

City of Erie, PA HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

Consultation

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

See Appendix A for all Stakeholder Consultation materials. Stakeholder comments received throughout these various sessions and individual meetings are summarized below and are referenced appropriately throughout the Needs Assessment & Gaps Analysis.

The City of Erie engaged in an extensive stakeholder consultation process during June 2022. During this time, the City engaged with a variety of shelter and service providers serving each of the qualifying populations; the Continuum of Care Home Team; Erie County Department of Human Services, including the Office of Mental Health; victim service providers; the Housing Authority of the City of Erie; members of City Council; the Mayor’s office; and organizations addressing fair housing and Civil Rights in the City.

Each of the focus group sessions focused on identifying the Qualifying Populations and their unmet housing and service needs. A brief Power Point presentation on the HOME-ARP program was presented followed by questions meant to engage participants in identifying unmet needs among the qualifying populations they served.

The City also issued an online survey targeted to service providers, and conducted a survey of people with lived experience.

List the organizations consulted:

Focus Group Topic/ Agency	Date of Session	Method of Consultation	Number of Participants	Type of Agency(ies)/Org
Continuum of Care	June 28, 2022 1:00 p.m.	Virtual Interview	5	Continuum of Care Public Agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations
Shelter Providers	June 28, 2022 3:00 p.m.	Virtual Interview	5	Providers serving the homeless, victims of domestic violence, veterans’ groups Public Agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations

Focus Group Topic/ Agency	Date of Session	Method of Consultation	Number of Participants	Type of Agency(ies)/Org
Service Providers	June 29, 2022 1:00	Virtual Interview	16	Providers serving the homeless, victims of domestic violence, veterans' groups Public or private agencies that address the needs of persons with disabilities Public Agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations
Public Housing Authority/Affordable Housing Developers	June 30, 2022 11:00	Virtual Interview	5	Public Housing Authority Public or private agencies that address the needs of persons with disabilities Providers serving the homeless, victims of domestic violence
Disability/Civil Rights Advocates	June 29, 2022 3:00	Virtual Interview	1	Providers serving the homeless, victims of domestic violence, veterans' groups Public Agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations
Victims Service Providers	August 2, 2022 2:00	Virtual Interview	2	Providers serving the homeless, victims of domestic violence
Service Providers	August 4, 2022 1:00 p.m.	Virtual Interview	3	Providers serving the homeless, victims of domestic violence Public or private agencies that address the needs of persons with disabilities Public Agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations

Focus Group Topic/ Agency	Date of Session	Method of Consultation	Number of Participants	Type of Agency(ies)/Org

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

All stakeholders identified a need for more affordable rental housing units as well as permanent supportive housing units and other low-barrier housing options. According to the Housing Authority, rents are not high in the City; however, there is a general lack of quality inventory. Continuum of Care providers indicated a growing number of landlords unwilling to accept rental assistance payments and unwilling to lease to special needs populations with criminal, poor credit and poor rental histories. The market is saturated with rental assistance, landlords less willing to accept assistance. A landlord survey conducted separately from this outreach identified landlord incentives as a need/something that would be effective in generating landlord participation. Shelter staff capacity is extremely limited. Unmet supportive service needs include housing location and stabilization services, transportation services, and services during non-traditional hours (after business hours, weekends).

DRAFT

Public Participation

Commented [KM1]: Will complete once public hearing is completed.

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

- **Date(s) of public notice: 11/22/2022**
- **Public comment period: start date – 11/23/2022 end date – 12/9/2022**
- **Date(s) of public hearing: 12/5/2022**

Describe the public participation process:

Enter narrative response here.

Describe efforts to broaden public participation:

Enter narrative response here.

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

Enter narrative response here.

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

Enter narrative response here.

Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis

Similar to many communities across the United States, the City of Erie struggles with meeting the needs of its unhoused and extremely low-income residents. The following data analysis uses information from the HUD 2021 Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Count report for Erie City and County CoC, Point in Time Counts (PIT), 2014-2018 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, CoC APR data, and more to determine the needs of the community. The following analysis also includes input derived from consultations with Erie community stakeholders, including CoC representatives, public housing authorities, non-profit social service providers, disability advocates, and emergency shelter providers. In addition, a web-based survey was distributed across these same groups, the results of which are discussed in this analysis.

OPTIONAL Homeless Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

Homeless													
	Current Inventory					Homeless Population				Gap Analysis			
	Family		Adults Only		Vets	Family HH (at least 1 child)	Adult HH (w/o child)	Vets	Victims of DV	Family		Adults Only	
	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds					# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units
Emergency Shelter	99	61	153	130	1								
Transitional Housing	53	31	47	33	16								
Permanent Supportive Housing	312	23	117	145	78								
Other Permanent Housing*	153	7	83	27	17								
Sheltered Homeless						23	203	110	418				
Unsheltered Homeless						0	21	0	0				
Current Gap													

*Other Permanent Housing includes Safe Haven and Rapid Re-Housing beds. Source: HUD 2021 HIC; HIC Total Summary for PA-605;

The shortage of units both affordable and available for renter households at or below 30% area median income (AMI) increased housing insecurity and rent pressure on extremely low-income households. See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Non-Homeless Needs Inventory and Gaps Analysis Table

Non-Homeless			
	Current Inventory	Level of Need	Gaps Analysis

	# of Units	# of Households	# of Households
Total Rental Units	21,385		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness)	3,945		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI (Other Populations)	8,024		
0%-30% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (At-Risk of Homelessness)		4,420	
30%-50% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (Other Populations)		3,215	
Current Gaps			6,740

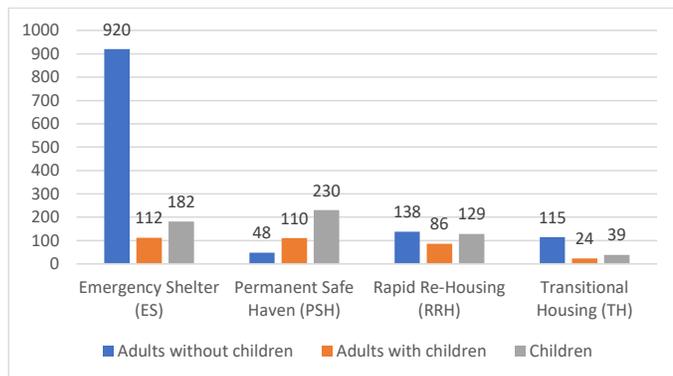
Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data (CHAS)

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

In order to determine whether or not the current housing inventory is sufficient to meet the need, it is important to look at the populations of those served by these housing programs, in order to determine the size and demography of the qualifying populations. Figures 3 through 10 use Continuum of Care APR data to identify these populations. HMIS data utilized is for the time period January 1, 2021-December 31, 2021.

Emergency shelters served the greatest number of people in 2021 compared to other housing projects, having served a total of 1,214 persons. Figure 3 below indicates how many individuals were served by project type. According to stakeholder consultations, there is an increase in unsheltered homeless persons congregating in the downtown area of Erie that is impacting businesses. Moreover, there is an increase in demand for permanent supportive housing.

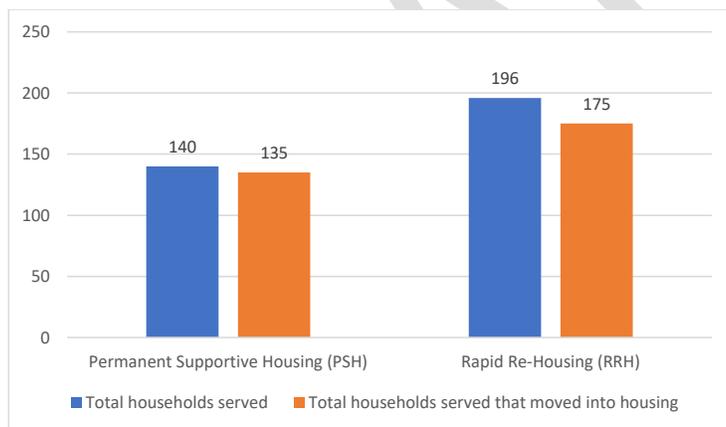
Figure 3: Persons Served



Source: CoC APR 2021

Figure 4 shows that among households served through PSH and RRH programs, the majority of households were moved into housing.

Figure 4: Households Served – PSH and RRH

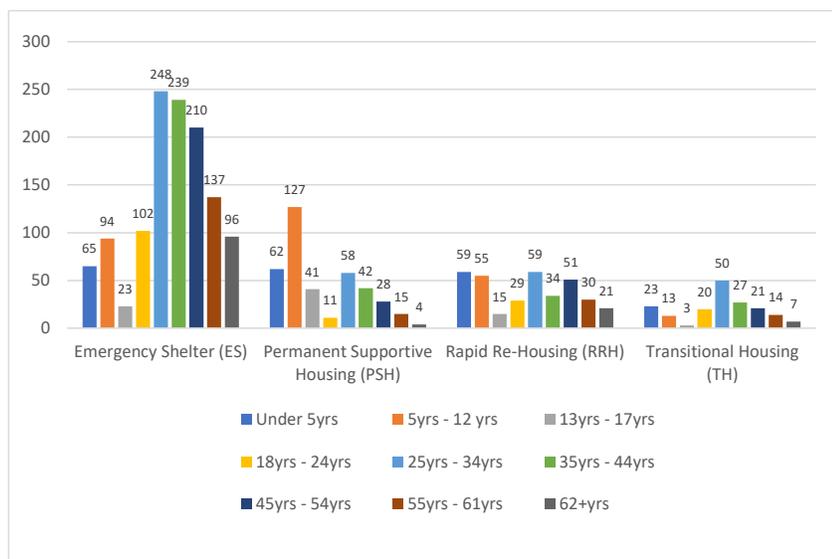


Source: CoC APR 2021

Among those served by emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid-re-housing, and transitional housing programs, exactly half of those served are between the ages of 25 and 54 years old (50.0%). 27.2% of those served were under the age of 18. As reported during stakeholder consultations, youth aging out of the foster care system have been identified as an at-risk subpopulation. They have a need for services that include job training and placement services and mental health services. The Erie Housing Authority has vouchers in partnership with OCY for youth aging out of the foster care system, but these are underutilized. In addition, youth aging out of the foster care system are also eligible to

receive a stipend for housing, but if they accept the Housing Authority voucher, the stipend goes away. This is a difficult population to engage with and identify.

Figure 5: Age of Persons Served



Source: CoC APR 2021

Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

The number of Erie residents that meet the definition of homeless under 24 CFR 91.5 derived from the 2022 PIT count, conducted on February 24, 2022 was a total of 298 persons, up from 260 persons in 2021. Of the counted homeless individuals, 275 (92.3%) were sheltered and 23 (7.7%) unsheltered. The majority of homeless persons in 2022 identified as female (58.6%). Of those who reported their racial and ethnic demographics, the majority of those identified were Non-Hispanic (92.9%), and primarily identified as Black (58.6%) as opposed to White (25.7%). 14.3% identified as having multiple races.

In 2022, the Erie City and County PIT identified 23 unsheltered homeless, which was the highest count since before the pandemic. Of the 23 unsheltered individuals identified, seven were considered chronically homeless. The PIT provides only a snapshot in time; stakeholder consultation indicated there are more chronically homeless individuals in the City than identified during the PIT. Chronically homeless individuals are often difficult to identify and engage, but are often most in need of housing and services. Stakeholders reported an increase in homelessness among families with children.

According to 2021 System Performance Measures, 798 people experienced homelessness for the first time during the period October 1, 2020-September 30, 2021. These measures took into account persons entering emergency shelter, transitional housing, safe haven, and permanent housing programs.

A survey of people with lived experience yielded 25 responses. Of the 25 participants, three are unsheltered and 21 are living in an emergency shelter. Fourteen of the respondents have been homeless less than six months. Some survey participants may also be counted as part of the annual PIT or HMIS data (if staying in an emergency shelter).

At Risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

According to the 2014-2018 CHAS data, there are 5,750 household in the City of Erie with an annual income below 30% of median family income. Renter households with income below 30% AMI and having one or more severe housing problems (including cost burden) total 4,420. In the City of Erie, there are fewer affordable units available than there are households at or below 30% area median income. Moreover, larger units (3 bedroom and 4 bedroom) are in need and are difficult to identify. See Figure 2 above.

Based on 2021 HMIS data, only 29.1% of leavers (402 individuals) exited to permanent destinations. In comparison, 38.4% of leavers (531 individuals) exited to temporary destinations. Exiting to a temporary destination may indicate greater risk of returning to homeless system. Of those households exiting emergency shelter, less than 20% exited to a positive (permanent) housing destination. Over 40% exited to temporary destinations, and nearly 35% exited to unknown destinations.

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

As summarized in Figure 6 below, 421 adults served by emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing programs in 2021 were survivors of domestic violence. In addition, 187 adults reported that they were fleeing domestic violence. As reported during stakeholder sessions, there is an increase in single parents with multiple children fleeing domestic violence in the City of Erie. Stakeholder consultations indicated an increase in the incidence of domestic violence in the City.

Figure 6: Survivors of Domestic Violence

	Number of Survivors of DV	% Of Program that is Survivor of DV
Emergency Shelter (ES)	200	19.9%
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	96	60.4%
Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)	78	35.1%
Transitional Housing (TH)*	47	33.3%

Source: CoC APR 2021

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

Those at greatest risk of housing instability include 3,580 renter households with an annual income less than or equal to 30% AMI and experiencing severe cost burden. This represents 62% of all extremely low income renter households in the City. In addition, 3,215 renter households earn between 30% and

50% AMI and experience one or more severe housing problems, including severe cost burden and or severe overcrowding.

Prior to entering an emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, or transitional housing program, the majority of adults served reported being homeless prior to entering the program (55.2%). However, 13.4% reported living in an institutional setting prior to entering the project, 12.5% reported staying or living in a friend’s room/apartment/or house prior to entering the program, and 8.0% reported staying or living in a family member’s room/apartment/or house prior to entering the project. Households without stable housing prior to entering the homeless system may be more likely to return to the homeless system once housed. More details on these at-risk populations are summarized in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Living Situation of Adults/Heads of Households Immediately Prior to Entering the Project

	Emergency Shelter (ES)	Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)	Transitional Housing (TH)
Homeless situations	498	118	210	33
Institutional settings	119	2	0	88
Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons	1	17	0	0
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	57	4	2	7
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	48	0	1	1
Staying or living in a friend’s room, apartment, or house	180	3	4	8
Staying or living in a family member’s room, apartment, or house	109	5	6	4
Other locations	21	10	1	0

Source: CoC APR 2021

Figure 8: Number of Veterans Served

	Emergency Shelter (ES)	Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)	Transitional Housing (TH)
Chronically Homeless Veteran	10	5	5	0
Non-Chronically Homeless Veteran	72	3	8	6
Not a Veteran	945	150	211	130

Source: CoC APR 2021

According to HMIS data, 178 people were living in transitional housing during the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021; of these 48 or nearly 27% were Black, African American, or African. During the same time period, 353 people were receiving rapid rehousing assistance; of these, 41% were Black, African American, or African. Of households that exited Rapid Rehousing programs during this period, 24% of adult leavers had no cash income, putting these households at greater risk of returning to homelessness if unable to support ongoing housing payments.

During the period January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021 HMIS data indicated 38.4% of households exited to temporary destinations and 29.6% exited to “other destinations” which could mean they exited to a residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria, they are deceased, data was not collected, or they exited to some other destination not listed in the survey. Of all individuals exiting the homeless system, only 29.1% exited to permanent destinations. Households receiving temporary assistance and those exiting to temporary destinations are more likely to return to homeless or face greater risk of housing instability than those exiting to permanent destinations.

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

The Housing Authority of the City of Erie (HACE) owns and manages more than 2,000 housing units in the City, as well as administers more than 1,000 Housing Choice Vouchers

According to the 2022 HIC, the Erie City and County CoC has 429 permanent supportive housing beds, of which most are estimated to be occupied. The City/County CoC also has 352 emergency shelter beds and transitional housing beds.

Production of new units remains high priority and high need. While rents are not high in the City, as reported by the HACE, many landlords are asking for rent increases and there is insufficient inventory to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Service providers and shelters alike experience ongoing staffing shortages that contribute to these capacity challenges, but also the housing market and inventory is rapidly changing.

The City does not utilize HOME or CDBG resources for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance regularly; however, ESG funds are utilized for rapid rehousing rental assistance.

Due to expiration of eviction moratoria, which offered protection for many low-income renter households, coupled with escalating rents, lack of affordable housing inventory, and continued economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the homeless system in the City of Erie experienced significant strains. It lacks capacity across all systems to address the unmet needs of all qualifying populations. This includes staff capacity, inventory capacity and resource capacity to appropriately address growing needs among all of the QPs. Service providers and shelters alike experience ongoing staffing shortages that contribute to these capacity challenges, but also the housing market and inventory is rapidly changing.

Describe the unmet housing and service needs of qualifying populations:

Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

HMIS data indicated that 1,032 adults and 182 children (1,214 total) were served by the homeless system in 2021. According to the 2022 HIC, the Erie City and County CoC has 429 permanent supportive housing beds, of which most are estimated to be occupied. The City/County CoC also has 352 emergency shelter beds and transitional housing beds.

Stakeholder consultation with CoC executive leadership indicated that the largest gap in the City of Erie continues to be affordable housing units. Many survey respondents noted that not only is it difficult to find affordable housing at any level, but more funds need to be directed towards creating more housing options and encourage low-income housing developments. Stakeholders reported a general lack of capacity to provide robust services and coordination of services for households in shelter, and that there is a need for services to continue once households leave shelter and are placed in housing (either with or without voucher/other assistance).

The City collaborates with developers to invest its HOME funds in LIHTC rental housing to expand the inventory of affordable rental units. However, many of those participating in consultations reported that even these units are not affordable to the extremely low-income populations. Further, there is increased competition for fewer affordable units. Already subsidized projects fill quickly and experience very little turnover and long waiting lists for affordable housing and permanent supportive housing. Many permanent supportive providers rely on scattered site privately owned units, and many providers are falling victim to the landlords who are no longer willing to accept assistance or have tenant selection policies that act as barriers for special needs populations. Many landlords are not willing to lease to populations due to criminal, credit, or poor rental histories. Further, while the market is currently saturated with rental assistance, landlords are less willing to accept assistance.

Services, especially case management and coordination services, are a priority need—maintaining capacity among providers is an ongoing challenge due to rates of pay, high levels of turnover and burnout. Staff capacity continues to be a challenge; Hazard Pay for shelter workers has sustained shelter employment, but there is growing concern that as hazard pay expires, shelters will also struggle to maintain sufficient staff capacity to operate effectively.

Street Outreach services were identified by stakeholders as an unmet need to identify unsheltered populations and to begin to build relationships to connect them to housing and services. This is especially important for the chronically homeless, who are often the most difficult to identify, locate and engage.

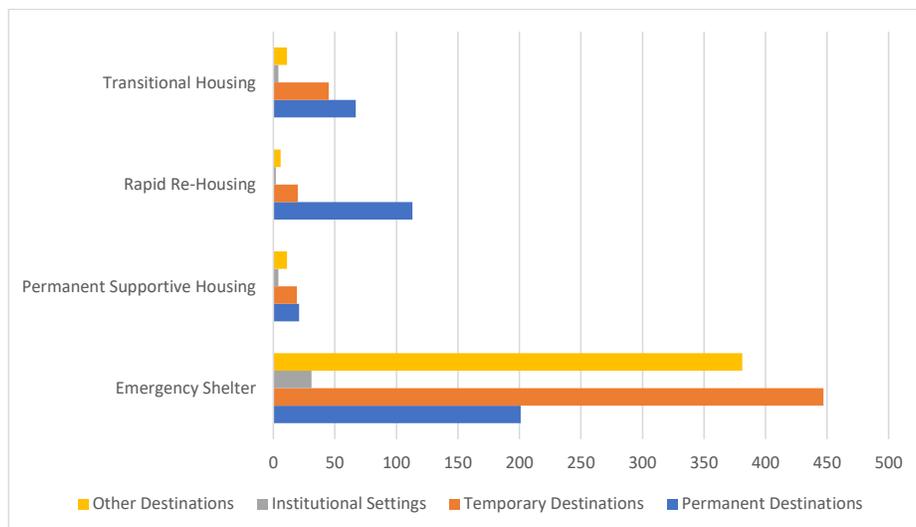
According to the survey of persons with lived experience, the most frequently cited barriers to finding housing included affordability, steady income, and lack of inventory of quality, affordable units. Poor rental history and landlords unwilling to work with the individuals was also cited as barriers.

At Risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

Analyzing the exit destinations of those leaving emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing programs is a strong indicator of populations at risk of homelessness. Those who exited to temporary, or even institutional settings, are at-risk of homelessness. According to 2021 APR data, 38.4% of leavers exited to temporary destinations and 3% of

leavers exited to institutional settings. 29.6% exited to “other destinations” which could mean they exited to a residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria, they are deceased, data was not collected, or they exited to some other destination not listed in the survey. Of all leavers, only 29.1% exited to permanent destinations. See Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Exit Destination of Leavers



Source: CoC APR 2021

Poor rental history is often identified as a barrier for households accessing affordable households. Rental assistance and legal services for eviction prevention were identified as needed services to help salvage tenancies and prevent poor rental history from becoming a barrier for future tenancies. Subpopulations identified by stakeholders include LGBTQ+ populations, homeless youth and young adults (18-24), including those aging out of foster care. According to stakeholders, individuals discharging from the hospital but requiring medical services are in need of respite care so that they are not at risk from entering homelessness due to unavailability.

Stakeholders reported service gaps in connecting people discharging from treatment facilities to housing, identifying transitional housing/step-down housing as an unmet need and an effective model for populations discharging from institutional care. Services such as case management and other services during non-traditional hours (outside normal business hours) are not available but are needed.

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

According to HMIS data, across all programs (emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing), 187 adult residents reported that they were fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence. 421 adult residents that participating in one of these housing programs

reported being survivors of domestic violence. In sum, an estimated 30.7% of adult participants reported being survivors of or fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence. See Figure 10 below.

To accommodate these residents, it is necessary to ensure that there are proper resources available and advertised for those who are fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking. Stakeholder consultation stressed the importance of establishing a coordinated structure among all homelessness and housing providers in the City and County to ensure that all residents in need are reached and receiving proper and adequate care and resources. Stakeholders also reported that services that align with rapid rehousing and other rental assistance for Domestic Violence survivors is sufficient and will meet their needs. Services for individuals fleeing human trafficking were identified by stakeholders as an unmet need.

Figure 10: Fleeing, or Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

	Fleeing Domestic Violence	
	#	%
Emergency Shelter	86	43.0%
Permanent Supportive Housing	31	32.3%
Rapid Re-Housing	43	55.1%
Transitional Housing	27	57.4%

Source: CoC APR 2021

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

Among those served by emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing programs, 17.4% of households included at least one or more chronically homeless person. A chronically homeless individual, as defined by the Continuum of Care, is a person who:

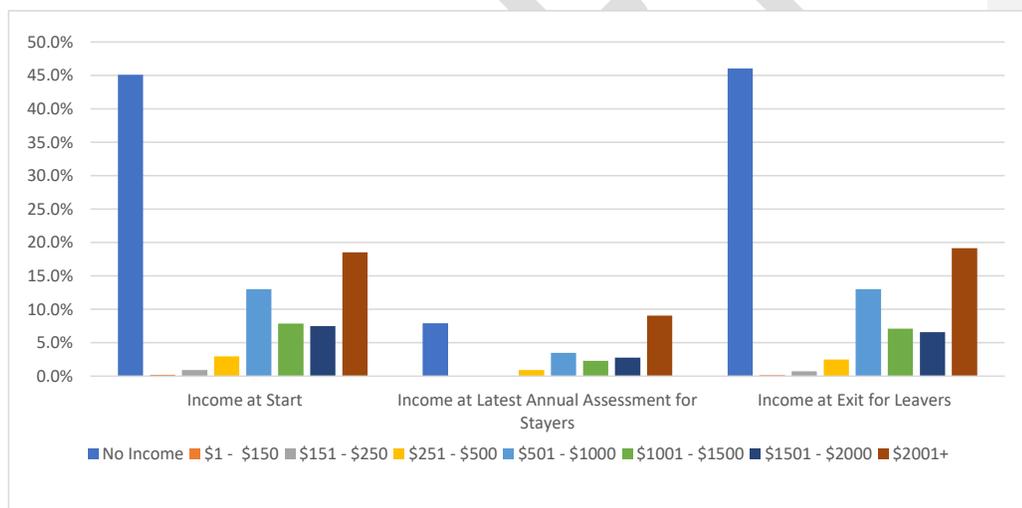
1. Is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
2. Has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least 1 year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years where the combined length of time homeless in those occasions is at least 12 months; and
3. Has a qualifying disability.

According to the 2022 PIT count, 3 persons (within 1 household) was reported as chronically homeless. As indicated in Figure 9 below, of those participating in the emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing programs, 20 of 115 veterans were identified as chronically homeless. During stakeholder consultation, respondents indicated that those at greatest risk of harm and those who are costing health, safety and housing services the most money are the chronically homeless. Those with severe mental illness, oftentimes substance-use disorder, are experiencing years of homelessness. Concentrated resources on the chronically homeless, including

medical respite and permanent supportive housing that is tied to housing authority vouchers is needed. Stakeholders also reported the need for services for households after rental assistance expires in order to maintain stability and prevent returns to homelessness.

It is useful to look at the cash income of persons served by emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing programs at the start of entering the project and upon exit to better identify the needs of the community. As Figure 11 indicates, the vast majority of residents reported having no income at the start and upon exit. Having no income to help sustain housing places these households at risk of returning to the homeless system. According to CoC APR data, the majority of this income comes from sources such as earned income, supplemental security income (SSI), and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Of those exiting rapid rehousing and transitional housing programs, 24% and 61%, respectively, reported having zero income at exit. Those with zero income have a greater likelihood of returning to homelessness and would benefit from additional assistance prior to exiting the homeless system.

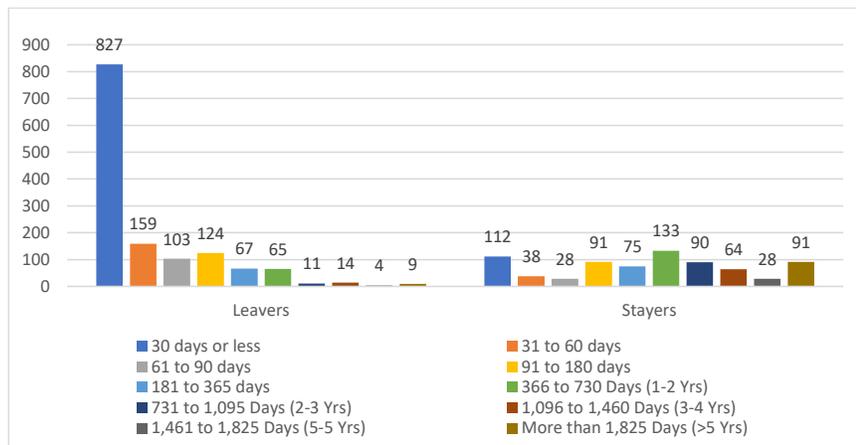
Figure 11: Cash Income Ranges (ES, PSH, RRH, and TH*)



Source: CoC APR 2021

44.0% of those in emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, or transitional housing programs remain as such for thirty days or less. About 16.2% have a length of stay between 61 to 180 days. See Figure 12 below. Longer lengths of stay may increase the need for beds, as there is less movement for new clients to be able to use those resources. This was confirmed during the consultation process, where stakeholders reported that shelter length of stay is high in Erie because there is nowhere to place people exiting shelter. This indicates a need for additional housing inventory, as fewer available options lead to less turnover in shelter and transitional beds.

Figure12: Length of Participation



Source: CoC APR 2021

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

In addition, the gaps identified for particular qualifying populations above, many survey respondents addressed the need for not only financial support towards social service agencies and supportive services, but more organizational support towards these non-profit social service agencies. Most social service agencies are understaffed, or the staff underpaid, which presents a challenge to having staff dedicated primarily to housing efforts. The lack of a shared plan and a coordinated entry system that is trauma informed were cited as organizational needs that are not being met within the community.

Shelter resources (both bed capacity and staff capacity) are insufficient to meet the needs. Stakeholders reported that street outreach services that have been funded with supplemental CARES Act funding have been critical to identifying unsheltered individuals and placing them in shelter or other temporary housing solutions; however, as these resources dwindle, there will be a gap in the ability to continue to provide this service.

Under Section IV.4.2.ii.G of the HOME-ARP Notice, a PJ may provide additional characteristics associated with instability and increased risk of homelessness in their HOME-ARP allocation plan. These characteristics will further refine the definition of “other populations” that are “At Greatest Risk of Housing Instability,” as established in the HOME-ARP Notice. If including these characteristics, identify them here:

Other characteristics that further refine the definition of “At Greatest Risk of Housing Instability” that were included elsewhere in this Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis are those longer lengths of stay, the chronically homeless, and those with little or no income upon exiting the homeless system. These factors are indicators that an individual or household may require further assistance than was initially

provided or available, that they may re-enter the system of care, or that high volumes of these types of residents participating in the program prevents turnover or stifles the ability to provide care and resources to more residents.

Identify priority needs for qualifying populations:

For all qualifying populations, housing and shelter were identified as high priorities, as evidenced by stakeholder feedback as well as survey results. Rental housing that is affordable and accessible to individuals and households at 0-30% AMI is the priority need. An adequate inventory of deeply subsidized housing for Qualifying Populations is a priority due to low vacancy rates and lack of inventory. Many landlords aren't willing to lease to populations due to criminal, credit, poor rental histories. Coupled with this is a priority for rental assistance and supportive services (including case management, legal services and homeless prevention services) to assist the homeless identify and access housing and become stably housed, as well as to prevent homelessness among households who are at greatest risk. Services, especially case management and coordination services, are a priority need—maintaining capacity among providers is an ongoing challenge due to rates of pay, high levels of turnover and burnout. There is an ongoing need for medical respite for folks exiting hospitals but aren't ready to be at home without care, nor are the needs severe enough to need a nursing/rehab facility. An ongoing, increasing need is for utility arrears—they often act as a barrier for people renting units. Landlords may be willing to rent, but the tenant won't be able to get utilities in their name without a large arrearage payment.

People with lived experience that participated in the survey were asked to rank the four HOME-ARP eligible activities (Rental Housing, TBRA, Supportive Services, and Non-Congregate Shelter) in order of priority. Twelve of the 25 respondents (48%) indicated Affordable Housing was the top priority; 10 (40%) indicated TBRA was a top priority. Fourteen of the 25 respondents (56%) indicated non-congregate shelter was the lowest priority among the four.

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

In addition to feedback from stakeholders and consultation sessions, an online survey targeted to service providers, and a survey of people with lived experience, the following plans and data sources were consulted to determine needs and system gaps for HOME-ARP qualifying populations:

- American Community Survey (ACS), 2016-2020
- HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2014-2018
- Erie City/County 2022 Point-In-Time Count
- Erie City/County 2022 Housing Inventory County (HIC)
- Erie City/County CoC Annual Performance Report (APR)
- 2021 System Performance Measures
- Survey of Service Providers
- Survey of Persons with Lived Experience

HOME-ARP Activities

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

The City of Erie Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) will invite any Developer/Owner that is looking to apply for funding and/or other resources from DECD for the new construction, substantial rehabilitation, and/or preservation of affordable housing to submit a proposal for funding. The proposed activity, including the proposed qualifying population(s) to be served, will be evaluated in accordance with the City's HOME-ARP allocation priorities, preferences and prioritization (if any), and projects that address qualifying populations will be considered. The City is not currently establishing preference or priority as part of its scoring criteria for HOME ARP proposals for funding. Should the City establish preference or priorities, a substantial amendment may be duly publicized and submitted to HUD for review. Developers, service providers or subrecipients applying for HOME-ARP must meet the minimum program eligibility and threshold requirements. Depending on the nature of the proposed activity, site inspections may be conducted by DECD staff. An evaluation of the site's feasibility, financial underwriting and developer capacity assessment will be completed and considered as part of the review process.

The City of Erie has reviewed other state and federal funding resources available to the agency that potentially can be used as leverage for maximizing its HOME-ARP investment. The City's goal of producing 10 affordable rental units serving Qualifying Populations is meant to foster the production of additional affordable units as HOME-ARP funds are combined with other resources (state funds, LIHTC, Housing Trust Funds, etc.)

Describe whether the PJ will administer eligible activities directly:

The City of Erie will not administer and oversee its eligible activities directly. Rather, it will enter into HOME Agreements with developers of affordable rental housing projects, and execute subrecipient agreements with service providers who may receive capacity building dollars.

If any portion of the PJ's HOME-ARP administrative funds are provided to a subrecipient or contractor prior to HUD's acceptance of the HOME-ARP allocation plan because the subrecipient or contractor is responsible for the administration of the PJ's entire HOME-ARP grant, identify the subrecipient or contractor and describe its role and responsibilities in administering all of the PJ's HOME-ARP program:

The City of Erie will not be distributing any portion of its HOME – ARP administrative funds to a subrecipient or contractor prior to HUD's acceptance of the HOME-ARP allocation plan.

Use of HOME-ARP Funding

	Funding Amount	Percent of the Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	\$ 200,000.00		
Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	\$ 0		

Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	\$ 0		
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	\$ 2,292,779.00	80%	0
Non-Profit Operating	\$ 0	0 %	5%
Non-Profit Capacity Building	\$ 0	0 %	5%
Administration and Planning	\$ 439,902.00	15 %	15%
Total HOME ARP Allocation	\$ 2,932,681.00		

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

The HOME-ARP budget was driven by the priority needs identified as a result of stakeholder consultation and data analysis. The City of Erie will distribute approximately 80% of its HOME-ARP allocation for the development of affordable rental housing. An overall lack of affordable rental units was one of the most frequently identified unmet needs among stakeholders. Tight rental markets and high rents make it extremely difficult for housing and service providers to find units that are affordable and in decent condition for their clients. The Department of Economic and Community Development is prioritizing the creation of affordable housing units for qualified populations. In addition, the City is allocating approximately 7% of its HOME-ARP funds for supportive services, recognizing that long term supportive services are critical to ensuring stability and success in permanent housing for vulnerable households. HOME – ARP funds will be used for individuals or families from all of the following qualifying populations: homeless; at-risk of homelessness; fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; other populations where providing assistance would prevent the family's homelessness or would serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability.

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

The affordable rental housing inventory in the City of Erie is severely limited, a challenge that existed long before and has been exacerbated by the pandemic. There is increased competition for fewer affordable units throughout the City. Privately owned units are no longer available for affordable housing in many places as landlords are no longer willing to accept rental assistance or have tenant selection policies that act as barriers for special needs populations. Shelters lack bed capacity for households experiencing homelessness, primarily because it is increasingly challenging to move folks out of shelter into permanent housing due to lack of affordable inventory. Therefore, the City's emphasis with HOME ARP funds will be to create new units to add to the affordable housing inventory in the City.

In addition, while the City believes there is a robust network of services available, mobilization of those services and meeting people where they are is a priority for the City. Reserving funds for services ensures the City is able to provide services to those households that will occupy units created with HOME-ARP, but also provides an opportunity for the City to connect unsheltered homeless individuals with housing and services provide by HOME-ARP.

HOME-ARP Production Housing Goals

Estimate the number of affordable rental housing units for qualifying populations that the PJ will produce or support with its HOME-ARP allocation:

It is the City's intent to leverage HOME-ARP with other funding sources to increase the total number of units created. It is anticipated that the City's HOME ARP funds will directly support the creation of a minimum of eight new units affordable to households at or below 30% AMI.

Describe the specific affordable rental housing production goal that the PJ hopes to achieve and describe how the production goal will address the PJ's priority needs:

It is anticipated that the City's HOME ARP funds will be used to create eight new units affordable to households at or below 30% AMI. The City's priority goal established by this Allocation Plan is to increase the number of affordable housing units in the City. Providing funds for rental housing production directly supports the advancement of that goal.

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Preferences

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

While all four qualifying populations will be eligible to apply for rental housing developed with HOME-ARP, the City of Erie intends to establish preference for the chronically homeless as defined by 24 CFR 91.5 and homeless families with children. Applicants that qualify for one or more preferences will be given priority admission based on length of time homeless. All other qualifying populations will be selected in chronological order of application.

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

In 2022, the Erie City and County PIT identified 23 unsheltered homeless, which was the highest count since before the pandemic. Of the 23 unsheltered individuals identified, seven were considered chronically homeless. The PIT provides only a snapshot in time; stakeholder consultation indicated there are more chronically homeless individuals in the City than identified during the PIT. Chronically homeless individuals are often difficult to identify and engage, but are often most in need of housing and services. These populations often require intensive supportive services to achieve and maintain housing stability. These qualifying populations require assistance transitioning to housing, including permanent supportive housing, along with robust supportive services like case management, healthcare, legal services, and other supportive services. With better housing options and wrap-around services, these families will have a higher likelihood of becoming self-sustaining over time.

In 2022, the Erie City and County PIT identified 23 homeless families with children, all of which were sheltered. The PIT provides only a snapshot in time; stakeholders reported an increase in homelessness among families with children.

Establishing these preferences will allow the City to serve the most vulnerable among the HOME-ARP qualified populations.

Referrals Methods

Identify the referral methods that the PJ intends to use for its HOME-ARP projects and activities. PJ's may use multiple referral methods in its HOME-ARP program. (Optional):

The City of Erie will use the Coordinated Entry system as an indirect referral source. That is, the CE will be used for intake in order to add the eligible applicant to a HOME-ARP project waiting list, which will be selected from in accordance with the preference and prioritization described above. Coordinated Entry will not be used to admit applicants directly to a HOME-ARP assisted project.

If the PJ intends to use the coordinated entry (CE) process established by the CoC, describe whether all qualifying populations eligible for a project or activity will be included in the CE process, or the method by which all qualifying populations eligible for the project or activity will be covered. (Optional):

As indicated above Coordinated Entry will not be used to admit applicants directly to a HOME-ARP assisted project as it does not include all of the qualifying populations. Referrals will be accepted from other sources including emergency shelters, 2-1-1, Street Outreach programs and service providers. All referrals will be placed on the project(s) waiting list and admitted in accordance with the preference and prioritization established earlier in this Plan.

If the PJ intends to use the CE process established by the CoC, describe the method of prioritization to be used by the CE. (Optional):

As indicated above Coordinated Entry will not be used to admit applicants directly to a HOME-ARP assisted project, and the CoC CE prioritization will not be utilized.

If the PJ intends to use both a CE process established by the CoC and another referral method for a project or activity, describe any method of prioritization between the two referral methods, if any. (Optional):

As indicated above Coordinated Entry will not be used to admit applicants directly to a HOME-ARP assisted project as it does not include all of the qualifying populations. Referrals will be accepted from other sources including emergency shelters, 2-1-1, Street Outreach programs and service providers. All referrals will be placed on the project(s) waiting list and admitted in accordance with the preference and prioritization established earlier in this Plan. Chronically homeless applicants will be given priority admission based on length of time homeless. All other qualifying populations will be selected in chronological order of application, regardless of referral source.

Limitations in a HOME-ARP rental housing or NCS project

Describe whether the PJ intends to limit eligibility for a HOME-ARP rental housing or NCS project to a particular qualifying population or specific subpopulation of a qualifying population identified in section IV.A of the Notice:

The City of Erie is not establishing limitations on eligibility.

If a PJ intends to implement a limitation, explain why the use of a limitation is necessary to address the unmet need or gap in benefits and services received by individuals and families in the qualifying population or subpopulation of qualifying population, consistent with the PJ's needs assessment and gap analysis:

The City of Erie is not establishing limitations on eligibility.

If a limitation was identified, describe how the PJ will address the unmet needs or gaps in benefits and services of the other qualifying populations that are not included in the limitation through the use of HOME-ARP funds (i.e., through another of the PJ's HOME-ARP projects or activities):

Not applicable.

HOME-ARP Refinancing Guidelines

The City of Erie does not intend to use HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily rental housing in order to rehabilitate the units with HOME-ARP funds. If the City determines that it will use HOME ARP for refinancing, the guidelines for doing so will be in conformance with the HOME-ARP program notice and will be submitted to HUD for review.

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