



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Philadelphia Office
The Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-3380

JUN 03 2008

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

Dear Mr. Stuckey:

SUBJECT: Annual Community Assessment
Lancaster County
January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007

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.

The Consolidated Plan regulations at 24 CFR 91.525 require 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 Section 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 County's submission of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for Fiscal Year 2007. This report summarized accomplishments made with funds provided from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME), and the Emergency Shelter Grant Programs. In addition, we took into account technical assistance, and follow up conversations with County staff. This letter is a summary of our review of the County of Lancaster's overall performance.

As you know, under the update to the Part 91 Consolidated Planning regulations that came into effect March 13, 2006, all Annual Action Plans and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPER) are required to include Performance Measures as part of their annual reporting. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has deemed this information necessary to validate the continued funding of HUD programs. The County of Lancaster provided Performance Measures as required by the new guidance.

The HUD timeliness requirement is that a community may have no more than 1.5 times their most recent annual grant remaining in the line of credit 60 days prior to the end of their program year. When the 60-day timeliness test was conducted on November 2, 2007, it was calculated that Lancaster County had a balance in its Line-of-Credit of 1.37 times its annual grant. Please note that this did not include any program income that the County may have in its accounts. Thus, this figure may actually be higher.

During the 2007 program year, the County has expended 100 percent of its CDBG funds for activities benefiting low/moderate income persons, which meets the Primary Objective of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. In addition, the County obligated 14.83 percent of funds on public service activities which meets the 15 percent regulatory cap. The County of Lancaster obligated 15.16 percent of its funds on planning and administration, less than the 20 percent regulatory cap.

The County has met the HOME requirements for expenditure by committing all funds to projects within two years and expending funds within five years. The requirement to provide at least 15 percent of HOME funding to Community Housing Development Organizations has also been achieved. We also remind grantees that all HOME projects should be closed within 120 days of their final draw.

The County included in its CAPER their role in affirmatively furthering Fair Housing and identifying impediments to Fair Housing. In 2007, the Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority and the Lancaster Human Relations Committee entered into a contract for \$45,000 to assist the Fair Housing Services Project, in addressing impediments to fair housing. The Fair Housing Services Project provided a comprehensive program to include: educational services for providers and consumers, preventive measures for potential discrimination, and an aggressive compliance program to ensure equal access to housing. The Fair Housing Program received, evaluated, and processed fourteen complaints of housing discrimination.

The County Redevelopment Authority's Housing Services Department addresses lead hazards through staff members who conduct risk assessments and clearance inspections; and certified contractors conduct lead hazard reduction work. All rental units rehabilitated under the Rental Housing Program are lead safe. During 2007, 31 low-and moderate income owner-occupied homes using the Home Improvement Program, were certified as lead-safe as a result of CDBG-funded activities.

We congratulate the County on its many accomplishments during this program year. Based on our review we have concluded that the County of Lancaster has the capacity to carry out its programs and has met its reporting requirements.

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, 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 the County's performance for this program year. To facilitate and expedite citizen access to our performance letter, we request that you inform 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 look forward to continuing to work with you and members of your staff to accomplish Departmental goals and mutual objectives to develop viable urban communities. We would also be pleased to provide you with any information on resources that may be available to your community. If you need assistance, or if you have any questions concerning the content of this letter, please contact Mr. Nadab Bynum, Community Planning and Development Director, at (215) 861-7652, or Ms. Ileana Colón, Senior Community Planning and Development Representative, at (215) 861-7656. This Office may be reached via text telephone (TTY), by dialing (215) 656-3452.

Sincerely,

Brenda I. ...



John G. Bravacos
Regional Director

cc:

Mr. Matthew T. Sternberg