City of Somerville

HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

February 2023

DRAFT for Public Review and Comment

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HOME-ARP Allocation Plan

Introduction

The City of Somerville has been allocated a total of $1,626,742 in HOME-ARP funds. This HUD program provides a one-time award of funds, which are dedicated to addressing specific housing and service needs of homeless households and others who face an elevated risk of homelessness and housing instability.

HUD requires jurisdictions to conduct a thorough community exploration and to produce a complete Allocation Plan, as a condition of gaining access to HOME-ARP funds. This document serves as the City of Somerville's HOME-ARP Allocation Plan.

Somerville, MA, a densely-built city of 81,000 residents, is part of Boston's metropolitan region. Somerville abuts Cambridge, MA, and students attending the many universities in the area have long made local housing conditions costly and competitive. Recently linked directly to the public transit system, Somerville is experiencing a tremendous economic upheaval, with proliferating "life science" office towers as well as market-rate and luxury housing and commercial development.

Thus, Somerville's lower-income residents already faced a sharply higher risk of homelessness and housing instability. The further instability experienced by all people, everywhere, related to two-plus years of pandemic-related uncertainties, brought many more households into the vulnerable conditions prioritized for assistance through HUD's HOME-ARP program.

Consultation

In accordance with Section V.A of the Notice (page 13), <u>before developing its HOME-ARP allocation plan</u>, at a minimum, a PJ must consult with:

- CoC(s) serving the jurisdiction's geographic area,
- homeless service providers,
- domestic violence service providers,
- veterans' groups,
- public housing agencies (PHAs),
- public agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations, and
- public or private organizations that address fair housing, civil rights, and the needs of persons with disabilities.

Consulting Process Summary

In preparation for HOME-ARP's community process, the City hosted a virtual meeting of community stakeholders and providers on March 18, 2022. Additional consultation took place

in the fall and through the winter, with another virtual stakeholder meeting on December 5, 2022.

The City developed and issued a survey in December 2022, which asked Respondents to identify the Qualifying Populations with whom they worked (as well as others), presented eligible HOME-ARP activities, asked Respondents to prioritize among the options as well as to discuss how and why they prioritized as they did. The survey – presented in **Appendix A**– was sent to 85 people, with 20 responses received.

On January 18, 2023, the City met again with providers and survey Respondents, to update them on the results of the survey, needs assessment/gaps analysis progress, and to present the City's proposed approach to allocating its HOME-ARP funds, as developed in response to community consultations and data analysis.

Organizations Consulted:

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback/notes
Somerville Homeless Coalition, Inc.	Nonprofit serving QP – Homeless Service Provider	Virtual Roundtable 3/18/22, 12/5/22, 1/18/23, and survey	Unsheltered homeless continues to be an issue in Somerville, especially around Davis Square and East Somerville, including the salt piles under rt. 93. Theft among the unsheltered population a significant issue. SHC currently using ARPA funds for an engagement center which will allow for greater outreach and additional resources for homeless population. Further funding supportive services would prevent households from facing a "cliff effect" to their housing assistance, and funding case management/street outreach would help leverage existing funding sources for housing assistance.
Office of Housing Stability – City of Somerville	Public agency that addresses the needs of QP	Virtual Roundtable 3/18/22, 12/5/22,	Noted many instances where a household will pay one month's rent, but does not have the ability to pay in subsequent months due

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback/notes
		1/18/23, and survey	to lack of income-hoping to access new resources to address this issue. Identified continued funding for rental assistance as a critical priority.
Somerville School Department	Public agency that addresses the needs of QP	Virtual Roundtable 3/18/22, 12/5/22, 1/18/23 and survey	Critical need for supportive services to address homeless issues, particularly for substance abuse and other areas of long-term care. Language access has also been a barrier to addressing these issues. Many families in school system are living in overcrowded apartments, and have few options to better their housing situation
Somerville Housing Authority	Public Housing Authority	Virtual Roundtable 3/18/22,12/5/22 and survey	Identified rental assistance and supportive services as high and critical priorities.
Respond	Nonprofit serving QP-Domestic Violence Service Provider	Virtual meeting with Housing Division (12/16/22) and virtual roundtable on 3/18/22 and 1/18/23, and survey	NCS is a priority with additional funding sources-especially if supportive services for the NCS is included with that funding. Would like to see NCS continue as COVID funding is no longer available. Identified Supportive Services and Rental Assistance as critical priorities.
Michael Kannensohn	Funding Consultant working a Nonprofit serving QP	Virtual Roundtable 12/5/22	Did not provide comments at 12/5 meeting
Veteran Services – City of Somerville	Public agency that addresses the needs of QP-Veterans' group	Conversation regarding needs of Veterans and Virtual Roundtable 1/18/23	Identified housing options and supportive services as critical need for Veterans
Fair Housing Commission-City of Somerville	Public agency that addresses fair housing	Survey	Identified development of affordable rental housing as a critical priority

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback/notes
Commission for Persons with Disabilities	Public agency that addresses the needs of persons with disabilities	Virtual Roundtable 1/18/23 and survey	Identified affordable housing which could accommodate tenants with disabilities as a critical need. Also noted the importance of training agencies in collaborative efforts on the needs of those with disabilities.
Health and Human Services-City of Somerville	Public agency that addresses the needs of QP	Virtual Roundtable 3/18/22, 12/5/22 and 1/18/23	Did not provide comments at either meeting or complete survey
Somerville Police Dept.	Public agency that addresses the needs of QP	Virtual Roundtable 1/18/23	Additional staffing would help with better inter-agency coordination.
Volunteers of America	Non-profit homeless service provider/agency who addresses the needs of QP	Virtual roundtable 12/5/22 and survey	Identified all eligible use of funds as high priority.
Somerville Community Land Trust	Non-profit agency that addresses the needs of QP	Virtual roundtable 12/5/22 and 1/18/23, and survey	Identified supportive services and rental assistance as critical priorities.
Greater Boston Legal Services	Non-profit agency that addresses the needs of QP	Virtual roundtable 12/5/22	Increase in evictions since moratorium ended-often personal belongings are kept in locations far away from where previous housing was, and it is unclear where those evicted are rehoused. In Somerville, many cases where several tenants are overcrowded, and once primary tenant moves out or is evicted, remaining tenants are unable to pay rent.
Community Action Agency of Somerville	Non-profit homeless service provider/agency	Virtual roundtable 12/5/22 and 1/18/23,	Noted importance of additional staffing for case management and interagency cooperation, identified capacity building as a

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback/notes
	who addresses the needs of QP	Individual Discussion 2/13/23	high priority. Encouraged involving people with lived experience in future planning discussions.
Somerville Community Corporation	Non-profit homeless service provider/agency who addresses the needs of QP	Virtual roundtable 12/5/22 and 1/18/23, and survey	Identified expediting the development of affordable housing as a critical priority,
Catholic Charities	Non-profit homeless service provider/agency who addresses the needs of QP	Survey	Identified residents with Section 8 vouchers who have difficulty finding housing in Somerville, and rental/utility assistance as highest priorities.
Just-A-Start	Non-profit homeless service provider/agency who addresses the needs of QP	Virtual roundtable 12/5/22 and 1/18/23, and survey	Identified preventing housing destabilization through rental assistance and access to affordable housing as critical priorities.
Veterans Benefits	Agency who addresses the needs of QP -Veterans' services	Individual Discussion	Received invitation but did not attend 12/5/22 or 1/18/23 meeting, did not complete survey
Housing Division, OSPCD-City of Somerville	Public agency that addresses the needs of QP	Virtual roundtable 3/18/22, 12/5/22 and 1/18/2023	Identified Supportive Services as the best way to use available funds to address needs of each QP
Somerville YMCA	Agency who provides SRO housing and addresses the needs of QP	Virtual roundtable 1/18/2023	Identified affordable rental housing as a critical need.
Balance of State Continuum of Care/DHCD	CoC serving the jurisdiction's geographic area	Virtual meeting 1/11/23	Acknowledged importance of Supportive Services, which were identified as a critical need during the process for Responding to the recent special NOFO for unsheltered homeless programs/services. The need for Supportive Services and additional

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback/notes
			affordable units are the most consistent needs identified by providers in the local CoC (Balance of State). Also suggested including data on those in family shelters within the CoC who identified Somerville as their home.
Member, Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund	Public entity provides combine local/state funds for projects and programs	Individual meeting, 02/08/2023	Critical, long-standing need for additional units of housing. Need skilled partners to leverage City's investment in housing with other funds, and need to increase focus on long-term affordability. Concerned about households reaching "cliff" as rental assistance ends, with few community resources. Wants to see a holistic community response that builds economic/employment support into basic needs services.
SafeLink	State-wide domestic violence hotline	Email exchange for relevant data	Data on requests from Somerville residents, 2020-2022
Commonwealth Anti-Trafficking Task Force	State-wide multi-agency task force	Email request for data on Human Trafficking	No data available at community level
MA Attorney General's Office	State-wide law enforcement agency	Email request for data on Human Trafficking	No response to email request received
Middlesex District Attorney's Office	County-level law enforcement agency	Email request for data on Human Trafficking	No additional data produced as a result of email exchange
Wayside	Non-profit service provider who addresses the needs of QP	Invited to attend meetings and respond to Stakeholder Survey	
Heading Home	Non-profit service provider who addresses the needs of QP	Invited to attend meetings and respond to Stakeholder Survey	

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method of Consultation	Feedback/notes
Maloney Properties	Private real estate organization which partners with public agencies and non-profits who serve QP	Invited to attend meetings and respond to Stakeholder Survey	
We Soldier On	Agency who addresses the needs of QP -Veterans' services	Invited to attend meetings and respond to Stakeholder Survey	
Baycove Human Services, Inc.	Non-profit service provider who addresses the needs of QP	Invited to attend meetings and respond to Stakeholder Survey	

Summary of Input from Consultation:

In direct discussion and through survey responses, the City received consistent feedback in several areas related to housing and the housing needs of vulnerable Somerville residents. Comments included:

Need for affordable rental housing – Providers and survey Respondents noted that while affordable rental housing was the most pressing need in Somerville, the modest award would produce or contribute to only a small number of units given rapidly rising construction costs. With other housing-production funds available, the consensus was not to use HOME-ARP funds for rental housing.

Need for additional supportive services – Providers and survey Respondents spoke directly to the need for additional supportive services. While the City and its community agencies have stabilized hundreds of economically fragile households by providing financial assistance and time-limited rental assistance, the need for additional housing-oriented case management and services designed to assist households in managing the end of assistance was stated as a priority. Others spoke more generally about the economic dislocation of families who cannot keep up with rising rents and costs, and the need to reach and provide them with stabilization supports.

Concern about winter conditions and street outreach to assist unhoused persons – Providers and survey Respondents also noted the need for "winter warming" capacity as well as expanded

street outreach supports for a growing number of unhoused individuals who appear to be living outdoors.

Public Participation

In accordance with Section V.B of the Notice (page 13), PJs must provide for and encourage citizen participation in the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan. Before submission of the plan, PJs must provide residents with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the proposed HOME-ARP allocation plan of **no less than 15 calendar days**. The PJ must follow its adopted requirements for "reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment" for plan amendments in its current citizen participation plan. In addition, PJs must hold **at least one public hearing** during the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan and prior to submission.

PJs are required to make the following information available to the public:

- The amount of HOME-ARP the PJ will receive, and
- The range of activities the PJ may undertake.

Throughout the HOME-ARP allocation plan public participation process, the PJ must follow its applicable fair housing and civil rights requirements and procedures for effective communication, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and providing meaningful access to participation by limited English proficient (LEP) residents that are in its current citizen participation plan as required by 24 CFR 91.105 and 91.115.

Public Participation Process:

- ***Date(s) of public notice: 2/15/2023***
- ***Public comment period:*** *start date* ***-2/24/2023*** *end date –****3/17/2023***
- ***Date(s) of public hearing: 2/23/2023***

Describe the public participation process:

The City built out its existing operating framework for Public Comment and Public Hearings, extending outreach efforts specifically to connect with members of the community who are struggling with rising rents and a very competitive housing market.

Efforts to broaden public participation:

The City worked across various departments to ensure the broadest outreach possible for the public participation process. The City's web team posted the notice of the public hearing and the draft plan on the City's website. Translated versions of the notice of the public hearing in Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Nepali and simplified/traditional Chinese were provided by the City's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

The English and translated versions of the notice of the public hearing were advertised by the City's Communications Department. This process included placing the notice in the Somerville Times, and advertising on Somerville Community Access Television. The notice was also circulated via email by City staff to local Somerville providers and stakeholders, members of the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust, and to the Renter's Committee supported by the Community Action Agency of Somerville.

A video recording of the public hearing is available on the City's YouTube channel. Links to the video recording can be found on the City's website, and is provided below: *(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKjtC1cBqT4)*

Comments and recommendations received:

During the public hearing, questions were asked by attendees using the chat function in Zoom. Questions from attendees during the hearing are listed in italics and have been edited for clarity. Response information from the project team follows each question.

- *What is the source of data on the number of affordable units in Somerville?* Information on existing affordable units and affordable units in the project pipeline is tracked and was provided by the City's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, through its Housing Division. Additional data on housing was provided by the Community Housing Assessment Survey (CHAS), and data from the American Community Surveys, surveys which are conducted in-between censuses by the federal government. Data from these sources were included based on guidance from HUD.
- *Do we have a strategy to address needs that are not met by the proposals put forth by local nonprofits? Is the idea that we'll expand municipal services in addition to grants and contracts for nonprofits?* There is currently an application process for ARPA funds dedicated to services that are not included in the HOME-ARP allocation plan. Additionally, the City is planning to use ARPA funds to launch a Municipal Voucher Program which will address the need for affordable rental units, notably targeting households with limited access to other housing resources. The proposal in the draft allocation plan is meant to strengthen the non-profit driven service delivery system. The plan sets aside some funding for non-profit operating expenses and capacity building.

Providers during the consultation process identified better coordination and training among non-profit agencies as a way to use HOME-ARP funds effectively. Non-profit capacity is something that the current mayoral administration is focused on, and is evaluating on a large scale. If during the initial RFP process for HOME-ARP the conclusion is drawn that we are not meeting local needs for non-profit capacity building, a second request for RFP's may be issued based on the information provided during the first round of evaluating proposals (while staying within the 5% cap in each optional funding area).

- *What kind of gaps in the service delivery surfaced in this allocation plan?* There are some new facilities opening intending to help unhoused populations, including Somerville Homeless Coalition's engagement center in Davis Square and a community and behavioral health center operated by the Cambridge Health Alliance. Helping providers to link clients with resources such as these is one way the plan hopes to address gaps in service delivery that can move people toward housing solutions. Another high priority identified in the allocation plan is how providers can work together to identify and reach out to qualifying population households receiving time-limited assistance, including increasing funding supportive services to identify those individuals or households facing a cliff effect and working with them on next steps to stabilize their housing.
- *How will you ensure that the funds will be allocated without discriminating against any of the eligible qualifying populations? For example, will a lack of identifying information which may lead to a lack of accurate data result in funding not being allocated to serve survivors of domestic violence?* HUD gives communities the option to create preferences in their allocation plan. However, the City decided that it would be beneficial not to include preferences in its Allocation Plan until further community-wide analysis and planning can take place. Preferences can be created and added later through a Substantial Amendment if needed to respond to community needs. If preferences are not included, HOME-ARP explicitly says projects and programs will provide resources on a first come, first basis. This will ensure that despite some of the data for qualifying population three (domestic violence survivors and other victims of sex crimes) not being as complete as data for other qualifying populations, households within all qualifying populations will be able to access program and services funded by HOME-ARP.

Summarize any comments or recommendations not accepted and state the reasons why:
No comments or recommendations made during the Public Hearing or Public Comment period were not accepted.

Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis

The City of Somerville worked with community and state partners to assemble data for its needs assessment and gaps analysis. The data helps illuminate the size and composition of each of the four Qualifying Populations, describes existing resources for each QP, and identifies unmet needs and system gaps.

Current/expiring resources are described in relevant sections throughout this narrative, while **Appendix B** lists out specific housing and services available to QPs in Somerville.

QP1: Somerville's Homeless Population

Somerville has seen an increase in the average number of literally homeless persons since 2016. Based on recent PIT Count data, the number of unsheltered persons has remained fairly consistent over the past couple of years. Local providers report an increase in non-English-speaking recent immigrants among the unsheltered population. Many in this group report serious health concerns as well as having left informal roommate situations, presenting additional barriers to housing and economic engagement.

Size and Composition

In 2019, the Somerville/Arlington CoC merged into the Massachusetts Balance of State CoC. Community agencies and volunteers remain very involved in local collaborations and in conducting a community-level point-in-time (PIT) count.

The most recent PIT count, conducted on January 25, 2023, identified 15 unsheltered homeless persons in Somerville on the night of the count. As noted above, there is a general sense within the city that there are more unhoused persons in the community than in previous years, and for the first time this year, unhoused people are sleeping in front of an East Somerville church.

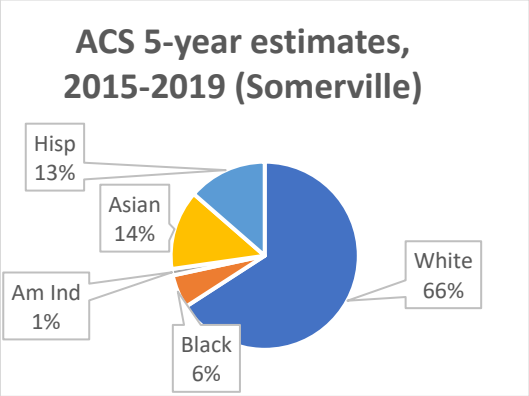
Table 2 provides information about homeless households who accessed shelter services or were seen in the street outreach program during the calendar year, including those in several subpopulations – veterans, unaccompanied youth, and survivors of domestic violence.

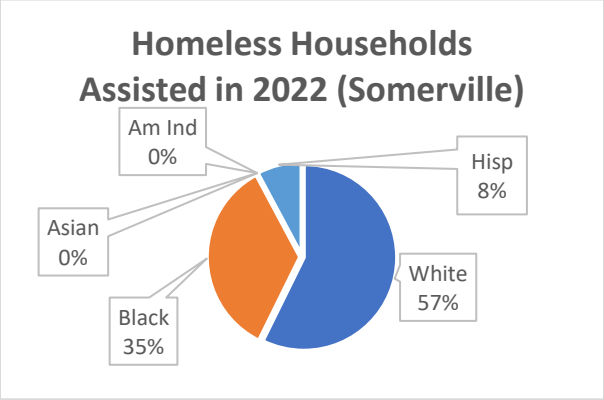
Table 2: Unhoused Persons in Somerville

	Homeless Population		**Homeless Subpopulations**		
	In Family Household (w/at least 1 child)	In Adult Household (w/o child)	Veterans	Unaccompanied Youth 18-24	DV Survivors
Sheltered	8	98	<5	<5	18
Unsheltered (Street Outreach)	0	82	<5	0	

Source: MA BoS HMIS analysis of Somerville population as of 1/23/2023

As in many communities, a comparison between the demographics of Somerville's general population and its unhoused population indicates that non-white households are disproportionately affected by homelessness.





Sources: MA BoS HMIS analysis of Somerville population as of 1/23/2023; ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates; * Hispanic persons may be of any race

Existing resources

Somerville currently has two emergency shelters (39 beds) for adults without children in the household. One accepts women into its shelter using a daily lottery, and also operates transitional housing for women. Another accepts adults of all genders. The oldest adult shelter, operated by the Somerville Homeless Coalition since 1985, is open year-round. Meals and supportive services are provided onsite and shelter residents are referred for other needed services through an active referral network.

During the pandemic and at other times of severe weather, the Coalition has placed some unhoused adult clients temporarily in hotel rooms. In January 2023, Somerville Homeless Coalition began operating an Engagement Center, providing unsheltered homeless persons with links to needed services as well as seasonal aids (such as sleeping bags and hand warmers).

Additional resources supporting unhoused persons include the Community Behavioral Health Crisis Services Center recently opened by the Cambridge Health Alliance. The center provides mental health and substance abuse services in a timely manner to those who may otherwise not have access to those services. The Somerville Homeless Coalition recently received an ARPA grant to open an Engagement Center and the city's first Warming Center.

The City currently has one shelter for families, operated by domestic violence provider T. This 8-unit facility provides shelter for families as well as individuals. Until late 2021, the City had another family shelter which had a capacity for five families. This shelter had to close when the church where it was located decided to use the space for its own uses – and no comparable space was affordable.

Somerville families experiencing homelessness without immediate domestic violence elements are referred to a state-wide network of family shelters, known as Emergency Assistance (EA). In calendar 2022, a total of 22 families reported last living in Somerville before entering the shelter system. While shelter placement is assured (Massachusetts is a right-to-shelter state), families may be disadvantaged when placed in shelters far from their original communities.

The MA Law Reform Institute website states that, "EA is available to many persons with legal status, including refugees, lawful permanent residents, Cuban/Haitian entrants, and persons residing in the U.S. under color of law…If any member of the household has one of these statuses or is a U.S. citizen, the entire household meets this requirement and is eligible for EA."

Somerville's rapid rise in immigrant households suggests that a growing number of family households may meet the housing elements of HUD homeless guidelines, but may not be eligible for placement in an EA-funded shelter. During 2022 and into 2023, Massachusetts has had an influx of migrant households, and Somerville anticipates additional members of this population arriving and requiring housing and supportive service resources.

Three transitional shelters are currently in place in Somerville. Wayside Youth and Family Network operates its ShortStop program in Somerville, which provides transitional housing and supportive services to homeless young adults, 18 to 24 years of age. Volunteers of America operates the Massachusetts Bay Veterans Center in Somerville, providing transitional housing as well as supportive services to homeless veterans. Catholic Charities operates its transitional program at St. Patrick's Church along with its emergency shelter and provides beds for homeless women.

In addition to emergency and transitional shelters, there are Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-Housing resources in Somerville. Somerville Homeless Coalition provides PSH to formerly homeless, disabled individuals and families. Vacancies are filled through the Balance of State's Coordinated Entry System. SHC also provides Rapid Re-Housing by leveraging several sources of funding (including at the federal and local level) to help with monthly rent, start-up costs, and curing rental arrears in order to stabilize the housing situation of individuals or families at risk of homelessness. Respond operates a Rapid Re-Housing program for victims of Domestic Violence, funded through the Balance of State CoC. Other Balance of State (BoS) Continuum of Care, (CoC) providers operate Permanent Supportive Housing.

Information about shelters, transitional housing and housing units dedicated to the unhoused appears in Table 3 and in greater detail in **Appendix B.**

Table 3: Homeless Housing Inventory Chart							
	Total Inventory				Subpopulation Inventory		
	Family		Adults Only		Vets	Unaccompanied Youth	DV
	# beds	# units	# beds	# units	# beds	# beds	# beds
Emergency Shelter	18	8	38		0		18
Transitional Housing	0	0	41		22	9	0
Permanent Supportive Housing	36	14	94		7		0
Other Permanent Housing	12	4	9				0
Rapid Rehousing	11	4	6				10

Source: 2022 Housing Inventory Chart

Unmet Needs

As noted throughout this Plan, Somerville's economic growth and the resulting rise in rents have placed lower-income and unhoused tenants at a disadvantage in the competition for affordable units. This is evident in the small number of RRH units located in the community; households that qualify for RRH must look in areas farther from Boston in order to afford rent. Also as noted above, the City lacks a general emergency shelter for families, and its adult shelters have limited capacity and/or target specific groups like survivors of Domestic Violence. Additionally, as described in greater detail in other sections of the Allocation Plan, both the City and non-profit providers have been looking for opportunities to create Non-Congregate Shelters (NCS), without success. The need to better coordinate and expand Supportive Services was noted through each part of the consultation process.

QP2: Somerville Households At-Risk of Homelessness

Under the HOME-ARP program, HUD follows HEARTH Act guidelines, defining those at risk of homelessness as individuals and families with an income at or below 30% of the area median income (AMI)[1], who do not have sufficient resources or support networks to prevent them from becoming homeless, and who show specific indications of housing instability. These include:

- Moving 2 or more times within during the last 60 days due to economic reasons
- Living in another's home due to economic hardship
- Living in overcrowded housing

[1] Somerville's median household income is $108,896, thus households with income at/below 30% AMI make no more than $32,669, while those with incomes at/below 50% AMI make no more than $54,448.

- Exiting a publicly-funded institution or system of care (including health-care facility, mental health facility, foster care, or other youth facility or correction program or institution)

Families and youth who qualify as homeless under Department of Education standards (which generally include households with children that are doubled up).

Background on Households At-Risk of Homelessness in Somerville

Given the overheated rental housing market in Somerville and its surrounding communities, the number of extremely low-income households (at or below 30% AMI) at risk of homelessness is growing, and conditions like overcrowding and frequent moves are very common. The School Department's Director of Director of Basic Needs and Housing Support Services reports previously unseen numbers of families facing these challenges. Leaders from faith communities report sharply increased requests for food, clothes, and financial assistance. As in many other red-hot housing markets, if any household loses housing it was previously able to afford, there is very little chance that it will find new similar quality/size housing at a comparable cost. This is particularly true at the extreme low-income end of the housing market.

Size and Demographics of QP2

There is no single dataset reflecting all characteristics of households facing these conditions. The first analysis illuminates the number of households in this category, although it is important to note that this information predates both the pandemic and much of the sharp rise in rents and costs of living observed in Somerville as it experiences rapid development and increased displacement.

Table 4: Housing Inventory (Units not dedicated to Homeless Renters)		
	Current Inventory	**Level of Need**
	# of Units	**# of Households**
Total Rental Units	21,765	
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 30% AMI (At-Risk of Homelessness)	4,230	
Extremely Low Income HH: 0-30% AMI with 1 or more severe housing problems *		3,875 • 18% of all renters • 92% of all renters with 0-30% AMI

Source: ACS 2015-2019 HUD CHAS: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html

** The CHAS and ACS use a list of four housing problems to identify households with this specific risk, including: 1) housing unit lacks complete kitchen facilities; 2) housing unit lacks complete plumbing facilities; 3) household is overcrowded; and 4) household is cost-burdened.*

A household is said to have a housing problem if they have any 1 or more of these 4 problems.

Renters face tremendous economic challenges to remain stably housed in Somerville, and those with the lowest incomes (at or below 30% AMI) face the most significant instability through rent burden and housing problems. Some of the other factors identified in the Notice that denote At-Risk of Homelessness (e.g., moved repeatedly, overcrowded conditions) cannot be directly measured with available data sources; nonetheless, the proxy factors of severe housing problems and undue rent burden are indicators the fragility of these tenancies.

The rental housing market in Somerville has gotten extremely tight in the years since this data was recorded. Vacancy rates fell to an all-time low of 0.50% in August 2022 (per Boston Pad, a real estate analytics website). With the opening of a new public transit stop in Somerville's Union Square in December 2022 and the ongoing aggressive development of life science office towers and high-end residential buildings, access to affordable rental units is scarce and getting scarcer.

Looking at race and income, it is evident that income disparities among racial and ethnic groups create a significantly greater risk of homelessness and housing instability for different groups. Specifically, White households are thriving while BIPOC households are not.

Table 5: Ranges of income by Race and Ethnicity

	Median Family Income	Income as % of AMI	Monthly income
White	$113,663	104%	$9,472
Black or African American	$51,806	48%	$4,317
American Indian	$75,625	69%	$6,302
Asian	$109,991	101%	$9,166
Other Race	$79,973	73%	$6,664
Two or More Races	$73,892	68%	$6,158
Latino Householder	$67,097	62%	$5,591
White Alone, Not Latino	$121,287	111%	$10,573

Source: 2019 ACS Five-Year Estimates; data reported for owner and renter households

Rents in Somerville are high and are rising rapidly. The City's Housing Needs Assessment reports average rents in July 2022 as follows:

Rents in Somerville are high and are rising rapidly. The City's Housing Needs Assessment reports average rents in July 2022 as follows:

Bedrooms	Monthly Rent
1	$2,106
2	$2,558
3	$3,163

This report reflects rents that were fully 11.4% higher than in July 2021, one year previous. Furthermore, the July 2022 average rents rose 2.4% from rent levels reported just a month earlier (in June 2022). This meteoric rise in rent levels constantly brings new households into an elevated risk of homelessness.

Comparing monthly income to rents for these groups reveals the significant and differential rent burdens for different groups. Black households are already severely rent-burdened, while American Indian, households with two or more races, and Latino Householders were already above 40% and, in light of rapidly rising rents in the years since these data were gathered, may be at or over that 50% cost-burden threshold.

Table 6: Rent Burdens for Different Racial/Ethnic groups

Race and Latino Group	Monthly income	Rent burden (for a 2-bedroom unit, $2,558 in July 2022)
White	$9,472	27%
Black or African American	$4,317	59%
American Indian	$6,302	41%
Asian	$9,166	28%
Other Race	$6,664	38%
Two or More Races	$6,158	42%
Latino Householder	$5,591	46%
White Alone, Not Latino	$10,573	24%

Source: 2019 ACS Five-Year Estimates; data reported for owner and renter households

Existing Resources

The housing picture in Somerville involves several elements:

- Somerville is home to Tufts University and is adjacent to Cambridge and Boston with many more universities and colleges, i.e., greater Boston is filled with tens of thousands of higher-education students. This greatly exacerbates competition for lower-cost units in Somerville and surrounding communities.
- As noted above, the extension of the Green Line public transit into Somerville in late 2022 and a related explosion in real estate development (life sciences and upper-end residential buildings) creates added pressure across the entire spectrum of housing affordability.

The City has attempted to meet the demand for low-income rental housing through a variety of projects and policies. Somerville has several all-affordable developments which were acquired or developed using a variety of funding sources, including at the local and federal levels. These projects are deed restricted with units in many cases remaining affordable in perpetuity. Since 2016, the City has partnered with its local community development corporation, Somerville Community Corporation, on the 100 Homes Program. The goal of the program is to acquire 100 units of deed-restricted affordable rental housing to provide to income-eligible households in Somerville, including households at or below 50% AMI and voucher holders.

The City's Inclusionary Housing Program is made of units within market-rate residential developments. The City's Zoning Ordinance requires that any residential development with 4 or more units set aside 20% of those units to be deed restricted at various AMI tiers, including at or below 50% AMI. These units are also accessible to voucher holders.

Inclusionary and all-affordable projects currently in development will add to these existing resources in the next couple of years. The City is also in the process of preparing to launch a Municipal Voucher Program, which ARPA would first fund, and then by local City funds once ARPA funds are expended. The program's target population will be low to very low-income Somerville households most vulnerable to displacement, and who are ineligible for other federal- or state-funded housing programs due to immigration status or other barriers.

The Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) manages more than 1,475 units of affordable housing in Somerville. There is currently an estimated wait time of two years or more for each type of housing managed by the SHA (state and federal family housing, state and federal elderly/disabled housing, and Section 8).

Additional factors related to the risk of homelessness, reported in Somerville's 2022 Housing Needs Assessment, include:	Median Household Income for a female single parent is $30,000 ($2,500 per month), lower than the 30% area median income of $32,669.
	Median Income for People with Disabilities: • Men $30,000 (55% of what men without disabilities take in) • Women $17,500 (36% of what women without disabilities take in)

Table 7: City-assisted housing units targeted to specific income segments		
Existing rental resources		
Project Type	# rental units available to HH at or below 30% AMI	# rental units available to HH at or below 50% AMI
Inclusionary Housing	0	118
100 Homes/49 More Homes	0	20
Deed restricted	38	86
Rental resources in the development pipeline		
Inclusionary Housing	0	82
Deed restricted	33	5

Source: City Housing Division, 2023

The economic disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic brought many households into economic crisis. Since 2020, the Community Action Agency of Somerville has distributed more than $1.3 million in privately raised funds, primarily to households reporting incomes below 50% AMI. Since 2020, the City and its non-profit partners provided over $8.4 million to almost 750 eligible households in federal and state Emergency Rental Assistance, although there a subset of households received assistance more than once.

City and non-profit leaders report a growing number of households arriving from Latin American and South American nations, many of whom do not qualify for shelter or housing as they live in doubled-up situations with family and friends.

Detailed 2023 data from the Somerville Housing Authority show a high demand for subsidized housing. Table 8 indicates the numbers and characteristics of households on the SHA's waitlist.

Table 8: Somerville Housing Authority Waitlist detail			
Type of Housing	Total on Waitlist	Somerville Residents on Waitlist	Wait-time for housing
State Housing (Family)	30,096	1086	Estimated 2 years or more
States Housing (Elderly/Disabled)	9,341	450	Estimated 2 years or more
Federal Housing (Family)	989	198	Estimated 2 years or more
Federal Housing (Elderly/Disabled)	621	262	Estimated 2 years or more
Section 8 Centralized	240,292	1797	Estimated 2 years or more
Section 8 Mainstream	240,959	2290	Estimated 2 years or more
AHVP	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other: Hagan Manor Bryant Manor	1280 1412	353 239	Estimated 2 years or more

Unmet Needs

As frequently discussed in roundtable discussions and raised by survey respondents, stakeholders across Somerville share deep concerns: about households with insufficient income to sustain housing and family stability, about those whose rental assistance will end in the coming months, and about those whose rents have increased sharply.

People want to see a system better able to identify and reach out to vulnerable households earlier, i.e., while additional options can be found (e.g., stronger diversion and homeless prevention services) as well as better coordination among providers working on housing navigation and stabilization, and increasing economic security for all households served.

QP3: Households who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking

Background on Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault/Trafficking in Somerville

The City conferred with local and state-wide Domestic Violence Service Organizations, the Somerville Police Department, and reached out to numerous entities (including MA Anti-Trafficking Task Force, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, and the Middlesex District Attorney's Office) in an effort to understand the size and demographics of this group. Limitations in the ways that data is collected and recorded make it difficult to provide clear information with confidence about these groups. For example, the Somerville Police include more crimes – including Sex for a Fee, Child Enticement, and Distributing Obscene Matter -- within the statistics they can report on "Sex Crimes." The analysis does effectively point to levels and types of households in need and changing needs.

A - Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence and dating violence:

The local Domestic Violence provider, Respond, Inc., is one of the oldest providers in the the state. As noted earlier, Respond operates a shelter with room for up to 21 persons; a 15-unit portfolio of rapid rehousing and two units of transitional housing, and four leased units for young adults. Other than the shelter, the units are not located in Somerville and access to these non-shelter units is gained through the MA Balance of State, into which Somerville and its COC-funded providers merged. Respond also provides Housing Search and Placement services, including a program for previously-incarcerated women (from a three-county area).

SafeLink is the state-wide domestic violence hotline. Their analysis (which extrapolates based on the proportion of callers who state their location) indicates that in each of the last three years, calls for assistance from Somerville ranged from just under 100 to over 200.

Respond also reported that from FY21 to FY22:

- the number of Harassment Order in Somerville rose by 12%
- the number of protection orders in Somerville rose by 13%
- mirroring experiences from other years, 75% of requests for shelter in Somerville went unmet due to the lack of available beds. (Survivors were assisted in other communities)

B - Sexual assault, stalking, and other sex-related crimes:

The Somerville Police Department's Victim Advocate explained that crimes are often reported sometime after the crime was committed, cautioning against looking for trends.

Year	Sex Crime Reports made to Police
2020	45
2021	65
2022	59

C – Human Trafficking

A 2021 TV News report noted that Human Trafficking is widely believed to be very common, "a major problem hiding in plain sight" throughout Massachusetts. In this story, then-Attorney General Maura Healey cited a report estimating that as many as 9,000 searches each day for sex were happening every afternoon via computer terminals in the City of Boston. This story also noted that the Attorney General's Office had opened a dedicated Human Trafficking Division.

The City requested data from the State Attorney General's Office and the Middlesex District Attorney's office, sending emails and leaving voice messages, but it was not possible to obtain information. Efforts will be made to include representatives from organizations serving this group in Somerville's future community discussion of changing service needs and opportunities to address using HOME-ARP funds.

Existing Resources for QP3 Households

As noted earlier, there is an 8-unit shelter (with space for up to 21 persons) in Somerville for those experiencing Domestic Violence and Dating Violence. This shelter has the capacity to serve families as well as individuals. Counting available beds, however, is not an effective way to gauge the number or needs of households who are fleeing or attempting to flee violence, in Somerville or anywhere else.

In Massachusetts, furthermore, the DV network often intentionally places the survivor household in another community, for its members' safety.

Unmet Needs

Both the state-wide and local reports indicated that more requests for DV assistance by Somerville households were recorded than households that were helped by the DV resources located in the City.

Similarly, it has proven difficult to identify numbers and characteristics of survivors of sexual crimes and/or human trafficking, given data needs and challenging efforts to reach public officials. The opportunity for the City and larger community to better understand the needs of QP3 households became clear during the research process involved in developing this Allocation Plan.

Summary of QP3 analysis and priorities

Respond leaders identified areas of sustained and growing need among the Domestic and Dating Violence population they serve, including:

- Financial assistance related to basic needs (the agency has greatly increased the number of grocery gift cards it distributes but cannot sustain this outlay forever)

- Financial assistance related to a household's move to a new unit (noting that rent-up costs can range as high as $6,000-8,000)
- Additional supportive services to assist households with more complex/intense abuse histories, as well as to help relocated families become oriented to their new community.

QP4: Other Populations

Other populations where providing supportive services or assistance under section 212(a) of NAHA (42 U.S.C. 12742(a)) would prevent the family's homelessness or would serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability. HUD defines these populations as individuals and households who do not qualify under any of the populations above but meet one of the following criteria:

(1) Other Families Requiring Services or Housing Assistance to Prevent Homelessness is defined as 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.

(2) At Greatest Risk of Housing Instability is defined as household who meets either paragraph (i) or (ii) below:

i) has annual income that is less than or equal to 30% of the area median income, as determined by HUD and is experiencing severe cost burden (i.e., is paying more than 50% of monthly household income toward housing costs);

(ii) has annual income that is less than or equal to 50% of the area median income, as determined by HUD, AND meets one of the following conditions from paragraph (iii) of the "At risk of homelessness" definition established at 24 CFR 91.5:

(A) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;

(B) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;

(C) Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;

(D) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;

(E) Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;

(F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or

(G) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan

Description of QP4 in Somerville

The high cost of rental housing in Somerville over the last 5-10 years – and the growing distance between local rents and HUD's FMR -- already drove many of the community's scattered-site PSH programs to lease up elsewhere. While a small number of RRH units are located in the city, households meeting the requirements of paragraph 1, above – previously qualified as homeless and now at risk – the City doesn't identify a large group of households meeting this definition.

However, households meeting the criteria for paragraph 2 – those with incomes at or below 30% AMI and deeply cost-burdened, and those with income at or below 50% AMI with other elements of homelessness risk included in section 2(ii)(A-G), above – are among the fastest growing population segments in the City.

Size and description

For Somerville in 2020, the median household income totaled $102,311. In the 2018-2021 analysis undertaken by the City, median income had risen by 6%, to $108,896. While we see higher-income households enjoying this growth, a dwindling number of very low-income households face stagnant or reduced earning power, against the backdrop of rising rents. For this reason, we include information on households with incomes between 31-50% of AMI, as we see this group at elevated risk for future housing instability and even homelessness.

Table 9: Housing Inventory (Units not dedicated to Homeless Renters)		
	Current Inventory	**Level of Need**
	# of Units	**# of Households**
Total Rental Units	21,765	
Rental Units Affordable to HH at 50% AMI	6,625	
Households with income at or below 30% of AMI with a rent burden of 50% or more		1,980 9% of all renters 47% of all renters with 0-30% AMI
Very Low-Income Households at high risk of housing instability (31-50% AMI)		2,220 10% of all renters 34% of all renters at or below 50% AMI
Households under 50% AMI with 1 or more severe housing problems		6,095 28% of all renters 92% of renters at or below 50% AMI

Source: ACS 2015-2019 HUD CHAS: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html

Additional characteristics of housing associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness faced by QP4 households

The City is considering adding two additional housing characteristics for QP 4 households:

1. Households with income at or below 30% AMI whose time-limited rental assistance is ending within 45 days
2. Households with income at or below 30% AMI whose rent has increased more than 50% in the past 12 months

These characteristics are particularly relevant to Somerville in 2023 and beyond, for a number of reasons. First, through the City's Office of Housing Stability and several community partners, more than $8.4 million in state funds (Rental Assistance to Families in Transition, or RAFT) and federal funds (Treasury funds distributed through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, or ERAP) was provided to nearly 750 Somerville households between October 2020 and September 2022.

Unfortunately, the City encountered data limitations here, including the inability to distinguish unique households assisted, as well as difficulty identifying which households are nearing the end of assistance (and thus facing the fiscal pressures either of QP2 or QP4 households).

Additionally, Somerville's highly active rental market has resulted in many households facing sharp rent increases. The local Community Action Agency has restored its Community Organizing and Advocacy team which has mobilized dozens of tenant advocates. Supported in part by City funds, the Organizing team has mobilized an active Renters Committee which reaches out to and supports tenants who lack knowledge of available resources. Organizers have been effective in identifying and publicizing cases of undue rent increases, working to sustain tenancies where possible, and helping households obtain housing search assistance when needed.

Existing Resources

Affordable housing and resources available to these other populations are described in the sections described under QP2, At-Risk, and outlined in Table 7 on page 18.

Identify and consider the current resources available to assist qualifying populations, including congregate and non-congregate shelter units, supportive services, TBRA, and affordable and permanent supportive rental housing (Optional):

As outlined earlier, the City's existing portfolio of shelters, transitional housing, affordable rental housing, permanent supportive housing, and safe-housing for those experiencing domestic violence, is small. Two of the larger transitional housing programs are targeted to specific populations (youth and Veterans). While Somerville is part of, and operates effectively, as an active member of the Balance of State CoC, the availability of housing options for those who want or need to stay in Somerville is woefully inadequate.

Unmet Needs

The challenges for "other low-income households with an elevated risk of housing instability" include that they are not prioritized for housing-related assistance, and generally are referred to what is called "mainstream resources." Assistance from many of these services are short-term and fail to address rising risk of instability in a community undergoing rapid economic change like Somerville.

Identify any gaps within the current shelter and housing inventory as well as the service delivery system:

There are significant gaps in the community's service delivery system, after the only emergency family shelter closed, at the behest of its landlord, a church, the only units available to unhoused families who seek to stay in Somerville are operated by Respond, a Domestic Violence provider with specific criteria for admission. While there is a transitional housing program for youth, there are important sectors of Somerville's homeless population without access to dedicated services, including youth and LGBTQ+ persons of various ages.

The most evident gap in the service delivery system and broader Somerville community (and across metropolitan Boston) is the lack of rental housing that is affordable to the low- and extremely-low-income households that HOME-ARP explicitly seeks to serve through QPs 1, 2 and 4. Additional service delivery gaps were raised by Respondents to our stakeholder survey, including:

- A lack of support for many households currently housed using short-term rental assistance but with no clear path toward economic stability
- Eviction prevention advocacy and resources
- Landlord outreach
- Assistance with utilities, emergency funds, rent, eviction prevention and as noted by many, housing search and navigation

Discussions among providers pointed to the HOME-ARP funds as undergirding the community's opportunity to look at system- and program-level results, to improve coordination and data analytics, and to implement an intentional approach to create the strongest possible community response.

Identify priority needs for qualifying populations:

Based on input gathered through consultations, the stakeholder survey, and a review of the needs assessment, the City identifies priority needs for each qualifying population as follows:

Table 10. Priority Needs for Qualifying Populations	
QP1	Additional supportive environments are opening in Somerville, including the Somerville Homeless Coalition's Engagement Center which began to offer services in January 2023, and a new Community Behavioral Health Center operated by the Cambridge Health Alliance which also opened in January 2023. Respondents noted the critical need to ensure coordination on behalf of the unsheltered among the Street Outreach team, public safety personnel and staff at these two new centers, and to strengthen the pathway to appropriate housing for unhoused households.
QP2	While many Respondents spoke to the pressing need for housing and emergency rental assistance resources when existing federal funds run out, there was even more support to invest in developing accessible, flexible, nimble service responses that can sustain or replace an extremely low-income household's threatened tenancy or facilitate transition into a shelter if that becomes necessary. In addition to housing concerns, access to low-barrier, multi-lingual services and an active referral system to connect people with services intended to increase household income and stability is a critical need.
QP3	Local DV provider Respond has operated a leased non-congregate shelter program during COVID. They hoped that HOME-ARP funding would allow this model to continue and even expand, but once they understood HOME-ARP could not support a leased model and provided no funding for NCS services, they identified priority needs for QP3 households as flexible funds that can be obtained quickly, to support basic needs as well as housing-related costs.
QP4	Many of the issues facing members of QP2 – rising rents, a dwindling number of units, and fierce competition for affordable units – are also facing QP4 households. Access to a similar network of income- and stabilization-oriented services and referrals is crucially needed for this group to remain securely housed in Somerville.

Based on consultations and the data analytics outlined above, the City identifies the opportunity to direct the largest part of its HOME-ARP allocation to Supportive Services. Justification for this position includes reflecting on the following questions:

1 – Why not rental housing? The funding amount of $1.6M is too small to contribute significantly to producing affordable housing. In the heated Somerville acquisition and development environment, these funds would possibly cover the costs of developing three units. Given the drastic increase in construction costs, it's not guaranteed that affordable housing projects actually get sited and built. The consensus was strong that while increasing affordable rental housing is a critical need, HOME-ARP funds are unlikely to achieve the desired impact.

2 – Why not non-congregate shelter? The City and its nonprofit partners have actively been looking at options to purchase hotels for re-use (as housing or perhaps non-congregate shelter), and they have had zero success. Acquiring and developing property already configured as NCS would be the only feasible route to establishing an NCS facility in the City, given its residential

density. Respond and other providers shared the view that a successful NCS facility would require extensive case management and housing placement services.

3 – Why not TBRA? The city currently funds TBRA programs using its traditional HOME allocation and other local and state funds. Expanding stand-alone rental assistance was not seen as an effective strategy, given the demonstrated need for supportive services for households currently receiving TBRA. Additionally, HOME-ARP's list of eligible Supportive Services activities includes the opportunity to direct some funds toward time-limited rental assistance.

4 – Why invest in Supportive Services? As noted above, Somerville's overall real estate market is in flux, which creates instability and uncertainty for many lower-income households. With the growth/development trends accelerating, significant changes to the community's nonprofit/service delivery system are needed – and at this point, not fully understood.

The City envisions using its one-time award of HOME-ARP funds to strengthen and support a flexible array of services to help undergird the redesign and reshaping of its community service delivery. It will do this with active contribution by community members. Possible system-delivery uses include:

Opportunity 1, for QP1: The Somerville Homeless Coalition recently opened a daytime engagement center, intended to expand the reach of a growing street outreach program and a city facing a growing number of persons living unhoused on the street. The Cambridge Health Alliance has begun operating a new Community Behavioral Health Center. These new services provide the opportunity for closer collaborations to be forged, both to coordinate support services for persons experiencing homelessness and also, to link them more closely and directly to housing opportunities available through the Balance of State CoC.

Opportunity 2, for QP2, QP3, and QP4: The array of City and nonprofit services that sprung up to provide emergency financial and rental assistance services in response to the COVID pandemic did outstanding work. HOME-ARP can provide transitional support for agencies and community partners to redesign the ways that people obtain assistance, to become more effective and more responsive to community needs. In addition, strong community and tenant organizing efforts have been effective in preventing evictions bringing media attention to the issue of displacement related to opening the new Green Line public transit stop, and more. These funds can help build organizational and systemic capacity to adapt to meet the changing needs of the City's most vulnerable residents and to ensure that redesign is informed by community input.

HOME-ARP funding can allow these community partners to reinvent and reshape its services/referral network for greater effectiveness and client outcomes, tracking changing needs as community conditions continue to evolve. System redesign can be strengthened by surveying active tenant organizers and other service users to find out what they have found helpful and what changes would make things even more helpful. This is also an opportunity to identify population segments whose access to services and support needs to be

improved. During the consultation, the need for system-wide training and support around disability rights and housing needs for disabled households was articulated.

Based on what the community learns through this self-assessment, the City and providers will undertake a system design and planning process. As noted in numerous discussions, this information-gathering will go "beyond the usual suspects" of providers and funders, to seek insights from households that are unhoused and those experiencing housing instability.

Flexible HOME-ARP Supportive Service funds can underwrite key transitions and investments needed to revamp the community's service delivery system in response to significant changes in the local economy and housing environments. The need and timeline to find alternate funding to sustain effective new services will be made explicit with any HOME-ARP awards.

Explain how the PJ determined the level of need and gaps in the PJ's shelter and housing inventory and service delivery systems based on the data presented in the plan:

The City's review of the data included in the needs assessment identified the extreme fragility of the tenancies of lower-income households, not to mention the challenge of rehousing literally homeless persons in this rental market. Affordable units are vanishing as real estate developers seek to charge sharply higher rents, and rent levels overall are shifting upwards. Providing longer-term transition-planning help to households unlikely to be able to sustain current rents once assistance runs out, will be a major task. Referring different households for different kinds of assistance will require a new, intentional delivery approach. A survey respondent wrote something that encapsulates this:

> *The priorities noted above speak to the components required to have a functioning network for serving populations that need affordable housing, rental assistance, supportive services, and eviction prevention. There are key structural components to provide housing stability long-term.*

The City and its community partners will use the one-time award of HOME-ARP funds to redesign its approach to coordinating services and referral relationships. Looking at best practices, the community will work together in new ways, with added resources to distribute to households in need as well as redesigning staffing and interagency partnerships.

HOME-ARP Activities

Describe the method(s)that will be used for soliciting applications for funding and/or selecting developers, service providers, subrecipients and/or contractors:

Enter narrative response here.

Following the community input/planning process described above, the City will design an RFP (or multiple RFPs) that follow existing City procurement guidelines, intended to select qualified non-profit organizations to carry out specific activities eligible under Supportive Services.

Describe whether the PJ will administer eligible activities directly:

Enter narrative response here.

The City will be responsible for Administration and Planning, but will not administer any other eligible activities directly.

If any portion of the PJ's HOME-ARP administrative funds are provided to a subrecipient or contractor prior to HUD's acceptance of the HOME-ARP allocation plan because the subrecipient or contractor is responsible for the administration of the PJ's entire HOME-ARP grant, identify the subrecipient or contractor and describe its role and responsibilities in administering all of the PJ's HOME-ARP program:

Enter narrative response here.

Not applicable

In accordance with Section V.C.2. of the Notice (page 4), PJs must indicate the amount of HOME-ARP funding that is planned for each eligible HOME-ARP activity type and demonstrate that any planned funding for nonprofit organization operating assistance, nonprofit capacity building, and administrative costs is within HOME-ARP limits.

Table 11: HOME-ARP Allocations			
	Proposed Funding Amount	Percent of the Grant	Statutory Limit
Supportive Services	$ 1,220,057		
Acquisition and Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	$		
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	$		
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	$		
Non-Profit Operating (optional)	$ 81,337	5%	Up to 5%
Non-Profit Capacity Building (optional)	$ 81,337	5%	Up to 5%
Administration and Planning	$ 244,011	15%	15%
Total HOME-ARP Allocation	**$ 1,626,742**		

Describe how the PJ will distribute HOME-ARP funds in accordance with its priority needs identified in its needs assessment and gap analysis:

Enter narrative response here.

The City will ensure that Supportive Services and direct-support resources are targeted to members of the Qualified Populations, groups that are all growing in size and complexity of need and eligible for HOME-ARP support.

Describe how the characteristics of the shelter and housing inventory, service delivery system, and the needs identified in the gap analysis provided a rationale for the plan to fund eligible activities:

As noted above, stakeholders indicated, through consultation and survey results, that they viewed the HOME-ARP funds as too small to make an observable impact in the number of needed affordable rental units, while this one-time award could effectively support the redesign and revamping of the community's service delivery network to produce a more coordinated response network. Involving community members in system assessment and redesign for improved outcomes is a priority for City leaders.

HOME-ARP Production Housing Goals

Estimate the number of affordable rental housing units for qualifying populations that the PJ will produce or support with its HOME-ARP allocation:

Somerville does not intend to produce rental units with HOME-ARP funding.

Preferences

Somerville does not intend to utilize preferences at this stage of its HOME-ARP planning and allocation. If the need for preferences becomes apparent as a result of the community assessment and redesign process envisioned by the City and its partners, then the actions required to submit a Substantial Amendment will be undertaken.

Referral Methods

City staff and nonprofit partners have begun and will continue discussions of reshaped referral methods to support more coordinated delivery of services. Examples include sharing client-level information among the Street Outreach, Engagement Center, and Community Behavioral Health Centers, and tracking the timeframes for time-limited rental assistance to ensure that households are supported in transitioning to paying full rent and utilities (or otherwise remaining housed).

Limitations in a HOME-ARP rental housing or NCS project

The City of Somerville will not include limitations for any of its HOME-ARP projects.

HOME-ARP Refinancing Guidelines

The City of Somerville will not use HOME-ARP for refinancing.

Appendix A – Somerville HOME-ARP Needs Assessment Survey

Somerville HOME-ARP needs assessment

The City of Somerville received $1,626,742 from HUD's HOME-ARP program. These funds are to be used to assist specific qualifying populations, and can be used for four eligible activities. Funds must be fully expended by **09/30/2030.**

The City's HOME-ARP Allocation Plan will be informed by input from community members, including providers, public agencies, and other stakeholders (including those who use housing and service resources).

HOME-ARP's Qualifying Populations include:

- individuals or families who are homeless

- individuals or families at risk of homelessness

- individuals or families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking, and

- other populations where supportive services would help prevent homelessness, a return to homelessness or serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability

HOME-ARP's Eligible Activities include:

- development of affordable rental housing

- tenant-based rental assistance

- supportive services (which can include street outreach, rental assistance and related financial assistance, and other services), and

- acquisition and/or development of non-congregate shelter

The purpose of the survey is to identify unmet needs and gaps in Somerville's housing and service resources for the Qualifying Populations.

Please submit your response no later than **Friday December 16, 2022** at 5 PM

1. Which Qualifying Populations do you work with? Check all that apply: *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Homeless, as defined in section 103 (a) of the McKinney Vento Homeless Act Assistance
- [ ] At-Risk of Homelessness as defined in section 104(1) of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- [ ] Those who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking as defined by HUD
- [ ] Other populations where supportive services would help prevent homelessness or serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability
- [ ] Other - describe in text box, below

2. Describe non-qualifying populations with whom you work.

3. What do you see as the greatest unmet need(s) in Somerville for the Qualifying Populations with whom you work?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Low Need	Moderate Need	High Need
Affordable Rental Housing			
ADA accessible housing			
Shelter/emergency housing			
Street Outreach			
Rental Assistance			
Utility Assistance			
Eviction Prevention			
Supportive Services			
Other			

Please describe the priorities you noted above.

4. Where would you suggest the City and its partners prioritize investment of these limited funds?

	Low Priority	Moderate Priority	High Priority	Critical Priority
Affordable Rental Housing				
ADA accessible housing				
Shelter/emergency housing				
Street Outreach				
Rental Assistance				
Utility Assistance				
Eviction Prevention				
Supportive Services				
Other				

5. Please share your thoughts on ways that these funds can increase housing stability and well-being for vulnerable residents.

6. Please indicate which sector you represent and optionally, provide your name and affiliation.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Continuum of Care representative
- ☐ Homeless service provider
- ☐ Domestic Violence service provider
- ☐ Veterans' group
- ☐ Public Housing Authority
- ☐ Public agency that address Qualifying Population needs
- ☐ Public or private organization that addresses fair housing, civil rights, and needs of persons with disabilities
- ☐ Community Stakeholder
- ☐ Other (please describe below)

7. Which other sector do you represent?

_____

8. Contact information (optional): Name, organization, title

_____

Appendix B – Existing Resources for Homelessness-related Housing

Type	Population served	# beds	# units	Provider name/funding
Emergency Shelter	Homeless	22	0	Catholic Charities
	DV	18	8	Respond
	Homeless	16	0	Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC)
Transitional Housing	Homeless Women	10	0	Catholic Charities
	Homeless Veterans	22	0	Volunteers of America
	Homeless Youth	9	0	Wayside
Permanent Supportive Housing	Formerly Homeless	38	-	Operated by other BoS CoC providers
	Formerly Homeless	7	2	181 Washington St.-SHC
	Formerly Homeless	13	0	Sewall St. -SHC
	Formerly Homeless	72	59	Turn the Key-SHC
Other Permanent Housing	Formerly Homeless	11	3	Operated by other BoS CoC providers
	Formerly Homeless	4	1	Cambridge Health Alliance-SHC
	Formerly Homeless	6	0	RTI-SHC
Rapid Rehousing	At risk of homelessness	3	0	SHC-DHCD funded
	DV	10	3	Respond
	Homeless	4	1	SHC-PASS