



**June 5, 2024**

**Amherst HOME Consortium**

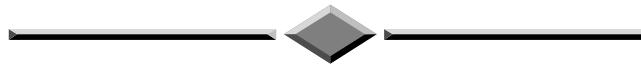
**Draft**

**Consolidated Annual Performance**

**Evaluation Report**

**For the Period**

**April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024**



**Amherst Community Development Block Grant**

and

**HOME Investment Partnership Program**

for

**(Amherst, Cheektowaga and Tonawanda)**

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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.

Through regular entitlement funding, single family owner-occupied home rehabilitation continues to be the main focus of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Grant Programs in the Towns. Many older homes in the first ring suburbs require extensive general maintenance and are occupied by low income and senior households with little disposable income to afford upkeep. Amherst's Housing Rehabilitation Program offers eligible homeowners 0% interest loans for necessary repairs required to provide a safe and secure home. During the 2023 program year, April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024, the Town of Amherst provided \$405,282 in housing rehabilitation loans to eligible owners of twenty-three (23) single family homes. This sum includes \$246,779 in CDBG funds, \$127,707 in HOME funds, and \$30,796 in NYS Affordable Housing Corporation's matching grant funds expended during this period. There was one veteran household assisted utilizing CDBG funds in Amherst. Lead paint hazards were remediated in seven (7) homes and fourteen (14) homes were weatherized in Amherst. During PY23, none of the clients in the first-time homebuyer program have been able to find a house in the Town that they can afford. The housing market has a very low supply of affordable homes making it difficult for clients in the program to find a house. To deal with increased housing values, the Town of Amherst amended its first-time homebuyer program in September of 2023 to not only provide closing cost assistance but to provide up to \$50,000 in down payment and or closing cost assistance. This additional assistance will bridge the gap between the sale price and the mortgage amount, making the home more affordable to low-moderate income first-time homebuyers. The program has a total of \$300,000 to assist 6 homebuyers during the program year of 2024. There are currently six (6) households approved for the program, of which three (3) households are still searching for a home to purchase under the program's value limit, and another nine (9) households are tentatively approved and on the waiting list. If the program is successful, the Town will set aside more HOME funding for future program years.

In Cheektowaga, \$785,091 was spent of HOME funds for ten (10) housing rehabilitation activities. There were two (2) properties that had lead-based paint remediated. In Tonawanda, \$353,167 in HOME funds were spent on housing rehabilitation for seven (7) single-family homes. There were five (5) homes that had lead paint removed.

HOME funds are also used to purchase foreclosed, vacant and deteriorated residences in Amherst for rehabilitation (or demolition/new construction) and eventual resale to an income eligible first-time homebuyer. This activity is accomplished in conjunction with the Town's designated Owner Developer, New Opportunities Community Housing Development Corp. In Program Year 2023, New Opportunities completed their rehab of a vacant property located at 345 Grover Cleveland Highway and HOME funds

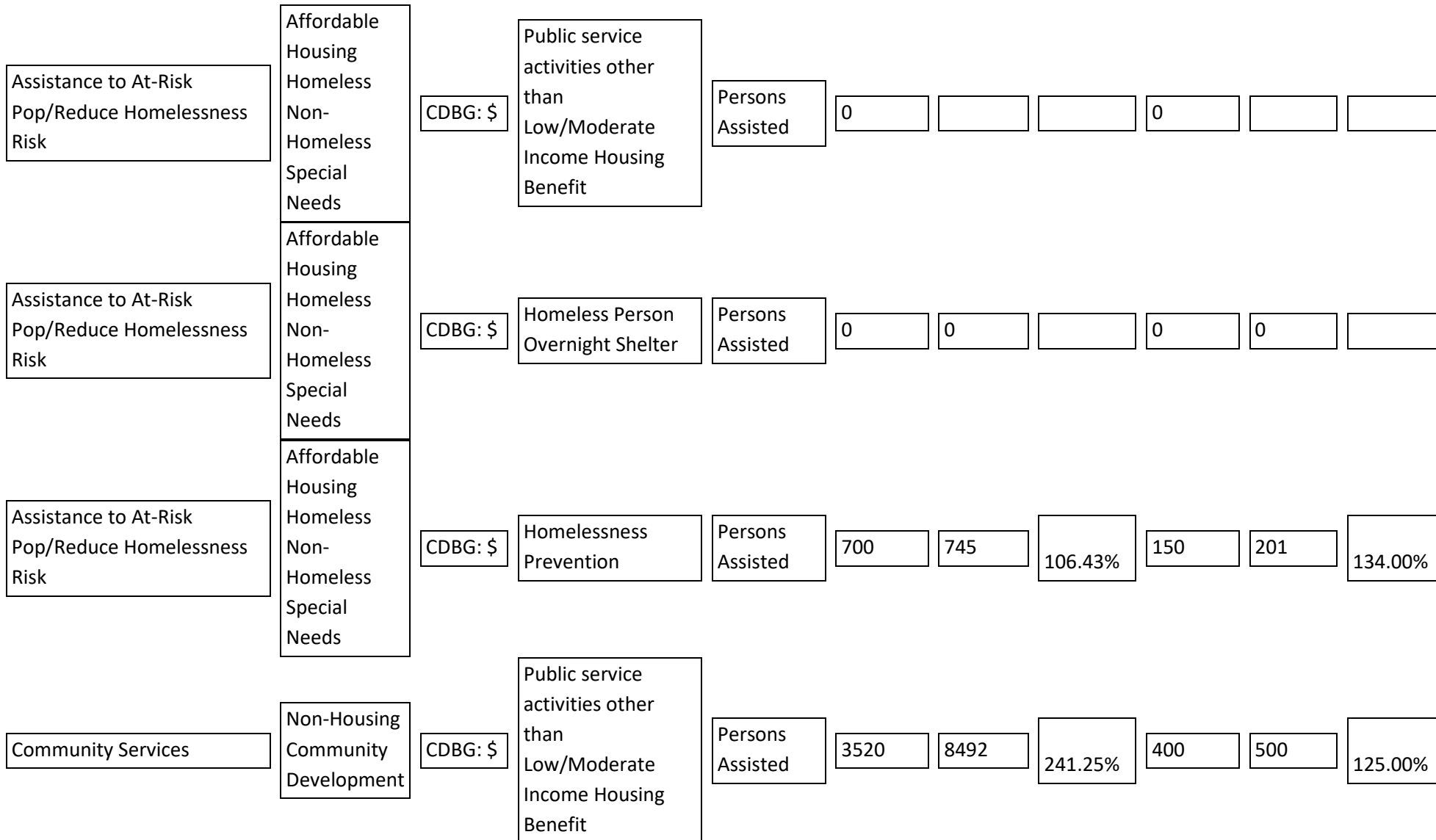
were made available to assist a first-time homebuyer in purchasing it during the 2023 program year (a total of \$85,093 in assistance was provided). As the appraisal of the home was \$226,000, to make it affordable to a first-time homebuyer the Town provided a purchase subsidy in the amount of \$75,000 through a loan forgiven over 15 years. The Town also provided closing costs of \$10,093.00 to the homebuyer via a lien, which will be due in full when the house is sold.

In Cheektowaga, two single family homes finished construction during the 2023 Program Year, one on Peachrow and one on Gardenvale. Two (2) first-time homebuyers purchased these properties with a total of \$123,764 in assistance.

**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
Affirmatively Further Fair Housing	Affordable Housing Public Housing Non-Homeless Special Needs	CDBG: \$	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	500	588	117.60%	150	220	146.67%
Affirmatively Further Fair Housing	Affordable Housing Public Housing Non-Homeless Special Needs	CDBG: \$	Public service activities for Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Households Assisted		0				



Economic Development/Neighborhood Improvement	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Facade treatment/business building rehabilitation	Business	2	0	0.00%			
Economic Development/Neighborhood Improvement	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Jobs created/retained	Jobs	2	0	0.00%			
Historic Preservation/Elimination of Slum & Blight	Preservation	CDBG: \$	Facade treatment/business building rehabilitation	Business	1	1	100.00%	1	1	100.00%
Improve Housing Stock	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Rental units rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	2	8	400.00%	1	0	0.00%
Improve Housing Stock	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	100	126	126.00%	25	40	160.00%
Improve Housing Stock	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$	Other	Other	6	0	0.00%			
Promote Affordable Homeownership	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$170090	Homeowner Housing Added	Household Housing Unit	5	4	80.00%	1	2	200.00%
Promote Affordable Homeownership	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$ / HOME: \$170090	Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers	Households Assisted	10	6	60.00%	4	0	0.00%

Public Facilities and Infrastructure	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG: \$	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	2000	11585	579.25%	100	6410	6,410.00%
Weatherization Assistance	Affordable Housing	CDBG: \$	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	50	46	92.00%	10	10	100.00%

**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.**

CDBG Entitlement (EN) funds are also applied to many community services, which includes fair housing/discrimination assistance, housing counseling, domestic violence counseling and support, and Meals on Wheels at the Senior Center. In 2023, one hundred and eleven (111) low and moderate income people were assisted with homebuyer counseling through Belmont Housing Resources. Ten (10) households were assisted in homeownership counseling and foreclosure prevention through the Buffalo Urban League. Funding for Housing Opportunities Made Equal also continued in 2023 with two hundred twenty (220) residents assisted with fair housing and discrimination concerns. There were 80 households assisted through the Family Justice Center which has a satellite office in Amherst. Approximately 500 residents of Amherst received Meals on Wheels through the Senior Center. Through Supportive Services, which provides weatherization services to low-moderate income families, there was a total of ten (10) households were assisted. CDBG Entitlement (EN) and CDBG COVID funds were also applied to public infrastructure projects in Program Year 2023. Approximately \$122,365.00 in CDBG EN funds were expended for sewer relining on Niagara Falls Boulevard between Maple Road and Sheridan Drive (Opportunity Zone Target Area) and the replacement and rebuilding of man-hole covers as part of the sewer rehabilitation project in Eggertsville (Target Area). Augusta Avenue also received a complete sidewalk replacement with \$34,635 in CDBG EN funding. The Northwest Amherst Community Center (NWACC) also began operations in PY2023 with the initial lease payment of \$377,570 and \$175,143 for technology and interior space outfitting for public programming support. NWACC project costs were funded through the CDBG-COVID funding and the community center serves the low-to-moderate income neighborhood located in Northwest Amherst. Lastly, a number of facility improvements were completed for the Amherst Senior Center with CDBG-COVID funding in Program Year 2023, including COVID-reducing bathroom fixtures and Meals on Wheels kitchen improvements to better serve the expanded demand for the center and its meal services. CDBG COVID funding was also utilized to continue a Meals on Wheels chef position to support the expanded demand post-COVID for meal services to seniors (approximately 500 seniors served), as well as a Senior Services social worker to address the increasing demand for seniors' needs.



## 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	1,573	24
Black or African American	350	4
Asian	81	0
American Indian or American Native	10	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,014</b>	<b>28</b>
Hispanic	15	0
Not Hispanic	2,075	28

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

### Narrative

The 2022 American Communities Survey (ACS) data – 5 Year Estimates illustrate the demographics of the town showing the population as predominately White or Caucasian, (78.5%), 5.7% African American and 9.6% Asian. The remainder of residents are either another race or identify as more than one race. Amherst’s CDBG-funded programs that include after school, housing counseling and fair housing services assist residents and households town-wide with racial and ethnic concentrations similar to the town as a whole. Housing Rehabilitation and First-time Homebuyer Programs tend to concentrate in the target area neighborhoods, where housing stock is older and less expensive, and a majority of residents are low to moderate income. These target area neighborhoods have a demographic breakdown of 65% White/Caucasian, 12% Asian, 15% African American, and 7% of the population identifies as more than one race (ACS 2019 – 5yr).

## 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	797,771	1,484,980
HOME	public - federal	2,150,668	1,648,898
Other	public - federal	1,526,012	809,654

**Table 3 - Resources Made Available**

### Narrative

During the program year, CDBG funds were expended on community activities (subrecipients) and housing rehabilitation. HOME funds, distributed between Amherst, Cheektowaga and Tonawanda, were primarily used for homeowner housing rehabilitation and acquisition-rehabilitation/new construction-resale activities. The chart above source data comes from PR01 and PR07.

### Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
Egbertsville	40	31	
Opportunity Zone - Census Tract 92	20	0	
Town Wide	40	69	Town Wide

**Table 4 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments**

### Narrative

The main target area of the Town’s community development funding is Egbertsville. Both the lowest-income households and the most affordable housing is in Egbertsville. The median household income and median home value in Egbertsville is \$63,061 and \$158,100 respectively (ACS 2022 – 5yr). In the Opportunity Zone neighborhood, the median household income and median home value is \$65,756 and \$175,500 respectively (ACS 2022-5yr). For comparison, the median household income and median home value town-wide is \$87,280 and \$262,800 respectively (ACS 2022– 5yr). Therefore, a majority of targeted (non Town-wide) funds for community development are directed to Egbertsville, to help stabilize the neighborhoods; assist homebuyers with purchasing a home; rehabilitating dilapidated/vacant housing; and acquiring, rehabilitating and reselling single-family homes. While the goals for geographic distribution prioritize Egbertsville, the actual disbursement of funding to Egbertsville and the Opportunity Zone is dependent upon the LMI clientele that seek our programming during a given Program Year. In many cases, such as with the Homeowner Rehab Program (where the bulk of our program funding is spent), potential beneficiaries may apply to the program but not qualify under HUD income limits. This is the reason that the actual allocations geographic distribution can vary quite considerable from the geographic distribution goals, as it depends upon who is seeking the programming, where they live, and whether or not they qualify.

## 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 HOME Consortium matched Federal resources with State funds for the housing rehabilitation program, which is reflected in the HOME Match table.

<b>Fiscal Year Summary – HOME Match 2023-10/1/22-9/30/23</b>	
1. Excess match from prior Federal fiscal year	7,259,719
2. Match contributed during current Federal fiscal year	88,384
3. Total match available for current Federal fiscal year (Line 1 plus Line 2)	7,348,103
4. Match liability for current Federal fiscal year	255,857
5. Excess match carried over to next Federal fiscal year (Line 3 minus Line 4)	7,092,246

**Table 5 – Fiscal Year Summary - HOME Match Report**

Match Contribution for the Federal Fiscal Year 2023								
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
144 Springville Avenue, Amherst	05/05/2023	563	0	0	0	0	0	563
15 Rowland Avenue, Cheektowag a	03/28/2023	18,270	0	0	0	0	0	18,270
1775 Eggert Road, Amherst	05/31/2023	8,617	0	0	0	0	0	8,617
178 Buckeye Road, Amherst	10/11/2022	15,359	0	0	0	0	0	15,359
202 Clover Place, Cheektowag a	03/02/2023	12,610	0	0	0	0	0	12,610
30 Dennis Lane, Cheektowag a	11/01/2022	30,552	0	0	0	0	0	30,552

Match Contribution for the Federal Fiscal Year 2023								
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
563 Niagara Falls Boulevard, Amherst	08/21/2023	2,413	0	0	0	0	0	2,413

Table 6 – 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 \$
2,216,257	1,139,748	661,099	0	2,694,906

Table 7 – Program Income

<b>Minority Business Enterprises and Women Business Enterprises – Indicate the number and dollar value of contracts for HOME projects completed during the reporting period</b>						
	Total	Minority Business Enterprises				White Non-Hispanic
		Alaskan Native or American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
<b>Contracts</b>						
Dollar Amount	804,512	0	0	0	0	804,512
Number	40	0	0	0	0	40
<b>Sub-Contracts</b>						
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dollar Amount	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	Women Business Enterprises	Male			
<b>Contracts</b>						
Dollar Amount	804,512	45,965	758,547			
Number	40	2	38			
<b>Sub-Contracts</b>						
Number	0	0	0			
Dollar Amount	0	0	0			

**Table 8 - Minority Business and Women Business Enterprises**

<b>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</b>						
	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 9 – Minority Owners of Rental Property**

<b>Relocation and Real Property Acquisition</b> – 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 10 – 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	15	0
Number of Non-Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	200	11
Number of Special-Needs households to be provided affordable housing units	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>11</b>

Table 11 – Number of Households

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of households supported through Rental Assistance	10	0
Number of households supported through The Production of New Units	2	2
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	60	40
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>42</b>

Table 12 – Number of Households Supported

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

The Town of Amherst cannot provide direct assistance to homeless or provide affordable housing for the homeless using HUD funding. Rental and homeless assistance is provided through Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Inc. According to the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) from Belmont, the number of households provided rental assistance was met for the program year. Of the 11 low income households assisted, the racial/ethnic composition was 5 Caucasian; and 6 African-American. During the 2022 Program Year, Amherst completed rehab on 345 Grover Cleveland and sold



the property in the 2023 Program Year. In addition, 23 households were assisted with interest free deferred loans that improved their housing and allowed them to live in safe and secure homes. In FY2023 the Town utilized 2020, 2021, and 2022 HOME funds for a 93 unit affordable housing development in the Village of Williamsville. The development was funded with additional HOME ARP funding to account for gap financing required as a result of the increase in project costs. The project is ultimately filling a housing need with a 7.46% capture rate and will provide permanent supportive housing in a walkable neighborhood. Construction began in the 2023 Program Year.

The Town of Cheektowaga completed construction on 2 new single-family homes, 36 Peachrow and 89 Gardenvale, that were sold to income eligible first-time homebuyers. Finally, during the 2023 program year, 10 single family homes were rehabilitated with HOME funds through our Homeowner Rehabilitation Program.

The Town of Tonawanda utilized HOME funds to rehabilitate seven (7) owner-occupied homes using HOME funds. Please note: The stats presented here differ slightly from the PR03 and PR23 reports because the figures in those reports depend on when those reports were generated in IDIS and may calculate projects that were technically complete after the program year ended.

**Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.**

The Town of Amherst doesn't receive Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program Funds. Rental and homelessness assistance to low income households will continue via Belmont, as appropriate institutional structures and systems are in place to assist Town residents. The Town will also continue assistance with CDBG funding to aid victims of domestic violence who are at risk of homelessness.

**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.**

<b>Number of Households Served</b>	<b>CDBG Actual</b>	<b>HOME Actual</b>
Extremely Low-income	4	2
Low-income	25	10
Moderate-income	21	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>28</b>

**Table 13 – Number of Households Served**

**Narrative Information**

CDBG funds were applied to many community services, including fair housing/discrimination assistance, housing counseling, meals on wheels, and domestic violence assistance. CDBG funds assisted 14 households in rehabilitating their homes. A total of six (6) homebuyer workshops were held. One hundred twenty (120) households were assisted in homeownership counseling and foreclosure

prevention overall. Approximately five hundred (500) seniors were assisted in affordable meal service through Amherst Meals on Wheels. Funds were provided to support the Family Justice Center's work with domestic violence victims, eighty (80) persons were assisted. Funds were also made available for Supportive Services which provided weatherization services to ten (10) households. No HOME funds were utilized in PY23 due to a lack of inventory of affordable homes on the market for low-income first-time homebuyers. However, nine (9) homeowners were assisted with rehabilitating their homes with HOME funds.

## **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 Town of Amherst does not typically receive any direct homelessness assistance (i.e. Emergency Solutions Grant program funding) but relies on assistance through the Homeless Alliance of WNY and Belmont Housing Resources for WNY's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program and emergency housing assistance. The Homeless Alliance of WNY (HAWNY) is the umbrella organization that coordinates funding, services and collaboration among area agencies and services for the homeless. HAWNY convenes regular meetings between the various agencies and advises the Town on homeless issues and related outreach efforts. Erie County Social Services and the Homeless Alliance have contracted with some Amherst area motels to provide emergency shelter for several people identified as homeless in the Town. Hearts for the Homeless emergency shelter continues to operate a mobile shelter. The mobile shelter travels throughout the Towns and the City of Buffalo to find homeless people on the street and provide food and clothing. At that time, the homeless are assessed as to their needs and referred to proper agencies. Compass House continues to enable youth to move to permanent housing and defray rent and utility arrears to prevent eviction and termination. The Salvation Army also covers these same costs for adults who find themselves in similar situations. Youth homelessness is a topic being addressed by agencies in the City of Buffalo and first ring suburbs. Homeless youth have different needs than adults, and different ways of accessing services. There are few programs in place to assist youth homelessness, but it is a topic being explored. The police departments and administrators of the emergency rooms of Kenmore Mercy Hospital in Tonawanda, St. Joseph's Hospital in Cheektowaga and Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital in Amherst all work together to identify the homeless, assess their needs, and refer them to the appropriate agency. The Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan goals address assisting frail elderly and those at risk of homelessness, including domestic violence victims. In PY 2022 the Consortium published the HOME-ARP Allocation plan of \$3.4M special appropriation funding to address homelessness. The Consortium incorporated the HOME-ARP allocation plan projects into the Consolidated and PY2023 Annual Action Plans.

### **Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons**

Law enforcement is available to assist victims of domestic violence in emergency situations through the Town of Amherst Police Department Family Offense Squad. In addition, the Family Justice Center assists in placement of homeless persons/families escaping domestic violence situations.

**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 Towns have contracted for the provision of housing counseling activities to homebuyers, homeowners and renters. The counseling educates residents on their personal responsibilities in managing their financial affairs to maintain a healthy credit rating as well as their opportunities to improve their own financial circumstances. Housing counseling services are provided through Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Inc. and Buffalo Urban League. Belmont primarily provided credit and mortgage default counseling and the Urban League provides legal assistance for foreclosure prevention and loan modification for homeowners at risk of losing their homes through job loss, costly medical bills, etc.

**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**

Low and moderate income households sometimes find themselves in a situation where they “lose ground” in terms of their housing situation. The Town has developed programs that assist existing low and moderate income residents so that they can maintain their current residential assets. This included homeowner rehabilitation assistance and weatherization assistance for owners. CDBG funds have provided support through the Family Justice Center for persons/families re-establishing themselves after the disruption of domestic violence.

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

### **Actions taken to address the needs of public housing**

There is no public housing in the Town of Amherst. However, there are four large affordable (subsidized) family housing complexes in the Town that have rental assistance through project specific vouchers and many individual rental units that are Housing Choice Voucher-approved. The Town is also host to nine subsidized senior housing complexes that offer affordable options to the Town's aging population. The Town of Amherst has been lead community in the Erie County Public Housing Authority Consortium since the Consortium's inception in the late 1970's, and oversees the financial accountability of the PHA Consortium, administered by Belmont.

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

The Town's developer and the Town conducts outreach to public housing units as part of the listing process of acquisition-rehab-resale homes, notifying residents for the opportunity to purchase an affordable home, as well as opportunities for other subsidies and homebuyer workshops.

### **Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs**

Although Amherst does not have any public housing, it is lead agency in the Erie County PHA Consortium, with Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Inc. administering the program. The Town has monitored Belmont's public housing files and program data, and has worked with Belmont and HUD to correct any deficiencies with recordkeeping or program operation that may come up. In the past four years, the Town has worked closely with Belmont on revisions to their internal procedures regarding housing quality issues, tenant complaints and inspections. Belmont has since added staff training opportunities, additional oversight by inspections supervisors, and provided on-going review of inspectors' performance. After losing some ground from the Pandemic, Belmont is back on track and Tenant complaints are now reduced and moving towards a more prompt resolution.

## **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)**

The Town has not identified local fees or costs imposed on new residential development that add significantly to the cost of housing construction. Although Western New York in the past has offered some of the most reasonable real estate prices in the US, high property taxes in New York State constitute a major portion of housing costs for new homeowners. Unfortunately, the past few years have seen home prices in Western New York significantly increase due to shrinking inventory post-COVID. This has hurt many low-income first-time homebuyers who are looking for affordable housing. To combat this the Town of Amherst and Tonawanda have increased the home sale price and mortgage limit amount in the First-Time Homebuyer Program to better assist homebuyers. In addition, in PY2023 the Town of Amherst also added the ability for program qualified homebuyers to receive up to \$50,000 in down payment and closing cost assistance in order to ensure homebuyers won't be "over-mortgaged" in Amherst's difficult housing market. The Town takes a proactive role in assuring that sponsoring agencies for new community residences (i.e. group homes) for special populations meet with neighborhood residents and address any questions they may have regarding the operation of the new facility in the community. While there is occasional opposition on the part of residents, sponsoring agencies are able to proceed with their plans with the knowledge that any outstanding concerns have been addressed. The Town is also able to use this opportunity to address any other neighborhood concerns residents may have. There are several new initiatives the Town has undertaken to remove barriers to affordable housing development in the Town, including: providing guidance and direct assistance to developers for site selection, HUD-funded incentive programs, and other affordable housing resources available in WNY; revising zoning in single-family zoning districts to accommodate accessory dwelling units; implementing mixed-use zoning districts that incorporate residential options above first-floor commercial and office space; working with the Amherst Industrial Development Agency to develop a Workforce Housing Incentive Policy aimed at 80% AMI and below; and advocating for Payment-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes approvals with school districts to maintain and expand critical affordable housing assets.

Most recently the Town has engaged in planning for redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall with the Town intent on taking the properties via Eminent Domain. The Mall site is falling victim to the trends facing most outdated shopping malls in America and has become a blight on the larger neighborhood. As part of redevelopment plans, the Town has removed barriers to development, such as preparing a Generic Environmental Impact Statement, and outlined goals for significant incorporation of new affordable housing as part of the upcoming RFP to designate development partners.

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

The Town's housing rehabilitation loan program has funds available for undertaking appropriate access improvements for homeowners. These may include installing access ramps, widening interior doorways, restructuring for adaptive bathrooms and kitchen areas. The Town also offers a \$5,000 Veterans Grant to eligible homeowner's for necessary housing repairs. This grant is forgiven in a period of 5 years if they continue to occupy their residence.

Town community development staff can provide information to prospective homeowners on mortgage products that are available specifically to persons with disabilities. Staff also coordinates with the Town's Committee on Disabilities, Veterans Committee to access and provide information to residents regarding rights and services.

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

The Community Development program provides all applicants for housing rehabilitation loans a copy of Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home. This brochure provides information on the danger of lead paint hazards and ways to minimize risk associated with them. Homeowners and first-time homebuyers are advised of the availability of testing for elevated levels of lead in the blood of children. As far as we know, no children in participating households have tested positive for elevated blood lead levels. All residential properties involved in CDBG and HOME assisted programs are inspected for lead paint hazards. Hazards such as exterior paint failure are typically addressed by installing siding. Friction sources of lead paint dust, such as double hung windows, are typically addressed by installing replacement windows. During the 2023 Program Year, seven (7) single family homes had lead-based paint remediated.

The Town continued to administer federal regulations on lead paint hazards. Together with the Towns of Cheektowaga and Tonawanda, Amherst has undertaken an assessment of existing housing programs funded with CDBG and HOME funds to implement necessary changes in policies and procedures. All contractors participating in the Towns' rehabilitation loan programs have been advised of the federal regulations and if lead paint is found to be present in a home, hired contractors are required to be certified for lead removal and remediation in housing rehabilitation projects through Community Development. This was done to ensure the availability of qualified, trained and competitive rehabilitation contractors when lead paint is present. Lead risk assessment and clearance testing is required on rehabilitation projects where paint may be disturbed; an environmental firm is contracted (through an RFP process) to provide these services at the most competitive cost. Failed clearance tests require the contractor to go back and correct the situation prior to conducting another clearance test and getting their final payment.

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

The Town of Amherst works with Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Inc. and the Buffalo Urban League to provide counseling for those persons that are struggling with credit and housing issues. Belmont provides assistance with credit counseling, reverse mortgages and administers the Housing Choice Voucher (section 8) and VASH rental assistance programs for those in need. The Buffalo Urban League offers assistance in foreclosure counseling as well as the legal assistance needed in many cases. Local free or reduced-cost legal agencies such as Western New York Law Center, Legal Aid of Buffalo, and Neighborhood Legal Services also provide legal counseling and representation.

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

It is important for public (municipal), non-profit and for-profit entities to work together to provide resources efficiently and effectively to residents, especially low-income residents. Community Development staff has established working relationships with the Homeless Alliance of WNY and the YWCA. Relationships continue with Aspire, People Inc., Heritage Christian Services, Erie County Departments of Social Services and Senior Services, Western New York Independent Living and others that provide housing and services to special populations. In addition, Community Development works closely with other departments and committees in the Town including Youth & Recreation Department, Building Department, Assessors and Legal Department, Amherst Committee on Disabilities, to ensure comprehensive municipal services to residents. The Town also acts as lead PHA for the Erie County PHA consortium and contracts in this capacity with Belmont for the day-to-day managements of the Housing Choice Voucher tenant-based rent subsidy program. The Town of Cheektowaga utilizes the University District Community Development Association, Inc. for as its CHDO developer for special projects using HOME funds.

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

The Town provides CDBG funding to Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Buffalo Urban League, Family Justice Center, Supportive Services, and Meals on Wheels for services to residents. Many of these organizations provide additional housing assistance and coordination services beyond those funded by Amherst, typically assisting clients with a myriad of support needs. Through the coordination with these agencies and other community groups and agencies, Community Development staff keep abreast of issues and challenges facing residents and properties in the Town.

### **Identify actions taken to overcome the effects of any impediments identified in the jurisdiction's analysis of impediments to fair housing choice. 91.520(a)**

The most recent Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) was published in December 2019. A review of the Town of Amherst's zoning ordinance indicated that there are some elements which may



pose moderate risks of causing impediments to fair housing choice. These risks include a vague definition and potential barriers to construction of group homes, as well as lack of “reasonable accommodation” provisions for persons with disabilities. There is a disparity between household income growth and housing costs, and members of protected classes are more likely to be affected. That is, individuals with disabilities, racial minorities and renters are less likely to be able to afford housing as home values rise. Due to inadequate public transit, there may be limited options for lower income households. Lower density pattern of development and limitations on public transportation infrastructure limits development of affordable housing, and leads to concentrations of lower income minorities in certain neighborhoods.

Some steps the Consortium could take to enhance fair housing choice would be to incentivize affordable housing outside of Racial/Ethnic Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAPs), require more than the minimum Section 504 thresholds, and require that all HOME-assisted units comply with visitability design standards. The region is diversifying; in the future, addressing R/ECAPs will become increasingly important. In the last 4 years, the Town has made some strides in addressing the impediments and goals outlined in the AI. For example, both recent HOME-assisted multifamily projects, Alberta Place Apartments and Blocher Apartments, meet visitability standards and have a % of units available for certain disabilities (i.e. blind, deaf). In addition, Amherst’s Community Development staff collaborated with the Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA) on tailoring AIDA incentives into a new Workforce Housing Policy aimed market-rate multifamily housing projects that lease 10%-20% of units for households at 80% Area Median Income or lower for 15 years. This new AIDA Program supports the AI’s recommendation to “incorporate incentives in market-rate projects to create affordable units”, and also “increase opportunities in higher-cost/higher-opportunity neighborhoods”. To date the program has created 36 units that are currently under construction.

Going forward, the Town will continue to contract with Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc. (HOME) for fair housing counseling, tenant/landlord trainings, and legal workshops/trainings. Recent trainings have included tenant rights surrounding service and support animals, and landlord training for homeowners building accessory dwelling units.

The Towns’ have also been working to improve outreach and communications to underrepresented populations or those historically discriminated against. For example, the Towns’ Citizen Participation Plan now mandates additional accommodations for persons with disabilities and the ACT Consortium Plan also emphasizes outreach to minorities, low-income persons, and persons with disabilities. Information is made available in alternative formats and for those who need language assistance. The Town of Amherst has built a strong relationship with the Committee on Disabilities, which offers assistance and guides staff on tailoring programming to be more inclusive. As such, housing programs all offer assistance with accessibility requirements, when applied for.

## **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 Town of Amherst monitors its Consortium subrecipients (Towns of Cheektowaga and Tonawanda), CDBG subrecipients, Public Housing Authority Administrator, and Housing Development Agencies according to HOME and CDBG regulations. The Town uses a combination of remote assessment/assistance and annual on-site review to conduct performance evaluations for each entity. Because monitoring of activities is conducted on an ongoing basis, there have been no significant issues that need to be resolved. Rather, community development staff works with program participants to “fine-tune” procedures to facilitate improvements in communication, coordination and management. When programs provide opportunities for contractor hiring, the Town and its subrecipients make every effort to recruit minority businesses to submit proposals/bids. The Town’s Requests for Proposals are advertised in minority newspapers through the three minority newspapers in the area, the Panorama Hispano, The Buffalo Criterion and The Challenger. When the Town has a home for sale or a construction project proposed, sale ads, RFPs and bid packages are also advertised in the minority newspapers.

## **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 Town holds two public hearings on its housing and community development programs during each program year to receive public input on the Annual Action Plans and how the federal funds should be allocated. They are held as part of regularly scheduled Town Board meetings and thus have a certain “captive audience” that might not otherwise attend a separate meeting covering just the community development programs. Public hearing notices are published in the Town’s official newspaper, the Amherst Bee, as a display and legal advertisement.

The Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) report was released for a 15-day public comment period beginning on June 5th, 2024. The CAPER is made available initially to the public in draft form in all local libraries, the Village Clerk’s Office, the Town Clerk’s Office, and the Planning Department for review and comment. A display advertisement is placed in the Amherst Bee advising the public of the availability of the document for public review with the narrative portion of the CAPER posted on the Town’s website at [www.amherst.ny.us/community](http://www.amherst.ny.us/community). The completed CAPER, will be submitted to HUD by June 30th, within 90 days after the start of the Towns’ current program year (April 1st).

## **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.**

As HOME funds have been more and more difficult to spend with the Towns' increasing home values, the Town priorities have shifted to utilizing HOME funds to foster more affordable rental housing, while CDBG funding focuses on maintenance of existing single-family housing stock, programming and public infrastructure to support low-and-moderate income persons. The HOME Acquisition-Rehab-Resale Program, which creates one single-family home for sale to a low-to-moderate income first-time homebuyer per program year has been increasingly difficult to accomplish in the current construction market and lending rates with HUD Subsidy Limits. Because of this the Town has shifted more funding towards the HOME Rental Subsidy Program which supports the creation of multi-family rental housing with other subsidies, such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits or Tax-Exempt Bonds.

The Town of Cheektowaga is able in certain sections of Town to acquire at least one property through the HOME program to rehabilitate or construct a single-family home. The Acquisition-Rehab-Resale Program allows a property to be returned to the tax rolls, acquired by a first-time low-moderate income household. In some cases, vacant land is purchased and a new home is constructed and sold to an eligible low-income family by the Town of Cheektowaga.

The Town of Amherst has begun funding more expensive infrastructure projects, recently. There is a high-need for the replacement and repair of sanitary sewers and waterlines in target areas, and mobility improvements to area streets and sidewalks. During this program year, the Town expended \$122,258.82 in CDBG funding to install new sewer linings and man hole covers in the Eggertsville and Opportunity Zone Target Areas. The Town also expended \$34,635 in CDBG funding for sidewalk replacement on Augusta Avenue in the Eggertsville Target Area; and \$552,714.04 of CDBG-CV funding for the establishment of the new Northwest Amherst Community Center serving the Town's low-moderated income area in Northwest Amherst. Also, the Village of Williamsville utilized PY 2023 CDBG funds to rehab the Historic Section House building with the intention to open it for public use at the adjacent South Long Park.

In the coming years the programs will also address the increasing needs of the post-Covid housing market and growing senior population through the housing rehabilitation program, and incentives to generate additional affordable units. The goal is to assist seniors to remain in their homes, by addressing maintenance and accessibility issues, and allowing them to avoid or postpone moving to expensive assisted living facilities.

**Does this Jurisdiction have any open Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) grants? No**

## **CR-50 - HOME 24 CFR 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 24 CFR §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.

There is only one housing complex subject to periodic inspections for 3 HOME-Assisted Units at this time, Belmont Housing's Alberta Place Apartments. HOME Housing Quality Standards inspections are required for the complex every 3 years and the complex completed their Certificate of Occupancy and Rent-up during the 2021 Program Year, meaning the units will be due for inspection in PY 2024.

### **Provide an assessment of the jurisdiction's affirmative marketing actions for HOME units. 24 CFR 91.520(e) and 24 CFR 92.351(a)**

Amherst's HOME Rental Subsidy Program requires the developer to provide an Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan for the rent-up of available HOME-units. A preliminary plan is required to be submitted to Amherst upon submittal of the development proposal and the final Marketing Plan (approved by NYS Homes and Community Renewal's NYS Fair and Equitable Housing Office) must be submitted at final underwriting and incorporated into the HOME Agreement. The Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan takes into account households least likely to apply in a market area, households with Limited English Proficiency, as well as the best marketing tools to use, such as print, radio, community outreach, etc. Such plans typically outline special news releases to local and minority newspapers, notifications on Amherst and Belmont's websites, and mailing of informational flyers to HOME assisted subsidized housing units and apartment complexes.

### **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**

HOME program income is received from the return of the loans repaid from the housing rehabilitation and homebuyer assistance programs. These funds are returned as general Program Income and redistributed into existing programming budgets. The amount of HOME Program Income funds received in Program Year 2023 was \$1,059,936.10. HOME Program Income is used on housing rehabilitation activities, first-time homebuyer activities, and the HOME Rental Subsidy program. Utilizing both Program Income and Entitlement HOME funds,

the HOME Consortium assisted two (2) first-time homebuyers with closing costs, and rehabilitated twenty-six (26) single family homes.

**Describe other actions taken to foster and maintain affordable housing. 24 CFR 91.220(k) (STATES ONLY: Including the coordination of LIHTC with the development of affordable housing). 24 CFR 91.320(j)**

The Town of Amherst fosters the creation of affordable housing and housing-type options through other initiatives as well, including providing an affordable housing advocate on staff and direct assistance with for HUD-funded incentive programs; rezoning single-family zoning districts to accommodate accessory dwelling units and complementary multifamily housing options; implementing regulatory reforms that incorporate residential options above first-floor commercial and office space; working with the Amherst Industrial Development Agency to develop a Workforce Housing Incentive Policy aimed at 80% AMI and below; and advocating for Payment-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes approvals with school districts to maintain and expand critical affordable housing assets.

### CR-58 – Section 3

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

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

**Table 14 – Total Labor Hours**

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

**Table 15 – Qualitative Efforts - Number of Activities by Program**