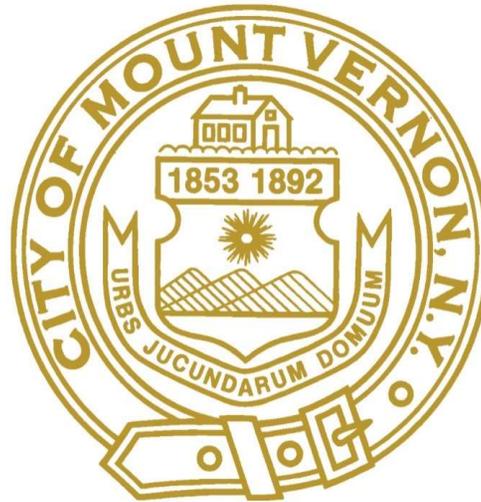


MOUNT VERNON, NY

PUBLIC FORUM ON HOMELESSNESS



October 14, 2021

Department of Planning and Community Development

Mount Vernon City Hall

One Roosevelt Square

Mount Vernon, New York 10550

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ERAP)

The City is partnering with United Way of Westchester and Putnam to help residents complete the ERAP application on-line. To determine if you qualify for these emergency funds and schedule an appointment for assistance:

Phone: Dial 2-1-1 to schedule an appointment

Website: <https://www.211.org/>

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ERAP)

Applicants Submitted as of October 7, 2021

Westchester County

Rental Arrears	Prospective Rental Payments	Utility Arrears
3,984	3,208	357

Mount Vernon

Zip Codes	Rental Arrears	Prospective Rental Payments	Utility Arrears
10550	1,175	960	105
10552	234	199	25
10553	203	165	18

The City of Mount Vernon is the jurisdiction with the highest number of applications submitted from Westchester County.

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Tenants Rights and ERAP Overview Workshop - June 24, 2021, 6:00pm-7:30pm

The City hosted a Zoom workshop in collaboration with Mount Vernon United Tenants and Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. Presenters informed tenants about the NY State ERAP Program and how to apply and the various legal protections against landlord harassment/retaliation and securing legal assistance for housing court proceedings. In addition, participants were informed how to organize a tenant association and about their rights to file complaints with the Buildings Department.

CMVNY Connect Launch – July 1, 2021

The City launched the new CMVNY CONNECT app to the public, enabling renters to quickly report code violations to the Buildings department for inspection/citation. The app includes links to ERAP resources, explaining the process, required documents, and providing easy links for renters to either fill out the application immediately on their phones/tablets or schedule an appointment with United Way of Westchester/Putnam (211) to provide technical support and assistance in completing and uploading ERAP applications.

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

ERAP Letter to Property Owners – July 15, 2021

A letter was mailed to 532 property owners (buildings/houses with 4 or more rental units) informing them about the ERAP program and how to assist their tenants with applying for assistance.

ERAP Fair at Mount Vernon Public Library - July 31, 2021, 10:00am – 1:00pm

The City hosted in collaboration with Mount Vernon United Tenants, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, and United Way of Westchester an ERAP fair. This was an opportunity for residents to receive technical assistance to submit their applications to NY State for rental arrears.

ERAP Technical Assistance at Mount Vernon Public Library – August 2021 - September 2021

During the months of August and September residents were able to meet with volunteers from United Way to receive technical assistance to complete their applications to NY State for rental arrears. During time periods where meeting space was not available at the library, the city identified alternative meeting space at churches and/or provided meeting space at City Hall.

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

ERAP Fair – September 18, 2021, 10:00am – 1:00pm

The City hosted a second ERAP fair at two locations: Allen Memorial Church of God in Christ and Macedonia Baptist Church. Mount Vernon United Tenants, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, and United Way of Westchester provided technical assistance to residents.

ERAP Fair for Veterans - September 24, 2021, 12:00pm – 4:00pm

The Department of Planning in coordination with the Veterans Services Agency hosted an ERAP fair for veterans.

ERAP Workshops - October 7, 2021 & October 21, 2021, 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Hybrid workshops are being held in English and Spanish at the Church of St. Mary and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and at Greater Centennial AME Zion Church. Catholic Charities of Westchester, Mount Vernon United Tenants, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, the Hudson Valley Justice Center, and the Westchester County Human Rights Commission will provide technical assistance to residents on the following topics: ERAP funding, Tenant Bill of Rights, legal protections afforded to tenants during eviction proceedings, and the rights of undocumented tenants to assistance.

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Mount Vernon City Court – October 1, 2021

City staff met with the Mount Vernon Court system to discuss the eviction crisis. At that meeting, city staff provided resource materials regarding ERAP funding that the Court System will make available to residents facing eviction proceedings.

City staff also informed the Court System about other funding sources available for rental assistance which include: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Catholic Charities, CLUSTER, the Bridge Fund, etc.

Note: New York State eviction moratorium was extended to Jan. 15, 2022 for tenants experiencing a hardship during the Pandemic who have completed a hardship declaration. Landlord's now have the right to challenge a tenant's declaration.

MOUNT VERNON, NY

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM

Background

In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) notified the City of Mount Vernon on April 2020 that it will receive an ESG CV funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus among individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or receiving homelessness assistance; and to support additional homelessness assistance and homeless prevention activities to mitigate the impact created by the coronavirus. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) authorized these allocations via, Public Law 116-136, which was signed by President Trump on March 27, 2020, to respond to the growing effects of COVID-19.

City of Mount Vernon Approved ESG Components:

- Shelter Operations
- Homeless Outreach
- Rapid Rehousing
- Youth and Child Homelessness – Housing Assistance
- Homeless Prevention

MOUNT VERNON, NY

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM

FY20 ESG Funding Allocations

The City of Mount Vernon's FY2020 ESG entitlement allocation is \$145,882. The City's FY2020 ESG-CV allocation is \$1,807,897.

\$1,814,094.10 in ESG-CV funds has been made available to subrecipients. The City retained \$139,684.90 for administrative costs.

The City allocated ESG Annual funds and ESG CV funds to prepare, prevent, and respond to the pandemic.

MOUNT VERNON, NY

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM

TIMELINE

On November 2, 2020, The City released an ESG RFP seeking proposals for the 2020 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Annual Funds and Emergency Solutions Grant Covid-19 funds (ESG-CV). The City allocated ESG annual funds and ESG-CV funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID19).

The City held ESG Pre-Application workshops on November 10, 2020 and November 12, 2020. These workshops covered eligibility criteria along with the rules and regulations governing the program. Attendance at one of these sessions was mandatory for all applicants. In addition, the City held office hours to provide applicants an opportunity to ask programmatic questions. The office hours took place on November 17, 2020. Applications were due on December 8, 2020.

The application is available at: <https://cmvny.com/urbanrenewalagency/esgcovid19grant/>.

The City consulted with the Westchester Continuum of Care (CoC) regarding the City's ESG program. The Westchester CoC leadership participated in the review and scoring of the Mount Vernon ESG Applications to determine which non-profit organizations would receive ESG funding from Mount Vernon. The City held meeting with the Westchester CoC Coordinated Entry staff to streamline and coordinate referral of homeless clients. The City meets with the Westchester CoC on a quarterly basis to discuss project outcomes and to make any needed improvements to the coordinated entry process.

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES

The Westchester Continuum of Care has developed performance standards for ESG projects.

ESG projects are evaluated for compliance with HUD requirements for participant eligibility, HMIS participation, Coordinated Entry utilization, habitability standards, reasonable rent, fair housing, and financial regulations.

The City is partnering with two homeless service providers on the following ESG program components: Street Outreach, Rapid Rehousing, Youth Homeless Prevention, Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing, and Domestic Violence Homelessness Prevention.

Subrecipients will report quarterly via the HMIS system, all outcomes that are required by HUD and/or the City of Mount Vernon. The outcomes report provided on a quarterly basis will include specific performance targets related to number of households housed, number of households served and other metrics appropriate to the program.

In addition, the City will analyze outcomes and indicators in the quarterly reports by race and ethnicity to identify programmatic inequities in specific outcome areas. The data review will consider the indicators of engagements, program exits to permanent housing, and lengths of stay in programs by race and ethnicity, as well as all other CAPER indicators that may demonstrate potential programmatic inequities as identified during the data review and analysis process.

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM

SUBRECIPIENT QUARTERLY REVIEW CHECKLIST

Program Start-Up

- Review move-in and projected move-in data
- Review barriers
- Discuss solutions to expedite housing process as needed

Eligibility

Participant

- Discuss participant eligibility documentation process
- Review any participant eligibility issues
- Discuss solutions to improve eligibility determination process

Cost

- Discuss cost eligibility documentation process
- Review any cost eligibility issues
- Discuss solutions to improve eligibility determination process

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM

SUBRECIPIENT QUARTERLY REVIEW CHECKLIST

Outcome Review

- Discuss pre-meeting data review findings regarding key areas of outcome success and key areas for outcome improvement
- Discuss possible solutions to improve outcomes
- Collaboratively establish goals for next contract quarter

Outcome Goals – For the Quarter

Data Indicator	Outcome for Previous Period	Goals for Next Period	Strategies to Reach Goal	Notes

2020 EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS CARE ACT FUNDS

Program Components

Street Outreach: The Guidance Center of Westchester was selected to receive Emergency Solutions Grant CARES Act funds (ESG-CV) in the amount of \$300,000 to administer a street outreach program to serve the homeless in Mount Vernon.

To date, the street outreach team has been in contact with 43 homeless individuals and has connected each of them with resources and helped place them at emergency shelters. Not all the homeless that the street outreach team has been in contact with want to stay at an emergency shelter. Westchester County DSS has indicated that homeless individuals from Mount Vernon can stay for free at the emergency shelters for the first 45 days. All 43 homeless individuals have indicated that they are originally from Mount Vernon.

Rapid Rehousing: The Guidance Center of Westchester was selected to receive ESG-CV funds in the amount of \$400,000 to administer a rapid rehousing program to provide 11 homeless single adults and families with housing. The rapid rehousing program was designed to provide housing to the homeless identified and engaged by the street outreach team who were living in the streets of Mount Vernon.

To date, there are 12 homeless clients enrolled in the rapid rehousing program. There are 5 homeless who are living in apartments and 7 who will be housed by November 1, 2021. In addition, there are 14 homeless who are on the waiting list.

2020 EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS CARE ACT FUNDS

Program Components

Homeless Prevention: The Guidance Center of Westchester was selected to receive ESG-CV funds in the amount of \$405,693 to administer a youth homeless prevention program to prioritize 10 homeless youth under the age of 24 to provide housing to prevent individuals or families from homelessness.

To date, there are 7 homeless youth and their families who have been placed in apartments. There are 3 homeless youth who will be housed by November 1, 2021. There is a waiting list of 3 additional youth who we are looking to provide housing to by November 1, 2021. The youth participating in the program were referred by the Youth Shelter, Youth Bureau, School District, and Guidance Center.

2020 EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS CARE ACT FUNDS

Program Components

Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing Assistance: The Mental Health Association of Westchester was selected to receive ESG-CV funds in the amount of \$354,000 to administer a rapid rehousing program to provide 10 domestic violence survivors and the families who are living at the emergency shelters with housing.

To date, there are 6 currently enrolled in the program. On October 8, 2021, the first participant of the rapid rehousing program moved into a one bedroom apartment. MHA is working with the 5 clients to find them housing and connect them with resources.

Domestic Violence Homeless Prevention Assistance: The Mental Health Association of Westchester was selected to receive ESG-CV funds in the amount of \$354,401.10 to provide housing to 10 individuals and or families fleeing domestic violence.

To date, there are 9 currently enrolled in the program. On October 6, 2021, the first participant of this program and her two young children moved into a two bedroom apartment. MHS is working with the remaining 8 clients to find them housing and connect them with resources.

2020 EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS CARE ACT FUNDS

There is a requirement that all ESG recipients meet the spending deadline of September 30, 2022. All funds must be spent otherwise they will be recaptured by the federal government.

We are in the process of making budget modifications for the ESG-CV funds and will report to HUD how we plan to ensure that the City meets the spending deadline.

HOME American Rescue Plan Act

\$5 billion for homelessness assistance and assistance to other vulnerable populations.

Funds were appropriated under Title II of Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 (NAHA) – HOME Program statute

HUD Published CPD Notice 21-10: Requirements for the Use of Funds in the HOME-ARP Program (September 13, 2021)

- Establishes all HOME-ARP requirements
- Suspensions, Waivers and alternative requirements issued as an Appendix
- Provided \$25 million for technical assistance
- Funds available to jurisdictions until September 2030

Mount Vernon is receiving an allocation of \$1,855,473 in HOME ARP funds.

HOME ARP Purpose

HOME ARP funds are a one-time funding opportunity to meet the housing and supporting needs of a community's most vulnerable population. HOME ARP funds can be used for four eligible activities including:

- The Production/Preservation of Affordable Rental Housing;
- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance;
- Supportive Services (homeless prevention and housing counseling);
- The Purchase or Development of Non-Congregate Shelter for the Homeless

In the 2021 Annual Action Plan, the City indicated that it is considering allocating the HOME ARP funds for tenant based rental assistance and having these funds available to place individuals and/or households that may need this resource once the ESG CV grant funds expire on September 2022.

HOME ARP Qualifying Populations

HOME-ARP funds must be used to primarily benefit individuals and families that meet the requirements for one or more “qualifying populations” (QPs).

- 1) Homeless (McKinney Act definition at 24 CFR 91.5)
- 2) At-risk of homelessness (McKinney Act definition at 24 CFR 91.5)
- 3) Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, or Human Trafficking
- 4) Other Populations where assistance would:
 - Prevent the family’s homelessness; or
 - Serve those with the Greatest Risk of Housing Instability

Veterans and families including veteran member that meet one of preceding criteria.

HOME ARP Qualifying Populations

Other Families Requiring Services or Housing Assistance to Prevent Homelessness: 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

HOME ARP Eligible Activities

Affordable Rental Housing

- Acquisition of standard rental housing
- Construction of rental housing
- Rehabilitation of rental housing
- Includes conversion of nonresidential buildings to housing

HOME ARP Eligible Activities

Tenant Based Rental Assistance

HOME-ARP can assist qualifying populations to pay the rent, security deposits, utility payments, and utility deposits

A jurisdiction may provide up to 100% of rent and utility costs.

HOME ARP Eligible Activities

HOME-ARP Supportive Services Eligible Costs

- Child Care
- Outreach Services
- Education Services
- Substance Abuse Treatment Services
- Employment Assistance and Job Training
- Transportation
- Food
- Case Management
- Housing Search and Counseling
- Mediation Services
- Credit Repair
- Legal Services
- Landlord/Tenant Liaison
- Life Skills Training
- Services for Special Populations
- Mental Health Services
- Financial Assistance Costs
- Outpatient Health Services

HOME ARP Eligible Activities

Supportive Services - Housing Counseling Eligible Costs

- Staff salaries and overhead costs of HUD-certified housing counseling agencies - direct housing counseling services
- Development of a housing counseling workplan
- Marketing and outreach
- Intake
- Financial and housing affordability analysis
- Action Plans
- Follow-up communication with program participants

HOME ARP Eligible Activities

Supportive Services - Housing Counseling Eligible Costs

- Staff salaries and overhead costs of HUD-certified housing counseling agencies - direct housing counseling services
- Development of a housing counseling workplan
- Marketing and outreach
- Intake
- Financial and housing affordability analysis
- Action Plans
- Follow-up communication with program participants

HOME ARP Eligible Activities

HOME ARP Non-Congregate Shelter

Non-Congregate Shelter is defined as one or more buildings that:

- Provide private units or rooms for temporary shelter
- Serve individuals and families that meet one or more of the qualifying populations
- Do not require occupants to sign a lease or occupancy agreement

Eligible Activities:

- Acquisition of structures
- New construction, with or without land acquisition
- Rehabilitation of existing structures (such as motels, nursing homes)

Consultation Requirements - HOME ARP Allocation Plan

Consultation Requirements

Before developing the HOME ARP plan, at minimum the City must consult with:

- Westchester County Continuum of Care
- Homeless and domestic violence service providers;
- Veterans' groups;
- Public housing agencies (PHAs)
- Public agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations; and,
- Public/private organizations that address fair housing, civil rights, and the needs of persons with disabilities

Consultation in HOME ARP Allocation Plan

- Identify unmet needs and gaps in housing or service delivery systems
- Provides a basis for the City's strategy for distributing HOME-ARP for eligible activities

In the plan, the City must:

- Describe the consultation process;
- List the organizations consulted; and
- Summarize the feedback received

Public Participation

Before submitting the Plan, the City must:

- Provide notice and public comment period of no less than 15 calendar days;
- Follow requirements for “reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment” for plan amendments in its current citizen participation plan; and
- Hold at least one public hearing during the development of the Plan.

The City must make the following available to the public:

- Amount of HOME ARP funds that the City will receive; and
- Range of activities that the City make undertake.

Public Participation

Before submitting the HOME ARP Plan, the City must:

- Provide notice and public comment period of no less than 15 calendar days;
- Follow requirements for “reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment” for plan amendments in its current citizen participation plan; and
- Hold at least one public hearing during the development of the Plan.

The City must make the following available to the public:

- Amount of HOME ARP funds that the City will receive; and
- Range of activities that the City make undertake.

The City must consider any comments or view of residents received in writing or orally at a public hearing. The plan must include:

- A description of the City’s public participation process;
- Any efforts made to broaden public participation;
- A summary of comments and recommendations received; and,
- Any comments or recommendations not accepted, and why

Public Forum on Homelessness

Questions