



Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium
HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

DRAFT

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Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium

HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

Consultation

Describe the consultation process including methods used and dates of consultation:

The Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium engaged in regional and local consultation in an effort to undertake the most thorough consultation process possible. The Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium encouraged input for its consultation process from agencies with significant knowledge of and commitment to providing essential services to vulnerable populations, particularly people experiencing homelessness, within Gaston County. The Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium values input from all agencies and has ensured an inclusive approach was taken to ensure ample opportunity for collaboration and discussion on the HOME-ARP allocation plan. The feedback received overwhelmingly supports the activities that the Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium proposes to undertake with HOME-ARP funding.

Between the period of December 2022 and February 2023 the Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium consulted with stakeholders throughout Gaston County in its development of the HOME-American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) allocation plan. Individuals were engaged through individual consultation interviews, a community survey and virtual and in-person focus group forums. Persons were asked to provide input on the needs, service gaps and eligible activities for Gaston County's Qualifying Populations (QP).

As the lead agency for the Gastonia-Gaston Consortium, the City of Gastonia conducted the following outreach efforts to engage the community:

1. Conducted four (4) virtual and two (2) in-person focus group forums with:
 - a. Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Continuum of Care
 - b. Gaston County municipalities that are part of the HOME Consortium;
 - c. Gaston County agencies non-profit agencies providing services for all Qualifying Populations, church organizations, fair housing organizations, legal aid and other community groups.
 - d. Veteran individuals and families with lived experience
 - e. Homeless individuals and families with lived experience
 - f. Gaston County Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Community Support Services Department to include Gaston County Veterans Department of Veterans Affairs, Gaston County Access (transportation), Hope Youth Survivors Network (Domestic Violence) and the Department's Director.

2. Launched a community survey for the period of January 1 – 20, 2023. The survey yielded a total of 412 responses.

- Conducted consultation interviews with community stakeholders that work in some capacity with the Qualifying Populations

Organizations Consulted

As a result of the consultation methods outlined above, listed below are the corresponding agencies that participated and provided feedback.

Qualifying Population 1 (QP1)	Qualifying Population 2 (QP2)	Qualifying Population 3 (QP3)	Qualifying Population 4(QP4)	Other Population (OP)
Homeless	At-Risk	Domestic Violence	Veterans	Greatest Risk

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Qualifying Population Served	Method of Consultation	Feedback
ALM Counseling	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Support Services and Production and Preservation of Affordable Housing
ABCCM	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Priority Population: Homeless Greatest Need: Non-Congregate Shelter, and Support Services (Housing Counseling, Case Management)
Bridging the Gap Carolina	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population priority: At Risk Greatest Need(s) Non-Congregate Shelter and Homeless Prevent and Support Services
Catherine's House	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Group Meeting and WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Support Services (Education, Employment and Financial Assistance)
Development Solutions Group	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population Priority: Veterans Greatest Need(s): Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing, Non-Congregate Shelter, TBRA Vouchers and Support Services (Job Readiness, Life Skills Training, Case Management)
First ARP Church	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population Priority: Extremely Low Income and At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Shelter and Support Services
Friendship Christian Church	At-Risk Service Provider Homeless Service Provider	QP1 QP2 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Support Services (Financial Assistance, Job Readiness)
First United Methodist Church Belmont	At-Risk Service Provider Homeless Service Provider	QP1 QP2 OP	Community Survey	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Non-Congregate Shelter and Homeless Prevention and Supportive Services

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Qualifying Population Served	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Gaston Community Action	At-Risk Service Provider	QP2 OP	In-Person Consultation Meeting	Population Priority: At-Risk Greatest Need(s) Support Services (Financial Assistance) and Preserve and Produce Affordable Housing
Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Continuum of Care	Continuum of Care serving the jurisdiction's geographic area	QP1 QP3	WebEx Virtual Group Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing TBRA Vouchers
Gaston County: Hope Survivor Network	Domestic Violence Provider	QP3	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population priority: DV population with children Greatest Need(s): Preservation and production of Affordable Housing Units and support services (Mental Health/Substance Abuse)
Gaston County Veteran's Council	Veterans Group	QP4	In-Person Consultation Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Veterans Greatest Need(s): Housing and services
Gaston County Department of Veterans Affairs	Veterans Group	QP4	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Veterans Greatest Need(s): Housing and services
Gaston County Mediation Center	Public Agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations (include for these WHICH of the QPs or combination of the QPs the public agency serves)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
Gaston County Schools	Public Agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations (include for these WHICH of the QPs or combination of the QPs the public agency serves)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	Community Survey	Population Priority: Homeless and At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Non-Congregate Shelter, Support Services, Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing, TBRA Vouchers,
Belmont Housing Authority	Public Housing Agency	QP2 OP	Community Survey	Population Priority: Extremely Low Income Greatest Need(s): Support Services, Preservation and Production of

				Affordable Housing, Non-Congregate Shelter
Gastonia Housing Authority	Public Housing Agency	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Interview	Population Priority: Homeless and At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing, Support Services
Hannah's House	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population Priority: At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing, TBRA Vouchers, Support Services (Housing Counseling and Case Management)

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Qualifying Population Served	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Help Carolina	Homeless Service Provider	QP1 QP2	In-Person Consultation Meeting and WebEx Virtual Group Meeting	<u>Population priority:</u> Homeless <u>Greatest Need(s)</u> Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS) and Homeless Prevention and Support Services (Case Management, Financial Assistance, Life Skills Training, Job Readiness)
Hessed House	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Non-Congregate Shelter, Production and Preservation of Affordable Housing and Support Services (Case Management, Life Skills Training)
Homeless Focus Group	Persons with lived Experience	N/A	In Person Group Consultation Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Non-Congregate Shelter and Support Services (Substance Abuse, Legal Services, Financial Assistance, Housing Counseling)
House of Mercy	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing
Integrated Care Hickory	At Risk Service Provider Homeless Service Provider	QP1 QP2 OP	WebEx Virtual F Group Meeting	Population: At-Risk and Homeless Greatest Need(s): Support Services and Preservation and Production of affordable housing
Kenneth Falls Ministries	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Preservation and production of affordable housing, TBRA Vouchers
Kintegra	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Support Services (Life Skills Training, Case Management), TBRA Vouchers, Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing

Langston Realty Group	At-Risk Service Provider	QP2 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing; Support Services
Legal Aid of the Southern Piedmont	Legal and Fair Housing	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	Telephone	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Qualifying Population Served	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Veterans Focus Group	Persons with lived experience	QP4	In Person Group Consultation Meeting	Population Priority: Veterans Greatest Need(s): Support Services (Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Legal Services, Job Readiness, Housing Counseling, Financial Assistance, Transportation)
Mount Zion Restoration Church	Homeless Service Provider	QP1 QP2 OP	Community Survey	Population Priority: At-Risk and Homeless Greatest need(s): Support Services(Financial Assistance)
North Carolina Human Relations Commission	Public Agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations (include for these WHICH of the QPs or combination of the QPs the public agency serves)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Contacted in January 2023 and an Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
Our Neighbors, Inc.	At-Risk Service Provider	QP1 QP2	In-person consultation Interview and virtual focus group meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Affordable Housing, Support Services and Capacity Building
Partners Behavioral Health Management	Homeless Service Provider (Mental Health Disability)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest need: Support Services Preservation and production of affordable housing
Phoenix Counseling	Homeless Service Provider (Mental Health Disability)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	Community Survey	Population Priority: At-Risk Greatest Need(s): TBRA Vouchers, Support Services (Housing Counseling, Case Management)

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Qualifying Population Served	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Purpose Anew	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	Community Survey	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing and Support Services (Housing Counseling)
Regional Housing Partnerships	At- Risk Service Provider	QP1 QP2 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Preservation and production of affordable housing; Support Services
Salvation Army	Homeless Service Provider	QP1	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Greatest Need(s): Support Services and Production and preservation of Affordable Housing
United Way of Gaston County	Homeless Service Provider	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Non-Congregate Shelter, Support Services (Financial Assistance, Case Management, Life Skills Training)
City of Belmont	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
City of Bessemer City	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
City of Cherryville	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Qualifying Population Served	Method of Consultation	Feedback
City of Gastonia	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Priority population: Homeless and At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Non-Congregate Shelter, Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing, Support Services (Case Management), Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS), and affordable housing
City of Lowell	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
City of Mount Holly	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
Gaston County Government	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Priority Population: Homeless, DV, Veterans and At-Risk Greatest Need(s): Support Services (Case Management, Childcare, Employment Assistance, Mental Health Transportation) and Affordable Housing
Gastonia Police Department	Homeless Service Provider	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Focus Group Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need(s): Homeless support services (case management, financial assistance, legal services, mental health and substance abuse) and Non-Congregate Shelter

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Qualifying Population Served	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Town of Cramerton	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
Town of Dallas	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Group Meeting	Need: Support Services
Town of McAdenville	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Virtual Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
Town of Ranlo	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Group Meeting	Population Priority: N/A Greatest Need(s): N/A Note(s): Invitation extended to participate in focus group session on 02/01/2023. Response not received and did not participate in session.
Town of Stanley	HOME Consortium Member (Local Government Agency)	QP1 QP2 QP3 QP4 OP	WebEx Group Meeting	Population Priority: Homeless Greatest Need: Support Services; Non-Congregate Shelter, Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing

Summarize feedback received and results of upfront consultation with these entities:

An overview of the HOME-ARP Qualifying Populations and Eligible Activities were presented during the consultation meeting. After the presentation, participants discussed the lack of available housing options for the unsheltered homeless population. Due to the current emergency shelter operating at a fraction of capacity and the increased number of homelessness camps, is supporting evidence that clients still have difficulty locating emergency or temporary housing. Discussion ensued, and each agency voiced agreement that shelter and support services are both immediate needs. Parties agreed that the highest priority for the HOME-ARP funds is a Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS) that would best serve the population need. To ensure fairness and equity in housing-related activities, the Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium will continue to work with the North Carolina Human Relations Commission and Legal Aid of North Carolina to educate and enforce fair housing practices.

As the lead agency for the Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium, the City of Gastonia provided opportunity for the community to participate in an on-line community survey during the period of January 1 – 20, 2023. The survey link was available on the City of Gastonia website and allowed participants to provide input in the areas of:

- concerning needs and gaps within the community,
- identify Qualifying Populations in greatest need of housing and housing-related services, and
- Prioritize the eligible activities for HOME-ARP for Gaston County.
- Of the total 412 participants, 214 or 52% identified the Homeless Qualifying Population as the highest ranking in terms of priority of need for housing and services, followed by 24% identified as Other Qualifying Population of Extremely Low Income individuals and families, 16% for At-Risk Families, 9% in support of Veteran Qualifying Population and 3% identified as Domestic Violence Qualifying Population as a priority.

Survey participants also prioritized the needs within the community based upon eligible activity. Activities were Ranked as follows:

<u>Eligible Activity Category</u>	<u>Rank</u>
• Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing	4.41
• Support Services	4.25
• Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS)	4.15
• Tenant-Based Rental Assistance	4.07

Participants responses noted the need and support of Non-Profit Capacity Building and Operating. Responses received in support of these activities were 67.64% and 79.81% respectively.

Survey Participants also weighed in in the needs and gaps of specific support serves which are noted as follows:

<u>Support Services Type</u>	<u>Rank</u>
• Homeless Prevention Services (to include financial assistance)	3.82
• Housing Counseling	3.35
• Life Skills Training	2.84
• Job Readiness	2.78
• Case Management Services	2.24

Public Participation

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

- **Date(s) of public notice: 02/22/2023**
- **Public comment period: start date – 2/22/2023 end date – 3/10/2023**
- **Date(s) of public hearing: 3/9/2023**

The Public Participation Process for HOME-ARP Allocation Plan includes a broad range of activities for the Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium. The primary goal of the public participation process was to provide all citizens with adequate notice, access to, and opportunity to review and comment on the plan for HOME-ARP funding.

Efforts included placing an advertisement in the local newspaper, the Gaston Gazette, on the City of Gastonia website, and placing notices at public facilities. Notices were also emailed to the Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Continuum of Care, Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium Members, local church organizations and citizens that requested additional details. A public community meeting was held on February 23, 2023, at 6pm at the Adult Recreation Center, 519 W. Franklin Boulevard, Gastonia, NC 28052 and a virtual public hearing scheduled for March 9, 2023 at 12pm. The public hearing provides the public the ability to attend both telephonically or virtually on a computer, laptop, or mobile phone. A 15-day public comment period for public review of the draft HOME-ARP Plan began on **February 22, 2023** and extended through **March 10, 2023**.

Public notices include instructions for requesting reasonable accommodations and translation services for residents with limited English proficiency (LEP). Residents can contact the City of Gastonia Housing and Community Engagement Department by phone, TTY or North Carolina Relay Service, email, or postal mail to make requests.

Describe efforts to broaden public participation:

Efforts to broaden public participation included providing regular, intermittent information via the City of Gastonia social media sites to include Facebook and Twitter and contacting news media outlets which developed news stories outlining the process. Email updates were also submitted to persons who participated in the survey and requested additional information. The Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Continuum of Care was also provided with email updates. A notice was also placed in the local newspaper as well as at the Public Housing Authority, local recreation facilities and the public library. The virtual option will allow for greater citizen participation to accommodate varying schedules.

Summarize the comments and recommendations received through the public participation process either in writing, or orally at a public hearing:

None to date

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

None to date

Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis

Based upon the 412 responses received as a result of the community survey conducted January 1-20, 2023, 52% of respondents believed the Qualifying Population to consider are homeless individuals and families. Based upon participant responses, there is a gap in terms area nonprofit's ability to carry out existing services and funding to operate. Participants strongly supported the use of HOME-ARP funding for non-profit capacity building and operating costs by 67.64% and 79.81% respectively.

Homeless Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

Homeless													
	Current Inventory					Homeless Population				Gap Analysis			
	Family		Adults Only		Vets	Family HH (at least 1 child)	Adult HH (w/o child)	Vets	Victims of DV	Family		Adults Only	
	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds					# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units
Emergency Shelter	3	#	107	#	#								
Transitional Housing	10	#	66	#	#								
Permanent Supportive Housing	#	#	127	#	#								
Other Permanent Housing	#	#	74	#	#								
Sheltered Homeless						XX	178	#	#				
Unsheltered Homeless						#	199	#	#				
Current Gap										#	13	27	#

Note: Preliminary Draft Data as 02/22/2023 is noted above. Because the Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Continuum of Care is a tri-county continuum, data sets per county were not readily available at the time of this draft. Final data specific to Gaston County will be tabulated and included in the final document.

Non-Homeless Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

Non-Homeless			
	Current Inventory	Level of Need	Gap Analysis
	# of Units	# of Households	# of Households
Total Rental Units	34,314		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness)	16,976		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI (Other Populations)	5,575		
0%-30% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (At-Risk of Homelessness)		10,600	
30%-50% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (Other Populations)		24,114	
Current Gaps			12,163

Suggested Data Sources: 1. American Community Survey (ACS); 2. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)

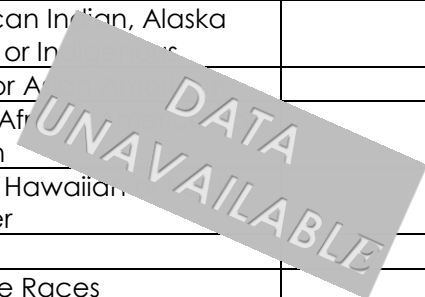
Describe the size and demographic composition of qualifying populations within the PJ's boundaries:

Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

The Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Continuum of Care is a tri-county continuum. Data for the 2022 Gaston County Point-In Time Count identified 199 unsheltered homeless persons within the county as of January 25, 2022. In comparison to the 2021 Gaston County Point-IN-Time Count which identified 133 unsheltered persons, there was 49.5% increase in the unsheltered population. The racial demographic of the unsheltered population for the 2022 Gaston County Point-In-Time Counts is noted however, 2021 racial demographic data was unavailable.

Gaston County 2022 Point In Time County Racial Demographic	
Race	Number
American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous	6
Asian or Asian American	5
Black, African American or African	157
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0
White	193
Multiple Races	16

Gaston County 2021 Point In Time County Racial Demographic	
Race	Number
American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous	
Asian or Asian American	
Black, African American or African	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	
White	
Multiple Races	



Note: Preliminary Draft Data as 02/22/2023 is noted above. Because the Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Continuum of Care is a tri-county continuum, data sets per county were not readily available at the time of this draft. Final data specific to Gaston County will be tabulated and included in the final document.

At Risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

Characteristics attributed to housing instability and increased risk of homelessness include households with less than 30% AMI and were cost burden where housing costs consumed more than 50% of the income. Data from the Community Development Block Grant-Coronavirus (CDBG-CV), supports this statistic with 40 low-income households at 50% of the AMI that required assistance. This data subset is a sampling of the population within Gaston County that require assistance.

***Fleeing, or Attempting to Flee, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, or Human Trafficking, as defined by HUD in the Notice
Other populations requiring services or housing assistance to prevent homelessness and other populations at greatest risk of housing instability, as defined by HUD in the Notice***

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

The City of Gastonia serves as the lead agency for the Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium. As of 2022 and listed as the 13th largest city within North Carolina, Gastonia's population is well in excess of 81,000. Gaston County encompasses both rural and urban landscapes and jurisdictions with a population that exceeds 230,000.

During 2022, the Gastonia Housing Authority has increased the number of Section 8 and Elderly housing vouchers from 1806 to 1843. In 2022 there are still 200 vouchers not used due to issues of housing availability.

Describe the unmet housing and service needs of qualifying populations:

Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

Since 2022 the Salvation Army has operated at a fraction of its capacity, and to date has not resumed full service. According to the 2022 Housing Inventory Count for Gaston County, there was a cumulative total of 388 beds for Emergency Shelter, Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing and Transitional Housing in Gaston County.

The 2022 Gaston County Point-In-Time Count identified 199 unsheltered homeless persons as compared to 2021 Point-In-Time Count identified 133 unsheltered homeless persons, a 49.5 % increase from the prior year.

The available beds for the Salvation Army has decreased each year since 2019. Reasons for the decrease in number of beds include administrative changes, shelter being designated as high barrier and implications of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Coronavirus epidemic had a substantial impact on the number of available beds at the emergency shelter. To limit its impacts, the number of available shelter beds were decreased to allow for social distancing and the safety of shelter residents and staff. Since March 2020 shelter has not resume the full use of all available beds. When comparing available beds for 2019 versus 2022, there is a reduction of well over 69%. A summary of available beds and utilization percentage for 2019 through 2022 are as listed below.

Program Year	Emergency Shelter	Total Beds	Utilization %
2022	Salvation Army	29	100%
2021	Salvation Army	47	32%
2020	Salvation Army	94	39%
2019	Salvation Army	94	81%

At Risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

Persons on a fixed income, persons with disabilities and other chronic health issues, substance abuse, mental health, poor credit history, and persons with a record of criminal history all have barriers that put them at risk of homelessness. These persons require supportive services to help maintain housing stability. Examples of supportive services include housing counseling, financial assistance and counseling as well as employment services.

The table, **Non-Homeless Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table**, as outlined on page 13 references data from the 2015-2019 data from the Community Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS). Affordable housing inventory for households at 30 and 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) totals 22,251 while the need for housing amongst this same demographic is 34,714 resulting in a gap of available units of 12,163. Of the renter households at 30% of AMI

and below, 6,875 have at least 1 housing problem. Renter households in the 30-50% range of AMI experiencing at least 1 of the 4 household problems is 3,840.

This data was supported by Gaston County's 2-1-1 Call Center Data for the period of February 2022 through February 2023 as noted below:

- 1) 5,554 citizen requests for services to include housing assistance, food insecurity, healthcare, utility assistance, and more.
- 2) 3,267 citizen calls received at the call center.

A further review of data revealed that 153,306 calls were received with requests totaling 294,323 for the following categories of assistance requests:

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
Housing and Shelter	51.1%
Food	3.7%
Utilities	18.5%
Healthcare & COVID-19	4.3%
Mental Health & Addictions	2.0%
Employment and Income	6.3%
Clothing and Household	2.1%
Childcare and Parenting	<1%
Government and Legal	4.3%
Transportation Assistance	1.3%
Education	<1%
Disaster	<1%
Other	5.8%
Total of all requests	100%

Fleeing, or Attempting to Flee, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, or Human Trafficking, as defined by HUD in the Notice

The 2022 Point-In-Time Count did not account for DV population data. 2022 DV data was obtained for Gaston County for Domestic Violence survivors.

1. Number of 911 Emergency DV calls for police service	6,567
2. Number of DV calls for police response	568 cases
3. Number of persons residing in DV shelters	327
4. Number of DV intakes for Hope United Survivors Network	696

According to 2022 Gaston-Lincoln-Cleveland Housing Inventory County data, Gaston County's DV Shelter had a total of 6 family rooms to house survivors and their children. In the event the shelter is at capacity, shelter administration has some flexibility to utilize hotel rooms to house additional individuals and families.

When considering the 2022 total persons seeking assistance at 327 in comparison to the facility's capability to assist at a maximum of 8 families, there is a substantial need and gap in current facility availability.

Other populations requiring services or housing assistance to prevent homelessness and other populations at greatest risk of housing instability as defined by HUD in the Notice

Of the 230,856 Gaston County population for 2021, 4.9% or 11,391 were living in poverty. In 2023 Gaston County ranked 12th in the state for renter evictions, and with 3,114 Gaston County families that faced eviction. Cost burdened households for Gaston County were 28% or 24,114 households.

2015-2019 CHAS data concerning households ranging from 0-50% of AMI shows that 22,550 renter households are cost burdened, and of the same population group, 12,725 have at least 1 housing problem.

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

Since March 2020, the current emergency shelter continues to operate at a fraction of its capacity. Since 2019, the local emergency shelter has experience a decline in the number of beds available.

Program Year	Unsheltered Population (Based on the Point-In-Time Count for Gaston County)	Number of Emergency Shelter Beds Available (Based upon the Housing Inventory Count for Gaston County)	Service Gap
2022	199	29	170
2021	133	47	86

In a comparison of the service gap data from 2021 to 2022, the service gap increased from 86 persons to 170 persons for an increase of 51%. For the same period, the number of emergency shelter beds decreased from 47 to 29 for a 61%.

Identify priority needs for qualifying populations:

Based upon the consultation process, priority needs include the addition of a Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS). Community partners indicated that there are extremely long waiting lists for the limited shelter options within the Gastonia-Gaston Consortium area.

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

The PJ assessed Community input and reviewed the data sources provided to determine the needs and gaps for proposed activities.

HOME-ARP Activities

Describe the method(s) that will be used for soliciting applications for funding and/or selecting developers, service providers, subrecipients and/or contractors:

As the lead agency of the Gastonia-Gaston Consortium, the City of Gastonia will solicit applications for funding through a competitive Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) or Request for Proposals (RFP) to eligible participants and interested parties. The NOFA will announce the availability of HOME-ARP funds and explain the eligible housing activities and corresponding qualifying populations that can be served through those activities. Interested parties can submit

applications by identifying a project that addresses eligible uses and populations as outlined in the NOFA. Detailed information for funding availabilities will be found on the City of Gastonia website <https://www.cityofgastonia.com>.

Describe whether the PJ will administer eligible activities directly:

While it is not the intent of the City of Gastonia as lead agency for the Gastonia-Gaston Consortium to administer program activities, it may elect to do so in the event of limited viable management options for activities deemed vital to community need.

Use of HOME-ARP Funding

	Funding Amount	Percent of the Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	\$ 200,000		
Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	\$ 2,200,111		
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	\$		
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	\$		
Non-Profit Operating	\$ 75,000	2.65%	5%
Non-Profit Capacity Building	\$ 125,000	4.38%	5%
Administration and Planning	\$ 250,000	8.70%	15%
Total HOME ARP Allocation	\$ 2,850,111		

Describe how the PJ will distribute HOME-ARP funds in accordance with its priority needs identified in its needs assessment and gap analysis:

1. Support Services Open to all Qualifying Populations. Based upon community participants' responses to the survey, priority was noted for Homeless Prevention Services, Housing counseling, Life Skills Training, Job Readiness and Case Management. To cover populations, proposed funding for this category is 7.02% or \$200,000 of the grant.
2. Non-Congregate Shelters: Activity will include acquisition and rehabilitation. The activity will prioritize the Homeless Qualifying Population for unsheltered homeless individuals and families. Referrals will be added to project waitlist. Due to the emergency shelter's capacity limited to a low number and the doubling of the population of those experiencing homelessness, the majority of funds will be allocated to provide safe and accessible shelter. This option will allow prove beneficial and assist a larger number of individuals and families. Due to rising real estate costs and supply chain issues, acquisition and rehabilitation costs are anticipated to be significant. Due to this factor, the largest portion of the grant \$2,200,111 or 77.19 % will be used for this activity.
3. Non-Profit Capacity Building: This category was ranked by more than 67% of survey participants as being significant to include in the plan. Capacity Building helps agencies develop the skills and training necessary for staff to carry out eligible activities. The statutory limit for this category is limited to 5% of the total grant funds. To allow for more funding to

assist the Qualifying Populations, this activity category was limited to 4.38% or \$125,000 of the grant.

4. Non-Profit Operating: This category was ranked by almost 80% of survey participants as being significant to include in the plan. The statutory limit for this category is limited to 5% of the total grant funds. To allow for more funding to assist the Qualifying Populations, this activity category was limited to 2.65% or \$75,000 of the grant.
5. Administration and Planning: Administration and Planning are a large part of ensuring that grant activities are carried out effectively. \$250,000 or 8.77% of the grant will be used for this activity.

%

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

The needs and gaps assessment revealed a substantial increase in the unsheltered homeless population from 2021 to 2022, the limited availability of beds as identified by the G-L-C Continuum of Care 2022 Housing Inventory Count, and the current Emergency Shelter performing as a high-barrier shelter operating in a reduced capacity. This assessment revealed the need for a Non-Congregate Shelter, Support Services and Operating and Capacity Building for Non-Profit Agencies.

Preferences

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

1. For the Acquisition or Rehabilitation of a Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS), the PJ will use a preference for the Qualifying Homeless Population and will use a project waitlist for referral methods. Unsheltered homeless with the Qualifying Homeless Population will be prioritized. All qualifying populations will be provided access to referral.
2. Support Services will not have a preference and will be open to all Qualifying Populations by means of an activity waitlist.
3. Tenant-Based Rental Assistance is not applicable. There are no plans to administer this activity.
4. Preservation and Production of Affordable Housing is not applicable. There are no plans to construct, acquire or refinance affordable housing.

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

The Gastonia-Gaston HOME Consortium has established a prioritization procedure for Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS). This procedure will provide a preference for Qualified Populations (QPs) who are homeless. Additionally, those individuals who are currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness will be given a higher priority in the allocation of services. This

prioritization procedure is designed to ensure that the NCS is delivering its services to those who are most in need. This eligible activity will use a project waitlist.

With the limited availability of emergency shelter facilities, the increase of the unsheltered homeless population and the limited owners that will accept vouchers, the method of prioritization for the NCS will be given to the qualifying population of homeless. This option will allow for more shelter opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness and address the current need. The facility will be available to all Qualifying Populations however, the Homeless Qualifying Population will be given priority.

Limitations in a HOME-ARP rental housing or NCS project

Not Applicable: The Gastonia-Gaston Consortium does not intend to set limitations in HOME-ARP rental housing or Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS) Projects.

HOME-ARP Refinancing Guidelines

Not Applicable: The Gastonia-Gaston Consortium does not intend to use HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily rental housing. Enter narrative response here.