



PY 2023 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (PY 49 CAPER)

DRAFT

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

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

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

The City of Meriden is an entitlement jurisdiction, receiving an annual allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These funds help the City address the housing, community and economic development objectives outlined by HUD, which include, but are not limited to: the development and preservation of affordable housing, public facility and infrastructure improvements, small business assistance, and vital services for low- to moderate-income (LMI) and special needs populations. Accomplishments for PY 2023 are highlighted below.

Affordable Housing: Rehab activities continue to be in various stages of development, and will be reported as they are completed. These activities are completed by the City's Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) (#1036). The City continues to successfully implement the Code Enforcement program (#1037), which had a citywide low/mod benefit (LMA). Code enforcement activities provide house-to-house inspections principally within the inner-city target neighborhoods in order to ensure compliance with the City Housing Code and Zoning Ordinance and identify housing units suitable for rehabilitation.

Public Facility & Infrastructure Improvements: In PY 2023, the City funded the Gallery 53 activity (#1048), benefiting an estimated 59,395 persons in citywide low/mod areas.

Public Services: The City funded several public services which helped to improve the quality of lives for the special needs and LMI population in Meriden. A total of 1,185 individuals were served in PY 2023 with activities that reported by low/mod clientele (LMC). Services for special needs groups included senior services and mental health services. Services for LMI persons included youth enrichment and prevention, employment services, subsistence payments and childcare services. The City also had food programs and services which benefitted residents citywide living in low/mod areas through the Meriden Farmers Market and Joy Unlimited Breaking of the Bread Program. In general, services that have a low/mod citywide benefit serve an estimated 59,395 persons.

CARES: Many CDBG-CV activities have already been successfully reported in prior CAPER reports and the City has several activities that it is currently working to complete. To continue to successfully expend these funds, the City is working on executing sub-recipient agreements with local public service providers and providing technical support and basic program training to existing subrecipients to closeout grant agreements.

Comparison of the proposed versus actual outcomes for each outcome measure submitted with the consolidated plan and explain, if applicable, why progress was not made toward meeting goals and objectives. 91.520(g)

Categories, priority levels, funding sources and amounts, outcomes/objectives, goal outcome indicators, units of measure, targets, actual outcomes/outputs, and percentage completed for each of the grantee's program year goals.

Goal	Category	Source	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Expected – Strategic Plan	Actual – Strategic Plan	Percent Complete	Expected – Program Year	Actual – Program Year	Percent Complete
1A. Expand Public Infrastructure	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	25,000	59,395	237.58%	5,000	0	0.00%
1B. Improve Public Infrastructure Capacity	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	25,000	75,330	301.32%	5,000	0	0.00%
1C. Improve Access to Public Facilities	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	25,000	178,185	712.74%	5,000	59,395	1,187.90%
2A. Preserve Existing Homeowner & Rental Hsg Units	Affordable Housing	CDBG	Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated	Household Housing Unit	25	15	60.00%			

2B. Provide Code Enforcement in LMI Neighborhoods	Affordable Housing	CDBG	Housing Code Enforcement/Foreclosed Property Care	Household Housing Unit	25,000	237,580	950.32%	10,000	59,395	593.95%
2C. Provide for Homeownership Assistance	Affordable Housing	CDBG	Homeowner Housing Added	Household Housing Unit	20	0	0.00%			
2C. Provide for Homeownership Assistance	Affordable Housing	CDBG	Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers	Households Assisted	40	0	0.00%			
3A. Provide Supportive Services for Special Needs	Non-Homeless Special Needs	CDBG	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	110,000	17,372	15.79%	18,000	357	1.98%
3B. Provide Vital Services for LMI Households	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit	Persons Assisted	110,000	184,972	168.16%	18,000	60,316	335.09%
4A. Provide for Small Business Assistance	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Businesses assisted	Businesses Assisted	50	39	78.00%			
4B. Planned Repayment of Section 108 Loan	Non-Housing Community Development	CDBG	Other	Other	1	1	100.00%	1	1	100.00%

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

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

PY 2023 is the fourth program year of the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. The plan was developed through an analysis of community and housing data as well as input from citizens. Priority needs identified in Meriden were public facilities and infrastructure improvements; affordable housing development and preservation; economic development; and public services for low- to moderate-income (LMI) and special needs populations. Funds from CDBG were used to address these needs, and a number of objectives were completed as a result of these investments.

Overview of PY 2023 Goals Accomplished

1A. Expand Public Infrastructure: The City had a goal for 5,000 to be assisted, and this goal was not completed in PY 2023. The City was focused on public infrastructure improvements and may remove this goal in future plans as to not duplicate goals and efforts.

1B. Improve Public Infrastructure Capacity: The City had a goal for 5,000 to be assisted, and this goal was not completed in PY 2023. The City is still working on completing activity # 1050 - Sidewalks (Olive and Oak), and anticipates this will be reported in the upcoming CAPER.

1C. Improve Access to Public Facilities: The City had a goal for 5,000 to be assisted, and an estimated 59,395 in low/mod areas were serviced. The improvement activity was associated with the Gallery 53 Meriden Mosaics activity (#1048).

2A. Preserve Existing Homeowner & Rental Hsg Units: There were no goals set for this in the PY 2023 AAP.

2B. Provide Code Enforcement in LMI Neighborhoods: There was a goal to assist 5000 residents in LMI areas with code enforcement activities, and the City exceeded this goal with activities that benefit 59,395 in low/mod areas.

2C. Provide for Homeownership Assistance: There were no goals set for this in the PY 2023 AAP.

3A. Provide Supportive Services for Special Needs: There was a goal to assist 18,000 special needs persons, and the City funded programs that assisted 357 special needs persons. The City may revise this goal estimate in the future.

3B. Provide Vital Services for LMI Households: There was a goal to assist 18,000 LMI persons, and the City served 60,580 LMI persons. This was achieved through food programs which benefitted residents citywide and through the various programs such as youth, employment training,

subsistence payments and child care services.

4A. Provide for Small Business Assistance: This goal is a long-term goal in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan. With CDBG-CV funds, the City has now assisted 39 small businesses impacted by COVID-19.

4B. Planned Repayment of Section 108 Loan: The City made loan repayments in the amount of \$188,156.25 in PY 2023. This Section 108 loan repayment to HUD was for the demolition and environmental remediation of the former Insilco Factory H building site.

PR23 Differences to CR-05 Reporting

The City had several activities that were still open from previous program years that were just recently completed/closed in the current reporting year. The PR23 Summary of Accomplishments report captures all these open activities regardless if they have been reported in previous CAPER reports or not. Due to this reason, the estimated persons receiving benefits is reported as much higher on the PR23, than what is reported in the CR-05 goal table above. The City has removed any activity accomplishment that was already reported in previous year CAPERs so as not to duplicate the benefits counted.

CR-10 - Racial and Ethnic composition of families assisted

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

	CDBG
White	645
Black or African American	317
Asian	14
American Indian or American Native	1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	11
Total	988
Hispanic	723
Not Hispanic	555

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

Narrative

DATA NOTE: The data above was drawn from the beneficiary accomplishments from the PY 2023 PR23 Summary of Accomplishments and the PR03 CDBG Activity Summary Report. The table above does not include a category for people that identify as “other” or “multiple races” nor does it include the beneficiaries of projects determined to have an "area benefit" to the community, such as public improvements to sidewalks and neighborhood facilities in low/mod income areas. Therefore, the data in the above table does not necessarily match the numbers of all people actually served by the CDBG program. Please also note, the accomplishments listed above are lower than what is reported in the PR23 because the City has removed any accomplishments that has already been reported in previous CAPER reports. The table above reports 988 persons assisted, however the actual total served was 1,278 persons. There were 290 “other” or “multiracial” persons assisted which was not included in the table above.

According to the most recent 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the total population of Meriden was 60,556 and 65.9% were White, 8.2% were Black and 2.1% were Asian. Some other race were 8.3% and Two or more races were 15.1%. All other minority groups combined was less than 1%. Persons who identified ethnically as Hispanic were 37.1% of the citywide population.

Approximately 24.8% of CDBG funding went towards assisting Black persons and 1.1% went towards Asians. Other multiracial persons assisted were 22.4% and Two or more races were 0.3%. All other minority races accounted for less than 1%. For persons who identified ethnically as Hispanic, 56.6% of CDBG funding went towards assisting this group. With the exception of smaller race groups such as Asians, the percentage of persons assisted with CDBG funds were in line with the City demographics.

Housing Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment in the City's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan assesses if any racial and ethnic group by income category has a disproportionate need in the area with regards to housing problems, severe housing problems and cost burden. Households with housing problems are those that reside in units lacking complete kitchen and plumbing facilities as well as overcrowding (more than one person per room) and cost burden (spending 30% or more of income on housing per month). Households with "severe housing problems" are those that reside in units lacking complete kitchen and plumbing facilities as well as severely overcrowded homes (more than 1.5 person per room) and severe cost burden (spending 50% or more of income on housing per month).

Housing Needs Assessment (NA-15): According to the Needs Assessment, for regular housing problems, Asian households experience a disparity in very-low income levels (30-50% AMI).

Severe Housing Needs Assessment (NA-20): For severe housing problems, Asian households again experience a disparity in very-low income levels (30-50% AMI).

Housing Cost Burden (NA-25): For housing cost burden, there were no minority households experiencing a disproportionate need.

The City did not complete any affordable housing activities in PY 2023. The program currently has several different projects in various stages of development and will be reporting these benefits in future CAPER reports. Due to the small number of households assisted through the program in any given year, the City may not be able identify all minority groups with this need in each year of the program.

CR-15 - Resources and Investments 91.520(a)

Identify the resources made available

Source of Funds	Source	Resources Made Available	Amount Expended During Program Year
CDBG	public - federal	1,142,573	1,077,526

Table 3 - Resources Made Available

Narrative

In PY 2023 there was \$942,573 in CDBG funds made available to the City through the annual allocation and \$200,000 in prior year funds from unspent PY 2017 and PY 2018 funds, which were previously committed to the Commercial Façade Rehab Program. This program has now been completed and these funds were reallocated towards the Sidewalk Repair program.

For the program year, the City reported total expenditures of \$1,077,526. This amount encompasses expenses incurred by the City and its subrecipients for eligible activities, including public services, housing rehabilitation, and improvements to public facilities and infrastructure. However, since the City operates on a reimbursement system, this total does not reflect the draws processed in the IDIS system up to the time of this report.

According to the PR07 Drawdown Report the City expended \$1,045,528.79 in the program year. These funds went towards public improvements to sidewalks, affordable housing activities, vital public services for special needs groups and LMI households, and repayment of a Section 108 loan in association to the Factory H economic development project. A detail of funds spent by priority is listed below:

Public Services: \$131,684.02 (12.6%)

Expand/Improve Public Infrastructure & Facilities: \$349,520.02 (33.4%)

Preserve & Expand Affordable Housing: \$273,188.44 (26.1%)

Section 108 Loan Repayment: \$188,156.25 (18.0%)

Administration: \$102,980.06 (9.8%)

Total CDBG Expenditures: \$1,045,528.79

CARES Act Funds:

The City received a total of \$1,045,687 in CDBG-CV grant funds to fund activities that prevent, prepare for and respond (PPR) to the COVID-19 pandemic. In PY 2023, the City expended another \$10,000.00 in CDBG-CV funds towards Small Business Assistance for LMI owners still impacted by the pandemic. This brings total expenditures for the life of the program to \$351,207.56 and leaves a remaining balance of \$694,479.44 or 66%. The PR26 CDBG-CV Financial Summary Report has been uploaded to confirm expenditures for the program.

FY CDBG Grant Allocation Close-Out

Each year the City reports if a prior FY CDBG annual allocation has been fully spent. In PY 2023, there were no FY annual allocations fully spent. In the event that the City fully expends a FY annual grant allocation, the City will contact its HUD office to initiate the grant close out process as noticed by CPD-22-14.

Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Target Area	Planned Percentage of Allocation	Actual Percentage of Allocation	Narrative Description
Central Downtown Area	100	100	Investments focused on the downtown area due to it being the highest concentration of LMI

Table 4 – Identify the geographic distribution and location of investments

Narrative

CDBG investment in Meriden is targeted towards downtown neighborhoods, which contain low- to moderate-income households, sub-standard housing conditions, and a concentration of vacant or underutilized properties. The City recognizes that the revitalization of its downtown neighborhoods is linked to the revitalization of its economy as a whole. It also continues to be the location of many of the non-profits and other groups that provide vital services to the area's residents.

The percentage of funds shown in the geographic distribution table is an approximation, however the City has several mechanisms to ensure funds are directed towards the Central Downtown Area. Included in the Central Downtown Area funds are the public improvements, housing rehab, and the Section 108 repayment projects. Also included are public service activities that are specifically located in the downtown, or predominantly serve the residents of downtown.

Leveraging

Explain how federal funds leveraged additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements were satisfied, as well as how any publicly owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that were used to address the needs identified in the plan.

Federal CDBG funds are a primary source of funds that helps to leverage other resources on an annual basis in the City of Meriden. All City funded organization through the CDBG program have a budget that includes funds that are non-CDBG related but are still used to help provide vital services to City citizens. Program partners include small and large nonprofit agencies; local community organizations; and other local government agencies and departments. CDBG funds received by these various organizations are often used as leverage to help secure other local grants.

Funding of the Rehab Administration Program, Code Enforcement, and the Inner City Sidewalk improvement activities also help to maintain the momentum of the significant Federal and state financial investment that has occurred in the downtown area of Meriden in the past 6+ years. This other assistance has come from the Federal Government in the form of EPA assessment and cleanup grants, from the State of Connecticut in the form of Brownfields Cleanup grants & loans and a rebuilt train station, and numerous municipal monetary outlays.

The City secured a Section 108 Loan of \$1,500,000 to leverage a \$300,000 DECD Brownfields Pilot grant and \$400,000 in U.S. EPA Brownfields funds to complete demolition and environmental remediation of the former Insilco Factory H building at 77 Cooper and 104 Butler Street. Redevelopment of the Meriden Green, Meriden Transit Center, and Factory H areas are projects that are being or were facilitated with HUD Challenge Grant funding as well as significant investment by the State of Connecticut.

Publicly Owned Land or Property Used to Address Needs in the Plan

The City has limited developable land, thus greatly affecting the ability to construct new affordable housing units. However, the City continues to be actively involved in redevelopment efforts in its downtown that will provide new affordable housing as part of mixed-use development centered on an updated transit hub. Brownfield sites and vacant buildings are being or have been assessed for environmental contaminants, remediated, repurposed and transferred to private partner organizations to be developed into usable, mixed-used developments with housing and economic development opportunities. The City is also assisting in completing site re-use planning projects by working with landowners of vacant or underutilized parcels in the downtown area.

CR-20 - Affordable Housing 91.520(b)

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

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

Table 5 – Number of Households

	One-Year Goal	Actual
Number of households supported through Rental Assistance	0	0
Number of households supported through The Production of New Units	0	0
Number of households supported through Rehab of Existing Units	0	0
Number of households supported through Acquisition of Existing Units	0	0
Total	0	0

Table 6 – Number of Households Supported

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

In PY 2022, the City did not create any goals to assist households with affordable housing activities in the PY 2023 AAP; however, the City still continues to utilize funds that were programmed from previous program years to fund rehab activities. The Rehabilitation Administration activity administers the NPP program which provides zero-interest deferred forgivable loans to qualifying low-income individuals/households, with funding targeted at the central downtown area & low-income census tracts. The City has several projects in various stages of development and anticipates it will report these accomplishments in future CAPER reports. These activities will help to meet the established goals of the program.

While the City did not directly complete any affordable housing activities in PY 2023, the City continues indirectly assist in affordable housing efforts. The City successfully implement the Code Enforcement

program (#1037), which had a citywide low/mod benefit (LMA). Code enforcement activities provide house-to-house inspections principally within the inner-city target neighborhoods in order to ensure compliance with the City Housing Code and Zoning Ordinance and identify housing units suitable for rehabilitation.

Discuss how these outcomes will impact future annual action plans.

The City is continually working to identify eligible households for the NPP program. There are several projects in various stages of development that will help LMI residents with housing rehab, and the City will continue to fulfill this need in the community. Housing rehab remains a priority for the City, and the City will continue to fund this activity in future Annual Action Plans.

Include the number of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income persons served by each activity where information on income by family size is required to determine the eligibility of the activity.

Number of Households Served	CDBG Actual
Extremely Low-income	0
Low-income	0
Moderate-income	0
Total	0

Table 7 – Number of Households Served

Narrative Information

There were no affordable housing activities completed in PY 2023 in the NPP program.

Worst Case Needs

Those with worst case needs are individuals or households at-risk of or experiencing homelessness and/or are extremely low-income. Extremely low-income households are at imminent risk of homelessness as they lack the funds to maintain housing during emergency and times of crises. CHAS data reported in the City's Needs Assessment from the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan estimates that there are approximately 680 homeowner and 1,440 renters that are extremely low-income (0-30% AMI) in Meriden that are also severely cost burdened (households paying 50% of income towards housing costs).

Eligible households have been identified for the NPP program and are undergoing eligibility review. When new households are identified for the program, the City will help enroll them for service to maintain the condition of their housing.

The City did not specifically report any persons with a disability in affordable housing programs, however if a household with a disability is identified for assistance in one of the housing programs, the City will make all necessary accommodations within reason to meet the needs of the household.

Finally, to address homelessness in Meriden, the City continues to work with the Coalition on Housing and Homelessness for services at the homeless shelters. These services are designed to help individuals and families find support, social services, medical, job and housing.

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

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

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

The City allocated resources towards the provision of housing and counseling services to individuals who are either homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. These services include the Women and Families Center's "Project REACH" which directly benefits runaway, homeless and at-risk youth ages 18-24 by seeking out youth where they congregate and providing supportive services to build self-sufficiency and identify stable, long-term housing. The program also provides transitional housing services to young adults, economic training, and independence through job readiness programs and education.

Shelter Now, operated by New Opportunities, Inc., is also a long-time partner of the City. Shelter Now provides shelter to homeless persons while also supporting a portion of the full-time case management position. This position provides support and coordinates service assistance for shelter residents. Services including implementing individual evaluations, working with participants to develop activities to reach their goals, providing necessary intervention and cultivating and maintaining program links with area social service agencies, medical providers and appropriate support programs, helping to get residents into treatment, securing a job and enrolling in school.

The City funded Joy Unlimited Outreach Ministries and their meal program which reaches out to individuals and families with housing instability and to those who are experiencing homelessness. The meal service program, offering hot meals to low-income residents in Meriden during the weekends when other soup kitchens are closed.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The New Beginnings Shelter, operated by New Opportunities, Inc., provides assistance to shelter residents via intake, case management and supportive services necessary to make the transition from temporary housing to non-emergency assistance or complete self-sufficiency. The shelter has seen an increased number of individuals requiring shelter services due to the scarcity of relevant job opportunities and an increased number of foreclosures/evictions affecting its population. Activities at the shelter include assessing the situation of clients at the time of entry and developing a plan for family intervention, treatment, job placement, school enrollment and other long/short term goals. New Opportunities is continuing work to expand the facility to increase capacity and services. The program was again supported in PY 2023.

Women & Families Center operates Robyn's House, which provides short term housing options for ages 18-22 experiencing homelessness and case management services. This program was also supported by

the City in PY 2023.

Helping low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless, especially extremely low-income individuals and families and those who are: likely to become homeless after being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care (such as health care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); and, receiving assistance from public or private agencies that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, or youth needs

The City doesn't have a discharge policy for individuals and families likely to become homeless after leaving systems of care or publicly funded institutions. The City refers to its local homeless service providers, New Opportunities and the Women and Families Center, to coordinate and meet these needs.

Case management and life-skills services were offered by Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis, Shelter NOW, and the Women and Families Center's Project REACH to help low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless.

The Salvation Army Comprehensive Emergency Assistance Program and the New Opportunities Rental Assistance/ Security Deposit Program offer immediate housing-related financial aid to households who may be at risk of homelessness or are facing severe housing cost burden. The goal of these programs is to keep families and individuals in their homes and ameliorate the financial constraints that can lead to short and/or long-term homelessness. Eligible families may be assisted with utility bills, rent or free basic needs.

Also funded in PY 2023 was the Meriden Farmers Market Program, which provided farmers market fresh produce to low income residents to improve eating habits and provide nutrient rich food. The Middlesex Community College Magic Food Bus provided 93 participants with a food pantry and to raise awareness of food insecurity amongst students and access to wrap around services available to students. Finally, Joy Unlimited Outreach Ministries provided a meal service program, offering hot meals to low-income and at-risk residents in Meriden during the weekends when other soup kitchens are closed. These programs help to offset costs that can go towards other basic living needs.

The Women and Family Center's Project REACH at Robyn's House and Open DOHR also works with vulnerable youth that are at-risk or already homeless. Project REACH staff provide services that include needs assessment and individualized case management, supportive counseling, referrals and links to services, education, and aftercare services.

Kuhn Employment Opportunities has an employment program that helps persons with a disability with employment which helps them to earn an income. These activities help LMI disabled persons to be economically sustainable.

The Meriden Housing Authority has found that providing rental subsidies to households below 80% of the

median income level for the area is the most cost effective and practical means to address pending homelessness. The Meriden Housing Authority is continuing work to secure additional Section 8 Housing Assistance vouchers as they become available so that more individuals can be served.

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

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

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

The Women and Family Center's Project REACH at Robyn's House and Open DOHR also works with unsheltered teens to begin the transition into permanent, stable and safe housing. Project REACH staff provide services that help homeless youth overcome their current situation and return to self-sufficiency. Some of the services provided include assessment and individualized case management, supportive counseling, referrals and links to services, education, and aftercare services as youth move from homelessness to safe and stable housing.

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

Actions taken to address the needs of public housing

The Meriden Housing Authority (MHA) manages 221 public housing units and 915 Housing Choice Vouchers in the area. It's mission is to provide safe, decent, healthy and a responsive environment for its tenants while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the Authority.

MHA continues to undertake a multi-year effort to modernize and improve its aging housing stock. Recent developments include Yale Acres Redevelopment Phase I (162 units) and the Phase II expansion with 10 units. These developments have a development schedule of 22 and 18 months are currently in development. The MHA closed on a \$1.6 million veteran's supportive housing project at the Hannover Place Housing development with 9-units reserved for veterans at-risk of homeless. Silver City Apartments, a 41 residential unit development started in the prior program year is in a 20-month development schedule.

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

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

The MHA has monthly meetings with residents to encourage them to share their concerns with management and provide feedback as to operations. Residents are also invited to review and make comments to PHA plans.

The MHA has a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program that is designed to assist Section 8 and public housing residents achieve economic independence. FSS is a HUD initiative and supports families by providing services and referrals for educations, career counseling, financial managements, job training and job placement services. A majority of participants receive a savings account that grows as the family's earned income rises, and upon completion they receive the accumulated funds in their account. This money may be used to purchase a home, pay for higher education, start a business or pursue other personal goals. FSS participants make a contract with the program to achieve goals which will help them towards self-sufficiency. These goals include, but are not limited to getting a GED or high school diploma, acquiring a driver's license, becoming debt-free, completing home buyer education, attending or graduating college, purchasing a car, rebuilding credit, saving money and buying a house.

The MHA also operates a comprehensive homeownership program that provides qualified FSS Section 8 participants with the education and support necessary to achieve the dream of owning their own home. Successful graduates can convert their Section 8 Voucher to a Homeownership Voucher. To qualify for

this program the participant must have a Section 8 Voucher and live in the City of Meriden.

Actions taken to provide assistance to troubled PHAs

In the most recent PHA Plan, the MHA reported as a “troubled PHA”. To address this status, a corrective action plan has been implemented which will work to improve the scores for all the SEMAP indicators that resulted in the designation status. According to the 2024 MHA AAP, the MHA has entered into agreements with experienced agencies for the management, oversight, and supportive services for its Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and for providing the services that are focused on assisting the MHA to reconcile the deficiencies and put in place procedures and practices in order to improve MHA’s current designation. The procedures put into place will ensure compliance going forward and return the MHA to a high-performing PHA.

The City doesn’t provide funds to directly address the MHA’s troubled PHA designation, however the City has worked closely with the MHA recently on developments in the central downtown areas. Working together maximizes the funds being used in these areas.

CR-35 - Other Actions 91.220(j)-(k); 91.320(i)-(j)

Actions taken to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment. 91.220 (j); 91.320 (i)

The City of Meriden has collaborated with the Meriden Housing Authority through HUD's Choice Neighborhoods initiative for several recent projects. This includes the overhaul of the Mills Memorial Housing residences in the City's downtown neighborhood, which added 151 units of housing in place of the Mills dilapidated public housing facility.

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

Affordable Housing Plan

On June 6, 2022 the City of Meriden adopted an Affordable Housing Plan (AHP), as required by the Connecticut General Statutes, Title 8, Chapter 126a § 8-30j. This requires that the City must prepare an AHP at least once every five years, and within the plan, outline how the City intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments within Meriden. The AHP has a development process which involves data analysis and community input through public meetings, public hearings and a public review period. Following the adoption of the AHP, the City must regularly review and maintain the plan.

This AHP provides housing strategies the City of Meriden will consider over the next five years when addressing housing needs and opportunities. The four categories include cross-cutting strategies, supply-oriented strategies, homeownership strategies and preservation strategies. A summary of each strategy is provided below:

- Cross-cutting strategies serve multiple affordable housing needs and often involve multiple action types. This strategy will seek to encourage production of new affordable units, preserve existing affordable units, create affordable ownership opportunities, and expand housing types.
- Supply-based strategies seek to encourage the production of more affordable units whether that means developing new affordable units or working to deed restrict existing units.

- Homeownership strategies aim to assist LMI households in becoming homeowners as well as supporting existing homeowners to maintain their homes.
- Preservation and maintain strategies aim to prevent subsidized and naturally occurring affordable units from being converted into market rate units. It also aims to improve the quality of existing affordable units to serve the needs of residents.

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

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

CDBG funding remains consistent, however priorities must be set to continue to meet the needs of the community. In order to best allocate these funds, the Economic and Community Development Office worked closely with the Meriden City Council Human Services Committee and other City departments in an effort to avoid duplication of services and direct funding to the program and geographic areas of greatest need. Funded activities are reviewed annually in terms of timeliness and accomplishments to ensure that the greatest amount of need is being met with each CDBG award. In some cases, City staff have recommended decreased funding levels for activities that either underperform or do not submit required reporting and invoice materials in a timely manner so that funds can be shifted to more impactful activities. The City also continually explores alternative activities and programs that could be funded in order to better serve those in need.

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

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

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

Lead-based paint hazards are considered when drafting program guidelines and reviewing potential projects, including improvements to commercial facilities. Activities that involve the rehabilitation of building structures built before 1978 are subject to the requirements set forth at 24 CFR 91.220(k) or 91.320(j).

The City is also a recipient of the Lead Hazard Reduction Grant from the HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes Department. The City will receive \$4,000,000 from the grant as well as a \$300,000 Healthy Homes Supplement Grant. With these funds, the City estimates it will abate lead in over 200 housing units over a four year grant period. These funds will also help the City to leverage additional funding that will address low/mod and deteriorating areas in Meriden, which align with the overall housing goals in the plan.

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

Public Service activities are aimed directly at improving the quality of life of residents in Meriden including reducing the number of families in poverty. The City and its partners provided a large number of public service activities which assisted LMI persons citywide in PY 2023. Public services for special needs groups included senior services, victims of domestic violence, and mental health services. Public services for LMI persons included youth programs, food banks, employment training programs.

The New Opportunities Inc. Rent and Mortgage Assistance Program provided immediate financial relief to families facing financial hardship that could lead immediately to housing instability and further financial peril. Eviction from housing is one of the greatest contributors to cycles of poverty, as housing instability impacts employment, childhood education and general well-being of the households affected. These programs help preclude short term financial troubles from turning into long term poverty and homelessness.

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

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

CDBG administrative funds contribute to the administration of the CDBG Program and help ensure that the City meets the statutory and regulatory objectives outlined as a condition of participation in the program. The Economic & Community Development Department staff continue to take the following actions to ensure that needed services are coordinated between the City, subrecipient organizations carrying out CDBG activities, and the public who benefit from the CDBG-funded activities:

- Post CDBG Program materials and announcements, such as the availability of the Annual Plan, CAPER, and RFP documents in the local newspaper and on the City's website www.meridenct.gov
- Distribute copies of all materials to the general public, non-profit organizations, and elected

officials when available or requested.

- Hold one-on-one meetings with sub-recipients to discuss quarterly report accomplishments and overall programming, as needed.
- Provide referrals to appropriate City departments and local organizations, such as the Neighborhood Preservation Program and the Meriden Housing Authority.

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

The City of Meriden, the Meriden Housing Authority (MHA), local services providers and private housing developers continue to progress through coordinated efforts to provide housing, services, and economic opportunities in the City's downtown area. Recent coordination includes the Meriden Commons development, which incorporates over 150 units of affordable housing into the area. This working relationship between the City, MHA, and social service providers continues as all work in unison to explore options that will improve the quality of life for Meriden residents.

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

Through the City's Notice of Funding Application (NOFA) process, the City provides CDBG program basics, describes eligible activities and uses of funds, and target populations. The City also provides the priority needs as identified in the Consolidated Plan and program goals and objectives. While this process intended to accepted requests for proposals, each year the application process helps to build the capacity of service providers in the CDBG program.

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

The primary tool communities have for identifying contributing factors for these barriers to fair housing is the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). The overall goal of the AI is to review and assess impediments to fair housing within Meriden. On October 15, 2020, an AI report was completed in conjunction with the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. This AI evaluates Meriden's current fair housing legal status, and its and public and private fair housing programs and activities and provides recommendations for fair housing initiatives critical to ensuring equal housing opportunity within the City. The following impediments to fair housing related were identified:

- Concentration of Sub-Standard Housing
- Shortage of Public Housing Funds
- High Number of Cost Burdened Renter Households

- Lack of Vacant Developable Land
- Older Housing Stock
- Shortage of Affordable Housing
- The City Faces a Growing Aging Population

Actions Taken to Address Impediments

In PY 2023 the City took several steps to address the impediments identified in the 2020 AI. To address substandard housing within the City's low/mod areas, the City provided code enforcement activities that benefit these low/mod areas, as well as administer the NPP program which provided zero interest deferred forgivable loans for housing rehab.

To address the shortage of public housing funds, the City works closely with the MHA to work on developments in the central downtown areas. Working together maximizes the funds being used in these areas. The project will consist of providing first-time homebuyer classes and tenant goals to become more self-sufficient and financially successful at the Meriden Housing Authority.

The City recognizes that cost burden is one of the largest housing problems in the City. This is particularly true to low-income renters. The City has worked with the Salvation Army and New Opportunities to provide emergency rental/security deposits and utility payments for LMI renters, which also helped these households avoid homelessness. This also addresses the shortage of affordable housing in Meriden.

To address the growing elderly population in Meriden, the City has made it a priority to provide vital public services to help this special needs group. The City provided funds to Joy Unlimited for a meal service program. The Meriden Senior Center also provided eligible Meriden seniors with basic needs that couldn't be purchased through EBT (hygiene products, kitchen supplies, or bus passes etc.).

CR-40 - Monitoring 91.220 and 91.230

Describe the standards and procedures used to monitor activities carried out in furtherance of the plan and used to ensure long-term compliance with requirements of the programs involved, including minority business outreach and the comprehensive planning requirements

The City of Meriden's Economic and Community Development Office is responsible for the overall administration and implementation of the City's CDBG Program. The City maintains records of program accomplishments, funding spent, population served, housing units rehabilitated, and other information in the HUD-provided IDIS reporting system.

Per the requirements of 24 CFR Part 91.230, the City monitors all CDBG subrecipients and City Departments to ensure that all Plan activities are carried out in compliance with program requirements. The City evaluates the performance of each sub-grantee and City Department based on the specific milestones outlined in each project proposal. Progress towards those goals is reported on a quarterly and on an annual basis. Department staff also conducts annual on-site visits to CDBG funded Public Service Agency to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and to review progress toward goals outlined in their application for funding. The intent of these monitoring policies and procedures is to identify potential discrepancies with contract standards and program requirements before they become larger issues.

The City will continue to work with local businesses and economic development organizations to attract and retain businesses, in particular woman-owned and other minority-owned businesses. The City will also follow all Section 3 regulations as appropriate.

Comprehensive planning requirements include the development and consolidated plan process of the 5-Year ConPlan, the AAP, and CAPER. Citizen participation is a vital part of the consolidated plan process and the City will make sure to follow its HUD approved Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) which helps guide the City to gather feedback from citizens which is an essential component in identifying the priority housing and community development needs in Meriden. These priority needs form the basis of the City's Strategic Plan in the ConPlan and annual goals and activities carried out in each subsequent AAP.

The ConPlan is developed every 5 years, with identified priority needs and goals to address these needs. Each year of the 5-Year plan, the City develops an AAP which identifies the projects and activities that will address and further the goals of the plan. This plan is required to be submitted to and approved by HUD each year to receive CDBG funding annually. At the end of each AAP program year, the City will report on the accomplishments and performance of the program through the CAPER. Citizen participation is required in the development of each of these stages as per 24 CFR 91.105.

Department staff work in cooperation with other city staff, Council, and the Mayor to ensure the success of the program. Staff assists, for example, by identifying needs, advising on program guidelines, and overseeing activities funded by the CDBG program.

Citizen Participation Efforts for the PY 2023 AAP

The City followed its Citizen Participation Plan closely in soliciting citizen input for the PY 2023 Annual Action Plan. Members of the public were encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas as to how Meriden's CDBG funding could best serve the community and its needs at the public hearing and public comment review period. A public hearing was held on March 7, 2023, 5:30 p.m. at the Human Services Committee meeting at Council Chambers, City Hall, 142 East Main Street, Meriden, CT 06450. The public comment period was held for 30-days starting on April 1, 2023, through May 1, 2023, and the plan was made available online at www.meridenct.gov, or at the Community Development Office, Room 134, 142 East Main Street, Meriden, CT 06450. A hybrid Human Services Committee meeting was also held on April 4, 2023 at 5:30 to approve the funding for programs and review any comments made. The committee voted unanimously to approve. There was one comment made discussing confusion about who staff members were, and disagreement with public facility money going towards sidewalks. It was also noted that the City did not allocate up to the allowed \$220,000 max cap for public services.

Citizen Participation Plan 91.105(d); 91.115(d)

Describe the efforts to provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports.

The City of Meriden follows its HUD approved Citizen Participation Plan which guides and encourages input from citizen for its CDBG program. The Economic and Community Development Office is constantly working to ensure that residents of Meriden are aware of the process and able to review and comment on decisions at their discretion.

The draft PY 2023 CAPER was noticed in the *Meriden Record Journal* and a copy of the draft was posted on the City's Economic Development and Community Development website.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Citizens are invited to review and make comments on the draft CAPER. A copy of the draft CAPER is available, during the Public Comment Period, in the Office of Community Development, Room 134, City Hall, 142 East Main Street, Meriden, CT 06450 as well as on the Community Development website at: <https://www.meridenct.gov/government/departments/economic-development/community-development/>. Written comments on the CAPER will be accepted for 15-days beginning September 10, 2024, through September 24, 2024, until 4:30PM EST.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing will be held virtually and in-person on September 24, 2024, at 3:00 PM EST. This means citizens will have the ability to meet in person at the Council Chambers, Room 206 at City Hall or online via MSFT Teams meeting in real time through the internet on a computer or other electronic device. For more information on how to participate at the public hearing please call Jeanette Allam, Community Development & Grants Administrator at (203) 630-4151, or email at jallam@meridenct.gov, or on the Community Development website as listed above.

<https://www.meridenct.gov/virtual-meetings/>

Accommodations will be made for non-English speakers and/or those with disabilities upon request. Please contact Jeanette Allam, Community Development & Grants Administrator, at the address and/or telephone number listed above at least 24 hours prior to the hearing if auxiliary aids are required.

CR-45 - CDBG 91.520(c)

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

PY 2023 is the fourth year of the City of Meriden's 5-Year 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan (Strategic Plan) and there are currently no changes to the overall strategies identified in the Plan. The priority needs and goals continue to serve as the basis of the 5-Year Strategic Plan.

While the needs and goals remain the same, the City may identify new activities to fund that may further the already established goals of the 5-Year Strategic Plan. When those opportunities arise, the City may make adjustments to the goal outcome indicators as necessary to properly adjust for those changes in the number of persons or households assisted during the development of each AAP in the 5-Year planning period.

CDBG-CV

The City also continues to monitor the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the onset of the pandemic, the City received a total of \$1,045,687 in CDBG-CV grant funds to fund activities that prevent, prepare for and respond to the pandemic, and in particular to assist LMI residents during this time.

In PY 2023, the City continued to expend CDBG-CV funds towards public services for LMI residents impacted by the pandemic. These activities include Small Business Assistance via Capital for Change (#941). The City will continue to monitor the situation and the effects the pandemic has on LMI residents and will make necessary changes if there arises a need. At this time, the City doesn't expect any changes to the goals or outcomes for CDBG-CV funds. A summary of activities has been provided in the CR-05, and a summary of expenditures has been provided in the CR-15.

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

No

CR-58 - Section 3

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

Total Labor Hours	CDBG
Total Number of Activities	0
Total Labor Hours	0
Total Section 3 Worker Hours	0
Total Targeted Section 3 Worker Hours	0

Table 8 – Total Labor Hours

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

Table 9 – Qualitative Efforts - Number of Activities by Program

Narrative

On October 29, 2020 HUD made effective the Final Rule, which set new benchmarks for Section 3 under 24 CFR 75. Section 3 helps to establish more economically sustainable communities by ensuring that employment and other economic opportunities generated by Federal assistance for development programs are directed towards very low- and low-income persons to the greatest extent possible, and in particular to those who are recipients of the Federal assistance. The Final Rule changes tracking the number of qualified new hires in Section 3 projects, to tracking the total labor hours worked.

As applicable to the City of Meriden, the benchmark for Section 3 workers was set at 25 percent or more of the total number of labor hours worked by all workers on a Section 3 project. The benchmark for Targeted Section 3 workers was set at 5 percent or more of the total number of labor hours worked by all workers on a Section 3 project.

Section 3 Projects cover housing rehab/construction and public improvement construction activities assisted under HUD grant programs that provide housing and community development financial assistance that exceeds a threshold of \$200,000. A \$100,000 project threshold applies to grants under HUD's Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes programs. In PY 2023, the City had no activities that met the threshold as defined for a Section 3 project.