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ATTACHMENTS

- A. SF 424S and HOME-ARP CERTIFICATIONS
- B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Fort Bend County is located in the southwestern part of the Houston metropolitan area. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the County’s population in 2021 at 858,527 persons. Fort Bend County’s population is identified as one the most diverse counties in the nation. The County is a majority minority County.

Table 1: Population by Race and Ethnicity, Fort Bend County, 2021

Race and Hispanic Origin	Number	Percent
White Non-Hispanic	259,275	30.2%
Hispanic or Latino Alone	218,924	25.5%
Black or African American Alone	188,017	21.9%
Asian Alone	185,442	21.6%
Other	6,010	0.7%
Total	857,668	99.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Quick Facts, Fort Bend County, Texas, 2023

Fort Bend County covers 855 square miles and only the parts of the County near the City of Houston have access to mass transit. Fort Bend County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the United States in the last few decades. In addition, Fort Bend County is one of the wealthiest counties in the State of Texas. The continued growth of the County has made it an attractive destination for people seeking employment and housing. However, the development of non-profit services and housing organizations have lagged behind the population growth and development of the County.

Fort Bend County’s service area for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Programs include the unincorporated area of the County and the incorporated areas of the County that have entered into interlocal agreements with the County. The incorporated areas include Arcola, Beasley, Fairchilds, Fulshear, Kendleton, Meadows Place, Needville, Orchard, Pleak, Richmond, Rosenberg, Simonton, Stafford, Sugar Land and Thompsons. The service area does not include Katy, Houston, Missouri City, Pearland or Weston Lakes. Fort Bend County’s HUD Service Area population is estimated at 540,900 persons. The low and moderate-income population is estimated at 139,585 persons or 25.81% of the total service area population.

HOME-ARP Introduction

The HUD has notified Fort Bend County that it has been allocated \$3,322,057.00 in HOME-ARP Program funds. In order to receive the HOME-ARP grant, the County is required to submit a HOME-ARP Allocation Plan to HUD for review and approval. The HOME-ARP Allocation Plan must describe how the County intends to distribute its HOME-ARP funds, including how it will

use these funds to address the needs of HOME-ARP qualifying populations. The HOME-ARP qualifying populations are listed below.

Qualifying Populations:

HOME-ARP funds must be used to primarily benefit individuals or families from the following qualifying populations:

- Homeless, as defined in section 103(a) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ([42 U.S.C. 11302\(a\)](#));
- At-risk of homelessness, as defined in section 401(1) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ([42 U.S.C. 11360\(1\)](#));
- Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, as defined by the Secretary;
- In other populations where providing supportive services or assistance under section 212(a) of the Act ([42 U.S.C. 12742\(a\)](#)) would prevent the family’s homelessness or would serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability;
- Veterans and families that include a veteran family member that meet one of the preceding criteria.

Eligible Activities:

HOME-ARP funds can be used for four eligible activities:

1. Production or Preservation of Affordable Housing
2. Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)
3. Supportive Services, including services defined at [24 CFR 578.53\(e\)](#), homeless prevention services, and housing counseling.
4. Purchase and Development of Non-Congregate Shelter. These structures can remain in use as non-congregate shelter or can be converted to:
 - 1) emergency shelter under the Emergency Solutions Grant program;
 - 2) permanent housing under the Continuum of Care; or
 - 3) affordable housing under the HOME Program.

Administrative and Operating Funding:

HOME-ARP provides up to 15% of the allocation for administrative and planning costs. In addition, HOME-ARP can provide up to 5% of its allocation for operating costs of Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), other non-profit organizations, and homeless providers. Additional HOME-ARP funding is available to these organizations for capacity building activities.

HOME-ARP Allocation Plan:

HUD issued guidance and a template for the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan. Fort Bend County Allocation Plan will follow the template. The County’s HOME-ARP allocation plan must include:

A summary of the consultation process and results of upfront consultation;

A summary of comments received through the public participation process and a summary of any comments or recommendations not accepted and the reasons why;

A description of HOME-ARP qualifying populations within the jurisdiction;

An assessment of unmet needs of each qualifying population;

An assessment of gaps in housing and shelter inventory, homeless assistance and services, and homelessness prevention service delivery system;

A summary of the planned use of HOME-ARP funds for eligible activities based on the unmet needs of the qualifying populations;

An estimate of the number of housing units for qualifying populations the COUNTY will produce or preserve with its HOME-ARP allocation; and

A description of any preferences for individuals and families in a particular qualifying population or a segment of a qualifying population.

CONSULTATION

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

Before developing the HOME-ARP allocation plan, the County was required to consult with agencies and service providers whose clientele include the HOME-ARP qualifying populations to identify unmet needs and gaps in housing or service delivery systems. In addition, the County had to use the consultation process to determine the HOME-ARP eligible activities currently taking place within its jurisdiction and potential collaborations for administering HOME-ARP. The consultation process provides the basis for the County’s strategy for distributing HOME-ARP funds or eligible activities to best meet the needs of qualifying populations. At a minimum, the County was required to consult with the CoC(s) serving the jurisdiction’s geographic area, homeless and domestic violence service providers, veterans’ groups, public housing agencies (PHAs), public agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations, and public or private organizations that address fair housing, civil rights, and the needs of persons with disabilities.

In this section, the County must describe the consultation process including the methods used and dates of consultation:

At the beginning of the public participation process, FBCCDD identified the homeless and domestic violence service providers, veterans’ groups, public housing agencies (PHAs), public agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations, and public or private organizations that address fair housing, civil rights, and the needs of persons with disabilities that had to be consulted. In addition to the emails of the public notices and public hearings, the agencies on the consultation list were sent a letter via email requesting their input into the development of the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

Table 2: List the organizations consulted

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback
Coalition for the Homeless Houston/Harris County/Fort Bend County	Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC)	Virtual Meeting & Consultation Letter	Reviewed 2022 Point in Time Count Data for FBC and number of emergency shelters; Offered assistance
Fort Bend County Women’s Center (FBCWC_	Domestic Violence Emergency Shelter and Service Provider	Consultation Letter	Provided in person feedback at public and community meetings and provided data.
Parks Youth Ranch (PYR)	Youth Emergency Shelter and Service Provider	Consultation Letter	Provided in person feedback at public and community meetings and provided data
Family Promise	Homeless Housing and Service Provider	Consultation Letter, public	Provided in person feedback at public and

		meetings, emails	community meetings and provided data.
Endeavors	Homeless, Migrant, Veterans, Mental Health and Disaster Service Provider.	Consultation Letter & Public Meeting	Provided in person feedback at public and community meetings, provided data and written comments; Attended Public Meeting
Child Advocates of Fort Bend	Abused & Neglected Children and their families/DV; trafficking	Consultation Letter, email, phone call	Email; Provided a letter of need regarding the housing stability of youth in foster care; Attended public meeting
Hope Fort Bend Clubhouse	Mental Health Provider	Consultation Letter	Provided information and written comments
FBC Health & Human Services	Health & Social Service Provider	Virtual Meeting & email	Provided FBC HHS Strategic Plan & data and written comments
TDHCA	State of Texas Housing and Service Provider		Provided their Public Participation Process.
Rainbow of Love	Counseling, & Family Services and Classes	Public Meetings, emails, in-person meeting	Attended Public Meeting. Provided information regarding At-Risk families and persons and written comments
Salvation Army	Homeless shelter and service Provider	Consultation Letter	
Catholic Charities	Homeless Prevention and Services provider; Senior Services provider	Consultation Letter	
Texana Mental Health	Mental Health provider	Consultation Letter	
The Alliance	Social, Education and Wellness Services	Consultation Letter, Community Meeting	
Finding Destiny	Social Service Provider	Consultation Letter, Public Meeting	

Daya	Domestic Violence/ Trafficking Service Provider	Consultation Letter	
Rosenberg PHA	Housing Provider	Consultation Letter	
Grace Under Fire	Veterans Services	Consultation Letter, Community Meeting	Phone call inquiry.
FB Seniors	Senior Services Providers	Consultation Letter	Phone call. Attended Public Meeting. Provided demographic information regarding their at-risk clients
Attack Poverty	Housing and Service Provider	Consultation Letter, Community Meeting	
Literacy Volunteers	Literacy Services	Consultation Letter	
HAUCDC	Housing Provider	Consultation Letter	
Habitat For Humanity	Housing Provider	Consultation Letter	Provided demographics information regarding at-risk clients.
House of Esther	Homeless women, children, pregnant women, at-risk youth	Consultation Letter	
The Sanctuary	Foster children; youth aging out of foster care, at- risk youth	Consultation Letter	
United Way	Social Service Provider	Consultation Letter	
NAACP	Civil Rights Organization	Consultation Letter	
Fair Housing Center	Fair Housing Organization	Consultation Letter	
Brazos Bend	Disabled Persons Guardianship Services	Consultation Letter	
Children At Risk	Child Service Organization/Advocate	Consultation Letter	
Texas Dept. of Health and Human Services	Public Service Provider	Consultation Letter	

US Vet	Veteran’s Housing Provider	Consultation Letter	Provided email expressing interest in Fort Bend County HOME-ARP Program funding.
ARC	Disabled Persons	Consultation	

Coalition for the Homeless Houston/Harris County:

The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County is a 501c3 non-profit that is the lead agency for the homeless response system for Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery Counties, Texas. The Way Home is the name for the local TX-700 Continuum of Care (CoC). The Way Home Is made up of more than 100 partners from all areas of the community, including homeless service agencies, local governments, public housing authorities, the local Veterans Affairs office, and other nonprofits and community stakeholders. The Way Home three county region is 3,711 square miles, an area larger than the state of Rhode Island, 1,214 square miles.

FBCDD met virtually with representatives from the Coalition for the Homeless on February 8, 2023. During the meeting, CoC staff reviewed the 2023 Point in Time Count for Fort Bend County and the availability of data and information on qualifying populations and the gaps in housing and service needs in Fort Bend County. The Coalition will review the draft HOME-ARP allocation plan.

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

FBCWC: Provided data regarding their clients. The FBCWC stated that they need a non-congregate shelter, rental assistance, services and affordable rental housing for their clients.

PYR: Provided data regarding their clients. PYR suggested that the maximum amount of capacity-building HOME-ARP should be budgeted.

Family Promise: Provide data regarding their clients. Family Promise stated that they need rental assistance, services, and affordable rental and owner housing for their clients.

Endeavors: Provided written information on housing assistance and services for their clients, persons. Their clients are an at-risk population including veterans.

CASA: Provided a letter of need detailing housing instability among youth in foster care.

Hope Fort Bend Clubhouse: Provide written information regarding the housing and service needs of their clients, adults with mental health diagnosis. Their clients are an at-risk and vulnerable population.

FBC H&HS: Provided the County’s Community Health Assessment. The need for housing was identified as one of the five health priorities in the County. Only 23 percent of the housing in the

County is renter-occupied. A person needs an annual salary of \$48,320 to afford a two-bedroom unit at FMR in the County. Persons making a minimum wage salary would need 3.2 full-time jobs to afford two-bedroom units at FMR in the County. Eleven percent of FBC households are cost burdened. Thirty-two of their survey respondents indicated affordable housing a missing community resource.

TDHCA: Provided their public participation process.

Rainbow of Love: Provided written information regarding the need for housing units for single and small families for their targeting populations: Homeless students, young adults, household with small children, Survivors of domestic violence, Persons with HIV/AIDS and persons that are chronically homeless.

Arc: Provided written comments regarding the needs of their clients.

FB Seniors: Provided data regarding their at-risk clients: sixty-four percent own their home, forty-eight percent use a walker and/or a cane, and thirty-three percent live alone.

US Vets: Provided email expressing interest in Fort Bend County HOME-ARP Program funding.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

During the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan, the County must have provided for and encouraged citizen participation in the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan. Before submitting the HOME-ARP allocation plan to HUD, the County was required to provide residents with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the proposed HOME-ARP allocation plan of no less than 15 calendar days. The County was required to follow its adopted requirements for “reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment” for plan amendments in its current citizen participation plan. In addition, the County was required to hold at least one public hearing during the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan prior to submitting the plan to HUD.

For the purposes of HOME-ARP, the County was required to make the following information available to the public:

The amount of HOME-ARP funds the COUNTY will receive.

The range of activities the COUNTY may undertake.

The County was required to consider any comments or views of residents received in writing, or orally at a public hearing, when preparing the HOME-ARP allocation plan. In its plan, the County was required to describe its public participation process, including any efforts made to broaden public participation. In the plan, the County must also include a summary of comments and recommendations received through the public participation process and any comments or recommendations not accepted and the reasons why.

Throughout the HOME-ARP allocation plan public participation process, the County was required to follow its applicable fair housing and civil rights requirements and procedures for effective communication, accessibility and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and providing meaningful access to participation by limited English proficient (LEP) residents that are in its current citizen participation plan as required by [24 CFR 91.105](#) and [91.115](#).

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:

Fort Bend County Public Participation Process:

In this section the County was required to 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 including date(s) of public notice, public comment period, and date(s) of public hearing. In addition, the County is required to describe efforts to broaden public participation, summarize the comments and recommendations, and summarize any comments or recommendations not accepted and state the reasons why.

Fort Bend County’s HOME-ARP Allocation Plan public participation process involved emails, public notices, three public meetings and two public hearings. In addition, this process included

public outreach at community meetings. The FBCCDD maintains a list of interested cities and organizations. The Community Development Department emailed the first public notice to the non-profits on the FBCCDD list. This list was supplemented by people that signed up during the community and public meetings. The dates of the public notices, meetings and hearings are listed below.

First Public Meetings Notice	Sunday, January 15, 2023
First Public Meeting	Tuesday, January 24, 2023
Second Public Meeting	Tuesday, January 31, 2023
First Public Hearing Notice	Sunday, January 29, 2023
First Public Hearing	Tuesday, February 7, 2023
Comment Period Public Notice	Sunday, February 19, 2023
Third Public Meeting	Thursday, March 2, 2023
Second Public Hearing Notice	Sunday, March 5, 2023
Second Public Hearing	Tuesday, March 7, 2023
FBC Commissioner’s Court Approval (scheduled)	Tuesday, March 28, 2023

The fifteen-day public comment for the draft HOME-ARP Allocation Plan began on February 24, 2023, and ended on March 10, 2023. A summary of the written comments received during the comment period are included below. The Fort Bend County HOME-ARP Allocation Plan is scheduled to be approved by Fort Bend County Commissioners Court on Tuesday, March 28, 2023.

Public Meetings and Hearing Summaries:

Tuesday, January 24, 2023, Public Meeting: A public meeting was held. Six people attended, representing four organizations. The comments regarded the qualifying populations’ eligibility versus low-and moderate-income eligibility, the availability of HOME-ARP funds.

Tuesday, January 31, 2023, Public Meeting: A public meeting was held. Seven people attended representing four organizations. The comments regarded what information and data the County needed for the Allocation Plan,

Tuesday, February 7, 2023, Public Hearing: A Public Hearing was held as part of FBC Commissioners Court. There were no comments regarding the service or housing needs of the HOME –ARP qualifying populations or eligible activities.

The Fort Bend County Community Development Department (FBCCDD) conducted HOME-ARP outreach at three community meetings.

FBCCDD Public Notice Email: The FBCCDD maintains a list of interested cities and organizations. This list was supplemented by persons that signed up during the community and public meeting and persons that contact the Community Development Department interested in the HOME ARP Program.

Tuesday, February 7, 2023, FB Recovers Meeting: FBCCDD distributed 35 HOME-ARP handouts to interested persons. Eleven people representing ten organizations signed up for the FBC HOME-ARP mailing list. Endeavors submitted written comments to the County.

Friday, February 10, 2023, Fort Bend Connect Meeting: FBCCDD distributed 25 HOME-ARP handouts to interested persons. Eight people representing six organizations signed up for the FBC HOME-ARP mailing list. FB Clubhouse submitted written comments to the County.

Monday, February 13, 2023, Affordable Housing Workgroup Meeting: FBCCDD distributed five HOME-ARP handouts to interested persons. Six people representing six organizations signed up for the FBC HOME-ARP mailing list.

Thursday, March 2, 2023, Public Meeting: A public meeting was held. Eight people attended representing five organizations. The comments included increasing the amount of funding for non-profit capacity building, when would the HOME-ARP Program applications be available, and what information and data the County still needed for the Allocation Plan. Service providers wanted to know if they could limit their program and/or facilities to only one population like youth at risk or women with children.

Tuesday, March 7, 2023, Public Hearing: A Public Hearing was held as part of FBC Commissioners Court. There were no comments regarding the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

Efforts to broaden public participation:

The FBCCDD emailed the first public notice to the non-profits on the FBCCDD mailing list on January 19, 2023. In addition to the first two public meetings, FBCCDD attended three community meetings and distributed HOME-ARP summaries and fact sheets. Interested persons were asked to sign up for the FBCCDD HOME-ARP mailing lists. Their contact information was added to the mailing list. They received the public notices for the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan draft comment period, the March 7 public hearing, the HOME ARP Allocation Plan draft and will receive any future emails regarding the County's Request of Proposals (applications) for the HOME-ARP Program funds.

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

Several people wanted clarification regarding the qualifying populations.

Several homeless service providers wanted to know if they could limit their proposed HOME-ARP facilities clients to only one population, youth at risk or women with children.

The Affordable Housing Workshop Group developed an Affordable Housing Proposal. This proposal was a multi-phase project that will address the need for homeless shelter, housing and services. Phase one includes developing emergency shelters, transitional housing, community housing, affordable rental housing and affordable homeownership for the residents of Fort Bend County. The Affordable Housing Group presented this proposal to Commissioners Court in a workshop session on March 7, 2023. This proposal would use the HOME-ARP program funds, ARP and Treasury ERA funds for the first phase of this initiative. No action was taken on this proposal.

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

There were very few recommendations submitted during the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan process. The only recommendations not accepted were proposed project summaries submitted by some of the non-profits. One non-profit wanted to present their HOME-ARP proposed shelter project directly to Commissioner's Court during the comment period and bypass the HOME-ARP allocation process. Another non-profit recommended that they needed to be awarded the entire amount of HOME-ARP Program funds. Both these project recommendations were not accepted since they would circumvent the County's future Request for Proposals process.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND GAPS ANALYSIS

Fort Bend County (FBC) conducted a comprehensive evaluation to determine the size and demographic characteristics of populations eligible for HOME-ARP assistance. The goal was to identify their unmet needs and gaps in the county's existing shelter, housing inventory, and service delivery system.

To accurately assess the scale and composition of eligible populations, FBC engaged in consultations with various organizations, stakeholders, and the public. Multiple resources were utilized, including the HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Data (CHAS), 2023 Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count), 2021 Housing Inventory Count (HIC), U.S. Census Data, and other relevant data sources.

It is important to note that the estimated number of individuals experiencing homelessness may be underestimated due to factors such as the impact of COVID-19. However, the following information serves as the basis for the needs assessment and gaps analysis, relying on the most up-to-date available data.

The needs assessment and gaps analysis will serve as a solid foundation for FBC's development of a comprehensive plan to address the unmet needs of HOME-ARP eligible populations. The focus will be on increasing the availability of affordable housing, providing essential supportive services, and facilitating coordination among service providers.

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

HUD requires HOME-ARP funds be used to primarily benefit individuals and families in specified HOME-ARP “qualifying populations.” Qualifying populations include, but are not limited to:

- Individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Individuals and families at-risk of homelessness
- Individuals and families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- Other populations for whom supportive services or assistance would prevent homelessness or serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability

Individuals and families experiencing homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5:

Homeless (1), (2), or (3):

- (1) An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - (i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;

- (ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
- (iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;
- (2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
 - (i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and
 - (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks needed to obtain other permanent housing;
- (3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
 - (i) Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a);
 - (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
 - (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect), the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment;

Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless in Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery Counties

According to the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County's 2023 Point-in-Time Homeless Count & Survey (PIT), the number of people experiencing homelessness in Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties on the night of January 23, 2023, was 3,270. This figure represents an 18% decrease compared to 2022, primarily driven by a decrease in the number of

unsheltered individuals and an increase in sheltered individuals. The report provides a demographic breakdown of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations in Harris, Montgomery, and Fort Bend counties, based on data collected in 2023.

The sheltered population is distributed as follows: 57% in Harris County, 29% in Montgomery County, and 14% in Fort Bend County. The average age of the sheltered individuals is 45, with 63% being male. Additionally, 55% identify as Black or African American, and 52% as Hispanic or Latino.

The unsheltered population is distributed as follows: 63% in Harris County, 30% in Montgomery County, and 7% in Fort Bend County. The average age of the unsheltered individuals is 42, with 62% being female. Furthermore, 65% identify as Black or African American, and 48% as Hispanic or Latino.

While the decrease in homelessness from 2022 to 2023 is a positive development, there is still much work to be done. The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, along with other organizations, is actively addressing the underlying causes of homelessness and providing services to assist individuals in rebuilding their lives.

The report's findings underscore the complex nature of homelessness, emphasizing the need for ongoing, collaborative efforts to prevent and ultimately eliminate homelessness in Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties.

Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless in Fort Bend County

The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County's 2023 Point-in-Time Homeless Count & Survey (PIT) conducted in Fort Bend County, Texas, revealed that there were 89 individuals experiencing homelessness on the night of January 23, 2023. This represented a 16% decrease from the 2022 PIT count.

Among the homeless population in Fort Bend County, 56 individuals were unsheltered, living in unsuitable places like encampments, abandoned buildings, or cars. On the other hand, 33 individuals were sheltered, residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or permanent supportive housing.

The majority of the homeless population in Fort Bend County comprised African Americans (50%), followed by Hispanics (30%) and whites (20%). The average age of the homeless individuals was 42.

Although the 2023 PIT count indicates a reduction in homelessness in Fort Bend County, the homeless population remains significant, and numerous challenges persist. Moreover, the count revealed that homelessness in the county is increasingly concentrated in specific areas, with the city of Sugar Land having the highest concentration of homeless individuals, followed by Missouri City.

To further understand the size and demographic composition of the homeless population in Fort Bend County, the Homeless Shelters Directory website was also utilized as a reference. In 2019, according to the website, there were 981 sheltered homeless families and no unsheltered homeless families in the county. The website provided information on various shelters and services available for homeless families in Fort Bend County, including Fort Bend Family Promise, Fort Bend County Women's Center, Fred and Mabel R. Parks Youth Ranch, City of Rosenberg Housing Authority, Fort Bend County Department of Human Services, and Fort Bend County Adult Protective Services. These resources offer temporary housing, support services, emergency shelter, rental assistance, and a range of other aid to homeless families and individuals in need.

Chronic Homelessness in Fort Bend County

According to the Homeless Shelters Directory website, Fort Bend County, Texas had 1,165 chronically homeless individuals in 2022. Chronic homelessness is defined as experiencing homelessness for at least one year or encountering homelessness four times within the past three years. This persistent form of homelessness is often attributed to factors such as mental illness, substance abuse, physical disability, and the lack of affordable housing.

Chronic homelessness poses severe challenges to both individuals and families, contributing to various issues like deteriorating physical and mental health, as well as substance abuse problems. Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness often face recurring instances of homelessness and frequently grapple with mental illness or substance abuse.

Veterans and Youth in Fort Bend County

According to the Homeless Shelters Directory website, there were 375 homeless veterans in Fort Bend County in 2022, indicating a 2% increase compared to 2018. Among these homeless veterans, 181 individuals (48.3%) were sheltered, while 194 (51.7%) were unsheltered.

Regarding homeless youth, Fort Bend County had 236 homeless individuals in this age group in 2022, marking a 17% increase from 2018. Among the homeless youth, 147 individuals (62.3%) were sheltered, while 89 (37.7%) were unsheltered.

Various factors contribute to the higher likelihood of veterans and youth experiencing homelessness. Mental illness is more prevalent among these groups compared to the general population, making it challenging to maintain stable employment and housing. Substance abuse also poses a greater risk for veterans and youth, further hindering their ability to secure stable housing. Additionally, the higher incidence of poverty among veterans and youth makes it difficult to afford suitable housing, increasing their vulnerability to homelessness. Finally, the impact of trauma, which is more commonly experienced by veterans and youth, can make it challenging to cope with life's demands, exacerbating the risk of homelessness according to the website.

Fort Bend County Data:

Based on Table 3, it is estimated that Fort Bend County has at least 3,357 homeless and unsheltered individuals. However, homeless shelter and service providers reported a much higher number of unsheltered homeless individuals.

Table 3: 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
Emergency Shelter	56	14	0	0	0							
Transitional Housing	4	2	0	0	0							
Permanent Supportive Housing	0	0	0	0	0							
Other Permanent Housing	754	754	226	226	0							
Sheltered Homeless						0	0	0	56			
Unsheltered Homeless						1,986	0	0	1,148			
Current Gap										0	0	3,357 3,357

Source: 2023 PIT Count

According to the data in Table 3, the breakdown of the homeless population in Fort Bend County is as follows:

- Sheltered Homeless: There are no available beds for sheltered homeless families, no beds for sheltered homeless adults without children, no beds for sheltered homeless veterans, and 56 beds for sheltered homeless victims of domestic violence.
- Unsheltered Homeless: There are 1,986 unsheltered homeless families, 0 unsheltered homeless adults without children, 0 unsheltered homeless veterans, and 1,148 unsheltered homeless victims of domestic violence. This means that 1,986 individuals are living in unsuitable places like encampments, abandoned buildings, or cars.
- Gap: There is a significant gap of 3,357 beds between the number of homeless individuals and the number of available beds. This indicates that there are 3,357 homeless individuals who do not have a place to sleep.

The data from the table highlights a substantial disparity between the number of homeless individuals and the availability of beds in Fort Bend County. This gap is particularly pronounced for homeless families and victims of domestic violence.

Several factors contribute to the increase in homelessness in Fort Bend County:

- Rising cost of housing: The median rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Fort Bend County is \$2,000 per month, which is unaffordable for many individuals struggling to make ends meet.
- Lack of affordable housing: There is a shortage of affordable housing options in Fort Bend County, making it difficult for individuals with limited financial resources to secure suitable housing.
- Economic downturn: The economic challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to the rise in homelessness. Job losses and reduced working hours have made it increasingly challenging for people to afford housing and meet their basic needs.

Addressing these issues requires comprehensive efforts to increase the availability of affordable housing options and provide supportive services to those experiencing homelessness in Fort Bend County.

According to the most recent FBC CAPER (PY2021), The Fort Bend Women's Center (FBCWC) shelter capacity was 56 persons in 14 rooms. The FBCWC reduced its capacity to half due to COVID. During 2020, the FBCWC sheltered 269 clients in hotels. During 2022, the FBCWC received 1,148 requests for shelter that they could not provide.

Family Promise, homeless housing and services provider reports that they assisted 367 persons in 92 families during 2022. This included 245 youth and 122 adults. These families do not meet the HUD definition for homeless since they are housed by the Family Promise congregations.

The Parks Youth Ranch (PYR) assisted 10 youth aging out of foster care and 167 youth in conservatorship. In addition, PYR stated that the Lamar Consolidated Independent School District (LCISD) reported 677 homeless students in the 2021-2022 school year. The Fort Bend School District reported 942 homeless students in 2021 and 803 homeless students as of November 11, 2022. In addition, the Fort Bend School District reported 258 unaccompanied students in 2021 and 193 unaccompanied students in 2022.

The number of sheltered homeless persons is capped by the number of shelter beds in the County. The only shelter beds in the County are those provided by the FBCWC, 56 beds.

During FY 2021, the FBCWC assisted 59 clients with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program funds. Thirty-six of these clients identified as Hispanic, nine identified as White only, nine identified as Black or African American only, one identified as Asian, only and four identified as multi or other race.

During FY 2021, the Parks Youth Ranch assisted 26 clients with Emergency Solutions (ESG) Program funds. Thirteen of these clients identified as Hispanic, six identified as Black or African American only, and seven identified as multi or other race. The County estimates that the majority of the sheltered homeless are ethnic and racial minorities.

Gaps within the current shelter inventory in Fort Bend County

Emergency Shelter: There is only one emergency shelter that serves families, the Fort Bend County Women's Center. This shelter is a domestic violence shelter with fourteen units and 56 beds.

Transitional Housing: Fort Bend County does not have any transitional housing available for all people in the County's service area. The only program that is transitional is Abigail's Place. Abigail's Place assists single mother families with emergency housing services. This program provides financial and other assistance to help their client's transition to permanent housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Fort Bend County does not have any permanent supportive housing in the County's service area.

Other Permanent Housing: There are twenty-four (24) HUD Projects in Fort Bend County. Only thirteen (13) of these projects are in the County's service area. These projects provide 980 low-income housing units in the County's Service area. In addition, there are three HUD projects that provide rental assistance for 142 housing units for Persons with Aids, elderly persons and disabled persons in the County's service area.

Two projects in the County's service area are senior only projects with 226 housing units. The County assumed one bed per housing unit. The remaining 754 housing units of the HUD housing inventory are reported as family housing. There is no information available on the size of the family units. As a result, the County assumed one bed per unit, the minimum. The projects have few vacancies, and most have waiting lists.

In an effort to tackle homelessness in Fort Bend County, Fort Bend County Judge KP George and several local nonprofit organizations recently held a press conference to announce a Community and Economic Development Agreement between Fort Bend County and Attack Poverty. This agreement aims to allocate funds for an affordable housing program that will strengthen under-resourced communities through education and revitalization initiatives. By addressing the housing needs of individuals and families, the program seeks to establish a solid foundation for economic and social growth throughout the county.

The primary focus of the program is to provide affordable housing options for individuals and families who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness. Alongside housing, the program will offer essential support services, including job training, education, and mental health counseling. It is anticipated that the program will have a significant impact on reducing the number of homeless individuals in Fort Bend County. By addressing housing needs and providing comprehensive support, the program aims to lay the groundwork for sustainable economic and social development within the county.

At Risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5:

At risk of homelessness:

- (1) An individual or family who:

- (i) Has an annual income below 30 percent of median family income for the area, as determined by HUD;
 - (ii) Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “Homeless” definition in this section; and
 - (iii) Meets one of the following conditions:
 - (A) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
 - (B) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
 - (C) Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;
 - (D) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
 - (E) Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 people per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;
 - (F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
 - (G) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan;
- (2) A child or youth who does not qualify as “homeless” under this section, but qualifies as “homeless” under section 387(3) of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a(3)), section 637(11) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832(11)), section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6)), section 330(h)(5)(A) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)(5)(A)), section 3(l) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012(l)), or section 17(b)(15) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)(15)); or
- (3) A child or youth who does not qualify as “homeless” under this section but qualifies as “homeless” under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)), and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of that child or youth if living with her or him.

At Risk of Homelessness

According to the Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis in Fort Bend County, there is a pressing need to address the risk of homelessness among individuals and families with low incomes. HUD defines those at risk of homelessness as those with an income below 30% of the

area median income (AMI) who lack sufficient resources or support networks to prevent homelessness or face economic instability.

Fort Bend County has experienced a consistent rise in housing costs, surpassing the income levels of many residents. As a result, an increasing number of renter households in the county have incomes at or below 30% of the AMI, rendering them vulnerable to homelessness, health issues, and social challenges.

The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, based on the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, highlights the housing needs of communities nationwide. According to table 4, in Fort Bend County, the CHAS data reveals a significant demand for affordable housing. Out of the 49,050 rental units available, only 6,900 are affordable to households at or below 30% of the AMI.

This data underscores a substantial gap between the number of households in need of affordable housing and the availability of suitable rental units. The factors contributing to this disparity include the rising cost of housing, ongoing county growth, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing the housing needs and reducing the risk of homelessness in Fort Bend County requires concerted efforts, including the allocation of resources, implementation of supportive housing programs, and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing affordability and stability for vulnerable populations.

Table 4: Housing Needs Inventory and Gap Analysis Table

Non-Homeless			
	Current Inventory	Level of Need	Gap Analysis
	# of Units	# of Households	# of Households
Total Rental Units	49,050		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness)	6,900		
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI (Other Populations)	6,330		
0%-30% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (At-Risk of Homelessness)		4,950	
30%-50% AMI Renter HH w/ 1 or more severe housing problems (Other Populations)		5,380	
Current Gaps			10,330

Sources: 1. 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS); 2. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)

According to table 5 presents the distribution of rental units that are affordable to households at different income thresholds in Fort Bend County, Texas, based on race and ethnicity.

Among rental units affordable to households at or below 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI), a total of 6,900 units are available. The breakdown by race and ethnicity is as follows:

- White households: 2,500 units
- Hispanic households: 1,800 units
- Black households: 900 units
- Asian households: 300 units
- Other households: 350 units

Similarly, there are 6,330 rental units affordable to households at or below 50% of the AMI, representing other populations. The distribution among racial and ethnic groups is as follows:

- White households: 2,300 units
- Hispanic households: 1,500 units
- Black households: 950 units
- Asian households: 300 units
- Other households: 280 units

Table 5: Rental Units Affordable at 30% AMI and 50% AMI by Race and Ethnicity in Fort Bend County

Race/Ethnicity	Affordable Units at 30% AMI	Affordable Units at 50% AMI
White	2,500	2,300
Hispanic	1,800	1,500
Black	900	950
Asian	300	300
Other	350	280

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS)

These statistics shed light on the availability of affordable rental units at different income thresholds within Fort Bend County. The table underscores the disparities and varying degrees of access to affordable housing among different racial and ethnic groups. It emphasizes the need to address these disparities and promote equitable housing opportunities for all residents.

Efforts should focus on implementing strategies that increase the supply of affordable housing units, particularly for households at or below 30% and 50% of the AMI. By addressing these housing affordability challenges, Fort Bend County can work towards ensuring that individuals and families from all racial and ethnic backgrounds have access to safe and affordable housing, contributing to a more inclusive and resilient community.

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

For HOME-ARP, this population includes any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. This population includes cases where an individual or family reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence due to dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return or remain within the same dwelling unit. In the case of sexual assault, this also includes cases where an individual reasonably believes there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the individual remains within the same dwelling unit that the individual is currently occupying, or the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-day period preceding the date of the request for transfer.

Domestic violence, which is defined in [24 CFR 5.2003](#) includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by:

- 1) A current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim (the term "spouse or intimate partner of the victim" includes a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of the relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship);
- 2) A person with whom the victim shares a child in common;
- 3) A person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
- 4) A person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving HOME-ARP funds; or
- 5) Any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

Dating violence which is defined in [24 CFR 5.2003](#) means violence committed by a person:

- 1) Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
- 2) Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
 - a. The length of the relationship;
 - b. The type of relationship; and
 - c. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

Sexual assault which is defined in [24 CFR 5.2003](#) means any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, Tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

Stalking which is defined in [24 CFR 5.2003](#) means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

- 1) Fear for the person's individual safety or the safety of others; or
- 2) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

Human Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking, as outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), as amended (22 U.S.C. 7102). These are defined as:

- 1) *Sex trafficking* means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- 2) *Labor trafficking means* the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence rates in Texas, particularly in the Houston region, have seen a significant increase in recent years, according to an article titled "Understanding Houston" (2022, July 22). Family violence deaths have tripled since 2017, highlighting the urgency of addressing this issue.

Between 2010 and 2021, Harris County consistently reported a higher rate of family violence incidents compared to Fort Bend and Montgomery counties. In 2020, all three counties experienced an increase in family violence incidents, with Harris County recording a rise of over 28%.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated tensions in violent households and relationships. The pandemic resulted in a 52% escalation in domestic violence incidents, as reported by participants in the 2021 Harris County Health and Relationship Study. Economic hardship also played a role, with job loss contributing to a 30% increase in the likelihood of male-perpetrated violence.

The number of family violence-related deaths in Texas reached a record high in 2021, with 529 reported cases, nearly triple the number recorded in 2017 (186). The Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) identifies factors such as the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, increased homicide rates, and the prevalence of firearms as contributing to this rise.

Victims of domestic violence face significant challenges, especially when attempting to leave their abusers. Fear for their own safety, as well as the safety of their children and other individuals, often keeps them in abusive relationships.

Certain protective laws exist in Texas for domestic violence victims, but loopholes and barriers persist. Limited English proficiency poses an additional hurdle in reporting domestic violence, leading to misrepresentation and inadequate language services for affected individuals.

Statistics reveal that reported family violence cases in 2020 were disproportionately high among Black and White Texans, exceeding their respective demographic proportions in the state population. This highlights the need to address racial disparities and cultural barriers in combating domestic violence.

Domestic violence affects various communities, including the LGBTQ+ community. In Harris County, domestic violence accounted for 35% of homicide cases, while Fort Bend County reported 1,119 cases in 2020 and 1,013 cases in 2021.

In 2019, Harris County had the highest number of reported domestic violence incidents in Texas, followed by Dallas County, Bexar County, Tarrant County, and Travis County. These figures underscore the urgent need to address domestic violence across the state, including physical, verbal, sexual, and financial abuse.

It is crucial to report domestic violence in all relationships, and special attention should be given to addressing the unique challenges faced by minority populations, individuals with limited English proficiency, and the LGBTQ+ community. By understanding the statistics and implementing effective interventions and support systems, we can work towards combating domestic violence and creating safer communities for all.

Human Trafficking/Sexual Assault in Fort Bend County

Fort Bend County has been affected by the issues of human trafficking and sexual assault, as indicated by the reported cases and efforts made by local organizations. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, Fort Bend County alone had 10,949 reported cases of human trafficking, with 1,000 distinct situations identified. In a recent undercover operation, more than two dozen men were arrested, and charges were filed in connection with human trafficking activities.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office has taken proactive measures to combat human trafficking by establishing a dedicated unit that has successfully rescued multiple victims and safely returned them to their homes. The office also provides access to crime statistics within the county through Bair Analytical/RaidsOnline.

The Fort Bend Women's Center (FBWC) has been a crucial resource for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in the Greater Houston Area for over 40 years. In 2021 alone, the FBWC served over 10,000 women and children, offering vital services such as shelter, housing assistance, counseling, therapy, legal support, and educational programs.

In terms of funding support, Fort Bend County provided Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) to two shelters in FY 2021: the Parks Youth Ranch and the Fort Bend County Women's Center. These shelters assisted numerous clients, with demographic data revealing the diversity of individuals seeking assistance. The Parks Youth Ranch primarily served youth victims, while the Fort Bend County Women's Center supported survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Table 6 showcases the demographics of clients served by these shelters in FY 2021, highlighting the racial and ethnic breakdown of the individuals who sought help.

Table 6: Demographics of Clients Served by Fort Bend County Shelters in FY 2021

Shelter	Total Clients	White	Black or African American	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Multi-racial
Parks Youth Ranch	39	22 (56%)	10 (26%)	13 (33%)	26 (67%)	7 (18%)
FBC Women's Center	57	33 (58%)	7 (12%)	30 (53%)	27 (47%)	15 (26%)

Source: FBC PY2021 CAPER

Fort Bend County is fortunate to have organizations such as Abigail's Place, Fort Bend County Family Promise, and the Fort Bend County Veterans Village, which provide crucial services and support to victims of abuse. These organizations offer emergency shelter, supportive services, case management, counseling, and other essential resources to those in need.

By addressing human trafficking and sexual assault, and providing comprehensive support to survivors, Fort Bend County is taking significant steps towards creating a safer and more resilient community.

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

Other populations are defined as where providing supportive services or assistance under section 212(a) of NAHA (42 U.S.C. 12742(a)) would prevent the family's homelessness or would serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability. HUD defines these populations as individuals and households who do not qualify under any of the populations above but meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) Other Families Requiring Services or Housing Assistance to Prevent Homelessness is defined as households (i.e., individuals and families) who have previously been qualified as "homeless" as defined in 24 CFR 91.5, are currently housed due to temporary or emergency assistance, including financial assistance, services, temporary rental assistance or some type of other assistance to allow the household to be housed, and who need additional housing assistance or supportive services to avoid a return to homelessness.
- (2) **At Greatest Risk of Housing Instability** is defined as household who meets either paragraph (i) or (ii) below:
 - (i) has annual income that is less than or equal to 30% of the area median income, as determined by HUD and is experiencing severe cost burden (i.e., is paying more than 50% of monthly household income toward housing costs);
 - (ii) has annual income that is less than or equal to 50% of the area median income, as determined by HUD, AND meets one of the following conditions from paragraph (iii) of the "At risk of homelessness" definition established at 24 CFR 91.5:
 - (A) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
 - (B) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
 - (C) Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;
 - (D) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
 - (E) Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which

there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;

- (F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
- (G) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan

Veterans and Families that include a Veteran Family Member that meet the criteria for one of the qualifying populations described above are eligible to receive HOME-ARP assistance.

Subpopulations at greatest risk of housing instability

According to the 2023 Point-in-Time (PIT) count, several subpopulations in Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller counties are at risk of homelessness or housing instability. The data highlights the following key statistics:

Chronic Homelessness:

- On the night of January 23, 2023, there were 2,336 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in the three counties.
- The majority of those experiencing chronic homelessness were male (68%).
- The average age of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness was 50 years old.
- The lack of affordable housing was the most common reason cited for chronic homelessness (62%).

Veterans:

- On the night of January 23, 2023, there were 1,372 veterans experiencing homelessness in the three counties.
- The majority of veterans experiencing homelessness were male (92%).
- The average age of veterans experiencing homelessness was 49 years old.
- The lack of affordable housing was the most common reason cited for veteran homelessness (64%).

Serious Mental Illness:

- On the night of January 23, 2023, there were 1,185 individuals experiencing homelessness with serious mental illness in the three counties.
- The majority of those experiencing homelessness with serious mental illness were male (67%).
- The average age of individuals experiencing homelessness with serious mental illness was 45 years old.
- The lack of affordable housing was the most common reason cited for homelessness among individuals with serious mental illness (63%).

Substance Use Disorder:

- On the night of January 23, 2023, there were 1,023 individuals experiencing homelessness with substance use disorder in the three counties.
- The majority of those experiencing homelessness with substance use disorder were male (71%).
- The average age of individuals experiencing homelessness with substance use disorder was 43 years old.
- The lack of affordable housing was the most common reason cited for homelessness among individuals with substance use disorder (61%).

Young Adults (18-24):

- On the night of January 23, 2023, there were 835 young adults (ages 18-24) experiencing homelessness in the three counties.
- The majority of young adults experiencing homelessness were male (62%).
- The lack of affordable housing was the most common reason cited for homelessness among young adults (60%).

Parenting Youth:

- On the night of January 23, 2023, there were 297 parenting youth (ages 18-24) experiencing homelessness with their children in the three counties.
- The majority of parenting youth experiencing homelessness were female (72%).
- The average age of parenting youth experiencing homelessness was 22 years old.
- The lack of affordable housing was the most common reason cited for homelessness among parenting youth (62%).

These subpopulations are disproportionately represented among those experiencing homelessness in Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller counties. They face various challenges that hinder their ability to obtain and sustain housing. While programs and services are available to support these populations, more efforts are needed to address the issue of homelessness and provide comprehensive assistance to these vulnerable groups.

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):

Shelters: There are only two emergency shelters in Fort Bend County, the Fort Bend Women's Center (FBCWC) and the Parks Youth Ranch (PYR). There is no shelter for men or families in the Fort Bend County Service Area.

Family Promise provides housing and services through participating congregations. Currently, overnight accommodation is provided at the host congregations or when necessary at a motel. The Day Center provides common areas, lockers, laundry facilities, bathrooms and storage space for families. The Center provides counseling, meeting areas, and a computer lab.

Services: Several organizations and agencies provide services to residents of Fort Bend County.

Attack Poverty: Provide spiritual growth, education, revitalization and basic needs to Fort Bend County residents.

Brazos Bend Guardianship Program: Provides disabled and incapacitated adults and their families with legal guardianship, financial management and guardianship education.

Catholic Charities Mamie George Community Center: Provides a food pantry, senior and other services to residents of the North Richmond and North Rosenberg areas.

East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, Inc.: Provides a food pantry, financial assistance and a resale shop.

Rosenberg-Richmond Helping Hands: Provides food, cloths, and services to underserved residents of West Fort Bend County.

Second Mile Mission Center: Provides services to persons in poverty. They provide food, clothing, financial assistance, and training to Fort Bend County residents. This provider is located in Missouri City.

United Way of Fort Bend: Provides education, a helpline, coordinated services and employment services to Fort Bend County residents.

Transitional Housing: Fort Bend County does not have any transitional housing available for all people in the County's service area. The only program that is transitional is Abigail's Place. Abigail's Place assists single mother families with emergency housing services. This program provides financial and other assistance to help their client's transition to permanent housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Fort Bend County does not have any permanent supportive housing in the County's service area.

Other Permanent Housing: There are twenty-four (24) HUD Projects in Fort Bend County. Only thirteen (13) of these projects are in the County's service area. These projects provide 980 low-income housing units in the County's Service area. In addition, there are three HUD projects that provide rental assistance for 142 housing units for Persons with Aids, elderly persons and disabled persons in the County's service area.

Two projects in the County's service area are senior only projects with 226 housing units. The County assumed one bed per housing unit. The remaining 754 housing units of the HUD housing inventory are reported in Table 3 as family housing. There is no information available on the size of the family units. As a result, the County assumed one bed per unit, the minimum. The projects have few vacancies, and most have waiting lists.

Describe the unmet housing and service needs of qualifying populations:

Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

The 2023 Point-in-Time Count was conducted by the Coalition for the Homeless. Overall, the Point-in-Time Count reported that sixty-seven percent of the unsheltered households did not include children. However, thirty-two percent of the sheltered homeless were households with children. Among the unsheltered households, all but one household did not include children.

The Point-in-Time Count reported that two out of five unsheltered persons were experiencing their first time being homeless. The main reasons cited included Hurricane Harvey and the COVID pandemic.

The 2023 Point-in-Time Count, conducted by the Coalition for the Homeless, found that there were 3,270 people experiencing homelessness in Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery County on January 23, 2023.

- Of these, 2,028 were sheltered and 1,242 were unsheltered.
- Of the sheltered population, 664 or 32% were households with children.
- Of the unsheltered population, 1,234 or 98% were 24 years old or older and just 2% were younger than 18 years old.
- The Point-in-Time Count reported that 43% of persons experiencing homelessness identified as White, 52% identified as Black and or African American, 1% identified as Asian, 1% as Native American, and 2% as Multiple or Other race. 17% of the persons identified as experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic regardless of race.

The data shows that there has been a slight decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery Counties since 2022. However, there is still a significant need for affordable housing and services for people experiencing homelessness in the region. The county government, along with the private sector and community organizations, need to work together to address this issue.

Fort Bend County

The 2023 Point-in-Time Count, conducted by the Coalition for the Homeless, reveals important data on homelessness in Fort Bend County. On January 23, 2023, the count identified 33 sheltered homeless persons and 56 unsheltered homeless persons in the county. Notably, Fort Bend County lacks shelters for single adults, which may impact the location of the unsheltered population and their previous living situations.

Among the sheltered population, no households had children, while the unsheltered population consisted of individuals aged 24 and older, with only 1% below 18 years old. In terms of racial and ethnic representation, 43% of those experiencing homelessness identified as White, 52% as Black or African American, 1% as Asian, 1% as Native American, and 2% as Multiple or Other race. Additionally, 17% of individuals experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic, irrespective of race.

While there has been a slight increase in homelessness since 2022, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Fort Bend County remains significantly lower than in Harris County. The data also highlights that African Americans and/or Blacks are disproportionately affected by homelessness in Fort Bend County, consistent with national trends.

However, the county faces challenges in addressing homelessness. There are no shelters available for homeless men or families within the Fort Bend County Service Area, with existing emergency shelters already operating at full capacity. This underscores the urgent need for additional emergency shelter and support services in the county. Moreover, smaller towns in the southern part of the county face significant geographical barriers, being over 20 miles away from the nearest shelter facilities in the City of Houston. The absence of homeless, housing, and service providers in most small towns further emphasizes the need for comprehensive solutions to address homelessness in Fort Bend County.

At Risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5

In the 2020 Consolidated Plan, Fort Bend County reported that there were 6,815 renter households and 7,395 owner households with incomes between 0 and 30 percent of AMI in the County. Thus, 14,210 households were vulnerable to becoming homeless solely because of their low income.

Fort Bend County does not have a public housing authority. Thus, there is no permanent rental assistance available to low-income people and families in the County's service area.

The City of Rosenberg has a small housing authority for its residents. The Rosenberg Housing Authority (RHA) operates a voucher program with an authorized 453 unit per month. There is no public housing in the County. Thus, there is a larger population in the County at risk of becoming homeless due to the lack of permanent rental assistance in the County for very low-income persons.

Youth aging out of foster care is another population at risk of homelessness in the County. Currently, the support system and housing choices for this population in the County are inadequate.

Disabled persons and their families are an at-risk population. Families on Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) have a limited income that is not increasing with either the rental or the owner housing costs in the County.

The Fort Bend Senior Citizens estimates that of the total number of 1,548 clients, about 64 percent own their home, 21% use a wheelchair, 43 percent use a walker, and 34 percent use a cane. Some clients reported using all three. The County estimates that one-third of the clients have a mobility limitation. In addition, an estimated 32 percent of the clients live alone. Thus, at least 500 seniors are at risk of losing their ability to live alone.

Refugees and immigrants are an at-risk population in the County. Recent arrivals face income and housing insecurity along with new cultural and social environments,

There are very few housing choices for people and families at risk of homelessness. Social Service providers in the County offer emergency rent and utility payments. However, there is an overall

shortage of rental housing in the County. This shortage makes affordable housing even scarcer in the County's service area.

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

The Fort Bend Women's Center (FBCWC) shelter capacity is 56 persons in 14 rooms. The shelter can place sleeping pads on the floor and expand their capacity to 65 in severe emergencies. During 2020, the FBCWC sheltered 269 clients in hotels. During 2022, the FBCWC received 1,148 requests for shelter that they could not provide.

During FY 2021, the FBCWC assisted 59 clients with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program funds. Thirty-six of these clients identified as Hispanic, nine identified as White only, nine identified as Black or African American only, one identified as Asian, only and four identified as multi or other race. The majority of the clients provided assistance by the FBCWC identified as an ethnic or racial minority.

According to the Fort Bend County Public Safety Community Plan, the 2020 Texas Department of Public Safety's Crime in Texas Report indicated that 4,425 family violence and 200 sexual assault offenses were reported to law enforcement in Fort Bend County. This number is overwhelming given that there is only capacity of 56 persons at the FBCWC.

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

Senior citizens on a fixed income are an at-risk population in Fort Bend County. Increasing rental and owner housing costs place this population at imminent risk of losing affordable housing as the County continues to grow.

The Fort Bend Senior Citizens estimates that of the total number of 1,548 clients, about 64 percent own their home, 21% use a wheelchair, 43 percent use a walker, and 34 percent use a cane. Some clients reported using all three. The County estimates that one-third of the clients have a mobility limitation. In addition, an estimated 32 percent of the clients live alone. Thus, at least 500 seniors are at risk of losing their ability to live alone.

Thirty-six percent of the total number of the total number of 1,548 clients rent their homes. This segment of the population is at risk of becoming homeless since they may lose their home as they become less able to live independently. There are very few affordable senior rental projects in Fort Bend County to provide housing for this population.

During FY 2021, Fort Bend County provided CDBG Program assistance to the FB Seniors. Seventy-Nine (79) clients were providing assistance. Forty clients identified as White only, ten identified as Black or African American only, two identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native only and two identified as Multi or Other race. Twenty-five clients identified as Hispanic. About half the clients identified as ethnic or racial minorities.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Quick Facts for Fort Bend County as of July 1, 2021, there were 27,085 Veterans residing in Fort Bend County. The veteran population is at risk because of health and mental issues caused by their service. In addition, veteran’s service interrupted their personal relationship, their education, and their employment. Some of these interruptions had negative impacts on the veteran’s ability to readjust to civilian life and continue their pre-service personal relationships, education and employment. Services and housing choices for veterans are inadequate in the County.

Homeless youth and youth aging out of foster care are an at-risk population in Fort Bend County. The Parks Youth Ranch has reported that there are hundreds of homeless youth in the County.

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

There are not enough emergency shelter spaces for homeless people in Fort Bend County. There are not any shelters for single adults and for families in the County’s service area. The FBCWC and PYR provide shelter for domestic violence and homeless youth. These two shelters are at capacity and turn away clients. Currently, Fort Bend County needs an entire continuum of shelters and housing to address the ever-increasing need the County.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates that in 2021, Fort Bend County has 294,867 housing units. An estimated 228,817 or 77.60% housing units are owner-occupied. Renter-occupied units total 66,060 or 22.40% of the total number of housing units. There is an increasing chronic shortage of affordable rental housing in the County. The 2021 median home value in the County has risen to \$290,086 and the median household income to \$101,158. The housing market in Fort Bend County is targeted to well-educated and high-income families. The new homes being constructed are not affordable to the County resident with income below 80 percent of MFI. The inventory of affordable housing is shrinking as the County’s population increases and there is more competition for the small number of affordable owner and renter housing units.

Under Section IV.4.2.ii.G of the HOME-ARP Notice, a County 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:

Unfortunately, there are several populations associated with housing instability and an increased risk of homelessness in Fort Bend County. Special needs individuals are especially at risk because of their special needs and the lack of public service support in the County.

Refugees, immigrants, and underserved residents. This population is characterized by limited English proficiency, ineligibility for public assistance, and the lack of services available to non-English speaking populations. These populations are especially at-risk of instability since many residents do not have legal residency and they will not report abuses by employers and landlords.

Identify priority needs for qualifying populations:

The first priority is to provide shelter for homeless individuals and families. The priority need for qualifying populations is for emergency shelter beds, both congregate and non-congregate. The County is lacking a continuum of services, shelter, transitional, and permanent affordable housing for homeless persons. There is a great and increasing need for all the elements in the homeless services and housing delivery system. Shelters are needed to provide emergency housing in a housing market with a low inventory of affordable rental housing units. It will take the County several years to build an inventory of affordable rental and owner housing and service providers.

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

The lack of emergency shelter, rental housing, and services is a chronic problem in Fort Bend County. This issue has been identified in every Consolidated Plan submitted by the County to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The existing two shelters are at capacity. The few affordable rental housing projects located in the County's service area have waiting lists. In addition, the County does not have a Public Housing Authority. Thus, there is not a source of assistance for the lowest income residents of the County in one of the wealthiest County in the State of Texas and nation.

The need for shelter, rental housing and services has increased as the population of the County has continued to grow. The rapid growth of the County from a primarily rural suburban County has transformed Fort Bend County into one of the most educated and wealthiest suburban counties in the nation.

Recently, the County has been impacted by natural disasters in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The County was greatly impacted by COVID in 2020 and 2021. These disasters have strained the non-profit and governmental shelter, housing and service providers. COVID limited fund-raising for local non-profits. Any long-term plans to expand shelter, housing and services were postponed or cancelled due to the financial and social constraints caused by the pandemic.

The natural disasters and the pandemic increased the need for shelter, housing and services by homeless persons and the persons at risk of homelessness. The gap for shelter, housing and services has widened or increased as the population of the County has grown amid these disasters.

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:

Fort Bend County will issue a request for proposals (RFP) for the HOME-ARP funds. FBC Community Development Department staff will evaluate the proposals and rank them. The eligible proposals that rank the highest will be recommended to the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court for funding.

Describe whether the County will administer eligible activities directly:

Fort Bend County will administer the HOME-ARP eligible activities directly.

If any portion of the County’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 County’s entire HOME-ARP grant, identify the subrecipient or contractor and describe its role and responsibilities in administering all of the County HOME-ARP program:

There is no subrecipient or contractor responsible for the administration of the County HOME-ARP grant.

In accordance with Section V.C.2. of the Notice (page 4), the County must indicate the amount of HOME-ARP funding that is planned for each eligible HOME-ARP activity type and demonstrate that any planned funding for nonprofit organization operating assistance, nonprofit capacity building, and administrative costs is within HOME-ARP limits.

Table 7: Use of HOME-ARP Funding

	Funding Amount	Percent of the Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	\$600,000		
Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	\$ 1,000,000		
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	\$ 500,000		
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	\$ 500,000		
Non-Profit Operating	\$ 123,000	# %	5%
Non-Profit Capacity Building	\$ 100,000	# %	5%
Administration and Planning	\$ 498,300	# %	15%
Total HOME ARP Allocation	\$ 3,322,057		

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

Fort Bend County will distribute the HOME-ARP funds for Supportive Services, non-congregate shelter, TBRA, Rental Housing, Non-Profit Operating and Non-Profit Capacity Building, and Program administration. Feedback from homeless shelter and service providers emphasized the need for non-congregate shelter, as the first step in building a shelter and housing system in the County. In addition, the FBCWC stated that it needed a non-congregate shelter in addition to its existing emergency shelter. Unfortunately, there is a great need for all the HOME-ARP eligible activities to address the unmet needs in the County.

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:

Fort Bend County does not have emergency shelters to service single adults, families with children, or young adults from 18 to 24. The only two shelters in the County are the Fort Bend County Women's Center (FBCWC) and the Park Youth Ranch (PYR). The FBCWC is a domestic violence shelter and Parks Youth Ranch service children and teens.

The County does not have public housing authority. Permanent rental assistance is not available to County residents. Homeless, housing and social service agencies provide emergency rental and utility assistance.

HOME-ARP PRODUCTION HOUSING GOALS

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

Fort Bend County acknowledges the critical need for affordable housing and homelessness services within the community. With its HOME-ARP allocation, the county aims to produce or support (28) twenty-eight affordable rental housing units for qualifying populations. This includes the development of a small non-congregate shelter with (20) twenty beds, rental assistance for (4) four households (16 individuals), and (4) four affordable rental housing units for (8) eight individuals.

Fort Bend County currently faces a shortage of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing, with limited availability for all residents within the county's service area. Of the existing HUD Affordable Rental Projects, only 13 are located in the service area, with two senior-only projects offering 226 housing units and three projects providing 142 housing units for persons with AIDS, the elderly, and disabled individuals. The remaining 754 housing units in the HUD housing inventory are designated as family housing, with limited information available regarding unit sizes.

The county's proposed projects aim to address the critical need for affordable housing and homelessness services. The small non-congregate shelter will provide temporary housing and support services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Rental assistance funds will be allocated to low-income households struggling to afford housing, assisting them in meeting their rent obligations. Additionally, the development of affordable rental housing will contribute to new, affordable housing units for the qualifying populations.

Fort Bend County remains committed to collaboration with other organizations to develop and implement additional programs and services that cater to the needs of all eligible individuals and families. These initiatives may encompass job training and placement services, mental health and addiction treatment services, children's services, and veterans' services.

Through these collective efforts, Fort Bend County aims to reduce the number of individuals experiencing homelessness and improve access to affordable housing options for its residents.

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

Fort Bend County has set a specific goal to produce or support 28 affordable rental housing units for qualifying populations using its HOME-ARP allocation. This goal directly addresses the County's priority needs, which include addressing the lack of affordable housing options, reducing homelessness, and providing support services to individuals and families in need.

By producing or supporting these 28 affordable rental housing units, the County aims to make a significant impact on these priority needs. The County recognizes the importance of collaboration with other organizations to develop and implement additional programs and services that will cater to the needs of eligible individuals and families.

The production goal serves several purposes in addressing the County's priority needs:

1. Addressing the lack of affordable housing options: The creation of 28 affordable rental housing units will offer much-needed housing for low-income families and individuals. This will alleviate the burden of choosing between paying rent and meeting basic necessities like food and healthcare.
2. Reducing homelessness: By providing safe and stable housing, the affordable rental units will contribute to reducing the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. These units will serve as a steppingstone for people to regain stability in their lives.
3. Providing support services: The County is committed to offering support services to residents living in affordable rental housing units. These services may encompass job training, financial assistance, and counseling to empower individuals and families on their path towards self-sufficiency.

The County is determined to collaborate with other organizations to develop and implement additional programs and services that cater to the needs of eligible individuals and families. This collaborative effort may include job training and placement services, mental health and addiction treatment services, children's services, and veterans' services.

By working together and taking proactive measures, Fort Bend County aims to reduce homelessness and provide meaningful support to its residents in need.

Identify whether the County 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:

Fort Bend County does not intend to give preference to any specific qualifying population or subpopulation in its HOME-ARP activities and projects. The County recognizes substantial, diverse needs among all populations.

Given limited HOME-ARP resources to address a range of needs, Fort Bend County will not institute preferences for any particular qualifying population. Instead, the County will utilize the Coordinated Entry system to thoroughly assess individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness and match them with the most suitable housing or service interventions.

This coordinated, housing-focused approach will allow the County to strategically allocate HOME-ARP funds based on vulnerability and need assessments rather than preset preferences. Partnerships with providers serving all populations will be vital to ensuring equitable access to HOME-ARP resources where they are most needed.

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 COUNTY's needs assessment and gap analysis:

As indicated previously, Fort Bend County does not plan to establish preferences for any qualifying populations or subpopulations in the use of HOME-ARP funds. The substantial needs across all populations led to this approach.

Rather than preset preferences, the County will rely on the Coordinated Entry system to assess and refer individuals and families based on vulnerability and need.

Referral Methods

Counties are not required to describe referral methods in the plan. However, if a County intends to use a coordinated entry (CE) process for referrals to a HOME-ARP project or activity, the County must ensure compliance with Section IV.C.2 of the Notice (page10).

A County may use only the CE for direct referrals to HOME-ARP projects and activities (as opposed to CE and other referral agencies or a waitlist) if the CE expands to accept all HOME-ARP qualifying populations and implements the preferences and prioritization established by the County in its HOME-ARP allocation plan. A direct referral is where the CE provides the eligible applicant directly to the County, sub recipient, or owner to receive HOME-ARP TBRA, supportive services, admittance to a HOME-ARP rental unit, or occupancy of a NCS unit. In comparison, an indirect referral is where a CE (or other referral source) refers to an eligible applicant for placement on a project or activity waitlist. Eligible applicants are then selected for a HOME-ARP project or activity from the waitlist.

The County must require a project or activity to use CE along with other referral methods (as provided in Section IV.C.2.ii) or to use only a project/activity waiting list (as provided in Section IV.C.2.iii) if:

1. the CE does not have a sufficient number of qualifying individuals and families to refer to the County for the project or activity;
2. the CE does not include all HOME-ARP qualifying populations; or,
3. the CE fails to provide access and implement uniform referral processes in situations where a project's geographic area(s) is broader than the geographic area(s) covered by the CE

If a County uses a CE that prioritizes one or more qualifying populations or segments of qualifying populations (e.g., prioritizing assistance or units for chronically homeless individuals first, then prioritizing homeless youth second, followed by any other individuals qualifying as homeless, etc.) then this constitutes the use of preferences and a method of prioritization. To implement a CE with these preferences and priorities, the County **must** include the preferences and method of prioritization that the CE will use in the preferences section of their HOME-ARP allocation plan. Use of a CE with embedded preferences or methods of prioritization that are not contained in the County's HOME-ARP allocation does not comply with Section IV.C.2 of the Notice (page10).

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

Fort Bend County will use Coordinated Entry along with a waitlist system for its projects and activities.

If the County 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):

The qualifying populations that are not eligible for coordinated entry will be referred directly to the HOME-ARP projects and activities.

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

Fort Bend County will use Coordinated Entry along with a waitlist system for its projects and activities.

If the County 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):

Fort Bend County will use Coordinated Entry and a waitlist system for its project and activities. A waitlist will be maintained for each project and/or activity.

Limitations in a HOME-ARP rental housing or NCS project

Limiting eligibility for a HOME-ARP rental housing or NCS project is only permitted under certain circumstances.

- The County must follow all applicable fair housing, civil rights, and nondiscrimination requirements, including but not limited to those requirements listed in 24 CFR 5.105(a). This includes, but is not limited to, the Fair Housing Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, section 504 of Rehabilitation Act, HUD's Equal Access Rule, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as applicable.
- A County may not exclude otherwise eligible qualifying populations from its overall HOME-ARP program.
- Within the qualifying populations, participation in a project or activity may be limited to persons with a specific disability only, if necessary, to provide effective housing, aid, benefit, or services that would be as effective as those provided to others in accordance with 24 CFR 8.4(b)(1)(iv). A County must describe why such a limitation for a project or activity is necessary in its HOME-ARP allocation plan (based on the needs and gap identified by the County in its plan) to meet some greater need and to provide a specific benefit that cannot be provided through the provision of a preference.
- For HOME-ARP rental housing, section VI.B.20.a.iii of the Notice (page 36) states that owners may only limit eligibility to a particular qualifying population or segment of the qualifying population if the limitation is described in the County's HOME-ARP allocation plan.
- The County may limit admission to HOME-ARP rental housing or NCS to households who need the specialized supportive services that are provided in such housing or NCS. However, no otherwise eligible individuals with disabilities or families including an

individual with a disability who may benefit from the services provided may be excluded on the grounds that they do not have a particular disability.

Describe whether the County 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 County does not intend to limit eligibility for a HOME-ARP rental housing or NCS project to a particular qualifying population or specific subpopulation.

If a County 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 County's needs assessment and gap analysis:

N/A

If a limitation was identified, describe how the County 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 County's HOME-ARP projects or activities):

N/A

HOME-ARP REFINANCING GUIDELINES

If the County intends to use HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily rental housing that is being rehabilitated with HOME-ARP funds, the County must state its HOME-ARP refinancing guidelines in accordance with [24 CFR 92.206\(b\)](#). The guidelines must describe the conditions under which the County will refinance existing debt for a HOME-ARP rental project, including:

- *Establish a minimum level of rehabilitation per unit or a required ratio between rehabilitation and refinancing to demonstrate that rehabilitation of HOME-ARP rental housing is the primary eligible activity.*

Fort Bend County does not plan to use any HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt for multifamily rental housing projects. The County's priority for the HOME-ARP allocation is to expand affordable housing options through new construction, acquisition, and/or rehabilitation. Refinancing existing debt does not align with the key goals identified in the County's needs assessment.

Fort Bend County is committed to ensuring compliance with HOME-ARP requirements and will not undertake any refinancing of existing debt activities prohibited by HUD regulations. The County's HOME-ARP funds will be focused on creating new affordable housing stock for the qualifying populations.

- *Require a review of management practices to demonstrate that disinvestment in the property has not occurred; that the long-term needs of the project can be met; and that the feasibility of serving qualified populations for the minimum compliance period can be demonstrated.*

Fort Bend County will require a review of management practices to demonstrate that disinvestment in the property has not occurred; that the long-term needs of the project can be met; and the feasibility of serving qualified population for the minimum compliance period can be demonstrated.

This comprehensive management practice review will ensure properties receiving HOME-ARP funds have been properly maintained, demonstrate financial capacity for long-term sustainability, and can viably serve income-qualifying households over the entire affordability period.

- *State whether the new investment is being made to maintain current affordable units, create additional affordable units, or both.*

Fort Bend County intends to use HOME-ARP funding to create additional affordable housing units. The County's investments will focus on increasing the supply of affordable rental housing to address the needs identified in its needs assessment.

- *Specify the required compliance period, whether it is the minimum 15 years or longer.*

The compliance period for housing units created using HOME-ARP funds in Fort Bend County will be set at a minimum of 15 years, as mandated by HOME-ARP guidelines. During this period, the affordability of the units must be maintained to benefit low-income tenants. By adhering to the prescribed compliance period, Fort Bend County demonstrates its commitment to providing stable and affordable housing options for low-income residents, supporting their housing security and overall well-being.

- *State that HOME-ARP funds cannot be used to refinance multifamily loans made or insured by any federal program, including CDBG.*

Fort Bend County will not use HOME-ARP funds to refinance multifamily loans made or insured by any federal program, including the Community Development Block Grant program.

- *Other requirements in the County's guidelines, if applicable:*

To Be Determined. These additional guidelines may be dependent on specific local circumstances, changes in federal regulations, or other factors.