



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Pennsylvania State Office
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-3380

The Honorable Howard Shaub
Chairman, Lancaster County
Board of Commissioners
50 North Duke Street
P.O. Box 83480
Lancaster, PA 17608

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FY 2003
CAPER

Dear Mr. Shaub:

SUBJECT: Consolidated Annual Assessment
Lancaster County
January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003

The provisions of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, require the annual submission of performance reports by grant recipients receiving Federal assistance through programs covered under these Acts. Additionally, these Acts require that a determination be made by the Secretary that the grant recipient is in compliance with the statutes and has the continuing capacity to implement and administer the programs for which assistance is received.

Section 91.525 of the Consolidated Plan regulations requires this Department to evaluate and report to the public on a community's overall progress in the management of its program funds; compliance with the Consolidated Plan; the accuracy of performance reports; and the extent to which progress has been achieved toward the statutory goals identified in 91.1. This letter serves to apprise you of our assessment of Lancaster County's overall progress.

In making our evaluation, we relied primarily upon the Consolidated Annual Performance (CAPER) submitted by the County. For Fiscal Year 2003, this report summarized the County's accomplishments of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the HOME Program, the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Program, and the data comparable to or the same as what was contained in the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) APR. In addition, we considered technical assistance, communications, and the County's handling of citizen comments and/or complaints.

We congratulate Lancaster County on its many accomplishments, during this past year, toward the achievement of Departmental Objectives. Based upon our analysis of the Consolidated Report and other relevant data, we were able to make the following determinations:

1. A comparison between our financial data from the LOCCS and the information in the Consolidated Plan Report evidences that the report is accurate and that funds are being properly managed; and
2. With respect to compliance with the Primary Objective, 100% of the CDBG funds expended were for activities that benefited low/moderate income persons or households.

In addition, we note that the activities carried out address the highest priorities established in the Strategic Plan section of the 2000 Consolidated Plan; and that progress has been made toward achieving the goals of providing decent housing and creating a suitable living environment.

With respect to the production of affordable housing units, during the reporting period the following results were achieved:

- Sixty-four units of rental housing for the elderly;
- Eight SROs for mentally ill persons, and 104 for general occupancy;
- Through the Home Improvement Program, 22 homes were rehabilitated;
- Eight-five 85 low-income homeowners were assisted under the Energy Conservation Program;
- Two first time homebuyers were aided, and,
- Three families received assistance, under the Homeowner Assistance Program, to complete municipally mandated site and utility improvements.

To increase the opportunities for homeownership, we note that consideration is being given to restructuring of some of its programs to make the financing packages more appealing, in light of the low-interest and less restrictive first time homebuyer programs banks are offering.

In addition to the above noted accomplishments, CDBG and ESG funding was provided to seven nonprofit agencies that assisted 1,936 clients with emergency shelter and transitional housing.

To improve the quality of the environment for its citizenry, the County provided low and moderate-income residents essential human services through CDBG and ESG funds. The services rendered included: health care, recreation employment and educational programs. In addition to services, improvements were made to homeless facilities and there was an expansion of a health facility.

Relative to economic development, assistance is targeted to assist small businesses and micro enterprises. Through the Assets, Base, and Community First Fund programs, the County provided services to 115 persons and/or small business owners and were given business training opportunities.

We ask that you review our assessment of your performance and provide any comments that you may have within 35 days of the date of this letter. Upon receipt, we will evaluate your comments and make any revisions that are deemed appropriate. If you do not have any comments relative to the above, we request that you formally notify us of that fact within the 35-day timeframe. Where no comments are received within the designated timeframe, our initial letter will serve as our final assessment of Lancaster County's performance for this program year. To facilitate and expedite citizen access to our performance letter, we request that you apprise the general public and interested citizens' organizations and non-profit entities of its availability. If, for any reason, the County chooses not to do so, please be advised that our Office is obligated to make the letter available to the public. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

We will continue to work with you and members of your staff to accomplish our mutual goals as well as local objectives whose purpose is to develop viable urban communities. If there is any assistance you require relative to achieving mutual and local ends, we will be pleased to discuss what resources we may be able to provide. Should you wish to meet or if you have any questions about the content of this letter, please contact Ms. Ileana Colón, Community Planning and Development Representative, at (215) 656-0626, extension 3178 or via email at Ileana.Colon@hud.gov. This Office may be accessed via text telephone (TTY), by dialing (215) 656-3452.

Sincerely,

Milton R. Pratt, Jr.

Milton R. Pratt, Jr.
Regional Director

cc:

✓ Mr. Randy Patterson