



2019 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

DRAFT

City of Meriden
Economic Development Department
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CR-05 - Goals and Outcomes

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

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

The City of Meriden is an entitlement jurisdiction, receiving an annual allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These funds help the City address the housing, community and economic development objectives outlined by HUD, which include, but are not limited to: furthering fair housing, development of affordable housing, infrastructure improvements, residential housing rehabilitation, homelessness prevention, and vital services for special needs and low-to moderate-income (LMI) populations.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the activities for the program year were not completed or significantly delayed because of health and safety precautions taken by the City to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. However, despite of the pandemic the City has successfully implemented many of the programs to further its goals addressing the priority needs in Meriden. These accomplishments are highlighted below.

Affordable Housing: Through the City's Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) one (1) existing residential structure received financial assistance to pay for various repairs. While several applications were received, a majority of the applications were denied because they did not qualify for the program in some way. The City has noticed however an uptick in interest in the program from qualified individuals and hopes to realize greater accomplishments in the next program year. Code enforcement activities also benefitted households in the downtown LMI area.

Public Facility & Infrastructure Improvements: An estimated 30,220 persons in downtown LMI areas benefitted from public infrastructure improvements to sidewalks that provided for a safer walking environment. Public facility improvements were also made in Washington Park that benefit 280 youth with an upgrade to the equipment room and space for safety classes for the Meriden Youth Football League.

Public Services: The City and its partners provided several public services which helped to improve the quality of lives for the special needs and LMI population in Meriden. A total of 52,694 persons were served in PY2019. Services for special needs groups included senior services, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and persons experiencing substance abuse. Services for LMI persons included youth enrichment and prevention, health and mental health services, food banks, housing service programs, employment services and literacy programs.

Homeless Prevention: There were 369 persons who received homeless overnight shelter services. These services were at the New Opportunities Shelter NOW facility and included activities such as medical services, referrals, accessing benefits, acquiring state ID and birth certificates and permanent housing assistance. As well, 59 persons received emergency financial assistance for homeless prevention.

Economic Development: There were 103 persons who had employment training. These trainings covered topics such as computer and financial literacy and as well case management was provided to enhance opportunities for job placements. The Kuhn’s Group Supported Employment program also provided employment training and jobs to 15 adults with intellectual disabilities to perform litter patrol at City parks although the actual jobs to be performed were put on hold due to COVID-19.

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
Administration/ Other/ Loan Repayment	Administration	CDBG	Other	Other	2	2	100.00%	2	2	100.00%
Create Suitable Living Environment	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	0	42760		16250	30500	187.69%
Create Suitable Living Environment	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	16000	231890	1,449.31%	2541	52694	2,073.75%

Create Suitable Living Environment	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Facade treatment/business building rehabilitation	Business	0	0		0	0	
Create Suitable Living Environment	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	0	0				
Create Suitable Living Environment	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Homeless Person Overnight Shelter	Persons Assisted	700	2750	392.86%	170	369	217.06%
Create Suitable Living Environment	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Homelessness Prevention	Persons Assisted	350	2137	610.57%	444	59	13.29%
Create Suitable Living Environment	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Businesses assisted	Businesses Assisted	0	0		0	0	
Increase supply of decent and affordable housing	Affordable Housing Homeless	CDBG Revolving Loan Fund	Rental units rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	0	4		0	0	
Increase supply of decent and affordable housing	Affordable Housing Homeless	CDBG Revolving Loan Fund	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	45	20	4.44%	5	1	20.00%
Increase supply of decent and affordable housing	Affordable Housing Homeless	CDBG Revolving Loan Fund	Homelessness Prevention	Persons Assisted	350	1203	343.71%			

Increase supply of decent and affordable housing	Affordable Housing Homeless	CDBG Revolving Loan Fund	Housing for Homeless added	Household Housing Unit	0	0				
Increase supply of decent and affordable housing	Affordable Housing Homeless	CDBG Revolving Loan Fund	Housing for People with HIV/AIDS added	Household Housing Unit	0	0				
Increase supply of decent and affordable housing	Affordable Housing Homeless	CDBG Revolving Loan Fund	Housing Code Enforcement/Foreclosed Property Care	Household Housing Unit	25000	55300	221.20%	7000	34045	486.36%
Provide Economic Opportunity	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	0	0				
Provide Economic Opportunity	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	30	3054	10,180.00%	733	103	14.05%
Provide Economic Opportunity	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Jobs created/retained	Jobs	0	93		43	15	34.88%

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

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

The City has identified public facilities and infrastructure improvements, affordable housing programs such as residential housing rehabilitation, homelessness prevention, and economic development for special needs and low- to moderate-income (LMI) populations as its priority. Funds from CDBG were used to address these high priority needs in Meriden, and a number of objectives were completed as a result of programming funded by CDBG grant funds.

Through the City's NPP affordable housing program one existing residential structure received rehab assistance. An estimated 30,220 persons in downtown LMI areas benefitted from public infrastructure improvements to sidewalks that provided for a safer walking environment. Public facility improvements were also made in Washington Park that benefit 280 youth. The City and its partners provided several public services which helped to improve the quality of lives for 52,694 total persons in the City who were either special needs or LMI. For homeless prevention activities there were 369 persons who received homeless overnight shelter services as well as 59 persons who received emergency financial assistance for homeless prevention. Finally for economic development activities there were 118 persons who had employment training.

Goals Not Accomplished in PY2019

While many activities were not started or saw significant delays due to COVID-19, the City was still able to accomplish many of its goals for PY2019. For goals that were not met, the City will work to complete its activities to achieve its intended outcomes while at the same time identify new activities that will help residents in the City. Below is a summary of goals that were not met.

Homeless Prevention: The City had a goal to assist 444 persons with homeless prevention however only 59 were assisted. This program provides emergency subsistence payments and/or emergency rental assistance. Currently the City funds New Opportunities and the Salvation Army for this program, however the City is exploring direct services to help meet this need.

Housing Rehab: The City had a goal to complete 5 residential housing rehab project, however it only completed one through the NPP program. While several applications were received, reviewed, and voted on during the program year, a majority of the applications were denied because they did not qualify for the program in some way. The most common disqualifier was that the applicant already had more than 105% of their property's appraised value in some form of debt, such as a mortgage, credit card debt, and various liens on the property. The NPP program as a matter of policy does not offer loans to homeowners in these situations. However, there is an uptick in interest in the program from

qualified individuals and hopes to realize greater accomplishments in the next PY.

Economic Development: Employment training goals and jobs retained/created were not met in the program year. There was a goal to 733 persons with employment training however only 103 received training. There were 15 jobs created for adults with disabilities through Kuhn Employment Program however opportunities for employment were limited due to the pandemic. While COVID-19 was a factor in the City not completing its outcomes, the City may revise its goals in upcoming program years.

CR-10 - Racial and Ethnic composition of families assisted

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

	CDBG
White	23,281
Black or African American	23,787
Asian	35
American Indian or American Native	13
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8
Total	47,124
Hispanic	20,063
Not Hispanic	27,061

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

Narrative

DATA NOTE: The data above was automatically generated with the start of the CAPER report in IDIS. This data is drawn from the beneficiary accomplishments for PY2019. Further, the table above does not include a category for people that identify as “other” or “multiple races” nor does it include a category for people who “refused/or did not know” to answer either racial or ethnic information so the data in the above table do not necessarily match the numbers of people actually served by CPD programs.

Just over half of CDBG funding went towards assisting Black or African Americans. All other minority races accounted for less than 1%. For persons who identified as Hispanic, over 40% of CDBG funding went towards assisting this group.

According to the most recent 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 78.1% of the population was White, followed by 10.0% for Blacks and 1.7% for Asians. Persons who identified ethnically as Hispanic were 29.2% of the citywide population. It should be noted that the Asian population is small, but with the exception of Asian persons, the City adequately assisted minority groups with CDBG programs.

Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment in the City’s Consolidated Plan, assesses if any racial and ethnic group by income category has a disproportionate need in the area with regards to housing problems, severe housing problems and cost burden. Households with housing problems are those that reside in units lacking complete kitchen and plumbing facilities as well as overcrowding (more than one person per room) and cost burden (spending 30% or more of income on housing per month). Households with “severe

housing problems” are those that reside in units lacking complete kitchen and plumbing facilities as well as severely overcrowded homes (more than 1.5 person per room) and severe cost burden (spending 50% or more of income on housing per month).

According to the Needs Assessment, for regular housing problems, Asian and Hispanic households experience a disparity across moderate income levels (50-80% AMI and 80-100% AMI). For severe housing problems, Black and Adian households experience a disparity across several income levels. Hispanic households experience a disparity at 50-80% AMI. For housing cost burden, Black and Hispanic households are the most cost burdened population. While the Asian population is small, it is the City’s intention to assist all minority groups regardless of size. With the exception of Asian persons, according to the table above, the City adequately assisted minority groups with CDBG programs.

CR-15 - Resources and Investments 91.520(a)

Identify the resources made available

Source of Funds	Source	Resources Made Available	Amount Expended During Program Year
CDBG	public - federal	1,154,428	895,351
Other	public - federal	216,756	8,280

Table 3 - Resources Made Available

Narrative

The Amount as Expended for CDBG comes from the PR07-Drawdown Report by Voucher Number. This report lists all vouchers that had a LOCCS send date during PY2019. In PY2019 there was \$1,154,428 in CDBG funds made available to the City has \$895,351 was expended. These funds went towards improvements to public facilities and infrastructure, affordable housing programs, public services for special needs and LMI households, homeless prevention activities and economic development activities. Due to safety precautions taken in response to COVID-19, some projects and activities saw delays, however the City is working to spend all remaining funds on PY2019 activities.

The "Other" fund listed above is the City's Revolving Loan Fund that is used to provide low-interest loans for homeowner rehab projects.

Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
Central Downtown Area	72	85	Investments continue to be focused on the downtown area due to highest concentration of LMI
Meriden - Citywide	28	15	The City also provides services to low/mod residents citywide.

Table 4 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Narrative

Investments continue to be focused on the downtown area of the City of Meriden. Central Downtown remains the area of the City with the highest concentration of low/mod income residents and households. It also continues to be the location of many of the non-profits and other groups that provide vital services to the area's residents.

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.

CDBG funds leverage countless amounts of monetary and human capital on an annual basis in the City of Meriden. All City funded organization through the CDBG program have a budget that includes funds that are non-CDBG related but still are used to help provide vital services to the City of Meriden and its citizens. Program partners include small and large non-profit agencies; local community organizations; government agencies; and larger organizations with national boards. Often CDBG funds received by these various organizations are then used as leverage to help secure other grants.

Additionally, funding that was spent on the issuance of forgivable loans for the Meriden Match Facade Improvement Project in Program Year 45 (PY2019) helped leverage private funds. In order for applicants to receive the CDBG funds, they were required to provide a funding match totaling between 25%-50% of the total project cost. This helped leverage approximately \$20,000 in funding from the recipients of the Facade Improvement funds.

Funding of the Rehab Administration Program, Code Enforcement, and the Inner City Sidewalk activities also maintains the momentum of the significant financial investment that has occurred in the downtown area of Meriden in the past 5 years. Said assistance has come from the Federal Government in the form of EPA assessment and cleanup grants, from the State of CT in the form of Brownfields Cleanup grants & loans and a rebuilt train station, and numerous municipal monetary outlays.

CR-20 - Affordable Housing 91.520(b)

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

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	0	0
Number of Non-Homeless households to be provided affordable housing units	45	60
Number of Special-Needs households to be provided affordable housing units	0	0
Total	45	60

Table 5 – Number of Households

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of households supported through Rental Assistance	40	59
Number of households supported through The Production of New Units	0	0
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	5	1
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	0	0
Total	45	60

Table 6 – Number of Households Supported

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

Affordable housing goals and actual outcomes tracked closely with what was anticipated in the Program Year 45 Annual Action Plan (PY2019). Rental assistance providers were able to assist more residents than expected, largely due to need. This need is expressed in the continued request by the rental assistance providers for increased levels of funding. There were 59 households assisted with rental assistance.

Through the City's NPP program, only 1 existing residential structure received financial assistance to pay for various repairs. While several applications were received, reviewed, and voted on during the program year, a majority of the applications were denied because they did not qualify for the program in some way. The most common disqualifier was that the applicant already had more than 105% of their property's appraised value in some form of debt, such as a mortgage, credit card debt, and various liens

on the property. The NPP program as a matter of policy does not offer loans to homeowners in these situations. The City has noticed however an uptick in interest in the program from qualified individuals and hopes to realize greater accomplishments in program year 46.

Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.

The number of households supported through rental and utility assistance programs, and the reporting provided by New Opportunities and the Salvation Army, indicate that a need for this type of program continues to exist. City staff frequently received inquiries into whether the City itself offers services similar to these providers, in addition to whether we offer some form of downpayment assistance program. This means that there is a high demand for such assistance. This need for rental assistance will inform future action plan funding allocations through the Meriden City Council. Indeed, both organizations are slated to receive funding similar to funding levels of PY2019 in the upcoming PY.

Through CDBG-CV money, the City also expects to make funding available for rental & mortgage payment assistance that is necessary due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has caused significant loss of income for many families that were already living paycheck to paycheck. The provision of rental or mortgage assistance will help alleviate some of the financial burden that many families are now facing and ideally prevent 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.

Number of Households Served	CDBG Actual
Extremely Low-income	4
Low-income	36
Moderate-income	12
Total	52

Table 7 – Number of Households Served

Narrative Information

DATA NOTE: The reason there is a discrepancy between the total number of households assisted (60 assisted) and the number of households served by income (52 assisted) is that 8 of the beneficiaries of the New Opportunities Rental Assistance/Security Deposit Program were not qualified as LMI. However, overall the rental assistance activities still served 86.7% Low/Mod individuals.

For households that reported income, in Rental Assistance there were 59 LMI assisted. Of these households 4 were extremely low-income, 35 were low-income and 12 were moderate-income. As mentioned above, there were 8 non-low income households assisted.

For homeowner housing rehab, the City's Neighborhood Preservation Program only assisted one (1) household the program year. The household was low-income.

Worst case needs are households that are extremely low-income and are at risk of homelessness. The City assisted 4 extremely low-income households with emergency rental assistance in PY2019.

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

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

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

The City conducts outreach to its homeless and at-risk-of-homelessness populations through its CDBG community partners best suited to manage the task. The Women and Families Center's Project REACH program provides direct street outreach and services to runaway and homeless street youth through age 21 with the intended goal of providing empowerment, assistance with physical and mental well-being, counseling and education. Contact is made and relationships are developed in order to best evaluate youth who may be at risk of, or subject to, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, gang activity, or who simply require basic needs. Project REACH has identified areas in Meriden where homeless youth often congregate, and also has a presence at community events and high schools.

Additional outreach and support is offered through the Meriden Soup Kitchen. In addition to providing hot food at no cost, the Meriden Soup Kitchen offers regular blood pressure and wellness checks; direct access to SNAP and CT HUSKY enrollment; winter clothing; books; and direction to City services five days per week. The City will also be funding an additional "foodbank" style activity in the coming program year that is open on days when the Meriden Soup Kitchen is closed in order to provide more complete services to those in need.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The Shelter NOW program, operated by New Opportunities, Inc., provides assistance to shelter residents via intake, case management and supportive services necessary to make the transition from temporary housing to non-emergency assistance or complete self-sufficiency. Shelter NOW has seen an increased number of residents requiring shelter services due to the scarcity of relevant job opportunities and an increased number of foreclosures/evictions affecting its population. CDBG funding provides for a case manager to assess the situation clients are in at the time of entry and develop a plan for family intervention, treatment, job placement, school enrollment and other long/short term goals. Shelter NOW served 369 people over the course of PY2019. New Opportunities is continuing work to expand the facility to increase capacity and services.

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

Case management and life-skills services are offered by Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis, Shelter NOW, and the Women and Families Center's Project REACH to help low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless. The Salvation Army Assistance Program and the NOW Security Deposit Program offer immediate housing-related financial aid to households who may be at risk of homelessness or are facing severe housing cost burden. The goal of these programs is to keep families and individuals in their homes and ameliorate the financial constraints that can lead to short and/or long-term homelessness. During PY2019, there were 59 households in total that were assisted with emergency financial assistance to prevent homelessness.

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

The Shelter NOW Program begins working with individuals and families immediately upon intake to assess goals and develop a plan for transitioning out of temporary/emergency housing as quickly as possible given existing circumstances. This work is undertaken by an onsite case-manager.

The Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis Self-Sufficiency Program provides help to income-eligible residents who need assistance with a range of issues, including employment, security deposits, job training, homelessness prevention and free furniture for those transitioning into new, independent housing. The program focuses on assisting survivors of domestic violence in navigating challenges faced when building their new lives from violence.

Project REACH also works with unsheltered teens to begin the transition into permanent, stable and safe housing.

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

Actions taken to address the needs of public housing

The Housing Authority of the City of Meriden (MHA) continues to undertake a multi-year effort to modernize and improve its aging housing stock. Several projects have been completed in the last decade including the Chamberlain Heights 122-unit development in 2010 with Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding. A mixed-use development at 24 Colony Street with 63 units was completed in 2016 with LIHTC funding. In 2016, Yale Acres Model Buildings with 163 units was renovated to increase their energy efficiency utilizing geo-thermal and solar energy systems. In 2018, Phase 1 Meriden Commons I, a mixed-use 75-unit residential development was completed.

Anticipated completion in PY2019 include the Bristol Schools Redevelopment with 98-units for seniors as well as the Phase 2 Meriden Commons II with 76 mixed-use units.

Developments started in PY2019 were Yale Acres Redevelopment Phase I (162 units) and the Phase II expansion with 10 units. The Hannover Place Veteran's Housing development with 10-units reserved for veterans at-risk of homeless is also planned for development in PY2019. Finally, the Silver City development is anticipated to start in November 2019 and is planned to have 41-units.

Developments in planning are Yales Acres Common Building and Warming Center, which is the Phase III in the modernization of Yales Acres. Plans include a community meeting room, gymnasium, heated pool, fitness center, child care center, community kitchen and more. Also planned are the 143 West Main Street mixed-income development with 45-units, and the Maple View Apartments located in the TOD district in downtown.

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

The MHA has monthly meetings with residents to encourage them to share their concerns with management and provide feedback as to operations. The MHA operates a comprehensive homeownership program that provides qualified residents with the education and supports necessary to achieve the dream of owning their own home. Successful graduates can convert their Housing Choice Voucher to a Homeownership Voucher and receive 70% mortgage assistance for fifteen years.

The MHA in partnership with the Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain applied for CDBG funding for Program Year 46 (PY2020) to run financial and housing classes for public housing residents. The program seeks to conduct Financial Fitness and First Time Home Buyer classes, in both English and Spanish, at the Meriden Housing Authority. The purpose of the classes is to equip people with the knowledge and skills needed to be financially successful, with goals including budgeting, building credit, and saving money. This programming will likely run during PY2020.

Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs

The Housing Authority of the City of Meriden is a high performing agency, therefore no corrective action/assistance from the City of Meriden was required during PY2019. The Housing Authority is not considered a troubled PHA.

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 City of Meriden has collaborated with the Meriden Housing Authority through HUD's Choice Neighborhoods initiative to drastically overhaul the Mills Memorial Housing residences in the City's downtown neighborhood. In total, almost 500 new or substantially rehabilitated units of housing will take the place of a dilapidated public housing facility. There is also 140 units of replacement housing for households earning less than 30% AMI that will ultimately be constructed in partnership with private developers, as well as 241 non-replacement units of affordable housing. Other developments and planned developments by the MHA are summarized in the PHA section CR-30.

The Economic Development Department and Planning Department work closely with developers of multi-family housing to ensure that affordable housing is included in new construction of housing units. The City's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning district that encompasses much of downtown Meriden is designed to promote denser housing and commercial uses surrounding the new train station, which has been serviced by the newly launched CT Rail since June 2018. Furthermore, the Planning Department is currently undertaking a close look at housing, both affordable and market rate, as part of the update of the City's Plan of Conservation and Development. Initial data points show that Meriden in fact has the second highest number of affordable units (4,077) in New Haven County, according to the CT Department of Housing. This number equates to 13.41 % of the City's housing stock.

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

The primary obstacle to underserved needs is funding. Connecticut's budget realities are dire, and funding cuts continue to have an impact on local municipalities, non-profits, and other local service providers. The City of Meriden itself has seen its own budget pressures related to maintaining sufficient public services without increasing taxation levels, while in an environment of lowered state and federal assistance and increasing non-discretionary costs that must be paid.

The City of Meriden was fortunate to see a modest increase in CDBG funding over the past several years, however the need for grants across all priorities identified in the Consolidated Plan continues to increase as well. In order to best allocate these funds, The Community Development Office worked closely with the Meriden City Council Human Services Committee and other City Staff in an effort to avoid duplication of services and direct funding to the program and geographic areas of greatest need. Funded activities are reviewed annually in terms of timeliness and accomplishments to ensure that the greatest amount of need is being met with each CDBG award. In some cases, City staff have recommended decreased funding levels for activities that either underperform or do not submit required reporting and invoice materials in a timely manner so that funds can be shifted to more

impactful activities. The City also continually explores alternative activities and programs that could be funded in order to better serve those in need.

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

Lead-based paint hazards are evaluated on a case-by-case basis in all of Meriden's Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) homeowner rehabilitation loans. Funding provided to City staff through the Housing project will in part cover housing inspections, and will address lead paint hazards as needed. Homes issued CDBG-backed loans through the NPP with children younger than six years old residing in them will be tested for lead based paint hazards if any work is to be performed that would pose a potential hazard to occupants. In the event children younger than six years old are exposed to lead poisoning they will be referred to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center "Lead Treatment Program.

The City works collaboratively with the Connecticut Children's Medical Center "Lead Treatment Program (LTP) to reduce residential lead hazards for low-income children under six years old. The LTP program has access to several federal funding programs that will be used to conduct risk assessments and inspections of housing units within targeted communities, provide lead hazard control education to families and property owners within targeted communities and provide property owners with financial assistance to rehabilitate housing units in targeted communities with identified lead hazards.

Lead-based paint hazards are considered when drafting program guidelines and reviewing potential projects, including improvements to commercial facilities. None of the City's Public Facility projects in Program Year 45 (PY2019) involved the rehabilitation of housing units, and were thus not subject to the requirements set forth at 24 CFR 91.220(k) or 91.320(j).

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

Public Service activities are aimed directly at improving the quality of life of residents in Meriden including reducing the number of families in poverty. The City and its partners provided several public services which assisted a total of 52,694 persons in PY2019. Public services for special needs groups included senior services, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and persons experiencing substance abuse. Public services for LMI persons included youth enrichment and prevention, health and mental health services, food banks, housing services, employment services and literacy programs.

The NOW Security Deposit Program and Salvation Army's Assistance Program provided immediate financial relief to families facing financial hardship that could lead immediately to housing instability and further financial peril. Eviction from housing is one of the greatest contributors to cycles of poverty, as housing instability impacts employment, childhood education and general well-being of the households affected. These programs help preclude short term financial troubles from turning into long term poverty and homelessness. Together, these programs assisted 59 households.

The Kuhn Employment Opportunities activity also helps those with disabilities to earn an income and provide a vital service to the community by cleaning up certain city parks. This program provided employment training and jobs to 15 disabled individuals in PY2019.

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

The Community Development Office's merger with the City's Economic Development Department helped to improve internal and external coordination and collaboration; better target CDBG awards related to housing and economic development; and increase inter-office working knowledge of the CDBG Program.

Community Development staff also worked closely with other City Departments during an on-site monitoring visit by the HUD Hartford Field Office in June of 2019. During that monitoring visit, HUD-Hartford found that overall management systems utilized by the City to implement its CDBG program were strong and that no concerns were noted in relation to its policies and procedures. The City will continue to work with HUD-Hartford to address concerns related to the NPP homeowner rehabilitation program.

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

The City of Meriden, the Meriden Housing Authority (MHA), local services providers and private housing developers continue to progress through coordinated efforts to provide housing, services, and economic opportunities in the City's downtown. The demolition of the Mills Memorial Housing Development, which was finished in early 2019, required the City and the MHA to work closely together. This partnership ultimately enabled the distressed public housing complex to be demolished, and has allowed for the construction of the Meriden Commons development. This multi-phased development incorporates over 150 units of housing, the majority of which are affordable or direct replacement units for the Mills development. This working relationship between the City, MHA, and social service providers continues as all work in unison to explore options that will improve the quality of life for Meriden residents.

MHA will continue to reduce the barriers to affordable housing by providing Section 8 vouchers and to provide first-time homeowner loan assistance aimed at transitioning residents from public housing into the private housing market. The City's Economic Development Department will work with developers of new rental housing construction in the targeted TOD area to ensure that historic tax credits and other state and federal programs leverage adequate affordable housing opportunities for residents.

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

The City of Meriden conducted an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in 2010 in accordance

with HUD regulation at 24 CFR 570.904(c)(1) for HUD CDBG Entitlement grantees. As part of its upcoming Consolidated Plan update, Meriden will be conducting a new Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing.

The City of Meriden is committed to furthering fair housing opportunities for all residents. As part of this commitment, the city coordinates with various local and state agencies in undertaking housing and neighborhood revitalization activities to assist in providing housing choice. Coordination with various state and local agencies and non-profit housing providers has resulted in the ability to provide a variety of housing options and services to assist in meeting housing needs throughout the community. The City works in conjunction with private and public organizations and non-profit housing and service providers to increase fair housing opportunities. The City is committed to eliminating discriminatory practices in housing opportunities for all protected groups identified under fair housing laws.

The City has an appointed Fair Housing Officer in the Law Department. The Fair Housing designee serves as a resource for fair housing complaints from City residents, distributing Fair Housing information, providing education on Fair Housing Laws to both landlords and tenants and providing referrals to complainants. The City also seeks additional resources to provide housing choice and to improve fair housing opportunity for all City residents that address impediments identified in the Analysis of Impediments.

The City maximizes its funding resources to provide and maintain affordable housing through code enforcement efforts and housing rehabilitation through the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP). Code enforcement activities benefitted households in the downtown LMI area.

The City also supports LMI household avoid homelessness through the NOW Security Deposit Program and the Salvation Army Emergency Assistance program with its CDBG funding. In PY2019 there were 59 households assisted with emergency rental assistance.

Through the NPP program one (1) existing residential structure received financial assistance to pay for various repairs. While several applications were received, a majority of the applications were denied because they did not qualify for the program in some way. The City has noticed however an uptick in interest in the program from qualified individuals and hopes to realize greater accomplishments in the next program year.

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

Through a combination of desk monitoring, quarterly reports, on-site monitoring, labor reporting, payment requisitions, interdepartmental coordination and face-to-face meetings, the City is able to evaluate progress throughout the Program Year as related to goals and timetables set forth in the Annual Action Plan and written agreements with subrecipients. The intent of these monitoring policies and procedures is to identify potential discrepancies with contract standards and program requirements before they become larger issues.

The City was however not able to conduct as much on-site monitoring during the program year in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of monitoring was conducted remotely, through email, phone calls, and the reviewing of quarterly reports/invoices.

Minority businesses outreach continued during Program Year 45 (PY2019) thanks to the merger of the Community Development Office and Economic Development Department. Both CDBG Admin Staff as well as City economic development staff work daily with small and minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs to identify viable commercial opportunities in the Downtown CDBG-eligible business district. This has resulted in significant interest in grant funding for business development, business expansion, and opportunities to provide capital to businesses for fit-out or code corrections. While the city did create the facade rehabilitation program in Program Year 43 (PY2017) to work towards these goals, the program has not been as successful at incentivizing development by minority owned businesses or entrepreneurs in the downtown area as was initially hoped. The City will continue to fine tune this program and potentially create new economic development oriented programs in coming years to assist minority owned businesses and landowners throughout the City. Indeed, the City expects to reprogram funds from the facade rehabilitation program to help fund a microenterprise, or other special economic development activity. The City expects to model this program in part on the small business relief program that it created to assist businesses as they prepare, prevent, and respond to the coronavirus.

In Program Year 45 (PY2019), the Economic Development Department returned to full staffing levels with the hiring of the Economic Development Specialist. This position is focused on business outreach and support.

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 most important facet of citizen participation in the planning and allocation of HUD entitlement funds is access to information. The Economic Development Office is constantly working to ensure that residents of Meriden are aware of the process and able to review and comment on decisions at their discretion.

The PY2019 CAPER for review and public comment was noticed on February **TBA, 2021** in the *Meriden Record Journal* as well as on the City's Economic Development and Community Development website. Comments were accepted from February **TBA, 2021** to February **TBA, 2021**. Per the requirements of the City's Citizen Participation plan, the CAPER must be made available for public comment and review at least fifteen (15) days before it is submitted to HUD.

CR-45 - CDBG 91.520(c)

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

The City of Meriden continues to see a tremendous need across all program objective categories, as evidenced by the requests for funding every program year far exceeding the amount of CDBG dollars made available through the formula allocation process. This is particularly true of requests for funding for public services and public facilities activities. Considerable interest in using CDBG funds for economic development opportunities continues to exist among City staff, businesses, and property owners in the City. City staff will likely work to implement a small business start-up incentive program that will seek to promote economic development in future program years likely through conducting a substantial amendment to the AAP.

One way that program objectives have however changed during the program year was related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent granting of CDBG-CV funds to the City. The City substantially amended the Program Year 45 Annual Action Plan in order to allocate the CDBG-CV1 funds to an emergency business grant program and to public service providers that are working to prepare, prevent, and respond to the pandemic. Both of these allocations will be vital to lessening the impact of the pandemic on the City's most vulnerable residents and hopefully helping businesses make it through until restrictions on business operations have passed.

Because of this pandemic and the impact on the community, the City also implemented some minor flexibilities to subrecipients that allowed them additional time to both spend their funding and conduct their programming that was previously approved. The City also allowed subrecipients flexibility in how they could operate their programming, such as allowing for online or remote operations in lieu of in-person, and allowing for electronic submission of documentation. It is likely that these flexibilities will continue in to PY2020 to ensure that CDBG funds are still being used in a proper and eligible way while also maintaining the safety of city staff, subrecipients, and program beneficiaries.

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

No