Lisa Nicholas  
Planning Director, City of Ithaca  
City Hall – 3rd Floor  
108 E. Greene Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850  

Dear Planning Director Nicholas:  

SUBJECT: Program Year 2021 Annual Community Assessment (ACA)  

Enclosed please find HUD’s Annual Community Assessment (ACA) reviewing the implementation and performance of the City of Ithaca’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME). This assessment focuses on the 2021 program year, which covered the period August 1, 2021- July 31, 2022.  

As a result of our Annual Community Assessment, we have determined that your overall performance is satisfactory. The Buffalo Office is providing you thirty (30) days to respond with any comments, changes, or updates. If no response is received, this report is final and will be considered the City’s Program Year Review Letter as required by HUD regulation. In accordance with the Consolidated Plan regulations, the Program Year Review Letter should be made available to the public through your established citizen participation process. HUD will also make it available to citizens upon request.  

If you have any questions about this report, would like to discuss the comments, or require further assistance in the administration of your community development programs, please contact Rashika L. Hall, Community Planning and Development Representative, at 716-646-7020, or via email at Rashika.L.Hall@hud.gov.  

Sincerely,  

William T. O’Connell  
Director  
Community Planning and Development Division  

Cc: Nels Bohn  

Enclosure
Annual Community Assessment Report

for

City of Ithaca, New York

Covering the Program Year of:

August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022
INTRODUCTION

As a recipient of HUD Entitlement funds, the City of Ithaca is required to annually report on the progress made in carrying out the goals and priorities of the Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) is designed to be a tool to report the activities undertaken during the previous year and shared with HUD as well as the local community stakeholders and residents.

The HUD Office is required to conduct an annual assessment of the City’s performance to determine whether the planning, activities, and reporting were carried out in accordance with applicable requirements. The City is invited to provide any updates or comments to the HUD Office within the next 30 days. Following the 30-day period, the report will be finalized and sent to the Chief Elected Officer of your community. The report will be available to the public as requested.

Assessment Period: August 1, 2021– July 31, 2022
3rd Year of a 5-year Consolidated Plan

The City applied for and received funding for the following programs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)</td>
<td>$690,793.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Investment Partnerships (HOME)</td>
<td>$334,715.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME-ARP)</td>
<td>$60,596.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Funding Awarded:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,086,104.45</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Total funding expended during the reporting period: $450,527.66 (includes funds from prior years)

The total CDBG-CV funding expended during the reporting period: $143,145.04.

PART I: Summary of Grantee Performance

CPD Programs
The City submitted the 2021 Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) which summarized performance during the reporting period. The report revealed that activities were implemented consistent with the goals and objectives set forth in the City’s Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. Any exceptions are noted for additional information, or clarification.

Highlights include:

- Areas of program funds invested to support low-income, immigrant, minority and homeless individuals and the agencies that support them.

- The City was compliant with administration caps for CDBG and HOME.

- The City has exceeded requirements with the CDBG low-mod income beneficiary threshold in 2021 by expending 100% of CDBG resources in low-moderate income communities.
• Ithaca met the HOME commitment and expenditure deadlines during the reporting period.

• Ithaca has used CDBG funds to support a transitional housing program for very low-income homeless women. This program provided sustained positive change in the lives of the women they served by incorporating rental stewardship classes, financial education, vocational and job seeking skills, and personal goal setting workshops.

• The City continued to invest HOME funds into a Tenant Based Rental Assistance Housing Scholarship Program that provided rental assistance to homeless youth. The support provided one-on-one staff support and life skills training to help participants secure and maintain safe and stable housing.

A portion of activities contributing towards the highlights mentioned above include, but are not limited to the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Place To Stay</th>
<th>Black Girl Alchemists Public Art Mosaic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DICC Child Care Center Re-Opening Assistance</td>
<td>Hospitality Employment Training Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Services Program</td>
<td>Scattered Site Preservation Project-Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Bus Stop Upgrade</td>
<td>ReUse Job Skills Training &amp; Employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Areas for follow up or clarification:

• Ithaca was very communicative throughout the review process and satisfactorily made adjustments and updates when necessary. The City provided timely explanations during the CAPER review process and all items of question were addressed thoroughly.

Compliance Summary and Updates:

• Ithaca is non-compliant with Single Audit Report submission guidelines as outlined at 2 CFR 200.512(a)(1). The City is due for FY2020 and FY2021 to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.

• Ithaca has not conducted required inspections of HOME assisted units since 2016. The City was noted to reconvene inspections in 2019, however the pandemic set the schedule on hold. The City explained to HUD last year that inspections were to reconvene by September 30, 2022. Currently, the City remains out of compliance of 24 CFR 92.504(d).

• Ithaca did not meet the CDBG timeliness test as of 6/2/22 at 1.70, which should be at 1.5 or below.

• Ithaca has no open monitoring findings.
Other HUD Programs:

Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity:

**FY-2021**
The 2021 Ithaca CAPER was evaluated by Region 2 Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FEHO) on November 18, 2022. A copy of the full FHEO CAPER review was sent in a separate attachment. Any FHEO questions and concerns regarding this 2021 FHEO CAPER review should be addressed to Audra Kolker, Management Analyst, at Audra.J.Kolker@hud.gov.

Ithaca continues to incorporate goals and action steps identified from their 2017 Assessment of Fair Housing report, which addresses barriers and actions necessary to remove them, which is commendable.

**PART II: HUD Evaluation and Conclusions**

The following determinations have been made relative to the City’s capacity to carry out CDBG funded activities:

1. The City has carried out its program substantially as described in its Consolidated Plan submission.
2. The Consolidated Plan submission as implemented complies with the requirements of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and other applicable laws and regulations.
3. The City has the continuing capacity to carry out the approved program in a timely manner and has also been used as a best practice for other programs throughout the country this year.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the Assessment Report, please feel free to contact Rashika Hall, Community Planning and Development Representative, at 716-646-7077 or Rashika.L.Hall@hud.gov. If you disagree with this assessment, please respond in writing to: William T. O’Connell, Director of Community Planning & Development – HUD, 465 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14203, or William.T.Oconnell@hud.gov. Your response should identify any areas of disagreement and corrections or any additional comments you would like HUD to consider.
Major 2022 IURA Accomplishments

- Awarded $950,158 in HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) grant funds for 20 projects, including affordable housing, job-training and placement, job-creation, homelessness prevention, COVID-19 hardship relief, and public facilities improvements. In total, the IURA monitored over 50 active projects.

- Numeric outcomes:
  - 73 rental housing units constructed
  - 2 rental housing units rehabilitated
  - 3 new homeowner units constructed
  - 24 homeowner units rehabilitated
  - 56 security deposits delivered
  - 9 job placements
  - 13 employment positions created
  - 5 employment positions retained
  - Public facility improvements at Ithaca Community Gardens and TCAT bus stops

- Issued $140,000 loan to Personal Best Brewing brewpub for furniture, fixtures and equipment, supplies, inventory, landscaping, and working capital, creating 13 full-time equivalent (FTE) employment positions (of which at least 51% will be held by low- and moderate-income persons). Personal Best Brewing will be housed in an 8,000 sq. ft. indoor space with three full-size shuffleboard courts, a full-service commercial kitchen, and a brand new, 10-barrel stainless steel brewery system. In addition to a brewing operation, Personal Best will host shuffleboard leagues, book small outdoor music events, broadcast sporting events on large screen TVs, and have outdoor fire pits.

- Issued $150,000 forgivable loan to Finger Lakes ReUse, Inc. (FLRU) for “FLRU Job-Retention” project, for job-retention of at least five full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs held by low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons at the Ithaca ReUse Center at 214 Elmira Rd.

- Finalized financing of the Eastern Section of Green Street Garage site. Upon completion, the $15 million 13-story mixed-use project (“The Ithacan”) will provide 200 rental housing units and reconstruction of two public parking decks to be leased to the City. 20% of the housing units will be rented at below market-rate rents, affordable to households earning up to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) and the project will contribute $500,000 to the Community Housing Development Fund (CHDF), which funds housing projects that increase or preserve affordable housing.

- Approved or funded four new COVID-19-related (“CDBG-CV”) projects, including $65,000.20 for the “Community Outreach Worker” project (City of Ithaca), $17,475.00 for the “Childcare Health & Safety” project (Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center), $9,785.48 for the “Aid for Immigrants During COVID-19 (2nd Award)” project (Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga Counties), and $17,000.00 for the “OAR Community Outreach Program” (Opportunities, Alternatives, & Resources of Tompkins County).

- Executed contract with Cayuga Housing Development Corporation (a subsidiary of the Ithaca Housing Authority), using $90,877.94 in 2020 HOME funding for the Northside Apartments project to rehabilitate 70 housing units for low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons and new construction of up to 12 housing units for LMI persons.

- Completed final phase of Ithaca Eviction/Displacement Defense (IEDD) project, using private funding secured in 2020 by IURA Community Development Planner and Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County (HSC), to provide a full spectrum of services to City of Ithaca tenants, including:
tenants rights hotline, operated by the Ithaca Tenants Union (ITU) with oversight from Cornell Law Director of Pro Bono Services & Externships and Advisory Board (there is firewall between ITU advocacy and the hotline—people who answer calls may or may not be ITU members, though most are)

- publication of Tenants’ Rights Handbook
- brief legal advice from Cornell University Law School students supervised by attorney
- full legal representation from Cornell University Law School’s housing law practicum and LawNY
- Efforts to increase the number of local *pro bono* eviction court attorneys, through Legal Assistance of Western NY (LawNY)
- Monitoring of eviction court by observer-members of student chapter of National Lawyers Guild, to produce more equitable outcomes for people facing eviction
- New local database to better identify how many evictions take place, which kinds of demographic populations are at-risk of eviction, major geographical areas involved, etc.
- Housing Stability Supplement Payment Direct cash payments to housing-unstable households of $300/mo. over 18 mos. to at least 63 households, with at least 60% reaching Black, Latinx, or persons-of-color households

- Launched Ithaca Guaranteed Income (IGI) pilot program, in collaboration with Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI), Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County (HSC), LawNY, City of Ithaca, and Cornell University Law School, providing unconditional monthly cash payments to 110 caregivers earning up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

- Convened Uses & Spaces 24/7 Task Force for 300-block of W. M.L.K., Jr./State Street, including submission of a $200,000 Capital Funding Request to award grants to projects that improve conditions on the 300-block, focused on promoting public health and safety.

- Initiated process for submitting Allocation Plan to HUD for $1,211,929 in HOME-ARP (American Rescue Plan) funds awarded to the City/IURA, for projects that reduce homelessness and/or increase housing stability.

- Coordinated submission of $2M Restore NY6 grant application, on behalf of the City of Ithaca, for Cayuga Street Rehabilitation project sponsored by Urban Encore, LLC. The project will complete full interior and exterior building renovations to create 16 new housing units on upper floors and a new ground floor restaurant. Project renovations include: installation of shared elevator; window, canopy, and façade restoration; and conversion to fully electric heating and cooling systems meeting local greenhouse gas emission goals.

- Executed Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) to sell current East Hill Fire Station at 309 College Ave. to be sold for $5.1 million (plus acquisition of adjoining parcels at 403 Elmwood Ave. and 408 Dryden Rd.) for City construction of new fire station.

**Major 2023 IURA Goals**

- Structure Inlet Island Urban Renewal Project to redevelop Inlet Island for consideration by Common Council.
- Submit HOME-ARP Allocation Plan to HUD for use of $1.2M awarded to City to address homeless needs.
- Administer and implement the City of Ithaca HUD Entitlement Grant Program.