

**DRAFT**

**City of Sumter  
Community Development Department**

**Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report  
(CAPER)**

**April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023**



**David P. Merchant  
Mayor**

**Deron L. McCormick  
City Manager**

**Clarence Gaines  
Community Development Director**

## **Executive Summary**

Citizens were advised on May 3, 2023, via an advertisement in *The Item* that the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) would be on display from May 23-June 23, 2023. Citizens are encouraged to come to review the plan and share their input as to how the City spent Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds during the last fiscal year (*April 1, 2022-March 31, 2023*).

**Sewer Improvements** were completed for two Low to Moderate Income (LMI) homeowners during this fiscal year.

**Historic Preservation** provides for partnerships with businesses and property owners. The Façade Grant Program allots funds to repair the facades of buildings in the downtown business district. Since the inception of the current Façade Grant program (which started in 2002), over \$13 million dollars of historic building renovations have been completed in the downtown historic district while spending less than \$400,000 dollars of CDBG funds. During this CAPER period, façade grant assistance was provided for five (5) downtown businesses.

**Housing Repairs** were accomplished with funding from CDBG. A total of six (6) owner-occupied homes were rehabilitated using CDBG funds for LMI occupants during the fiscal year of April 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023. Under the housing repair line item, the City used funds to pay inspectors for lead-based paintwork and the construction advisor for work write-ups, inspections, and bid preparation. Each unit is inspected prior to construction, and again after construction is completed for clearance of lead-based paint.

**United Ministries Housing Repair** Six (6) owner-occupied houses had minor repairs done for LMI occupants.

**Youth Employment** benefited eighty (80) students last summer. Thirty-five (35) were for the Co-Op program (14–15-year-old kids) and forty-five (45) were for the Youth Corps program (16 and up kids in High School).

**YMCA Funding** allowed fourteen (14) LMI youth to receive a variety of services provided by the YMCA.

**Public Housing** The local Housing Authority has a Resident Services Program dedicated to empowering the residents in the community to develop goals and encourage them with support and resources to achieve goals. Resident Service programs are only as supportive as their primary resource, the community partnerships. The participation of the City's Community Development office is an essential member of the partnership through the natural progression of empowerment and education. Community Service has allowed Public Housing clients the opportunity to work with community leaders and management to become oriented to housing opportunities through the various affordable housing programs in the community. Programs

currently available to our residents include lease refresher classes, housekeeping classes, two after school programs and quarterly Community Site Clean Ups.

1. The Housing Authority has completed the work scope of 2015 and 2016 annual capital fund grant with the acknowledgment of reduced funding. Remaining Capital Funds for 2017 and 2018 have been combined to replace 90 lavatory cabinets and 44 tankless water heaters prior to August 30, 2019. The Authority has obtain an Architect for replacement of stoop covers, drawings have been received and approved, once the cost estimate for the building front stoops are received we will prepare bid packets to compete this work scope, we will plan to complete the property line fencing requirements identified during the inspection cycle of the scattered sites to ensure proper accountability for maintaining property. With the release of the 2019 Capital Fund Grant, we plan to continue removal and replacement of the rear stoop covers. Since the September 8, 2017 shooting of two Housing Authority employees, the Authority has obtained a security system at the two largest properties managed by the Authority.
2. The Housing Authority, in coordination with the Sumter County CDC and Santee Lynches Affordable Housing, were successful in receiving grant funding in the amount of \$1,700,000.00 from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. This funding has allowed the partnership to acquire seventeen (17) houses under foreclosure. Acquisition and rehabilitation have been completed on the seventeen (17) units. The partnership is currently in the rental process. The Authority has project based all five of the Authority's units to Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher holders expanding the affordable housing in the Sumter community. There is a potential for additional houses, which may expand the program generated from program income.
3. Affordable housing that is not located in the high crime, high poverty areas of the Sumter community have progressed because of tax credits. The Authority currently utilizes a number of the tax credit properties to provide decent affordable housing to the housing choice voucher participants in the community.
4. The greatest concern of the Authority is continuous reduction of federal assistance. During the fiscal year 2017, funding for public housing was prorated from 85% to 92.9 percent of what the Authority was entitled to and approximately 93 percent in 2018 for Public Housing. The Housing Choice Voucher Program has maintained at the reduction of 80 percent of administrative fees that we are entitled to in 2017 and 2018. Staff is currently accessing training on open market housing to utilize the skills and expertise of the staff. The Authority currently has two certified property managers for open market.
5. Fair Market rents for 2018/2019 increased less than 5 percent in the MSA of Sumter supporting the elected payment standard of 110 percent of the FM retained active rents
6. Public Housing continues to offer flat rents, which were determined on market rates. Notification was received of a new PIH stating a minimum for flat rents to be no less than 80 percent of the Fair Market Rent.

This Public Housing Agency is not designated as “troubled”.

**Public Housing Strategy** – The Housing Authority of the City of Sumter has established the following as strategies:

The Authority has identified the need for additional affordable housing in the Sumter Community. The Authority has applied and received funding through a partnership of Neighborhood Stabilization Program in the amount of \$1,700,000.00 for acquisition of foreclosures, rehabilitation and rentals. A total of seventeen homes were purchased, rehabilitated and are now affordable housing in the Sumter community.

**The mission of the Housing Authority of the City of Sumter is to assist low-income families with safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities as they strive to achieve self-sufficiency and improve the quality of their lives. The Authority is committed to operating in an efficient, ethical and professional manner. The Housing Authority will create and maintain partnerships with its clients and appropriate community agencies in order to accomplish this mission.**

The Authority is currently at ninety-seven percent of the utilization of allocation with the Housing Choice Voucher program. This program was a high performing agency for 2017 and 2018. With the anticipation of the removal of Housing Quality Standards as the minimum inspection standard and increase to the Uniform Physical Inspection Standards - V in 2016, the Streamline rule and proposed HOTMA notice; the Authority anticipates electing only policy guidelines that will not have a detrimental impact on housing currently utilized throughout our programs.

Currently, the agency is working with Veteran Affairs to lease and administer the ten VASH Vouchers allocated in September of 2018 for the Sumter jurisdiction. At present, we have six VASH voucher families leased.

The Authority has been actively accepting on-line applications since April 2016.

The Authority has currently elected out of Asset Management since FY 2008 in Public Housing. This program maintains utilization between ninety-seven to ninety-nine percent. This program was a standard performing agency for 2017 and 2018. Identification of the need for additional one and two bedroom units has been driven by the waiting list. Applications for one or two bedroom unit normally exceed an average of one year prior to being housed; while three, four and five bedroom units wait time averages less than a month. The Authority has determined that the modified scattered site process is the most effective for the location and size of the Public Housing Authority. Renovations to the Administrative Building, to improve the professional flow for the operation, have now been completed.

Based on information provided by the applicable Consolidated Plan, information provided by HUD, and other generally available data, the Housing Authority of the City of Sumter will make a reasonable effort to identify the housing needs of the low-income, very low-income, and

extremely low-income families who reside in the jurisdiction served by the PHA, including elderly families, families with disabilities, and households of various races and ethnic groups, and other families who are on the public housing and Section 8 tenant-based assistance waiting lists. The identification of housing needs must address issues of affordability, supply, quality, accessibility, size of units, and location.

The Housing Authority of the City of Sumter provides a quality resource of affordable housing in the Sumter community. Not only are the affordable housing resources limited, but the economic condition, with the loss of industry in the community; supports the need for affordable housing and housing financial assistance need in the Authority's jurisdiction.

The Authority strives every day of operation to provide quality, affordable housing to the Sumter community. We also have strong partnerships that are utilized as a way to help our families achieve self-sufficiency and improve the quality of their lives. The Authority has elected to continue contracting with an outside source to conduct a Physical Needs Assessment to provide the necessary information to prepare for the Disposition of Public Housing. This information will determine which path is available to convert through the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program or if the Section 18 program needs to be considered. The Agency has identified the need for affordable housing in the community, including the potential utilization of vacant lots adjacent to Public Housing addressed in the five year plan since 2015. Physical conditions inspection of Public Housing includes responsibility of curb appeal! The deduction of points from scoring was appealed for fencing not owned by the Authority. We have not obtained any adjacent lots but have received some relief through the City's demolition program. We would like for this process to continue.

The overall goal is to have the staff trained and capable of providing efficient, effective and professional quality services at every level in the agency.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

City of Sumter  
Community Development Department  
As Amended 03/10/09

Beginning in 1994, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban development (HUD) required the City of Sumter to develop a consolidated plan affecting all of its community planning and development and housing programs. This new plan replaced all individual application requirements with a single submission. The four programs affected by the consolidated plan are: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

As such, to incorporate the four programs within the Citizens Participation Plan, “CDBG Programs” are now referred to as “the Consolidated Plan Programs.”

The laws governing the grant programs established three basic goals. They are to:

- Provide decent housing
- Provide a suitable living environment, and
- Expand economic opportunities

Further, each of these goals must primarily benefit low- and very low-income persons.

The benefit of having a consolidated plan ensures a collaborative and comprehensive process to establish a unified vision for community development actions.

To insure that citizens are involved in (1) planning, (2) implementation, and (3) assessment of Consolidated Plan Programs, U.S. HUD requires a written plan to show how citizens will be involved in the three areas cited.

Community involvement in the Consolidated Plan Programs shall include, but is not limited to, public notices in the local newspapers for citizen participation, and the public hearings process.

Assessment of Performance – There will be a public notice to allow citizens and community organizations to assess activities and submit comments on all aspects of the Consolidated Plan Programs. This notice will be published in local newspapers at least 30 days prior to the start of planning for the next program year. Copies of the Annual Performance Report, Proposed Statements of Objectives, and Final Statements of Objectives will be distributed to all public libraries for public review. Copies and information concerning all activities will also be available at the Community Development Office located at 12 W. Liberty Street, Office H..

All comments submitted by citizens, along with the City’s responses and a summary of any action taken will be included in the Grantee Performance Report (GPR).

### **Public Hearings**

The City will hold a minimum of two (2) public hearings during the fiscal year (April 1 – March 31). Announcements for the public hearing will be published in *The Item* at least seven (7) days prior to the hearing. Notices will be prominently displayed in the non-legal section of the local newspaper.

The hearings will be held to address housing and community development needs and receive suggestions for proposed activities. Following the public hearing, a 30-day comment period will allow citizens and interested parties additional time to submit their concerns.

After the development of the CP plan, application for funding and prior to the submission of the application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a public hearing will be held to review and solicit public comment upon the proposed activities.

If ten (10%) percent or more of potential beneficiaries of the project are non-English speaking, provisions will be made at the appropriate public hearings for translation of comments and documents into the native language of the majority of non-English speaking residents present. It has been determined, however, that at present, less than ten (10%) percent of the City's residents are non-English speaking.

### **Soliciting Participation**

The City will, to the extent determine necessary by its governing body, make direct efforts in soliciting the participation of the residents and other interested parties in the area(s) in which funds are to be expended. Methods may include, but are not limited to, request appropriate community leaders and other agencies to inform their constituents about the proposed use of funds; distributing notices in very-low and low-income neighborhoods, posting of notices at post offices and neighborhood businesses, radio and television announcements, South Sumter Resource Center, organized Neighborhood Groups, City of Sumter Housing Authority, HOPE Centers, as well as social service agencies.

### **Meetings**

All public meetings and hearings concerning the CP plan program will be held at times and places convenient to city residents, particularly those who are potential beneficiaries. No meetings will be held before 6:00 p.m. on weekdays or 2:00 p.m. on Sundays. No meetings will begin after 8:30 p.m.

The location of such meetings will be selected to provide access for physically challenged persons, and held in a convenient location for actual beneficiaries, and be accessible to accommodate those citizens with special needs. Requests for special assistance should be made by calling 774-1649.

**Provisions for Persons with Disabilities** – Upon advance notification, appropriate provisions will be made to accommodate persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments. Persons requiring said accommodations will be directed to contact the Community Development Office.

### **Housing And Community Development Needs**

Prior to the development of the Consolidated Plan application for funds, the City will assess its housing and community development needs particularly those of very low and low-income persons. The citizens of the City of Sumter are encouraged to participate in the assessment process and the realities of this Needs Assessment will be documented and presented to the citizens of the City at one or more advertised public hearings where citizens' comments will be considered.

### **Needs Assessment**

At the public hearing(s) where the Needs Assessment is presented, the City will also present information concerning the funding, guidelines, and the range of activities that may be undertaken with such funds, particularly in relation to identified needs contained in the Needs Assessment.

### **Technical Assistance**

The City will provide technical assistance to representatives of persons of very low and low income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding. This assistance shall be limited to the provision of information concerning the CP program, and shall be provided on the condition that activities to be addressed by any such proposal are consistent with identified community development and housing needs, federal program guidelines, that funds are available for funding such activities as may be involved, and that the City Council give its approval for providing such technical assistance. The City will consider any proposals developed by representatives of very low to low income persons, following all the requirements of public participation; however, the determination to submit the proposal to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for funding consideration is the prerogative of the City, since the submission of the application requires approval by City Council.

### **Comments**

The City will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearings, in preparing the final consolidated plan, amendment of the plan, or performance report. A summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons shall be attached to the final consolidated plan, amendment of the plan, or performance report. The City of Sumter will publish a summary of the proposed consolidated plan in *The Item* and copies will be made available at various public agencies throughout the city. A list of where the plan will be available will be identified in the summary.

### **Complaints/Grievances**

The City will provide for a timely, written answer to written complaints and grievances concerning the program, generally within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the written complaint. Grievances are to be delivered to the City Manager, who will then attempt to resolve the reason(s) for the complaint. If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the aggrieved party, an appeal to the City Council is the next step available to the party. Complaints or grievances including State law or policy, Federal program guidelines or regulations governing the CDBG program shall be directed to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for resolution. The City will then correct the grievance according to the direction of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Complaints involving local law or program policies will be resolved at the local level. After the above described appeal process has been exhausted, the complaint may seek relief in the appropriate court of law.

### **Access To Records**

Citizens will be provided with reasonable access to records concerning any projects undertaken with CDBG funds. These records are available for review at City Hall, 21 North Main Street, during normal business hours, upon the submission of the written request stating the reason for requesting access to such records. Confidential information normally protected under the State and Federal Freedom of Information laws may not be made available for public review; for example, information not normally available to the public concerning personal or business financial statements, earnings, or sources of income.



## **Performance Review**

Upon completing the fiscal year projects, the City will conduct at least one public hearing to review performance and accomplishments before closing out the grant through the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## **Use Of Plan**

The City must follow this citizen participation plan until amended.

## **Criteria For Amendment To Consolidated Plan/Definition Of Substantial Deviation**

The City Council will amend the plan when a substantial change in the actual activities, allocations, priorities, or method of distribution of funds is made to carry out an activity using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan. Substantial change would include the elimination or addition of a program and/or to change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

Substantial deviation requiring an amendment to the consolidated plan would be any individual or group of projects totaling more than 15% of the annual allocation. Public notices and called meetings will provide citizens reasonable notification and an opportunity to examine and submit comments on amendments. A period of not less than 30 days will be allowed to receive comments before any amendment is implemented.

### **Additional Requirements for End of Program Year Reporting**

#### **1. Narrative Statement Addressing the Following:**

##### **a. Assessment of Three-to-Five-Year Goals and Objectives**

The City's vision is to increase affordable and economic development. During this reporting period there has been no accomplishment with affordable housing due to lack of funding. The elderly, disabled, handicapped and all race and ethnic minorities should be afforded an equal opportunity to purchase a home. The City is currently working with housing partners so affordable housing opportunities will be available for all.

##### **b. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing**

In compliance with 24 CFR 91.520(a) City staff is working through the Fair Housing Task Force in an ongoing process to rid the city of Impediments: The City updated Area Impediment was completed during September 2017.

The City adopted a Property Maintenance Code which gives additional guidance to property owners and provides penalties for violations. In its current form there is a duty to the advisement of a 30-day notice of any substandard citing. Such notice is posted with property

title in the Courthouse. Property owners will have a duty to repair property before sale or follow through with any prior citing. Sale will be subject to repair within time allotted. The Fair Housing Task Force is working closely with the Codes Enforcement Department to accomplish this.

The City Council also passed an ordinance that is called an Appearance Code. The code does require that property owner's keep their property in good appearance at all times. Landlords, however, are not included in this group in that if they rent, the person residing in the property is required to keep the appearance up to par.

The City hired additional Codes Enforcement Officers. Part of their work involves issuing citations for property not being in a good state of appearance from the outside.

The City in partnership with the Housing Authority is continually working this issue as funding becomes available. Due to the in foreclosures in the City, the City in partnership with the Housing Authority has identified the need for additional affordable housing in the Sumter Community. The Authority applied for and received funding through a partnership of Neighborhood Stabilization Program in the amount of \$1,700,000.00 for acquisition of foreclosures and rehabilitating for affordable rentals. All partners are purchasing foreclosed homes, and have rehabilitated eleven units. The Sumter community is benefiting from 18 foreclosed homes being converted to rental properties.

The Fair Housing Task Force partnered up with the Sumter Board of Realtors and Local Housing Providers to inform the public, low-moderate-income persons, especially, about Predatory Lending practices and affordable housing opportunities. To celebrate Fair Housing Month and the 30th Anniversary of the HOME Program the City put on a Housing Seminar with emphasis on Available Housing Opportunities in the City and County. Rural Development also participated in this event. Many persons in attendance wanted and needed their information because not all persons desire to live inside the City Limits.

Local housing providers presented their programs visually and verbally. Display tables provided an opportunity for attendees to gain access to information about banking, finance and affordable housing.

c. Affordable Housing

**New construction** of single family houses inside the city limits for low-moderate-income citizens was stagnant this year. The higher interest rates during this year have been in the favor of the sellers. Gap financing, using HOME funds, has provided an opportunity for many persons to afford housing by receiving deferred loans, by a couple of our housing partners.

The units built for sale is only sold to persons who completed the city's homebuyer training program. The program encompasses consumer credit counseling, maintenance of the unit and budgeting. Funding comes from Santee-Lynches HOME money.

Twelve (12) families benefited from both of the housing repair programs during this reporting period, via the City partnership with United Ministries. These units were completed by the end of March 2023. All units were repaired with the use of CDBG Funds. Applicants must be at 80% or below the HUD Income Limits Scale to participate in this program. The City exceeded its target of six repairs this year.

**Housing Development Progress** -- It will be difficult for the City to reach its target of building one affordable house per year projected in its Five Year Consolidated Plan developed in 2020, due to significant reduction of the funding allocation for this program and few lots to be found in the better areas of the City. The City will strive to attain its target of affordable houses per year; by constructing as many houses as possible with the allotted funding, during the duration of the current Five-Year Consolidated Plan period.

- **Rental housing** owned by the City of Sumter **Housing Authority** upgraded HVAC, exterior doors, water heater replacement and bathtubs with surrounds through Capital Fund grants for 2009 and 2010 providing approximately \$500,000.00 in upgrades to all six communities. It is the goal of this Authority to provide quality housing. The intent of the pending renovations will allow the Authority to install energy efficient equipment and to continue the upgrade to the capital investment of the properties. In doing so they have stayed in compliance with Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, Employment Opportunities for Low-or Very-Low-Income Persons in compliance with regulation 24 CFR Part 135.
- **Worse case needs** are the affordability and the availability of rental units publicly and privately. The Housing Authority of the City of Sumter is currently has dedicated vouchers to houses purchased by the Authority through the Neighborhood Stabilization funds. Project based vouchers has been defined since the 2008 Annual Plan; this will enhance the Authority's goal of removing "older" mobile homes from the voucher program. The community has benefited from the five three bedroom houses from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program funded for acquisition, rehabilitation with providing affordable units.
- **Transportation needs** in the rural areas of Sumter County have influenced the ability to provide housing. Townships like Pinewood, Wedgefield, Maysville and Lynchburg do not have supporting transportation routes through the local transit authority thereby reducing the area of selection of housing opportunities.
- Housing Choice Vouchers is rental subsidy to Private Citizens who offer their property for rent through the City of Sumter Housing Authority to accommodate Section 8 and other programs. These units are inspected annually and must meet the standard of the Authority. The Authority experienced budget shortfall in 2009 with a budget rebound in 2010; however the difficulty of this is anticipating the time and man hours it takes to bring applicants on the program including updates, verifications, issuance of vouchers, locating the homes, testing affordability, inspection of the unit and approving initial occupancy. The Authority currently is at our budget capacity of families we are able to assist due to exceeding the operating budget.

- The continued implementation of federally mandated community service had a great impact on the unit turnaround for fiscal year 2015. The Authority is currently addressing non-renewal of leases for Public Housing clients who have not performed the federal requirement of 8 hours per month if they are (a) non-elderly, (b) not employed, (c) not disabled “as defined” by social security, (d) not a student, or (e) not caring for a disabled household member. This federal requirement prevents families from being determined eligible for other Housing subsidies.

**Housing Repair** is a very important part of the housing initiative for the city. Improving and maintaining current housing stock is just as important as new housing development. Many of our residents want to stay in their current neighborhoods. Housing repairs were accomplished with funding from Community Development Block Grant funds. A total of six owner-occupied houses were rehabilitated by staff using CDBG funds and six owner-occupied houses were rehabilitated by United Ministries using CDBG funds for LMI occupants during the fiscal year of April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023. Under the housing repair line item, the City used funds to pay inspectors for lead-based paint work and the construction advisor for work write-ups, inspections and bid preparation. Each unit is inspected prior to construction, and again after construction is completed for clearance of Lead-Based Paint. To make the housing repair program affordable the city makes the repairs as a grant, with no cost to the homeowner. The grants come from City CDBG funds. All housing repair projects were within the NRSA and the EZ.

**Assistance to local Non-Profit** –The City assisted non-profit agencies by providing grant assistance and having them refer their LMI clients to the city for any program the city offers.

**Homeless and emergency assistance** is provided by Alston Wilkes Society (Sumter Office), United Ministries, Wateree Community Actions, Inc., Christian Charities, Trinity Place and the Salvation Army. These programs provide funds for food and shelter for persons who are homeless or close to becoming homeless. The elderly and persons with disabilities, those who test positive for HIV/AIDS are included in these service opportunities.

The YWCA has a **homeless shelter for women** and children. Housing is provided as well as job skills and job referrals. Some of the housing is provided through the Housing Authority’s Section 8 program. When possible these women are also encouraged to participate in the FSSP.

d. Continuum of Care Narrative

Through the 12 -County Eastern Carolina Homeless Organization, the City of Sumter partners with other agencies to make certain homeless families and individuals are provided for through grants from HUD via the Super NOFA.

**Wateree Community Actions, Inc., Trans Aid Program** reports that they provided services to several families during this reporting period. They provided a turn key approach to homelessness by providing housing, education, counseling, job referral, etc., so that clients will have all needed services that will cause them not to return to their former state of homelessness.

**Persons living on the streets** were assisted by the Samaritan House, a homeless shelter located on Oakland Avenue, with limited stay – 3 nights. They get a mid day meal at the Soup Kitchen located on the south side of town, housed at the Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 421 South Main Street @ Bee Street. The Soup Kitchen is opened seven days a week. Hot meals are served five days. Lunch with sandwich, fruit and beverage is served on Saturday and Sunday.

**A ministry for the homeless is in operation on Sunday afternoon at 3:30pm.** A group of volunteers bring a hot meal to the Gazebo located off Calhoun Street. These volunteers have a bible study and serve the meal in a loving outside atmosphere. Their ministry is unique in that it is outside winter and summer regardless of weather condition. People from the street feel very comfortable participating in this ministry. This group has formed a bond and they take each other as family.

In concluding this narrative, Wateree Community Actions is the only local agency that has a turn key homeless initiative in Sumter. This, however, does not begin to serve the need of the community.

**United Ministries of Sumter County** continues to provide assistance to homeless persons and to others to prevent homelessness. They provide assistance with rent, mortgage, utility, medical, hotel/motel accommodation and food and clothing, along with counseling.

e. Other Actions

**Obstacles to meeting underserved needs** continues to include the need for an agency or organization that provides assistance to an almost unidentified population: persons who are under or unemployed, lack skills to market with potential employers, and who also need medical care with follow-up as well as housing. These persons often feel left completely out off the system and are also alienated from family and friends. South Carolina Works has a new program designed to retrain employees to enable them to become self sufficient; while also paying them a stipend during training.

**In fostering and maintaining affordable housing** the city provides grants to persons who qualify for housing repair. These repairs bring the house up to a safe, decent and sanitary standard. Due to limited funding houses are left with work that still needs to be done.

The city leverage funds with State Housing Trust Fund when available and CDBG. The city eliminates barriers to affordable housings by providing subsidies with HOME funds and

down payment and closing cost assistance with CDBG funds. Duke Energy (formerly Progress Energy) provides a small grant to each homebuyer.

**Overcome gaps in institutional structures and enhance coordination.** The City of Sumter have made vast improvement in over coming the gaps in institutional structures and enhance coordination. There are not only various agencies who provide services to assist to homeless individuals and families; they all have formed a partnership to coordinate the assistance for homeless and low income citizens. The partnership of the agencies has increased follow up on clients on a regular basis to help alleviate clients continually needed the same services over and over. The goal of the current actions are to make beneficiaries of these program self sufficient in the long run, by providing training, education, housing assistance, daycare assistance, and other programs to give clients the best chance to succeed in all aspects of life.

**Improvement in public housing and residents' initiatives** are ongoing with the City of Sumter Housing Authority. That agency has a Resident Initiatives Coordinator who also carries the title of Self Sufficiency Coordinator. The coordinator works closely with the residents to provide activities at the housing complexes for adults and children while at the same time providing an opportunity for adults to register for the Family Self Sufficiency Program. The program has over 10 active persons listed who have agreed to work towards self sufficiency within a certain period of time, usually five years. There were 33 persons initially; of the initial participants, five have become homeowners. Some left the program since its inception due to transfers and dropouts.

Improvements are made to public housing as the director makes upgrades to the units. The Authority has completed HVAC Installation, currently addressing cabinets, electrical and water heaters. The upgrades are continuing.

**Evaluate and reduce lead-based paint hazards** are an ongoing effort by the city through the housing repair program. The city provided initial inspections on all units built before 1978 that were scheduled for repair and the necessary encapsulation or other remedy upon recommendation of the lead inspector.

**Lead-Based Paint Training** information is provided to contractors who need Lead Supervisors training as well as Lead Workers training. They must go to a Training Facility, as they offer the training at a cost. The detailed information is provided each contractor that is registered with the City.

**Ensure compliance with program and comprehensive planning requirements** is ongoing. Program compliance is a major concern of this department. Efforts are made to understand what is required of all programs and projects as they are implemented. To avoid scattered or disjointed planning, the staff maintains a relationship with the City/County Planning Director so that those plans are enveloped into the Community Development programs and projects as well as projections for future operations. The new Consolidated

Plan encompasses many of the plans that are part of the City of Sumter Comprehensive Plan for 2040. Major elements of this plan are population, housing and economic development.

**Comprehensive planning** is part of the daily work of this department. Planning is done yearly based upon the existing Five-Year Consolidated Plan submitted in 2020. Overall comprehensive planning is the work of the City/County Planning Office. The Planning Office makes plans for the City and County governments on a daily basis. Codes and Ordinances as well as local laws are developed and executed out of the Planning Office, through City and County Councils.

**Fair Housing** and Equal Opportunity are woven into the entire planning process so that all citizens will have equal access to programs and services.

**Reduce the number of persons living below the poverty level.** This is an awesome task. Training and education is accomplished through the Adult Education Department of both School Districts. They offer basic reading and writing as well as the GED training and preparation for a High School Diploma. Additional training is provided in the areas of Computer Skills at all levels, from basic to advance. Teacher Certification classes are also offered by the Adult Education Department. The Literacy Program is a part of Adult Education. This program teaches English as a second language along with other pertinent classes.

The Technical College and the two 4-year colleges have programs that prepare individuals for upward mobility. As persons avail themselves to training and education their opportunity for living above the poverty level is greater. The initiative, however, must come from the person who is the victim of poverty. Children are assisted when they are employed in our Summer Youth Employment Programs. They have the opportunity to earn money for needed items that include school supplies and clothes. Some students use their money to help parents with household bills.

Contractors who build houses and do housing repairs are encouraged to comply with Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, Employment Opportunities for Low- or Very-Low-Income Persons, and with its implementing regulation at 24 CFR Part 135. Some students from Youth Build participate with contractors in the housing repair program. The City is supporting the Youth Build application that Sumter County plans to submit.

Seniors who are at least 55 years old are referred to Santee-Lynches Council of Governments to participate in the Title V Older American Act of 1965 Title V Section that established the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The program accommodates persons who make low retirement incomes. Work assignments increase the income by a large enough margin that they do not live below the poverty level. Some of the job assignments lead to permanent work, although it is often part-time job.

During the orientation and training of students for the Summer Youth Employment Co-Op Program staff makes a strong point of letting students know that they can decide now how they will spend their life in the future. Summer jobs can be the start of a career that can build

into a livelihood. We often use the example of the KFC's Executive who has helped with the orientation. He started working at KFC when he was in high school. He worked during college breaks. After graduation he came back into a management training slot at KFC. Now he owns three KFCs and is Vice President for all Kentucky Fried Chickens and Arby's in the 6-county area.

This is an example of how persons can be elevated above the poverty level, thereby reducing the number of persons living below the poverty level. It is a slow process.

Another example is the Family Self Sufficiency Program at the Housing Authority. These participants receive training and get help with their finances. Gradually they learn how to leave Public Housing. Their income increases with new initiatives, information and training, and they live above the poverty level.

f. Leveraging Resources

The City leverages resources through partnerships with funding sources such as CDBG funds and Santee Lynches Council of Governments HOME Funds. These monies are used for housing repair and new housing development.

Other private and public resources are tapped to address needs identified in the Consolidated Plan such as local banks, service agencies, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the Eastern Carolina Homeless Organization for the twelve county area, Sumter Housing Authority, Sumter Board of Realtors, Churches, Schools, Consumer Credit Counseling, and other service organizations. These partnerships provide easy access to services for Low-Moderate-Income citizens.

The Banks provide mortgage loans for home buyers. HOME funds close the gap with deferred loans to homebuyers to make the buying process possible. Fannie Mae and others buys these loans from our local banks thereby freeing up cash for new loans.

**Partnerships** with State Housing Finance & Development Authority Trust funds and CDBG funds are leveraged to bring housing repairs to a higher standard using more funds and reaching more people who need housing repair.

The Summer Youth Employment Co-Op Program is successful because local businesses leveraged their funds with CDBG funds to make the program work. The partnership with local businesses is due partly to the Chamber of Commerce agreeing to market the summer program for free in the late winter edition of their newsletter.

g. Citizen Comments

The CAPER was on display in the Community Development Office from May 23 - June 23, 2023. A Public Hearing was held May 16, 2023.



There were no comments during the review period. There comments at the Public Hearing concerning future spending of CDBG funds.

h. Self-Evaluation

**Are activities and strategies making an impact on identified needs?**

Yes.

**What indicators that would best describe the results?**

- **Youth employment** program that provides employment opportunities for students ages 14 through high school between the two programs – Youth CORPS and Youth Employment Co-Op Program.

Some employers keep the students after the program ends. This provides an opportunity for students to work around their school schedule and on weekends. Students' salaries are paid for exclusively by the employers after the summer program ends. The year round program ended eight years ago when CDBG funds were reduced. Two students became a full-time employee after graduating from high school during this reporting period.

- **Housing repair** program that has provided many residents with decent, safe and sanitary housing without having a financial burden placed on them for paying back loans. All of the housing repair programs are accomplished with grants from leveraging resources among CDBG and one other grantor
- Through the **Demolition** program we demolished eleven structures. All of them were either in the NRSA or the EZ.
- **Historic preservation** through the Downtown Revitalization effort, two buildings received face lifts through the Façade Grant Program. Business owners/managers contribute to the cost of these repairs.
- **Sewer improvement** for residents who needed sewer repair. Two homeowners were assisted this year.
- **Street paving** of most streets in the city was accomplished more than eight years ago, but the city will continue projects of this type on an as needed basis in LMA as funds become available..

**What barriers may have a negative impact on fulfilling the strategies and overall vision?**

The unemployment numbers continually looking better with several hiring announcements and the foreclosure situation during the housing bust is almost a thing of the past. In fact foreclosure rates are almost back to normal rates. There are not many known and/or identifiable barriers or negative impact on fulfilling the strategies and the overall vision – affordable housing and economic opportunity.

**What is the status of grant programs?**

N/A

**Are any activities or types of activities falling behind schedule? No**

**All Grantees Receiving CDBG Entitlement Funds Must Submit a Narrative Statement Addressing the Following Issues:**

- a. In assessing the relationship of the use of CDBG funds to the priorities, needs, goals and specific objectives identified in the Consolidated Plan, the City of Sumter implemented and executed the following projects during the reporting period.

2022-2023 CDBG Budget  
City of Sumter  
Community Development Department  
Sumter, SC 29150

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| HUD Allocation for period April 1, 2022-March 31, 2023 | \$308,419.00 |
| Public Service Cap (15%)                               | \$ 46,262.85 |
| Administration Cap (20%)                               | \$ 61,183.80 |

| Name of<br>National<br>Project<br>Objective   | Amount              | Matrix Code | Regulation<br>Citation |      |
|---|---------------------|-------------|------------------------|------|
| Administration<br>(administer the entitlement<br>program)                               | \$61,683.00         | 21A         | 570.206                | ---- |
| Demolition<br>(eliminate slum and blight<br>in residential and commercial<br>areas)     | \$30,000.00         | 04          | 570.201 (D)            | SBS  |
| United Ministries<br>(provide minor home repairs<br>For LMI citizens)                   | \$24,900.00         | 14A         | 570.202                | LMH  |
| Housing Repair<br>(housing repair for LMI citizens)                                     | \$146,336.00        | 14A         | 570.202                | LMH  |
| YMCA Youth Services<br>(provide vouchers for LMI youth<br>to participate in activities) | \$2,500.00          | 05D         | 570.201 (E)            | LMC* |
| Youth Employment<br>(provide summer employment<br>for 40 LMI youth)                     | <u>\$43,000.00</u>  | 05D         | 570.201 (E)            | LMC* |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$308,419.00</b> |             |                        |      |

\*Public Service

LMA – Low-to-Moderate Area  
LMC – Low-to-Moderate Clientele  
LMH – Low-to Moderate Housing  
SBA – Slum/Blight Area  
SBS – Slum/Blight Spot

b. **Describe the nature of and reasons for any changes in program objectives and indications as to how the jurisdiction would change its programs as a result of its experiences.**

There are no proposed, significant changes.

c. **Assess grantee efforts in carrying out the planned actions described in its Action Plan as part of the grantee’s certifications that it is following a current HUD-approved Consolidated Plan...**

(1) The grantee pursued all resources it said it would in the Consolidated Plan. This is referenced earlier in this report under Public Housing Initiatives and Leveraging of Resources. (2) The grantee supported efforts by other service agencies by providing letters of support, supplemental funding, and working with agencies to advance their programs. (3) The grantee did not hinder the implementation of the Consolidated Plan by any action or willful inaction.

d. **If grantee funds are not used exclusively for the three national objectives, or if the grantee did not comply with the overall benefit certification, the narrative explanation must be included...**

The City used its funds to meet the national objectives.

e. **If any activities specified for the program year involve acquisition, rehabilitation or demolition of occupied real property, a narrative must be submitted that identifies the activities and that describes...**

N/A

f. **If during the program year there were economic development activities undertaken where jobs were made available to low- or moderate-income persons but were not taken by them, then...**

The City does have a **HUD-Approved Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area**. The Empowerment Zone built a *Farmers’ Market*, located across from Bracey Plaza and adjacent to the South Sumter Resource Center. The market continues to provide opportunities for farmers to bring their goods to sell to the public without acquiring a business license. Farmers only need to register at the EZ office.

All housing repair projects are in the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) and EZ. All demolition projects were either in the NRSA or EZ.

The City will continue to push for economic development in the NRSA by partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and other local agencies to market the NRSA to businesses and developers. Also, the City strategy is to continue to improve the NRSA by providing a

facelift with Façade Grants, paving streets, improve lighting, increase law enforcement presents to provide security, plugging pot holes, cleaning up or demolish blight and slum areas, adult education assistance programs, job skills programs, providing a youth employment program and by marketing the tax credit incentives available in parts of the NRSA.

For the past five years the Downtown Façade Grant program has been a competitive grant process, open for all property owners in the Central Business District to apply. A committee of seven people reviewed the applications and selected those projects felt most deserving based on available funds. Through this program over 60 buildings have received exterior facelifts; to their front and in some cases rear facades. The program also provides for up to \$500 per business towards the purchase of a new sign that meets the historical design guidelines of the historic district.

**1. Requirement for Grantees receiving HOPWA Funds...**

N/A

**2. Requirements for Grantees Receiving ESG Funds**

N/A

**3. Public Participation Requirements**

This document was on display inside the Community Development Department from May 23, 2023 to June 23, 2023.

There were no citizens' comments.

The Public Hearing was held May 16, 2023, at 6:00 in the evening. The Notice to The Public was released through *The Item*, a local newspaper, on May 3, 2023, in the non-legal section.