

# CITY OF HICKORY

## CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT

JULY 1, 2014 – JUNE 30, 2015

# HICKORY



Life. Well Crafted.

*City of Hickory*  
*PO Box 398*  
*Hickory, NC 28603*  
*[www.hickorync.gov](http://www.hickorync.gov)*

## INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the City of Hickory joined with agencies, non-profit service providers, institutions, business leaders, beneficiaries, and its citizens to develop a community vision through which identified housing and community development needs may be realized. This community dialogue provided the basis for the City of Hickory's 2010-2014 "Five-Year Consolidated Strategy for Housing and Community Development", a comprehensive approach through which identified goals might be obtained. For each year included in the City's "Five-Year Consolidated Strategy for Housing and Community Development" is an "Annual Action Plan" that incorporates identified goals and objectives to be addressed during a specific program year. At the end of each program year, the City of Hickory joins with its citizens to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of resources in addressing identified goals and objectives cited in its "Annual Action Plan" for the previous year.

On June 30, 2015 the City of Hickory completed the fifth program year of its 2010-2014 "Five-Year Consolidated Strategy for Housing and Community Development." The City of Hickory has once again joined with its citizens to respectfully submit to the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development the following Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report of the City's "Annual Action Plan FY 2014." The City's Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report contains three sections.

Section 1 provides a summary of available resources and investments made to achieve the goals identified in the City's "Annual Action Plan FY `14."

Section 2 examines the relationship of annual action plan initiatives taken during FY`14' to goals and objectives identified in the City's "Five-Year Consolidated Strategy for Housing and Community Development."

Section 3 provides a self-examination of initiatives taken during the past program year in addressing identified priority needs and objectives for housing and community development.

## SECTION 1

### **SUMMARY OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND ANNUAL PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **Available Resources:**

As a result of annual grant submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the City of Hickory received \$310,314.00 in Community Development Block Grant funding (CDBG). In addition, the City received approximately \$171,744.35 in program income from the repayment of low-interest rate housing rehabilitation loans and low-interest rate downpayment assistance program loans administered to benefit qualifying low to moderate-income citizens in previous years. In sum, the City of Hickory had approximately \$864,433.82 (includes \$382,375.47 unspent funds from previous years) in available funding from CDBG funds and Program Income to address identified priorities in its “Annual Action Plan FY `14”.

#### **Use of Resources and Program Achievements, FY `14:**

1. **Preservation of the City’s Housing Stock:** \$21,426.32 was invested into preserving the City’s housing stock by providing low-interest rate single-family rehabilitation loans to five qualifying low and moderate-income homeowners residing within low to moderate-neighborhoods as defined by HUD. One home was completed during the FY 14 funding year through the City of Hickory’s Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. Four more homes were assisted by Habitat for Humanity’s grant program. Three additional homeowners were approved for funding in spring 2015. These properties will be rehabilitated during summer 2015.
2. **Administration of Housing Rehabilitation Program:** \$ 1,726.03 was used to fund a Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program Administrative Technician and a Rehabilitation Specialist to assist in the implementation of the City’s Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program.
3. **Enhancing Affordable Housing Opportunities:** \$ 29,000 was used for First-Time Homebuyers. The City assisted 4 first-time homebuyers in obtaining homeownership.
4. **Public Services Initiative:** \$ 3,278.00 was provided in the form of a grant to the City of Refuge Community Development Center to provide an afterschool program to approximately 21 predominately low to moderate income students.
5. **Public Services Initiative:** \$9,834.00 was provided as a grant to Exodus Homes to fund employment and transportation coordination services for program residents. Exodus Homes provides employment assistance and coordinates transportation for all residents. The mission of Exodus Homes is to help homeless and previously incarcerated recovering addicts maintain their sobriety, learn new skills, and become productive, contributing members of society. Approximately 42 residents received assistance through the program.

6. **Public Services Initiative:** \$9,834.00 allocated to AIDS Leadership Foothills Area Alliance (ALFA) in the form of a grant which was used to fund a case manger position. ALFA provides case management services to people living with HIV/AIDS and also offers HIV prevention education programs to the community at large. They currently have 167 people in care through their case management program.
7. **Public Services Initiative:** \$9,834.00 was provided as a grant to the Hickory Soup Kitchen, which enabled the organization to serve approximately 350 meals per day to 220 residents of Hickory needing a warm meal.
8. **Public Services Initiative:** \$9,834.00 was provided to the Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry Healthcare Center as a grant to support a certified nursing assistant in the health clinic. The Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministries Healthcare Center provides medical care services to low and moderate income individuals.
9. **Public Services Initiative:** \$9,834.00 was provided to Safe Harbor Rescue Mission to assist with the various needs of the day shelter. The day shelter provides food and shelter to women and children who are homeless or at risk for homelessness. Approximately 25 homeless women receive services each day.
10. **Public Services Initiative:** \$1,285.07 was provided to Community Ridge Day Care to assist with renovations to equip a room to house infants.
11. **Street Resurfacing:** \$79,004.55 was used to resurface portions of three neighborhood streets located within low and moderate income neighborhoods. Approximately 4,558 linear feet of two lane neighborhood streets were resurfaced.
12. **Renovations of the Ridgeview Library:** \$2,441.64 was used to assist with the renovations to preserving the old Ridgeview Library. This building was the original library and is being renovated into a community center and meeting space that will also house artifacts from the former Ridgeview High School. The renovations will result in the complete rehabilitation of the interior of the building. The renovation will be completed in fall 2015.
13. **Renovations to Hickory Optimist Park:** \$141,230.20 was used to assist with providing a walking trail around the park and constructing required drainage improvements. The improvements also include a pedestrian connection to Optimist Park to a nearby subdivision.
14. **Construction of Picnic Shelter and Restrooms at Kiwanis Park:** \$98,411.04 was used to construct a picnic shelter and accessible restrooms at Kiwanis Park. The park was recently upgraded with the Zahra Baker All Children's Playground, which has increased the number of persons using the park. The upper park did not have any accessible restrooms available. The new shelter is larger and more practical than the small shelter that previously served the site.

15. **Promote Fair Housing Practices:** \$1,598.00 of funding was used to purchase newspaper advertising to inform city residents of their fair housing rights. These advertisements ran eight times in the Hickory Daily Record and four times in a Charlotte based Spanish newspaper during the month of April. Fair housing information was included in the City's Housing Rehabilitation Program Brochures and the utility bill insert for the month of April. Fair Housing information was presented to the Community Relations Council at their April meeting. The Community Development Manager serves on the Catawba Valley Board of Realtors Equal Opportunity in Housing Committee. This committee presented training on fair housing at the board's April 2015 meeting.
16. **Program Administration:** \$69,637.82 (includes \$1,598.00 for Fair Housing Practices) was utilized to provide program administration and planning during the 2014 program year.

## SECTION 2

### **STATUS OF ANNUAL ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE CITY'S FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY**

**The City of Hickory's "Five-Year Consolidated Strategy for Housing and Community Development" incorporated the following community identified goals and objectives:**

- **Preservation of the City's Housing Stock** – Providing housing rehabilitation program funding that benefits low and moderate-income homeowners.
- **Affordable Housing Opportunities** - Creating affordable new housing initiatives and downpayment assistance programs that benefit low and moderate-income residents in obtaining homeownership.
- **Homeless Supportive Initiatives** – Providing support for programs that provide nutrition, medical attention, shelter, and assimilation strategies for homeless persons and families in the City.
- **Community Development Needs**- public service initiatives that benefit low and moderate-income persons through educational enrichment programs; promotion of fair housing practices; neighborhood/public facilities that provide equal access to life enhancing activities and programs; infrastructure improvements that promote public safety and quality neighborhoods throughout the city; and planning activities that promote beneficial urban change through which all of the City's citizens may prosper and grow.
- **Fair Housing** – Working to ensure that all citizens are aware of their rights to fair housing and taking steps to reduce barriers to fair housing within the community.

**All above referenced resources combined should contribute to the reduction of poverty and address fair housing issues.**

## **Annual Actions FY `14:**

1. **Preservation of the City's Housing Stock:** During the 2014 program year the City utilized approximately 5% of funds spent to preserve the City's housing stock. This translated into the renovation of 5 low and moderate-income owner occupied residences for a total of \$23,152.35 (includes \$1,726.03 delivery cost).
2. **Affordable Housing Opportunities:** 4 low and moderate-income households realized homeownership during the past program year as a result of City initiated down payment assistance programs. In addition, the City continued to develop new affordable housing opportunities through the purchase of property to sell for new homes. 4 qualifying first-time homebuyers obtained homeownership as a result of the City's investment of \$29,000 from available CDBG funds.
3. **Homeless Assistance Initiatives:** Low-interest rate loans and grants provided to Exodus Homes supplemented the efforts of these area service providers to continue to provide transitional housing, intervention, medical, and nutritional assistance to homeless persons and families in the Hickory area. Homeless assistance activities also included assisting the Hickory Soup Kitchen, Safe Harbor Rescue Mission and Cooperative Christian Ministries. These organizations provide extremely valuable food, counseling, day shelter, and health care services to the homeless.
4. **Community Development: fair housing, educational enrichment programs, neighborhood facilities, infrastructure, and planning.**
  - **Fair Housing Actions** - The city's partnership with Habitat for Humanity continues with new construction in Habitat's Glen at Green Park subdivision being barrier free. Three accessible homes were built during the program year. A total of 11 homes will be completed when the project is built out. The City of Hickory also updated its Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing during the 2012 program year. A study of the fair housing complaints received within the past five years indicated no complaints where the NC Human Relations Commission made a finding of discrimination within the City of Hickory. Therefore, the majority of fair housing efforts undertaken by the city are aimed at raising citizen awareness of their rights to fair housing.

The city continued to partner with local organizations and citizen groups to raise awareness about fair housing issues. Partnership efforts included a presentation to the Catawba Valley Association of Realtors. Community Development staff also has met with the city's Community Relations Council to discuss fair housing issues. In addition, Fair Housing posters were distributed to a number of predominately African American churches within the community. Fair housing information was included in the City's Housing Rehabilitation Program Brochures, which are distributed to groups throughout the city. Fair housing brochures are also made available at a kiosk the front of city hall for residents attending community meetings or paying utility bills.

During the past fiscal year, the City continued to be proactive in promoting fair housing practices through media announcements and availability to receive complaints. Fair Housing information was also included on all utility billing statements mailed during the month of April. Fair housing advertisements appeared in the Hickory Daily Record on every Sunday and Wednesday in April.

- **Educational Enrichment Programs** – The City of Hickory continued to fund the City of Refuge afterschool program, which provides afterschool tutoring to approximately 21 elementary school aged children that reside in predominately low and moderate income families.
  - **Public Infrastructure Improvements** – The City of Hickory continues to use CDBG funding to provide improvements to public infrastructure and neighborhood facilities in low to moderate income areas. Improvements during project year 2014 included the construction of approximately 4,558 linear feet of two lane neighborhood streets were resurfaced in the Kenworth, Green Park, and Ridgeview Neighborhoods. Funds were also used to fund improvements to the former Ridgeview Public Library, which is currently being renovated into a community center. The City also constructed a picnic shelter and accessible restrooms at Kiwanis Park. Improvements to Hickory Optimist Park included storm drainage replacement and construction of a walking trail.
  - **Administrative and Planning Initiatives-** CDBG funding was utilized during the past fiscal year for program administration and planning initiatives. This funding provided resources for Community Development staff to provide program management, monitoring, low and moderate-income community studies, and technical support to area service providers and residents. These initiatives directly benefited low and moderate-income persons and families in the City by providing affordable housing opportunities, single-family rehabilitation programs, addressing neighborhood quality issues, and providing technical assistance to area service providers serving the City’s homeless persons and people with disabilities.
5. **Leveraging CDBG Funding:** In FY `14, the City leveraged approximately \$ 436,800.00 mortgage financing from the \$ 29,000 provided to first time homebuyers as CDBG down payment assistance funds. Through the confidence of the City’s private financial institutions to provide mortgages in support of the City’s homebuyer assistance programs, four low and moderate-income families realized homeownership during the past fiscal year.
  6. **Gaps in Institutional Structure:** During the past fiscal year, the City continued to strive to achieve its community vision by addressing the citizen-identified goals and objectives formalized in its “Five-Year Consolidated Strategy for Housing and Community Development.” During this period, the City did not identify any gaps in institutional structure that interfered with the successful implementation of housing and community development initiatives cited in its “Five-Year Consolidated Strategy.”
  7. **Participation with Hickory Public Housing Authority has occurred in several areas.** The City has asked the Public Housing Authority to include pursuit of the Section 8

Homeownership Option in the PHA 5-year plan. The City has also worked with the Hickory Housing Authority as they work to implement their Rental Assistance Demonstration program funding to convert their public housing units to project based rental assistance vouchers. Community Development Staff submitted an unsuccessful Choice Neighborhoods Grant Application with the Hickory Housing Authority. Staff remains committed to taking steps to improve neighborhoods where public housing is located. Requests by the Public Housing Authority were included in City of Hickory's Annual Action Plan as Citizens Comments.

## SECTION 3

### SELF EVALUATION

**EFFECTIVE USE OF CDBG FUNDS:** During the past program year, the City utilized available CDBG funding to address the identified goals and objectives cited in its “Five-Year Consolidated Strategy for Housing and Community Development.” This translated directly into continuing to preserve the City’s housing stock by making needed single-family rehabilitation loans available to qualified beneficiaries, enhancing affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate-income homebuyers by providing downpayment assistance programs, supporting enrichment programs that benefit low and moderate-income citizens and people with disabilities, providing support to area service providers that assist the City’s homeless population, promoting fair housing practices, providing economic opportunities in low and moderate-income areas within the City, and providing needed infrastructure improvements to enhance public safety and environmental quality in low and moderate-income neighborhoods. In addition, the City continued to partner with the private sector to leverage CDBG funding and link community resources to directly benefit low and moderate-income families and persons residing in the City. The City continued to provide technical assistance to area service providers who have linked their resources together by developing a Continuum of Care initiative, CRIS.

**PROGRAM MONITORING:** The City of Hickory Community Development Department has continued to monitor the use of CDBG funding throughout the past program year. The City of Hickory plans an annual visit with all sub-recipients no later than the end of each fiscal year to monitor the use of CDBG funding and other public funding. Housing Rehabilitation projects are monitored for accuracy of file status and assistance is provided to contractors during the work phase of each rehabilitation project. Technical assistance is provided to Inter-Faith Development Corporation at regularly scheduled board of director meetings, and the use of CDBG funding is monitored as reimbursement requests are received for the City of Refuge, ALFA, Cooperative Christian Ministries, Hickory Soup Kitchen, Exodus Homes, Community Ridge Day Care and Safe Harbor Rescue Mission initiatives. All other recipients receiving CDBG funding and other public funding are monitored throughout their initiatives by City staff.

In sum, all CDBG efforts continue to be consistent with the identified goals and objectives cited in the City’s “Five-Year Consolidated Strategy for Housing and Community Development.” The City continues to strive with its citizens to realize our community vision for a quality environment in which all citizens may grow and prosper.

**FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND CITIZEN COMMENTS**

The City of Hickory encourages all citizens to review this document. Persons with questions or comments regarding the contents of this document may contact a representative at the Community Development Department:

Telephone: (828) 323-7414

Mail: City of Hickory  
Community Development Department  
Post Office Box 398  
Hickory, North Carolina 28603

**CITY OF HICKORY:**

**Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report  
Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2014 and Ending June 30, 2015.**

**SUMMARY OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING:**

During the past year, the Community Development Department has been available to assist any resident of the City with a housing discrimination problem. During this period, staff inquiries did not reveal any unfair housing practices involving realtors, lenders, or insurance agents in the City of Hickory.