

MAYOR SHAWYN PATTERSON-HOWARD

CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, NEW YORK

FY 2018 CAPER REPORT



MOUNT VERNON URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM
CONTINUUM OF CARE PROGRAM**

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CR-05 - Goals and Outcomes

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

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

2018 Program Year Accomplishments

Economic Development: There were 67,475 persons assisted through citywide commercial and industrial improvements in the 2018 Program Year. Outreach was conducted and meetings were held to support commercial façade and sign improvements throughout the business districts in the City. These efforts were made to promote signage uniformity and compliance with city code. As well, there were 31 persons that benefitted from employment training programs.

Affordable Housing: The City accomplished several projects to increase and preserve affordable housing in Mount Vernon. The City assisted 11 LMI households through the construction of affordable rental housing with the LaPorte project. There were 10 LMI homeowners and 85 LMI renters who were assisted with housing rehabilitation.

Neighborhood Revitalization: Public facilities and infrastructure improvements through citywide activities benefitted 67,475 persons. These improvements included activities such as upgrades to Hartley Park with installation of a new outdoor fitness court. There was also intersection improvements to assist persons with a disability in a LMI census tract. Throughout the City, there were Code Enforcement inspection activities that took place in CDBG eligible census tracts that benefit a total of 66,265 persons.

Public Services: The City and its partners provided public service programs and activities that benefitted citizens citywide. There were 79,088 persons that benefitted from programs such as senior services, youth services, crime prevention, and food distribution programs. There were also 81 very low income households that were assisted with legal services to avert homelessness.

Finally, the City is in the process of developing the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. There will be a Public Hearing in February 2020 to seek public input on the Consolidated Plan. The goal is to enhance coordination with other service providers in the City. Various program goals and issues that are the focus of this coordination are discussed throughout the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and include:

- removing obstacles to meet under-served needs
- fostering and maintaining affordable housing
- eliminating barriers to affordable housing
- eliminating blight
- enhancing service coordination between levels of government and the non-profit sector

The City partners with other public agencies and non-profit organizations to leverage resources and maximize outcomes involving housing and community development activities.

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

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

Goal	Category	Source/A mount	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Completed
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	0	0		1000	0	0.00%
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Public Service Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	229		200	0	0.00%
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Public Service Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	79088		100	79088	0.00%
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Rental Units Constructed	Household Housing Unit	375	11	0.00%		11	
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Rental Units Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	360	85	0.00%	100	85	0.00%
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	40	10	0.00%	100	10	0.00%
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers	Households Assisted	0	0		100	0	0.00%
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Homelessness Prevention	Persons Assisted	0	81		100	81	0.00%

Goal	Category	Source/A mount	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Completed
Economic Development	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$/	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	200	0	0.00%			
Economic Development	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$/	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	67475		20	67475	0.00%
Economic Development	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$/	Public Service Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	0	163		0	31	
Neighborhood Revitalization	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$/	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	66265		1000	66265	0.00%
Neighborhood Revitalization	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$/	Façade Treatment/business building rehabilitaion	Business	40	0	0.00%			
Neighborhood Revitalization	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Housing Code Enforcement/Foreclosed Property Care	Household Housing Unit	400	66265	0.00%	100	66265	0.00%

Goal	Category	Source/A mount	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Completed
New Accessible/Supportive Housing	Affordable Housing Non- Homeless Special Needs	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Rental Units Constructed	Household Housing Unit	125	0	0.00%			
Program Administration	Affordable Housing Public Housing Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted	0	0		100	0	
Program Administration	Affordable Housing Public Housing Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$/ HOME: \$	Other	Other	1	1	0.00%		1	

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

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

In 2018, the City earmarked funding for the following programs identified in the 2015 Consolidated Plan and Action Plan as high priority:

Economic Development: There were 67,475 persons assisted through citywide commercial and industrial improvements in the 2018 Program Year. Outreach was conducted and meetings were held to support commercial façade and sign improvements throughout the business districts in the City. These efforts were made to promote signage uniformity and compliance with city code. As well, there were 31 persons that benefitted from employment training programs.

Affordable Housing: The City accomplished several projects to increase and preserve affordable housing in Mount Vernon. The City assisted 11 LMI households through the construction of affordable rental housing with the LaPorte project. There were 10 LMI homeowners and 85 LMI renters who were assisted with housing rehabilitation.

Neighborhood Revitalization: Public facilities and infrastructure improvements through citywide activities benefitted 67,475 persons. These improvements included activities such as upgrades to Hartley Park with installation of a new outdoor fitness court. There was also intersection improvements to assist persons with a disability in a LMI census tract. Throughout the City, there were Code Enforcement inspection activities that took place in CDBG eligible census tracts that benefit a total of 66,265 persons.

Public Services: The City and its partners provided public service programs and activities that benefitted citizens citywide. There were 79,088 persons that benefitted from programs such as senior services, youth services, crime prevention, and food distribution programs. There were also 81 very low income households that were assisted with legal services to avert homelessness.

CR-10 - Racial and Ethnic composition of families assisted

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

91.520(a)

	CDBG	HOME
White	15	0
Black or African American	13,125	0
Asian	0	0
American Indian or American Native	1	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	0

Total	13,141	0
Hispanic	944	0
Not Hispanic	12,197	0

Table 1 – Table of assistance to racial and ethnic populations by source of funds

Note: There are no HOME units created in 2018.

Narrative

In 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that Mount Vernon’s resident population to be 68,703. The City of Mount Vernon’s population is predominantly minority, consisting of 65% African American, 23% White, 16.3% Hispanic/Latino, and 2.4% Asian. As of 2016, the median household income was \$51,886.00 and the percentage of persons living in poverty in Mount Vernon was 16%.

The majority of the beneficiaries of the CDBG and HOME funds utilized are low income African-American and Hispanic households. This is consistent with the City of Mount Vernon’s demographic data.

CR-15 - Resources and Investments 91.520(a)

Identify the resources made available

Source of Funds	Source	Resources Made Available	Amount Expended During Program Year
CDBG	public - federal	\$1,633,848	\$823,636
HOME	public - federal	\$467,855	\$53,132

Table 2 - Resources Made Available

Narrative

In 2018, HUD awarded the City \$1,633,848 in CDBG funds, of which \$326,770 (20%) was committed to program administration. In 2018, HUD awarded the City \$467,855 in Home funds, of which \$46,786 (10%) was committed to provide for program administration.

Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
CD target Area	25		The City no longer allocates funds based on geographic priorities.
Downtown	25		The City no longer allocates funds based on geographic priorities
Mount Vernon West	25		The City no longer allocates funds based on geographic priorities
Southside	25		The City no longer allocates funds based on geographic priorities.

Table 3 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Narrative

The City no longer allocates funds based on geographic priorities. This will be updated in the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan.

The system for establishing the priority for the selection of these projects in the City of Mount Vernon is predicated upon the following criteria:

- Meeting statutory requirements of the CDBG Program;
- Meeting the needs of Low and Moderate Income (LMI) residents;
- Focusing on LMI areas or neighborhoods;
- Impacted areas of concentration of minorities and LMI persons;
- Coordination and leveraging resources;
- Response to expressed needs;
- Sustainability and/or long-term impact;
- The ability to demonstrate measurable progress and success.

Leveraging

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

The City has been selected to compete for up to \$1 million dollars in grant funding through the Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement (“Cities RISE”) Phase Two grant to address housing challenges. Phase Two provides further resources and training to empower communities such as Mount Vernon to to develop innovative solutions to the City’s quality of life issues. For the past year, the City has been meeting with and collaborating closely with community stakeholders to learn about housing conditions throughout Mount Vernon. The information will be used to develop a housing code enforcement program. The City is working with policy advisors from Harvard University’s Ashe Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, Hester Street and Enterprise Community Partners, on this initiative.

To achieve the City’s economic development goals and objectives the City coordinates with local merchants and developers to assist with facilitating funding opportunities and tax incentives which are available from a number of city agencies, including Mount Vernon’s Urban Renewal Agency (URA) and Industrial Development Agency (IDA) among others.

Many programs that serve homeless individuals and families in the City of Mount Vernon leverage state, federal, and private funding. The City of Mount Vernon combined HUD homeless funding with services provided by many community agencies. Mount Vernon’s partners included Montefiore Mount Vernon hospital, Family Service Society of Yonkers, The Guidance Center of Westchester, Lexington Center for Recovery, Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, St. Johns Riverside Hospital, and Westchester County Department of Social Services.

In addition, it should be noted that on November 2014, 203 Gramatan Avenue Project (BLUE RIO) entered into a PILOT ((Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) program with the City of Mount Vernon Industrial Development Agency (IDA). Per the PILOT Agreement, payments commenced on January 1, 2016 in accordance with the PILOT Agreement Schedule in lieu of tax payments to the City.

The benefit received by the developer of 203 Gramatan Avenue (Blue Rio) for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 are as follows:

2016 = \$450,930.66; 2017 = \$452,429.40; 2018 = \$505,174.02; 2019 = \$509,252,84
Total to date is: **\$,1,917,786.92**

Additionally, the project was financed with tax-exempt bonds, with the face value of the loan being \$32 million, half of which may be counted as HOME Match. Applying the HOME ratio (11 of 159 units) results in a match contribution of \$1,106,918.

Fiscal Year Summary – HOME Match	
1. Excess match from prior Federal fiscal year	0
2. Match contributed during current Federal fiscal year	1,684,632
3. Total match available for current Federal fiscal year (Line 1 plus Line 2)	1,684,632
4. Match liability for current Federal fiscal year	0
5. Excess match carried over to next Federal fiscal year (Line 3 minus Line 4)	1,684,632

Table 4 – Fiscal Year Summary - HOME Match Report

Match Contribution for the Federal Fiscal Year								
Project No. or Other ID	Date of Contribution	Cash (non-Federal sources)	Foregone Taxes, Fees, Charges	Appraised Land/Real Property	Required Infrastructure	Site Preparation, Construction Materials, Donated labor	Bond Financing	Total Match
Blue Rio - IDIS ID is 2229	01/01/2018	0	577,714	0	0	0	1,106,918	1,684,632

Table 5 – Match Contribution for the Federal Fiscal Year

HOME MBE/WBE report

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

Table 6 – Program Income

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

Table 7 - Minority Business and Women Business Enterprises

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

Table 8 – Minority Owners of Rental Property

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

Table 9 – Relocation and Real Property Acquisition

CR-20 - Affordable Housing 91.520(b)

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

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	35	0
Number of Non-Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	200	106
Number of Special-Needs households to be provided affordable housing units	45	0
Total	280	106

Table 10 – Number of Households

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of households supported through Rental Assistance	0	0
Number of households supported through The Production of New Units	200	11
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	80	95
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	0	0
Total	280	106

Table 11 – Number of Households Supported

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

In the 2018 Program Year, the City accomplished several projects to increase and preserve affordable housing in Mount Vernon. The City assisted 11 LMI households through the construction of affordable rental housing with the LaPorte project. There were 10 LMI homeowners and 85 LMI renters who were assisted with housing rehabilitation.

Not included in the table above are 81 very low income households that were assisted with legal services to avert homelessness. Without the assistance of legal services these households would have faced certain eviction and homelessness.

The Blue Rio project represents both HOME and CDBG funds that were utilized to assist the development of 159 affordable units. The City recognizes that the level of production in the goals was overstated and as we begin our new Consolidated Plan process we intend to be more realistic about the level of production that can be achieved given the relatively modest level of grant funding received from HUD.

The City is partnering with Allied Community Enterprise (ACE) for the acquisition and rehabilitation of a HUD foreclosed home. The City is allocating HOME funds in the amount of \$337,200 toward this project. In addition to HOME funds, CDBG funds will be used to cover additional project costs (as the total funding needed exceeded HOME's maximum per unit subsidy limit applicable to the project. CDBG program income funds in the amount of \$37,680 will be used to fund eligible rehabilitation and soft costs.

The City is partnering with Westchester Residential Opportunities to launch a Homebuyer Assistance Program.

Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.

The City of Mount Vernon will work to create protocols and processes for the HOME program. The City will submit for HUD to review. The City will establish a HOME Buyers Assistance Program and will work to use HOME funds to provide affordable housing to low-income buyers. The City is also exploring creating a TBRA program and is working to identify a partner organization. This will enable the City to expend all of its HOME funds.

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

Number of Households Served	CDBG Actual	HOME Actual
Extremely Low-income	31	0
Low-income	62	0
Moderate-income	12	0
Total	105	0

Table 12 – Number of Households Served

Narrative Information

There were 106 households assisted with affordable housing activities through CDBG programs in the 2018 Program Year. While there were ongoing HOME activities in the 2018 Program Year, there were no completed HOME projects, and therefore there were no accomplishments recorded for HOME.

For the CDBG affordable housing program, there was one (1) Non-Low moderate household assisted in the single family housing rehab program so the table above only shows 105 LMI households assisted. Of the LMI households assisted there were 31 that were extremely low-income, 62 low-income and 12 moderate-income. Below is a breakdown of households assisted by program.

Construction of Rental Housing at the LaPorte development (11 assisted): 11 low-moderate households.

Single-Unit/Family Housing Rehab (10 assisted): 1 low-income and 1 moderate-income household.

Multi-Unit Housing Rehab (85 assisted): 31 extremely low-income, 50 low-income, 11 moderate-income and 1 non-low/moderate income household.

There were no households with a disabled member targeted and all eligible households were assisted.

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

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

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

The City participates in a coordinated effort to house homeless individuals, including veterans who are living on the street or in homeless shelters, through the Westchester Continuum of Care (COC).

The Westchester Continuum of Care has six (6) homeless outreach teams that cover the entire CoC geographic area. All homeless persons engaged are entered into HMIS for identification, tracking, and referral to better coordinate services and housing appropriate to their needs.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

In August and September 2017, the URA was alerted by HUD's field office that \$67,440.00 in 2010 Emergency Shelter Grant funds were at risk of being recaptured if not committed and expended by the end of Fiscal Year 2017. The URA engaged three non-profit organizations that provide services to the homeless to expend the remaining funds. Those three organizations – Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, the Guidance Center of Westchester, and the Neighborhood Health Center, provided a range of services to the homeless, including legal, medical, and housing-related services.

There are two large Emergency Shelters for homeless households with children located within the City of Mount Vernon. The Mount Vernon Family Center (operated by WestHELP with funding from Westchester DSS) has capacity for 138 beds in 46 families. Vernon Plaza (operated by Westhab with funding from Westchester DSS) has capacity for 102 beds in 34 families.

Transitional Housing for homeless households with children in scattered-site units in Mount Vernon is operated by Community Housing Innovations (with funding from Westchester DSS). This project is targeted to 80 families with 240 beds.

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

The Mount Vernon United Tenants Association (MVUTA) sent out bi-monthly mailing to their local Mount Vernon member families of more than 230 members and delivered flyers to buildings in Mount Vernon outlining United Tenants' services.

Client intake was performed in MVUTA offices, where staff helped clients prepare documents, and conducted case- management services for at-risk tenants. In addition, MVUTA worked closely with Legal Services of the Hudson Valley and Westchester Residential Opportunities, including regularly co-sponsoring public forums with both organizations.

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) entered into an agreement with the Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency on August 21, 2017 and quickly organized to provide Mount Vernon residents HUD ESG \$11,273.99 of services and financial assistance until the expiration of the contract, ending September 30, 2017.

During this period, LSHV prevented an incident of homelessness for six (6) of Mount Vernon's neediest households with annual incomes under 30% of the Average Median Income as published by HUD for Westchester County. Homelessness was spared for a total of nine (9) household members.

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

The City of Mount Vernon administers CoC Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) projects, including beds targeted to Veterans and families with children. Participants in these PSH projects receive housing plus supportive services, including case management and linkages to community services and benefits.

Mount Vernon also provides funding to several community-based organizations, which provide outreach and referral services to the homeless or those at-risk of homelessness including recently released female inmates, pregnant teens, families with housing problems and immigration needs and the elderly.

For FY 2017, there are **59** individuals and families that are participating in the program. They include veterans, families, and individuals who may suffer from substance abuse and or chronic homelessness.

Over the past year, the City has worked to ensure that all beds are filled and we are currently filling beds as funding becomes available.

The City went from being at 82% capacity two years ago to currently being at 104% target capacity.

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

Actions taken to address the needs of public housing

The City does not operate a public housing program.

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

See first answer above.

Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs

See first answer above.

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

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

Affordable Housing to Serve Protected Classes

- Mount Vernon is working with developers and CHDOs to expand the number of affordable accessible units available.
- Mount Vernon is working with developers and CHDOs to provide quality affordable housing to LMI individuals and families.

Discriminatory Lending Policies and Practices

- Westchester Residential Opportunities is a certified HUD counseling agency that provides workshops to educate the public, lenders, and real estate agents.
- Westchester Residential Opportunities provides housing counseling services and financial education sessions in Mount Vernon on a regular basis.

Zombie Property Initiative

- At a Kickoff Ceremony held on August 16, 2018, the City of Mount Vernon unveiled its plan to formally address urban blight and its focus on abandoned bank owned homes. The Zombie Properties Initiative was sponsored by the **New York State Attorney General's Office**, the **Local Initiatives Support Corporation ("LISC")** and **Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement ("CITIES Rise")**.
- This Initiative is a part of a joint effort to reduce blight. Grant recipients were given access to the cutting-edge software platform, **Building Blocks**, to identify, in real time, vacant and abandoned properties. The City of Mount Vernon has identified 201 vacant 1-4 family homes which need to be brought up to code as of March 2019. The City has identified 64 bank owned vacant properties, which is constantly changing as banks sell the homes. Additionally, Building Blocks has been used to identify vacant commercial property that are outside of the zombie property initiative scope. These were forwarded to the Buildings Department for action.
- As part of this grant initiative, struggling at-risk homeowners were provided mortgage foreclosure prevention counseling through **Westchester Residential Opportunities**. A national non-profit, **Hester Street**, has also been engaged to provide community engagement strategies to help the Mount Vernon community to realize change.

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

One of the greatest obstacles to meeting the underserved needs is the amount of funding available. To combat this issue, the Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency (URA) partners with many agencies to create larger and more sustainable impacts in the community. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Housing Related Activities - Fair housing activities to educate residents and their housing rights as well as assist those who are being treated unfairly in the rental assistance market. In addition, the URA also provides funding to address mortgage foreclosure prevention activities.
- Elder Abuse - The City has partnered with Family Services of Westchester (FSW) to provide resources to improve the safety and well-being of older adults living in Mount Vernon who are at risk of abuse from family members. FSW reaches out to seniors isolated in the community who have been identified, assesses them for safety, engages them and offers support and case-management, counseling and other services.

Update Zoning Code:

- We are currently working on adopting the City's parcel-based zoning map which includes all zoning updates such as the Mount Vernon West Rezoning and the South Fourth Avenue Urban Renewal Plan.

Align City's Zoning Map with Existing Sites:

- The City's zoning map was last adopted in 1997 which was 22 years ago. Therefore, certain zones within the map do not correlate with many of the land use sites that are present today. We seek to rectify these situations as well create new zoning designations; wherein, the land use would be permitted, and the parking reduced because these services are essential for the surrounding neighborhood.

Adopt Rezoning Timeframes:

- We are seeking to solidify the timeframe for rezoning proposals. Currently, the City Council may elect to hear a proposal for rezoning. The amendment would provide the City Council 90 days from the completion of the SEQRA process to vote on the proposed rezoning.

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

Lead-based paint hazards continues to be an issue in the City of Mount Vernon as almost all of the housing in the City was constructed prior to 1978. The City relies on the County to address abatement of lead-based paint in Mount Vernon's aged housing stock. Buildings and properties identified as potential hazards are referred to the County of Westchester Department of Health or to the Westchester County Department of Planning-administered Lead Safe Westchester program for appropriate action.

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

The City of Mount Vernon, through its Urban Renewal Agency, has utilized some of its CDBG funding allocation to provide scholarships to low income individuals pursuing post-secondary education at colleges, trade schools, or vocational schools.

The City also provides educational and training programs for youth and reentry individuals.

The City has funded organizations that are devoted to tenant protection, which helps prevent homelessness. Such organizations include the Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. Homelessness continues, however, to be a challenge, as it is in many parts of the county, state and country.

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

The Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency is responsible for the administration of the CDBG program. Effective delivery of the program requires constant communication and coordination with numerous City Departments, non-profit agencies, potential residential and commercial consumers, and other funding agencies.

The City has devoted extensive time and energy to develop best practices for operating its CDBG, HOME, and CoC funded programs, including through adoption of updated policies and procedures. The MVURA also has hired an accountant to assist with program operations. The City also requires, through its CDBG subrecipient agreements that subrecipients provide quarterly updates on their activities and grant spending.

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

The Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency (URA) facilitates regular meetings of service providers to oversee strategy implementation and to ensure coordination of efforts at the local level.

WestHELP operates a County Department of Social Services (DSS) funded emergency shelter for households with children within the City of Mount Vernon, with capacity for 46 families. Through the DSS District Office at 100 East First Street in Mount Vernon, families and individuals also have access to other DSS funded shelters, transitional housing, homeless prevention funds, and mainstream benefits such as Medicaid, SNAP, NYS CHIP, WIC, and TANF.

There are ongoing discussions with the Westchester Continuum of Care program concerning strategies for implementing improved systems of communication between service providers, the identification of barriers to the provision of services, and the assessment of community needs.

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

The Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency has issued an RFP for a consultant to carry out an Analysis of

Impediments to Fair Housing.

To expand on addressing the fair housing issues identified through this process, the City of Mount Vernon provides CDBG funding for fair housing counseling outreach workshops. The City would like to deepen its partnership with Westchester Residential Opportunities to provide comprehensive fair housing services including complain intake, undercover testing and investigation, advocacy and representation to victims of discrimination.

The City also provides CDBG funding for the Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention program. The City partners with Westchester Residential Opportunities to provide outreach, education, and legal representation to homeowners and new home buyers who are targeted by predatory lenders.

Providing mortgage foreclosure counseling services to home owners in default or foreclosure is critical to breaking the cycle of debt, eviction, and or foreclosure.

Together, both the fair housing counseling workshops and mortgage foreclosure prevention programs address a number of the impediments listed in the 2015 City of Mount Vernon Impediments to Fair Housing (AI).

CR-40 - Monitoring 91.220 and 91.230

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

Monitoring - the Agency has taken affirmative steps to strengthen compliance. For example, the Agency now requires quarterly reporting from all subrecipients. This is now a standardized practice. In addition, the Agency now will conduct annual inspections of its subgrantees as stipulated in the subrecipient agreement, and in conformance with HUD regulatory requirements.

In addition, the City through its Urban Renewal Agency is taking steps to address HUD-identified findings dating back over a decade that relate to the operations of its CDBG and HOME funded programs. One of the lessons learned and steps being taken by the URA is to strengthen record-keeping.

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

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

The City of Mount Vernon reached out to citizens by posting notices in public places (libraries, post offices), city's facebook page, city's Instagram, social media, through internet blasts, local newspapers, postings on community bulletin boards and in businesses located in low/moderate areas and through postings in non-for-profit agency offices. Public notices were made available in both English and Spanish.

On December 10, 2019, an email was sent out to Mount Vernon residents, City Hall staff, Westchester CoC listserv, community based organizations, and subrecipients.

The 2018 CAPER report was also included in the February 27, 2020 public hearing and in the March 26 2020 Virtual Hearing. There were no public comments regarding the 2018 CAPER Report.

CR-45 - CDBG 91.520(c)

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

The City has determined that it needs ongoing technical assistance to effectively monitoring CDBG and HOME program compliance as well as having the services of a full-time auditor to assist in managing and operating both programs. To that end, the City hired TDA Consulting Inc. to assist it with HOME program operations and now has a full-time auditor assisting the the Urban Renewal Agency with program compliance.

The City also determined that it would be helpful to formalize a subrecipient agreement between the City and the Urban Renewal Agency. To that end, a subrecipient agreement developed by the Mayor’s Administration was approved by the City Council and the subrecipient agreement has been executed.

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

No

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

Not applicable.

CR-50 - HOME 91.520(d)

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

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

The City of Mount Vernon has worked closely with TDA Consulting, Inc., which provides assistance with the on-site inspections of affordable rental housing to determine compliance with the regulations. The City's goal is to conduct inspections once every three years. Below is the list of sites to be inspected between July 2020 and December 2020. Each of these sites are subrecipients of HOME funding:

- Grace Towers
- Levister Towers
- Blue Rio/Atlantic Development
- 60 West 1 Street

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

Constructed or rehabilitated units using federal HOME funds are sold or rented according to an approved marketing plan that must be approved by the Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency. Marketing plans describe affirmative advertising or other marketing efforts, describe the selection process for buyers or renters and ensure equal opportunity in the availability of HOME-funded units.

The City of Mount Vernon created an affirmative marketing plan. The marketing plan was reviewed and approved by HUD's OFHEO office. The City will provide the marketing plan to rental developments that received HOME funds. The City will ask them to report on their affirmative marketing plans. The City will also work with a broad group of stakeholders to ensure that persons with disabilities are aware of available, accessible housing units in developments that received city support.

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

There were no projects funded with program income for the HOME program in the 2018 Program Year.

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

91.320(j) Not applicable.