required training programs on how to maintain a home/apartment and create budgets.
- Wages are not keeping up with rents. Rental subsidies for families and workers.
- Many individuals who qualify for assistance such as Section 8 based on their income are stuck on waiting lists due to the limited funding of these programs. Other individuals whose income is just above the limits for existing programs fall into a gap where they cannot afford market rate rent but cannot qualify for assistance. HOME-ARP funds could be used to establish rental assistance programs for individuals who do not qualify for other programs.
- Many tenants lack a financial safety net, meaning that an illness or unexpected expense can destabilize their ability to afford rent for many months. HOME-ARP funds could be used to establish an emergency assistance program for tenants who temporarily are unable to pay their rent or have rental arrears from being temporarily unable to pay.
- Need for Security Deposit assistance programs.
- Utica needs more safe, affordable housing

Q7. FOR SUPPLEMENTING ESG SERVICES, WHAT SPECIFIC NEEDS DO YOU SEE IN OUR COMMUNITY? HOW DO YOU THINK HOME-ARP FUNDS COULD BE USED TO ADDRESS THOSE NEEDS?

- Increase shelter options for the homeless.
- Programs for assisting at-risk and/or in-need youths.
- Case Management for simplifying the apartment-finding process for tenants, assistance in applying for housing, especially if there are documentation requirements for affordable housing. In addition, many tenants have intersecting issues such as food insecurity or health problems that make it hard to find and keep housing on their own. Establishing a program of social workers who assist tenants in applying for housing and related services and who follow up on tenants' situations past the initial application would greatly benefit these individuals.
- Effective shelters should embrace a Housing-First approach, offer immediate and low-barrier access to anyone facing a housing crisis.
- Increased funding for full-time staff to operate homeless street outreach, rental counseling, and eviction prevention.
- Administrative costs take up too much of grant awards. The financial assistance that we have been afforded makes a HUGE difference to service agencies' bottom line. Staffing is very difficult and the extra funds assist greatly.

Q8: FOR NON-CONGREGATE SHELTER, WHAT SPECIFIC NEEDS DO YOU SEE IN OUR COMMUNITY? HOW DO YOU THINK HOME-ARP FUNDS COULD BE USED TO ADDRESS THOSE NEEDS?

- Establish procedures to govern the pipeline from shelter, to NCS, to PSH to encourage participant responsibility.
- Free certification training for the working class in NCS housing.
- NCS Youth shelters for female, male, LGBTQ.
- Many individuals have had terrible experiences such as assault at traditional shelters and would rather be on the street than in a shelter as they feel it is safer. NCS housing is safer for at-risk populations.
- Create options on bus routes to support transfer between facilities (addiction day treatment, etc.).
- Studio apartments, apartment sharing, Co-housing, treatment communities, and cooperative housing should be considered. NCS options for families.
- Not all congregate shelters are equal.



Q9: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

- Things need to be relooked at with regards to the American Rescue Plan. It was well intended to respond to the many crises created by an unforeseen and unprecedented pandemic. Many of the "solutions" were enacted in desperation and without thought about the long-term impact. There are many out there that weren't affected by the pandemic at all that are benefitting from the results that came from the emergency actions. Funding is being wasted on helping those who don't want help (and actually refuse it).
- Solutions need to be implemented in all areas of the city, not just the central part of the city.
- Help with opening daycare centers and activities for kids.
- Use a Housing First approach, safe and appropriate diversion, immediate and low-barrier access to shelter, housing-focused services, and using data to measure performance.
- Consult with the homeless population to find solutions that work for the homeless population.
- Continued funding of the Coordinated Homeless Program. Our Coordinated Homeless Response System now has empirical data demonstrating the value of a homeless partnership among the Salvation Army, Rescue Mission, and the Housing Authority. Funding would enable the project to maintain the day-time drop in centers and expand evening services.
- Employ a professional, full-time Homeless Street Outreach Worker to engage with homeless people on the street. Current ESG funding levels have not been sufficient to operate a full-scale program.
- Continue operation of the Green Team program, as well as program enhancements such as career, job and education advisement to provide income incentives for able-bodied homeless persons.
- Funding of a rental housing counseling program to help people who face barriers to housing find apartments and be responsible tenants. There is no rental housing counseling service in Utica. The rental housing counseling agency would conduct outreach to landlords and develop a digital data base of apartments and landlords. Funds would be used to pay for staff to operate the center as a pilot program. The goal would be to use the HOME-ARP funds to establish a permanent rental housing counseling agency through HUD and private foundations. These services would complement existing Section 8 and public housing programs.

HOME-ARP ACTIVITIES

ALLOCATIONS

Based on key findings from the consultations, needs assessment, and gaps analysis, the City of Utica proposes funding four activities, in addition to grant administration and planning. Please see Table 7 below for a summary of the proposed allocations. The funding allocations are within HOME-ARP statutory limits.

Activity	Funding Amount	Percent of Grant
Acquisition/Development of Non-Congregate Shelter	\$1,500,000	61.76%
Supportive Services (Enhanced ESG Program)	\$500,000	20.59%
Development of Affordable Rental Housing Units	\$200,000	8.23%
Rental Assistance	\$50,000	2.06%
Admin and Planning (to be spread out over 8 years)	\$182,200	7.5%
Total	\$2,428,816	100%

The City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development will release a public notice of funding availability (NOFA) that complies with all HOME-ARP regulations once the plan is approved by HUD.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT PLAN MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
URBAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNTIL WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29TH



Urban and Economic Development
Re: HOME-ARP Draft Plan
ATTN: Brian Thomas
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Utica, NY 13502
BThomas@Cityofutica.com

