

City of Hickory

Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024



City of Hickory
PO Box 398
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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.

The City of Hickory's program year 2023-2024 highlights include:

1. Preservation of the City's Housing Stock: \$168,887.45 provided repairs to six low and moderate income homeowners to assist with repairs to their homes through the City of Hickory's Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program.
2. Administration of Housing Rehabilitation Program: \$36,850.82 funded staff costs related to the implementation of the City's Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program.
3. Public Services Initiative: \$8,000 provided to Exodus Homes to fund employment and transportation coordination services for homeless, formerly incarcerated individuals, and those coming from treatment programs. Exodus Homes provides employment assistance and transportation for all residents. 92 residents were supported through this funding.
4. Public Services Initiative: \$10,000 allocated to AIDS Leadership Foothills Area Alliance (ALFA) to provide case management services to people living with HIV/AIDS. ALFA also offers HIV prevention education programs to the community at large. They have 42 city residents in care through their program.
5. Public Services Initiative: \$8,000 provided to the Hickory Soup Kitchen, which provided salary support for main kitchen staff and enabled the organization to serve approximately 315 meals per day to 230 residents of Hickory needing a hot meal.
6. Public Services Initiative: \$6,500 provided to Family Care Center to provide salary support to operate a counseling program for homeless families during their time in transitional housing. 101 individuals were supported through this funding.
7. Public Services Initiative: \$8,000 to Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club to provide support for a program coordinator to provide interaction, guidance, and supervision to the youth in the after-school program. 61 individuals were supported through this funding.
8. Public Services Initiative: \$8,000 provided to Catawba Science Center to provide scholarships for science education to children of low and moderate income households. 22 families were assisted with these scholarships for a total of 80 individuals.
9. Public Infrastructure Improvements: Westmont Senior Center and Pickleball Courts benefited from \$69,576.21 in improvements, which included the construction of an accessible route from the existing parking lot to the existing pickleball courts as well as exterior improvements to the existing senior center. Civitan Park benefited from \$119,416.34 in Improvements, which included new play

equipment, picnic shelter and tables, sidewalk, new paving and striping of the parking lot, and trash receptacles. This project began in 2023 and was finished in 2024.

10. Promote Fair Housing: \$1,419.00 purchased newspaper ads and social media advertising to inform residents of fair housing rights.

11. Program Administration: \$64,180.49 for program administration and planning.

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 / Amount	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Complete
Demolish Dilapidated Structures	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Buildings Demolished	Buildings	4	0	0.00%			
Homeless Services and Prevention	Homeless	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted		0				
Homeless Services and Prevention	Homeless	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	1500	1844	122.93%	350	423	120.86%

Increase Entrepreneurship Opportunities	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Jobs created/retained	Jobs	5	2	40.00%			
Increase Entrepreneurship Opportunities	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Businesses assisted	Businesses Assisted	10	7	70.00%	4	0	0.00%
Increase Fair Housing Outreach and Awareness	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted		0				
Increase Fair Housing Outreach and Awareness	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	250	7140	2,856.00%	150	6919	4,612.67%
Preserve the City's Housing Stock	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	20	15	75.00%	4	5	125.00%
Provide Services to Persons Living with HIV/AIDS	Non-Homeless Special Needs	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	750	235	31.33%	50	42	84.00%

Public Infrastructure and Facility Improvements	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	5500	13725	249.55%	4000	1850	46.25%
Support Homeownership	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	250	7140	2,856.00%			
Youth Services	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted		0				
Youth Services	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	150	159	106.00%	92	141	153.26%

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.

The City of Hickory was able to address significant portions of its goals. Projects helped protect the City's housing stock by providing housing rehabilitation assistance to six households during the program year. Significant numbers of citizens benefited from public facility improvements. The City made improvements to Westmont Senior Center and Pickleball Courts which included the construction of an accessible route from the existing parking lot to the existing pickleball courts as well as exterior improvements to the existing senior center. The Senior Center and Pickleball Courts are located in Census Tract 106 Block Group 4 and is adjacent to Census Tract 107 Block Group 1. These improvements will benefit 1,850 individuals overall and 1,225 low to moderate income individuals.

In the 2022 program year, the City of Hickory continued its small business assistance programs which provide funding to businesses to create jobs and purchase equipment necessary to take their business to the next level. In 2022, the City awarded one microenterprise grants. The City has awarded three small business loans and twelve microenterprise grants since beginning the programs.

The City's public services initiative continued to assist the community's most vulnerable populations, including the homeless and persons living with HIV and AIDS, persons with substance abuse issues, and youth in need.

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
White	307
Black or African American	235
Asian	2
American Indian or American Native	4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
Total	548
Hispanic	63
Not Hispanic	548

Table 2 – Table of assistance to racial and ethnic populations by source of funds

Narrative

This table indicates the racial and ethnic breakdown of families assisted through CDBG public service funds in PY 2023. This does not include the racial and ethnic breakdown of area benefit activities that benefit all residents of a census tract or block group. Please note that there are 58 multi-racial individuals that do not appear in the table above due to lack of category listing within the required software.

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	630,911	508,830

Table 3 - Resources Made Available

Narrative

The \$630,911.31 funding available includes \$234,906.40 in unexpended funds at the beginning of the program year. The City received \$328,228 in its annual allocation from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City also received \$67,776.91 in program income during the fiscal year.

Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
CDBG ELIGIBLE AREA	70	88	
City-Wide	30	12	Eligibility Area

Table 4 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Narrative

The majority of funds expended during program year 2023 were spent in low and moderate income census tracts. The City made improvements to Westmont Senior Center and Pickleball Courts by improving the exterior of the Senior Center which included painting, new awnings, gutters, and lighting, and by making the Pickleball Court ADA accessible. This project will ultimately benefit 1,225 low/mod individuals and 1,850 overall in a low/mod census tract. Four of the six public services agencies are located in low to moderate income census tracts. All five of the homeowners assisted through the City of Hickory Housing Rehabilitation Program are located in low and moderate income census tracts. The percentages shown above are based on the estimated percentage of non-program administration expenses spent in low and moderate income census tracts.

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 also receives funds from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency for their Urgent Repair Program to assist homeowners with their needs. This funding allows the City to assist more individuals in the community. In PY 2023, the City of Hickory assisted six (6) homeowners with repairs through the Urgent Repair Program.

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	0	0
Number of Non-Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	4	5
Number of Special-Needs households to be provided affordable housing units	0	0
Total	4	5

Table 5 – 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	0	0
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	4	5
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	0	0
Total	4	5

Table 6 – Number of Households Supported

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

Hickory is a participating jurisdiction in the Unifour HOME Consortium to help meet the affordable housing needs of its citizens. The HOME Consortium provides down payment assistance to eligible households and provides additional funding to support affordable housing. Households continue to be served through the City's Housing Rehabilitation Loan program. The City's program assisted five low and moderate income households with home repairs.

After many years with little to no new home construction, the last 6 Fiscal years (2019-2024) have been strong in new housing starts with a total of 5,462 which includes both single and multi-family. Also, in the last year or so, 1,083 units have been completed with an additional 1,505 in some stage of construction, 1,392 in the site work phase, and an additional 1,482 at some level of plan review.

The goal will be to continue promoting development on City owned land for affordable housing. In addition, the City Planning Department is working to add items to the City Land Use Development Code to assist with the promotion of affordable housing. Updates could include the availability of affordable housing density bonuses; the reduction in lot widths; a provision that would allow for the division of long narrow lots to accommodate additional housing units; and to permit most types of housing in commercial and office zoning districts. The City approved a reduction in the minimum lot width in the R-4 zoning district, which helps promote infill housing.

Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.

The City plans to continue its efforts to support homeownership for LMI qualified homebuyers on city owned property, as well as plans to support the reconstruction of homes through Habitat for Humanity with CDBG and general fund allocations.

The City plans to continue funding its Housing Rehabilitation program in future action plans. The City will continue to work to increase the number of families served through housing rehabilitation. Its deferred loan program has begun to gain popularity, and the expectation is for it to continue to grow. Since it does not require the owner to make monthly payments, it is easier for homeowners to qualify. In recent years, fewer applicants have been able to meet loan criteria, which led to the creation of the program for households earning less than 50% of the area median income. In 2019, the City moved all rehab housing loans to a deferred program, doing away with a previous version that allowed for amortized loans for homeowners with household incomes between 50% and 80%. The City has implemented an advertising process to increase awareness of these programs to those that most need the assistance. The City has seen an increase in the number of rehab applications. For example, in PY 2019 the City completed two rehabilitations but in 2020 we completed five. For PY2023, they City has completed five rehabilitation projects with an additional four in some stage of the process.

The City will continue applying for funding from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency Urgent Repair Program to fund urgently needed home repairs for households below 50% of State-wide Area Median Income. This program allows the City to help those homeowners most in need of urgent or emergency repairs. Our goal is to complete eight projects each year. In PY 2023, the City completed six URP projects and at least half of the households assisted earn at or below 30% of state-wide area median income.

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the last year or so, 1,083 units have been completed with an additional 1,505 in some stage of construction, 1,392 in the site work phase, and an additional 1,482 at some level of plan review.

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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	546	0
Low-income	48	0
Moderate-income	17	0
Total	611	0

Table 7 – Number of Households Served

Narrative Information

Five (5) families were assisted with rehab funding during the 2023-2024 program year supported by CDBG funds. One hundred percent were low and extremely low income families (under 50% of AMI). In PY 2023, one-hundred percent (100%) were over the age of 65 and all (100%) were Black or African American. The City works to assist those with the greatest financial needs with the funding that is available. The number of families assisted in 2023 were comparable to the number assisted in 2022.

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

Community Development staff continues to serve on the Catawba County Continuum of Care. This organization brings together homeless serving agencies from across the county to determine funding options, raise awareness about important issues, and reduce duplication of services. The City funded the Hickory Soup Kitchen in the amount of \$8,000. This organization provides a hot meal and showers to homeless individuals five days per week and also provides free, fresh groceries to those in need weekly and monthly. The City supported the Family Care Center with a grant of \$6,500 to provide support for a transitional housing program for homeless or potentially homeless families. The City also supported Exodus Homes with an \$8,000 grant. This organization provides a residential treatment program for homeless and previously incarcerated individuals with substance use issues.

Additionally, in the summer of 2019, the City hired a Community Navigator to work specifically with our homeless population. This position is responsible for case management and ensuring that homeless persons reach the proper agency in order to receive services. This coordinated effort by multiple agencies has helped to ensure that our community is reaching as many of our homeless neighbors as possible. In PY 2023, the Community Navigator received 43 referrals for assistance to the homeless. He was able to assist approximately 32 individuals with services needed and has secured housing for 12 individuals to help them transition from homelessness to sheltered.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The City continues to fund Exodus Homes, which provides transitional housing to homeless and previously incarcerated individuals with substance abuse issues. The organization was funded with an \$8,000 grant in 2023-2024. These funds were used to support the salary of the Employment Coordinator who directs the entire vocational training program and assists residents in determining a path to employment. Approximately 92 individuals received assistance during PY 2023. The City also supported the Family Care Center with a grant of \$6,500 to provide support for a transitional housing program for homeless or potentially homeless families. Approximately 101 individuals received assistance through the program during PY 2023.

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 City's grants to public service agencies assist low income individuals by providing free or low-cost services such as healthcare, food assistance and job training. These services can enable families to make their incomes go further and reduce the likelihood of homelessness. The Hickory Soup Kitchen provides meals and food assistance to individuals in need with the City's grant of \$8,000. In PY 2023, they assisted 18,000 individuals. ALFA, with a grant of \$10,000, provided case management services to persons living with HIV and AIDS to help them stay in care, which should reduce healthcare costs and help reduce the risk of becoming homeless. ALFA assisted 42 individuals who are residents in the City of Hickory. The Family Care Center assists families that are homeless or are in danger of becoming homeless with transitional housing and counseling to help provide a path towards self-sufficiency and greater economic opportunity. They were supported with a grant of \$6,500 in PY 2023 and assisted 101 individuals. The City also supported Exodus Homes with an \$8,000 grant. This organization provides a residential treatment program for 92 homeless and previously incarcerated individuals with substance use issues.

The City's Community Navigator works specifically with our homeless population including youth. This position is responsible for case management and ensuring that homeless persons reach the proper agency in order to receive services. This coordinated effort by multiple agencies has helped to ensure that our community is reaching as many of our homeless neighbors as possible. In PY 2023, the Community Navigator received 43 referrals for assistance to the homeless. He has been able to assist approximately 32 individuals with services needed and has secured housing for 12 individuals to help them transition from homelessness to sheltered.

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

Exodus Homes helps homeless individuals with substance use issues make the transition from homelessness to employment and permanent housing. The Family Care Center assists families in need by providing transitional housing program and counseling for those that are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. Also, the City continues to work with the Continuum of Care to coordinate services and work with other service providers to identify gaps in services, and assist agencies in serving as many individuals in need as possible.

Additionally, since 2019, the City has had a Community Navigator to work specifically with its homeless population. This position is responsible for case management and ensuring that homeless persons reach

the proper agency in order to receive services. This coordinated effort by multiple agencies has helped to ensure that our community is reaching as many of our homeless neighbors as possible. The Community Navigator received 43 referrals for assistance to the homeless. He has been able to assist approximately 32 individuals with services needed and has secured housing for 12 individuals to help them transition from homelessness to sheltered.

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

Actions taken to address the needs of public housing

Staff continues to work with Hickory Housing Authority staff on planning issues related to housing authority properties. The Housing Authority received funding to remodel most of their units through the RAD program in early 2020. This will improve the quality of the units as well as the longevity.

Also, the City is still in the process of constructing a multi-modal path for bikes and pedestrians called the Historic Ridgeview Walk. This path will be located in the Ridgeview Community, in close proximity to the majority of Hickory Public Housing Authority units. This will give community members easier and safer access to the downtown area, as well as necessary amenities such as a grocery store. The City is also exploring the idea of other paths and connectors on city owned property adjacent to public housing and the new affordable homes the city has constructed.

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

The City of Hickory owns lots located within residential neighborhoods in the SE and SW sections of the City. The City will continue to investigate potential uses for these properties. The first two of these lots were developed into affordable single-family homes with the use of the Unifour Consortium's HOME Funds and funding from the NCHFA and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments for down payment assistance for prospective homeowners. This program was so successful that they City entered into a partnership with a local developer by selling them lots on which they construct affordable housing with deed restrictions to maintain affordability to future home buyers. In October 2022, these homes were sold to qualified low-moderate-income homeowners. In March of 2023 the City sold 10 additional lots to this developer in order to construct the next phase of affordable housing with deed restrictions to maintain affordability to future home buyers. This allows the City to assist with affordable housing and infill development faster as the developer can construct up to 10 houses at a time. There are approximately six additional lots available for the construction of affordable single-family homes with phase III being planned for late 2024-early 2025.

Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs

The Hickory Housing Authority does not have a troubled housing authority designation.

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)

City of Hickory staff continues to review its ordinances annually to ensure there are not unnecessary barriers to affordable housing. Recent actions taken to address affordable housing needs include rezoning of areas of Hickory to high-density residential (R-4). In order to reduce barriers to multi-family and affordable housing, City ordinances allow multi-family homes or duplexes to be permitted by right within all commercial zoning districts and within all but one residential zoning district. It is the hope of staff and City Council that this helps spur residential multi-family development in the area with the help of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects.

After many years with little to no new home construction, the last 6 Fiscal years (2019-2024) have been strong in new housing starts with a total of 5,462 which includes both single and multi-family. Also, in the last year or so, 1,083 units have been completed with an additional 1,505 in some stage of construction, 1,392 in the site work phase, and an additional 1,482 at some level of plan review.

The City will continue promoting development on City owned land for affordable housing. In addition, the City Planning Department is working to add items to the City Land Use Development Code to assist with the promotion of affordable housing. Updates could include the availability of affordable housing density bonuses; the reduction in lot widths; a provision that would allow for the division of long narrow lots to accommodate additional housing units; and to permit most types of housing in commercial and office zoning districts. The City approved a reduction in the minimum lot width in the R-4 zoning district, which helps promote infill housing.

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

The City continues to use CDBG funding to provide public infrastructure and facility improvements in low and moderate income areas. Infrastructure projects this year consisted of improvements to a Senior Center and Pickleball Courts within the city. These improvements to Westmont Senior Center and Pickleball Courts included painting, new awnings, gutters, and lighting, and by making the Pickleball Court ADA accessible. This project will ultimately benefit 1,225 low/mod individuals and 1,850 overall in a low/mod census tract.

The City of Hickory has partnered with the NCHFA to create approximately 230 Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) apartments in recent years, with another 72 units that are currently under construction. City Planning Staff are continuing to update the Hickory By Choice 2030 plan that will include efforts to support all housing development including affordable housing efforts. Additionally, the City has sold property to and partnered with JRN investments to build 10 new homes as part of the Hickory

Affordable Housing Initiative.

Community Development staff continues to serve on the Catawba County Continuum of Care. This organization brings together homeless serving agencies from across the county to determine funding options, raise awareness about important issues, and reduce duplication of services. City Staff also worked with the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board to establish a career counseling center called Ridgeview Works in an historically minority and low-income census tract. The process has been underway since early 2022. The hope is to give career counseling assistance to those who may not seek it outside of their neighborhood.

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

The City has also taken actions to reduce lead paint hazards. The City follows the lead safe housing rule when conducting housing rehabilitation activities. All of the City's rehabilitation projects are under \$25,000 in hard costs, which means that the City must identify and address lead hazards when paint is disturbed by renovation activities. This includes conducting a lead hazard risk assessment on the home and addressing all of the hazards identified in the report. All lead hazards are addressed at no cost to the homeowner. Contractors must be RRP certified to work on projects involving lead paint.

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

Numerous public service activities are funded each year with the aim of reducing poverty in the City of Hickory. \$8,000 was provided to the Hickory Soup Kitchen to provide meals and food assistance to very low-income families. The families that received assistance were able to stretch their income further to fund additional needs. ALFA received \$10,000 to assist its housing case management program, which provides housing assistance to persons with HIV and AIDS to ensure that they stay in treatment. Exodus Homes received \$8,000 to provide job and transportation coordination services for residents in its substance abuse treatment programs. The goal of the program is to assist residents in finding employment and move towards self-sufficiency. The Family Care Center received \$6,500 for its transitional housing program that assists families living that are homeless or are in danger of becoming homeless. This program also offers counseling and aimed at providing them a pathway to economic self-sufficiency.

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

Staff is always striving to review policies and procedures to ensure that programs are run according to appropriate federal guidelines. Improvements in the previous program year included gaining new knowledge of the environmental review process through the process of additional staff completing Environmental Reviews. In program year 2020, staff attended an online course on managing subrecipients and put some of the learned practices in place in PY 2021. Staff also attended the North Carolina Community Development Association Conference. New staff attended the Basically CDBG online course and the WISER online course. Staff have worked to streamline the continual review of

nonprofit subrecipients. This review includes regular updates on required documentation and regular meetings with nonprofit subrecipients to ensure that they are aware of federal requirements including any procurement and lead based paint regulations and processes that may need to be followed. In addition, staff are currently working to streamline all processes and procedures relating to grant management for CDBG funding.

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

In 2019, the City hired a Community Navigator to work specifically with our homeless population. This position is responsible for case management and ensuring that homeless persons reach the proper agency in order to receive services. This coordinated effort by multiple agencies has helped to ensure that our community is reaching as many of our homeless neighbors as possible. In PY 2023, the Community Navigator received 43 referrals for assistance to the homeless. He has been able to assist approximately 32 individuals with services needed and has secured housing for 12 individuals to help them transition from homelessness to sheltered. The City of Hickory and Habitat for Humanity have also enhanced their partnership to provide reconstructed housing to qualified homebuyers within the City of Hickory. The City has provided additional assistance from CDBG funding to Habitat for Humanity for the reconstruction of a single-family home for an income qualified family as well as supporting the reconstruction of an additional single-family home for an income qualified family from City General Funds. In addition, Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley was awarded funding from the McKenzie Scott Foundation. These funds will hopefully assist them with streamlining the organization and allow them to build more homes during a shorter time frame than they were previously able.

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

City of Hickory Staff continues to advertise and educate citizens regarding their rights to fair housing. Advertisements informing residents of their fair housing rights ran in the Hickory Daily Record, and the Spanish newspaper Hola Noticias. This year's advertising included a Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter marketing campaign that increased the reach of the City's advertising efforts. Staff continues to serve on the Catawba Valley Association of Realtors Equal Housing Opportunity Committee. This committee provides education and outreach to local realtors regarding fair housing laws. City staff was also involved in the Hickory Branch of the NAACP Equity and Inclusion Task Force Housing Committee. This committee is working to achieve equity in the area of housing as well basic inventory and affordability. The Housing Committee hosted the third Foothills Community Housing Fair at the Ridgeview Recreation Center which was in Workshop form and concentrated on the Keys to Becoming a Homeowner. Community Development staff participated in planning and hosting this event.

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

The City of Hickory Community Development Division conducts file audits of all city-initiated CDBG activities to ensure compliance with relevant federal requirements. Staff maintains file checklists for each of the types of activities normally undertaken each year. In addition, all nonprofit subrecipients are monitored by City staff at least once per year to ensure compliance with applicable requirements. Also, the City hires an independent auditor to review its finances each year. This audit includes an in-depth review of CDBG program activities.

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.

All reports are made available for review on the City's website and in the Office of Business Development at City Hall. The City advertises the availability of the report through its legal notice on the website and those placed in the local newspaper. The City also holds a public hearing to receive comments on the report prior to its consideration by the Hickory City Council.

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.

This is the fifth year of the City's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. The overall aspects of the Consolidated Plan for 2020-2024 did not change drastically as the programs seem to be assisting those most in need. The City allocates a good portion of its funding to housing rehabilitation as well as public infrastructure and park projects for low and moderate income areas. The City also allocates funds to increase entrepreneurial activities through its Small Business Loan program and Micro-Enterprise Grant Program. This has allowed the City to support entrepreneurial activities and economic development by assisting businesses in job creation most specifically with the Micro-Enterprise Grant. The City will continue to

support economic and entrepreneurial activities through the course of the next year.

In 2019, the City made the decision to move all rehab housing loans to a deferred program, doing away with a previous version that allowed for amortized loans for homeowners with household incomes between 50% and 80% of area median income. City loans no longer require homeowners to make monthly payments. This makes it easier for homeowners to qualify while reducing the cost burden to households already in need. This has increased the use of the program by low and moderate income homeowners – from a total of two projects completed in 2019, a total of five completed in 2020, six projects completed by the City in 2021, six projects completed by the City in 2022, and five projects completed by the City in 2023. In addition, the City has another four at some stage of the qualification, approval or rehabilitation process for the 2024 program year.

In PY 2021, the City hired a new Rehabilitation Specialist that was responsible for updating our Rehabilitation Standards and has assisted with major improvements to our work write ups we use for bids for our rehabilitation work

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

No

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

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.

This is the fifth year of the City's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. The overall aspects of the Consolidated Plan for 2020-2024 did not change drastically as the programs seem to be assisting those most in need. The City allocates a good portion of its funding to housing rehabilitation as well as public infrastructure and park projects for low and moderate income areas. The City also allocates funds to increase entrepreneurial activities through its Small Business Loan program and Micro-Enterprise Grant Program. This has allowed the City to support entrepreneurial activities and economic development by assisting businesses in job creation most specifically with the Micro-Enterprise Grant. The City will continue to support economic and entrepreneurial activities through the course of the next year.

In 2019, the City made the decision to move all rehab housing loans to a deferred program, doing away with a previous version that allowed for amortized loans for homeowners with household incomes between 50% and 80% of area median income. City loans no longer require homeowners to make monthly payments. This makes it easier for homeowners to qualify while reducing the cost burden to households already in need. This has increased the use of the program by low and moderate income homeowners – from a total of two projects completed in 2019, a total of five completed in 2020, six projects completed by the City in 2021, six projects completed by the City in 2022, and five projects completed by the City in 2023. In addition, the City has another four at some stage of the qualification, approval or rehabilitation process for the 2024 program year.

In PY 2021, the City hired a new Rehabilitation Specialist that was responsible for updating our Rehabilitation Standards and has assisted with major improvements to our work write ups we use for bids for our rehabilitation work

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

No

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

CR-58 – Section 3

Identify the number of individuals assisted and the types of assistance provided

Total Labor Hours	CDBG	HOME	ESG	HOPWA	HTF
Total Number of Activities	0	0	0	0	0
Total Labor Hours					
Total Section 3 Worker Hours					
Total Targeted Section 3 Worker Hours					

Table 8 – Total Labor Hours

Qualitative Efforts - Number of Activities by Program	CDBG	HOME	ESG	HOPWA	HTF
Outreach efforts to generate job applicants who are Public Housing Targeted Workers	0				
Outreach efforts to generate job applicants who are Other Funding Targeted Workers.	0				
Direct, on-the job training (including apprenticeships).	0				
Indirect training such as arranging for, contracting for, or paying tuition for, off-site training.	0				
Technical assistance to help Section 3 workers compete for jobs (e.g., resume assistance, coaching).	0				
Outreach efforts to identify and secure bids from Section 3 business concerns.	2				
Technical assistance to help Section 3 business concerns understand and bid on contracts.	0				
Division of contracts into smaller jobs to facilitate participation by Section 3 business concerns.	0				
Provided or connected residents with assistance in seeking employment including: drafting resumes, preparing for interviews, finding job opportunities, connecting residents to job placement services.	1				
Held one or more job fairs.	1				
Provided or connected residents with supportive services that can provide direct services or referrals.	1				
Provided or connected residents with supportive services that provide one or more of the following: work readiness health screenings, interview clothing, uniforms, test fees, transportation.	1				
Assisted residents with finding child care.	1				
Assisted residents to apply for, or attend community college or a four year educational institution.	1				
Assisted residents to apply for, or attend vocational/technical training.	0				
Assisted residents to obtain financial literacy training and/or coaching.	1				
Bonding assistance, guaranties, or other efforts to support viable bids from Section 3 business concerns.	1				
Provided or connected residents with training on computer use or online technologies.	0				
Promoting the use of a business registry designed to create opportunities for disadvantaged and small businesses.	0				
Outreach, engagement, or referrals with the state one-stop system, as designed in Section 121(e)(2) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.	1				

Other.					
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Table 9 – Qualitative Efforts - Number of Activities by Program

Narrative

There are no registered Section 3 businesses in the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA according to HUD’s Section 3 Opportunity Portal. City Staff understand the importance of increasing employment for those living in Public Housing. City Staff have been working with the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board NC Works to establish a career counseling center called Ridgeview Works in the historically minority and low-income census tract where the Hickory Public Housing Authority is located. This process has been underway since early 2022. The hope is to give career counseling assistance to those who may not seek it outside of their neighborhood and to increase awareness within Public Housing of the opportunities that exist for assistance with writing resumes, interview preparation, and finding job and scholarship opportunities that exist through NC Works. NC Works also provides assistance with work readiness including interview clothing, transportation and child care services so those that do not have access to these services can still have opportunities to find employment.