

# **City of Conway**

## **Second Program Year CAPER**

### **2005**

#### **Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report**

### **Executive Summary**

As designated Entitlement Community, the City of Conway continues to focus CDBG improvements in Census Tracts 703 and 704. Both of these areas have high populations of low-moderate income residents. 55.5% and 63.4% of residents in Tracts 703 and 704 (respectively) are classified as low-moderate income based on Census Bureau figures from 2000 and HUD requirements. Approximately 44% of Conway's population is classified as minority. Census Tracts 703 and 704 contain some of the highest percentages of minority residents.

CDBG-funded projects were located within Census Tracts 703 and 704 based on the continuing desire of city officials to impact the largest percentages of both low-moderate income residents and minority residents with this funding. Although there are portions of these census tracts with more affluent residents, careful consideration was given to ensure that CDBG funding was concentrated in areas where the greatest number of low-moderate income residents will benefit the most.

The second year of HUD funding began with a complete evaluation of the problems and issues encountered during the first year of funding. In the first year of the grant, the environmental review and the awarding of the bid for the first project--Smith Street Sidewalks were accomplished.

### **General Questions**

As previously stated in the CAPER for year one the first year of this grant was a learning experience for the City of Conway. The City was a new entitlement community and the Grants Coordinator had to go through a learning process in order to manage this grant. At the end of the first program year the Grants Coordinator left for a job in the private sector. When the new Grants Coordinator was hired in November 2005 a complete evaluation of the entire HUD Entitlement grant was done with the assistance of HUD representatives in order to ensure that the goals and objectives

stated in the Year One and Year Two Action Plans were specific, realistic, and attainable. Both Action Plans after a careful analysis were revised with the assistance of HUD Staff, City Council, City Staff, and Citizen participation during public hearings. Because of this complete evaluation it took until April 2006 to complete this process and ensure the city was complying with all required reporting requirements and to revise the action plans. Once these required actions were completed the city moved forward on projects as stated in the action plans.

Smith Street Sidewalks--This project experienced delays in the beginning due to federal requirements and project design. A full Environmental Assessment was required for this project since it involved new sidewalk construction rather than upgrades to existing public facilities. A series of stormwater drainage improvements were also being developed by the City's Public Works Department in the first part of the program year, one of which involved Smith Street. The project was delayed so that the drainage and sidewalk improvements could be combined into one project. As a result, only the sidewalks and some curbing is being funded through the CDBG allocation. The largest portion of the project (drainage improvements such as the majority of curbing, gutters, etc) is being funded through the City of Conway's Stormwater Utility. Weaver Construction was given a Notice of Award on May 24, 2005. Construction of the project had numerous delays from moving gas lines, to issues of tree preservation, and the weather. The Sidewalk and curbing project was completed in June of 2006. The City is currently as of August 2006 doing a complete evaluation of the entire street which had storm water improvements, sidewalks, curbing and complete resurfacing of the entire street before making a final approval and acceptance of the street.

Administration—During Year One \$11,938.88 was spent on advertisements and professional services. The majority (\$9800) was spent to hire a consultant to conduct an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, as stipulated in Conway's Consolidated Plan. The Grants Coordinator also attended a mandatory IDIS Training in Richmond, VA during Program Year 1. Program year two \$8,000 was set aside for Administration. Money was spent on Advertisements, training, and needed supplies in order to manage the HUD Entitlement Grant. The current Grants Coordinator is waiting for a class to attend IDIS training. Even though the current Grants Coordinator hasn't as yet attended this training HUD Staff has been of great assistance in getting required reporting information into the IDIS system. The current Grants Coordinator has received training in Grants management in Columbia SC and Effective Management of Subrecipients in Hollywood FL.

An important lesson learned in the second year is the importance of organization and documentation and making Goals and Objectives specific, realistic, and attainable. The Grants Coordinator keeps paperwork in an organized and easily accessible manner. There have been numerous occasions when representatives from HUD, City Council members, or citizens would request information about entitlement projects and the Grants Division was able to answer these requests and it's very important that this information is well-documented and organized. Organization and documentation methods will be continued into future program years and improvements will be made with the assistance and cooperation of City Staff.

In October of 2004, the Matheny-Burns Group completed an extensive study of fair housing within the City of Conway and surrounding areas. This Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice identified multiple and often interrelated areas of need based on a review of current policies and practices in the public and private sectors, interviews with key service providers, and an examination of socio-economic data.

The first issue identified was an inadequate supply of affordable housing to meet the demand. Although construction of housing units both within the City of Conway and Horry County has risen dramatically in recent years, many of the new housing units are not affordable to residents with low and moderate incomes.

Examples of strategies that will be used to address this issue in the coming years are:

1. Both separately and with the Housing Authority of Conway, work to identify and pursue potential funding sources and partnerships to support affordable housing objectives to include governmental and non-traditional funding sources.
2. Support the Housing Authority of Conway in the continuance of LMI programs and projects aimed at increasing the amount and quality of affordable housing resources within the AI Study Area.
3. Actively support the efforts of area non-profits that work to provide affordable, safe, and clean housing options and supportive services for LMI residents and particularly for special populations.
4. Continue on-going communication between the Grants and City Planning staff, conducting periodic reviews of City development regulations to identify potential barriers for developers of affordable housing and championing

zoning and community development proposals that provide fair and equal housing opportunities.

5. Consider providing incentives such as permit fee reductions and reductions in required open space to private developers to minimize development costs and encourage the development of affordable housing projects.
6. Work with the development community to identify technical assistance and financial incentives to encourage an increase in the supply of affordable units.
7. Continue the integration of affordable housing concepts into the City comprehensive planning process.
8. Expand participation in fair housing awareness promotion efforts such as Fair Housing month to increase awareness and support for fair housing initiatives among the general public, local decision-makers, financial institutions, and the private sector.

A second issue identified was the abundance of seasonal minimum wage jobs in the Grand Strand that require lengthy commutes and do little to advance the economic standing and housing choices of Conway's poor. Without more employment opportunities to earn more than the minimum wage, residents will not be able to afford the available housing stock. Strategies to address this critical issue include the recruitment of higher paying jobs to the Conway area and offering low-moderate income residents better access to the advanced education and training needed to compete for higher paying jobs. The City of Conway will continue to support efforts by Horry-Georgetown Technical College and the Horry County School District to increase access to advanced training and education opportunities to residents, particularly in high demand occupations such as health care, construction, and education. The City of Conway will also continue efforts to diversify its economic base through aggressive economic development. One issue that was immediately identified was that LYMO which is the rapid transit authority for Conway and Horry County SC had to cut bus routes in Conway due to funding shortages. The City as part of the Public Services section of year one projects granted LYMO \$10,000 in order to keep critical bus routes open so that low and moderate income residents that live in the 703 and 704 Census tracks have a way to get to work.

Another issue identified was that low-income and minority residents are experiencing a greater number of loan denials. The inability of low income and minority residents to qualify for loans can ultimately prevent the

purchase, maintenance and upgrade of residential properties and contributes to the decline in the quality and supply of affordable housing. The decline of these properties also diminishes the tax base for local governments over time. A secondary but related issue of concern is predatory lenders who prey on LMI homeowners, enticing them into contracts that include high interest rates, unreasonably high fees, and long contract periods.

1. The City of Conway continues to support local groups such as Habitat for Humanity that work to provide affordable homes and seek viable financing options for potential LMI homebuyers. The land that in the past year, the City deeded 1.7 acres to Habitat for Humanities on Robert Laney Drive now has five homes that have been recently built by Habitat.

2. Encourage local support service providers to expand existing Consumer Credit Counseling and First Time Home-Buyer programs with funding assistance where possible.

3. Work with community groups to seek additional avenues to build consumer credit education, counseling, and awareness among low income and minority residents to include local faith-based organizations, adult education providers, higher education institutions, Head Start programs, high schools, and other forums.

4. Continue to emphasize the importance of credit history in future home buying potential as an element of public education and fair housing promotional efforts, to include print and electronic media outreach efforts.

5. Monitor HMDA data periodically for changes or patterns in lending practices, especially those that impact low income, minorities, and other special populations.

6. Support local and State efforts to educate citizens on the perils of predatory lending and on how to read and understand contracts, including addressing language barriers by working with Hispanic serving organizations such as Catholic Charities and Latinoamericanos en Accion to promote greater understanding of financial tools, options, and risks.

7. Build upon strong CRA records and the interest of local banking institutions to mobilize public/private community-based partnerships to improve financial literacy among special populations.

A fourth issue is the limited availability of public transportation for those in need of the service. Lower incomes and physical and geographic access limitations for special needs populations – such as the elderly, single-parent

households, immigrants without driver's licenses, and residents with disabilities – make the availability of affordable and reliable transit a necessity to maintain employment, receive support services, and access health care and other needed programs.

The final impediment to fair housing choice identified in the analysis is the notable lack of emergency and transitional housing options for special populations in the Conway area. Special populations in the Conway AI Study Area must rely heavily on facilities in the neighboring Myrtle Beach area for emergency, transitional and other short-term housing options. Special populations include the homeless, those with HIV/AIDS and other debilitating illnesses, substance abusers, the mentally ill, and victims of domestic abuse. Also included in this group are families and individuals who have lost their homes to unexpected circumstances such as fire or flood.

The City of Conway continues to encourage groups such as local law enforcement agencies, Catholic Charities, Churches Assisting People (CAP), Citizens against Spouse Abuse, the Friendship Clinic, Latinoamericanos en Accion, the Salvation Army, the Street Reach Mission, the United Way, the Little River Medical Center, and others serving special populations to assist in count efforts for the homeless or persons at risk for becoming homeless so that more accurate needs assessment data can be provided in support of funding requests.

The City of Conway also actively supports the efforts of area non-profits that work to provide affordable and emergency housing options for special populations including the homeless, residents with HIV/AIDS, residents with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm workers, and others.

The City of Conway will support the efforts of the Total Care for the Homeless Coalition as they work to identify and serve the needs of the area homeless, as they expand their services to better serve the residents of the Conway Area, and as they facilitate interagency and intergovernmental coordination.

Although many of the above strategies consist of ongoing efforts that will take time to fully implement, the City of Conway was involved in activities that will result in a more immediate impact, particularly relating to the underserved's need for housing. First of all, the City of Conway designated April as Fair Housing Month. The Mayor of Conway signed a Proclamation. The City of Conway is actively involved with other municipalities and the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments in Fair Housing Activities. The City since January 2005 advertises the Fair Housing Law on the City Access Channel with contact information on who to contact for any Fair Housing

Complaints. The City has found that most low and moderate income residents cannot afford a newspaper. They do though watch the City Access Channel and since we've advertised on the channel we've referred two complaints to the Waccamaw Council of Regional Governments.

The City of Conway is also a member of the Waccamaw Fair Housing Council, which services Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg Counties. Components of the Fair Housing program include: fair housing counseling; education/outreach to housing industry professionals; Fair Housing Internet website; Education/Outreach to citizens; Housing Counseling; First Time Homebuyer Workshops; and other housing issues of importance to low-moderate income residents. Meetings of the Fair Housing Council help to coordinate information available on homeownership and fair housing issues throughout the tri-county region.

In June 2005, the City of Conway joined with other municipalities and local governments in Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties to form the Waccamaw HOME Consortium. Through this partnership, the Consortium hopes to be able to leverage more funds for affordable housing projects in this region. The City of Conway and the City of Myrtle Beach are the only entitlement communities in this tri-county region.

The City of Conway was able to leverage other resources during the year which were used towards projects in low-moderate income areas. First of all, the Smith Street Sidewalks project is being funded primarily through the City of Conway's stormwater utility. The City also donated land to Habitat for Humanity of Horry County for the development of affordable housing. Approximately \$325,000 was obtained from the County Transportation Committee for street improvements.

## **Managing the Process**

The City of Conway Grants Division acted as the Lead Agency for this Community Development Block Grant project in coordination with local and state agencies, as well as private groups and organizations. Compliance with program and comprehensive planning requirements were monitored by the Grants Coordinator with the assistance of HUD representatives to ensure that all applicable requirements were met.

Other governmental entities involved in the implementation of this plan included the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, Horry County, the Housing Authority of Conway, state government agencies (i.e., South Carolina Department of Transportation and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control) and the United States Department of

Housing and Urban Development. Also involved in the successful implementation of this Action Plan will be continued coordination between the City and neighborhood associations, Total Care for the Homeless Coalition, and service providers (i.e., emergency shelters, transitional housing providers, permanent supportive housing providers, and other agencies providing supportive services to special needs populations).

## **Citizen Participation**

The City of Conway held a Public Hearing on September 11, 2006 to allow citizens to comment on the Year 2 CAPER. Public notices were advertised in the area newspaper two weeks prior to the Public Hearing and notices were also placed on the City of Conway's Public Access Channel and sent to local neighborhood associations. The City of Conway made the Year 2 CAPER available for comments for forty five days).

## **Institutional Structure**

The City of Conway has also taken many steps throughout the last two years to foster a more cooperative spirit between the City and other local government agencies and service providers, particularly with respect to fair housing issues. Almost 50 interviews were conducted for the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in the first year of this grant. Information regarding housing activities, policies and practices were obtained from more than 40 organizations, including lenders, state agencies, local government, and non-profit organizations. The City of Conway has worked extensively with the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments to sponsor a regional housing fair and to develop a Fair Housing Council. The City of Conway has joined with other municipalities and county governments to form the Waccamaw HOME Investment Partnerships Consortium. This organization has applied for funds to enhance the financial capital available for affordable housing in this region and it will also build relationships between various government, non-profit, and private groups toward a unified purpose. The City of Conway will also continue to sponsor and promote fair housing in collaboration with the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and its subsidiaries. The City has become a member of National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources (NAEIR). NAEIR is a non-profit organization set up to assist non-profit organizations that assist low and moderate income people and especially children. Members are only charged a small handling fee and shipping of the item ordered. The first order we received \$25,100 in goods for a total cost of \$1,157. This program has been paid for under the Public Services section of the HUD Entitlement Grant. Six agencies received goods for needy Conway

residents, Salvation Army, Family OutReach, Not One More, Fostering Hope, CAPS (Churches Assisting People), City Recreation department (for Summer Playground Program for Autistic Children). Since the first order the Conway Housing Authority has joined the group which requests goods. This has become a very successful program which has brought great benefits to Conway's needy.

## **Monitoring**

In order to ensure that programs are being carried out in accordance with the Consolidated Plan and in a timely manner, the City of Conway Grants Coordinator monitored CDBG-funded projects on a weekly, and often daily basis.

The other major project conducted during the initial year was the Smith Street Sidewalk project which was finally completed in June 2006. In spite of consistent monitoring, this project experienced several delays beyond the control of City staff. Initial design for the project was postponed due to an opportunity to combine the sidewalk project with a stormwater project in the same location. Construction of the sidewalks prior to the stormwater design would have lead to removing the new sidewalks to correct stormwater issues in the future. Funds were saved by approaching both projects at the same time.

Once the project was designed, staff learned that sidewalk construction required a full environmental assessment. This resulted in further delays in the project, while various federal, state, and local authorities were consulted about the construction and enviromental impact of the project. Due to careful monitoring and extensive staff oversight, the environmental assessment was completed and the project was bid and awarded in Year 1. The major monitoring issue that arose in the initial year and second year was an inability of City staff to implement projects simultaneously while also learning "the ropes" of being a new Entitlement community. Once the new Grants Coordinator was hired a review was conducted of all HUD Entitlement grant activites. As a result, it was very apparent that several projects would never happen based upon current funding issues (the Community Center project as an example). Based upon the review and the assistance of HUD Staff both Year one and two action plans had to be revised to make projects more realistic and attainable based upon funding considerations. This unfortunately put the City behind on all projects to correct deficiencies. Once this was accomplished the City of Conway is now in a better positioned to complete projects in a more timely manner. It still has been a big learning process for the current Grant Coordinator in learning proper HUD forms and procedures. The City is also looking into contracting with the

Waccamaw Council of Regional Governments to assist in environmental studies on sidewalk projects.

During both Year 1 and 2, the City of Conway was involved in several activities to further fair housing and to provide suitable living environments for low-moderate income persons. First of all, the City participated in a regional Fair Housing Fair at Broadway at the Beach with other local governments in the area. The City is a member of the Fair Housing Council organized through the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and the Mayor of Conway signed a Proclamation designating April as Fair Housing Month. Conway City Council also deeded 1.7 acres of property, approximately 8-9 lots given zoning requirements for R-1, to Habitat for Humanity of Horry County for low-moderate income housing. These lots were located in Census Tract 704, one of the targeted areas for the City's Consolidated Plan.

## **Lead-Based Paint**

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) investigates childhood lead poisonings in the City of Conway limited to childhood lead poisoning prevention and detection activities. Private sector providers are also available for inspections of older homes that are being remodeled and are suspected to contain lead-based paint. These providers can be accessed through the local telephone directory or by calling 1-800-424-LEAD. The City's Building Department also assists DHEC during its construction inspection process.

No lead poisoning cases were reported to health officials in the last year. The City of Conway, therefore, will continue to support programs available through DHEC rather than begin a program of its own within the next five years. For additional information about Lead-Based Paint, residents of the City may call the Horry County Health Department's Environmental Quality Control Office at (843) 488-1902. Pamphlets and disclosures are available through the Health Department and additional information may also be obtained via HUD's internet website at [www.hud.gov/lea/leadhelp.html](http://www.hud.gov/lea/leadhelp.html).

## **Housing Needs**

In order to address housing needs, there is a demand for both renter and owner-occupied housing units. However, based on the current inventory of rental units, fair market rent for these units, the current waiting lists of public housing, and the income levels of those experiencing housing problems, there is a greater need for affordable rental units at this time in

Conway. During the initial year, the City examined ways to encourage the development of affordable housing in Conway through the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. The City Council has approved supporting an application to the state to assist in building affordable rental units in the City.

During Year 1, the City contracted with a firm to objectively examine barriers and impediments to fair housing in the Conway area. Several barriers were noted and the City of Conway was given strategies and performance measures for each identified issue. Issues identified were: the inadequacy of the supply of affordable housing to meet demand; the abundance of primarily seasonal minimum wage jobs that require lengthy commutes; greater number of loan denials for low-income and minority residents; limited public transportation; and a lack of emergency shelter and transitional housing for special populations.

These issues are being examined individually and the City is continuing to determine actions that can be taken within the next year to minimize their affect on the availability of affordable housing within the City of Conway. One way the City has already began to address the supply shortage is through the donation of lots to Habitat for Humanity of Horry County. 1.7 acres, or approximately 8-9 lots were donated in early 2005 to Habitat for the development of affordable housing. These lots were located in Census Tract 704, one of the two areas of greatest need identified in the City's Consolidated Plan. During 2006 Habitat has built five homes on these lots.

The City of Conway began participating in more discussions and opening the dialogue about the need for affordable housing through its efforts with the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments. Participation in the Fair Housing Council and the formation of the Waccamaw HOME Consortium will enhance the housing resources available to low-moderate income persons and the future availability of affordable housing.

## **Specific Housing Objectives**

The major objectives for Program Year 1 and 2 were to revitalize the community through the development of public improvements such as sidewalks. The goal of these investments was to provide increased accessibility and safety for low-moderate income residents who do not currently have access to meeting and recreational facilities or safe pedestrian routes to community and medical services. \$52,000 in funds were made available for a Housing Rehabilitation program for Conway's low and moderate income residents. The program has 21 applications for assistance

and we're now in the process of reviewing them for compliance with stated requirements and conducting site visits to access specific needs.

Due to a scarcity of financial resources, specific housing-related projects were not proposed for the both program years. However, the City was involved in activities to affirmatively further affordable housing through its participation in the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments' Fair Housing Council, the Fair Housing Fair at Broadway at the Beach and the dedication of lots to Habitat for Humanity of Horry County for the development of affordable housing.

## **Public Housing Strategy**

During the two past years, there were unmet needs for public housing in the Conway community. Although financial resources were not available through the City to subsidize public housing projects, the City does acknowledge the need for public housing and the large number of people awaiting placement due to its short supply. The City, therefore, joined the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and other local governments in sponsoring the Waccamaw HOME Consortium to expand the supply of decent, safe, and affordable housing for low and very low income families. Activities that this organization will undertake include the creation of transitional and permanent housing units, housing rehabilitation, homebuyer assistance, and interim rental assistance for low-income families.

## **Barriers to Affordable Housing**

During Program Year 1, the City of Conway contracted with the Matheny-Burns Group to conduct an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. This Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice identified multiple and often interrelated areas of need based on a review of current policies and practices in both the public and private sectors, interviews with key service providers, and an examination of socio-economic data. Several barriers were noted and the City of Conway was given strategies and performance measures for each identified issue. Issues identified were: the inadequacy of the supply of affordable housing to meet demand; the abundance of primarily seasonal minimum wage jobs that require lengthy commutes; greater number of loan denials for low-income and minority residents; limited public transportation; and a lack of emergency shelter and transitional housing for special populations.

Following the completion of this study, the City of Conway began examining ways to implement the suggested strategies. The City of Conway did acknowledge the inadequacy of affordable housing and has taken the following steps toward making improvements in this area. The City designated April as Fair Housing Month and helped sponsor an Affordable Housing Fair at Coastal Grand Mall at the Beach with other local governments.

The Conway City Council voted unanimously to join other local governments in the formation of the Waccamaw HOME Consortium. This group will seek to expand the supply of decent, safe, and affordable housing for low and very low income families. Activities that this organization will undertake include the creation of transitional and permanent housing units, housing rehabilitation, homebuyer assistance, and interim rental assistance for low-income families.

The City of Conway also donated property to Habitat for Humanity of Horry County for the development of more affordable housing in the City of Conway in which five homes have currently been built. The City has been supportive of this organization's efforts for many years and will continue to make every effort to support Habitat and similar organizations to provide low-moderate income persons with decent, affordable housing.

## **HOME/ American Dream Down Payment Initiative (ADDI)**

The City of Conway does not currently participate in the HOME program. Therefore, the City did not anticipate nor did the City undertake any activities in this area during Program Years 1 and 2.

## **Homeless Needs**

Due to a scarcity of resources available, the City of Conway was not able to specifically address needs of homeless persons during the first program year. Special populations in the Conway area must rely heavily on facilities in the neighboring Myrtle Beach area for emergency, transitional and other short-term housing options. Special populations include the homeless, those with HIV/AIDS and other debilitating illnesses, substance abusers, the mentally ill, and victims of domestic abuse. Also included in this group are families and individuals who have lost their homes to unexpected circumstances such as fire or flood. The homeless population of Horry County is considered largely undercounted—comprised of individuals or women with children who are forced to live with friends or relatives and persons living in makeshift outdoor accommodations. Persons or families living with family or friends can result in overcrowding and create stressful living environments that can lead to abuse, neglect and associated social

problems such as substance abuse. This group is also very mobile, moving frequently from one temporary home to another as welcomes wear thin. Persons living in makeshift outdoor accommodations are vulnerable to extremes in weather and are at risk for resulting health problems. Without secure shelter, these persons are also vulnerable to criminal activities and their safety is often at risk.

Over the last year, the City encouraged groups such as law enforcement agencies, Catholic Charities, Churches Assisting People (CAP), Citizens Against Spouse Abuse (CASA), the Friendship Clinic, Latinoamericanos en Accion, the Salvation Army, the Street Reach Mission, the United Way, the Little River Medical Center, and others serving special populations to assist in count efforts for the homeless or persons at risk of becoming homeless so that more accurate needs assessment data can be provided in support of funding requests.

The City of Conway did enter into a cooperative agreement with Habitat for Humanity for the development of affordable housing. This will potentially impact homeless persons with permanent housing. The formation of the Waccamaw HOME Consortium will give the City of Conway an opportunity to address transitional housing and other homeless issues in the future. The City of Conway will also designate a staff member to participate in the Total Care for the Homeless Coalition and to financially support their efforts through membership.

## **Specific Homeless Prevention Elements**

Within the initial year of funding, the City of Conway promoted economic development and education through Horry Georgetown Technical College and Coastal Carolina University. Educational advancements will improve the competitiveness of residents in the job market and promote a better trained workforce for economic development. Marketing available sites for various types of development will improve the likelihood that businesses will locate to Conway leading to a more diverse job market and higher paying jobs.

Through the stabilization of the job market and the continued support of non-profit organizations providing resources and services to residents, the City of Conway is confident that homelessness was prevented. The City has also acknowledged over the year the scarcity of affordable housing and the importance of affordable housing in the prevention of homelessness. These issues were addressed through the formation of the Waccamaw HOME Consortium and the Fair Housing Council. The City of Conway, as in the

initial program year, will continue efforts to prevent homelessness through the development of these and other efforts.

## **Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)**

The City of Conway does not currently participate in the ESG program. Therefore, the City did not anticipate nor did the City undertake any activities in this area during Program Years 1 and 2.

## **Community Development**

As stated in an earlier section, Program Years 1 and 2 is a continuing learning experience for the City of Conway, but a major objective was accomplished during this time period. The sidewalks along Smith Street is finally finished which has increased safety and community pride. The Horry Street Sidewalk project hasn't been started as of yet. The money allocated due to the increase of prices for material and labor has significantly increased. Also Conway and Horry county has experienced a boom on construction this has caused a backlog of construction projects in our area and it is difficult to get construction projects done in a timely manner. The City has identified an additional funding source through the State of South Carolina under the GSAT program. Funding has recently come available that will allow the City to do sidewalks along Horry Street from Brown Street to Grainger Road by utilizing HUD Entitlement funding and GSAT money. We're currently in the process of talking with Waccamaw Council of Regional Governments to assist the City in doing the environmental study on this project. Once this is completed the city will start accepting bids on this project. The highest priority activities, as defined in the Consolidated Plan, dealt with the provision of services for youth and neighborhood facilities. Although both of these projects have not been completed in a timely fashion do to issues in the initial year of this grant, both of the above projects addressed these issues and will impact these needs upon completion.

Sidewalks are needed along Horry Street. Horry Street is located off Hwy 378 and runs behind Whitemore Park Middle School and is near the Huckabee Heights Projects, it is located in Census Tract 703. 55.5% of the residents in this area are classified as Low-Moderate Income. 44% of Conway's population is minority and the highest concentrations of minority residents are located in Census Tracts 703 and 704. These sidewalks will improve the safety of residents especially children who are currently walking in the streets or along worn paths in the right-of-way. There is currently no physical barrier preventing motorists from hitting pedestrians with even a slight swerve. The addition of sidewalks, including curbs and gutters, will create a safer environment for pedestrians as they access medical and

community services from this neighborhood. The City of Conway was able to leverage other funds from the State of South Carolina under the GSAT program to assist in funding of this project along with the designated \$79,000 in HUD entitlement funds.

extracurricular activities. Many of these youth are left with an enormous amount of spare time often leading to risky behaviors.

The City of Conway examined ways to encourage the development of affordable housing the past two years and made significant progress in both the future development of housing and in building bridges with other organizations to further affordable housing goals. The City designated April as Fair Housing Month and helped sponsor an Affordable Housing Fair at Coastal Grand Mall at the Beach with other local governments.

The Conway City Council voted unanimously to join other local governments in the formation of the Waccamaw HOME Consortium. This group will seek to expand the supply of decent, safe, and affordable housing for low and very low income families. Activities that this organization will undertake include the creation of transitional and permanent housing units, housing rehabilitation, homebuyer assistance, and interim rental assistance for low-income families.

The City of Conway also donated property to Habitat for Humanity of Horry County for the development of more affordable housing in the City of Conway. The City has been supportive of this organization's efforts for many years and will continue to make every effort to support Habitat and similar organizations to provide low-moderate income persons with decent, affordable housing.

LMI residents were the beneficiaries of these projects due to the location of the projects and the accessibility of these new services by LMI persons. The combined population of Census Tracts 703 and 704 is 5,345. Of these persons, 966 or 18.07% are classified as moderate income, 876 or 16.39% as low income, and 1336 or 25.00% as very low income. The combined percentage of LMI residents in these areas is 59.46%, with the largest percentage of them being very low income. Census Tract 704, Block Group 2 has approximately 1,841 residents, 75.2% of which qualify as LMI.

As indicated in the Consolidated Plan, the City of Conway actively pursued other resources to aid in the implementation of program objectives. Within the initial year, the City appropriated approximately \$210,000 from the stormwater utility fund towards the Smith Street project. The City also donated land to Habitat for Humanity for the development of affordable

housing. Approximately \$325,000 in street improvements were also made throughout the City of Conway using funds from the County Transportation Committee. All resources and activities relating to the City of Conway's CDBG funds were consistent with federal and local guidelines and were conducted in a fair and impartial manner. The contract for the completion of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice was awarded after a formal Request for Proposals was advertised. Proposals were received and the consultant was chosen based on the project scope and qualifications outlined in the RFP. The Smith Street Sidewalks project was awarded following a competitive, sealed bids process. Bids were opened in a public setting with interested contractors present. The low bid was selected and approved by City Council. The City of Conway actively pursued the implementation of the Consolidated Plan throughout the initial program year and did not hinder such by any action or willful inaction and continue to comply in program year 2.

All funds were used towards a National Objective. No activities during Program Year 1 involved acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property or economic development activities involving jobs for LMI persons. All Program Year 1 and 2 activities related to a LMI area benefit rather than a LMI Limited Clientele Benefit. Program income was not received during the first year. No loans or other receivables were obtained during this reporting period.

## **Antipoverty Strategy**

Within both years of funding, the City of Conway promoted education through Horry Georgetown Technical College and Coastal Carolina University. The City continued to foster the relationship between the City and these two institutions in order to influence residents to pursue higher education and technical training. These educational advancements will improve the competitiveness of residents in a competitive job market and promote a better trained workforce for economic development.

In addition to promoting education, the City of Conway actively recruited businesses to Conway, in coordination with the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce, Myrtle Beach Economic Development Corporation, and Horry County. Marketing available sites for various types of development will improve the likelihood that businesses will locate to Conway leading to a more diverse job market and higher paying jobs.

## **Non-homeless Special Needs**

Due to a scarcity of resources available, the City of Conway was not able to specifically address needs of special populations during the first program year. Special populations in the Conway area must rely heavily on facilities in the neighboring Myrtle Beach area for emergency, transitional and other short-term housing options. Special populations include the homeless, those with HIV/AIDS and other debilitating illnesses, substance abusers, the mentally ill, and victims of domestic abuse. Also included in this group are families and individuals who have lost their homes to unexpected circumstances such as fire or flood.

## **Specific HOPWA Objectives**

The City of Conway does not currently participate in the HOPWA program. Therefore, the City did not anticipate nor did the City undertake any activities in this area during Program Year 1.