

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development

*Please also refer to the Community Development Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Identify the jurisdiction's priority non-housing community development needs eligible for assistance by CDBG eligibility category specified in the Community Development Needs Table (formerly Table 2B), public facilities, public improvements, public services and economic development.
2. Identify specific long-term and short-term community development objectives (including economic development activities that create jobs), developed in accordance with the statutory goals described in section 24 CFR 91.1 and the primary objective of the CDBG program to provide decent housing and a suitable living environment and expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

*Note: Each specific objective developed to address a priority need, must be identified by number and contain proposed accomplishments, the time period (i.e., one, two, three, or more years), and annual program year numeric goals the jurisdiction hopes to achieve in quantitative terms, or in other measurable terms as identified and defined by the jurisdiction.

Response:

1. Please see Appendix 9 which identifies the priority non-housing community development needs of the jurisdiction for the upcoming program year.
2. The City is compliant with the statutory goals described in Section 24 CFR 91.1 and the objectives of the CDBG program of providing decent housing, suitable living environments and expanding economic opportunities principally for low/moderate income persons. Appendix 2 contains a table that outlines the City of Rockford's long-term and short-term community development goals and objectives and year to date accomplishments for program year 2012.

Antipoverty Strategy

1. Describe the actions that will take place during the next year to reduce the number of poverty level families.

Response:

Helping people out of poverty is about creating opportunity. It is connecting schools, health and recreational facilities, grocery stores, transportation and housing. It is about building healthy prosperous community; EQUITY.

The actions that the City plans are:

CSBG loan program. Allows a person to apply for a small business loan at a reduced interest rate. A condition of the loan is that the business hire a low-income individual.

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Youth Employment program. The Sharing Work for Excellence Everywhere Program (SWEET) is a partnership between the City of Rockford Human Services and Community Development Departments. The program will result in the lives of low income persons being improved, as well as reduce neighborhood blight by providing employment and training to teens from economically challenged families. Youth hired into SWEET will conduct repairs to the homes of low-income homeowners that have been cited with City of Rockford code violations.

Scholarships-applicants receiving scholarships must be below the federal poverty level. Recipients that receive this scholarship can reduce the amount of student loans that they need to receive to go to college, thus reducing debt.

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Energy conservation. Providing accurate information on how to conserve energy will reduce the monthly expense of utilities for families living in poverty. Money save can be used towards other life sustaining items (food, clothing, medication, etc.)

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Financial literacy-The Financial Literacy Campaign is a community wide campaign targeted to low-income person(s) to address cost savings, banking, savings programs and budgeting and avoidance of predatory financial practices. Low-income residents seldom have any savings available to address emergency needs. With resources disappearing, it is critical they learn how to save and have access to financial services. Financial literacy has been identified as a basic need priority by the Rockford Health Council, including informational workshops on saving money, shopping, and paying bills on time, building credit, etc.

Housing counseling/Landlord tenant mediation-giving persons the tools they need to know their housing rights and responsibilities will better assist them in choosing where they live.

DCA- provides emergency assistance to CSBG eligible persons in need of housing, temporary shelter, transportation, medication, utility connection, and/or car repair to obtain and/or maintain self-sufficiency. Typically, this assistance follows some type of crisis beyond an applicant's control

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Summer Food Program-program feeds children that are in poverty or near poverty. Studies have shown that having access to proper nutrition improves life outcomes.

Community Garden Program-provides neighborhoods funding to grow their own sustainable food resource, thus reducing the amount of money needed at the super market.

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Convening and supporting efforts to support low income populations-See financial literacy and DCA.

Elderly Advocacy and Resource Project-see financial literacy.

Neighborhood Network- Neighborhood Network is a partnership supported by CSBG. Neighborhood Network provides training, development and support to the neighborhood associations of the Rockford area, especially in low-income neighborhoods. This results in a higher level of neighborhood volunteerism and reduction of crime and blight.

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DCFS Sufficiency- CSBG Staff partners with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to provide permanent housing assistance to individual youth and families who are currently homeless or who are at risk of being so. Strong support and encouragement is provided to families who have temporarily lost parental rights to children and/or parents who are at risk of losing rights due to their inability to maintain self-sufficiency.

Family and Community Development - CSBG staff provides Family and Community Development (FCD) case management services to families at risk for homelessness due to poverty, violence or economic turmoil. Through this case management program, CSBG staff provides intense self-esteem building, linkages and follow-up to increase long-term success for area low-income residents. Notable recipients of this program may be nominated for the Family of Distinction honor. Participants in the program may be referred by CSBG staff who are already providing them a work program service or by an outside source.

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Health Prevention Programs-Providing information to youth on the dangers of underage drinking, drug, and tobacco use can affect life outcomes. Providing tools on how to avoid peer pressure in addition to everyday life-skills that youth can take into adulthood.

RHA proudly serves Rockford through 1,922 housing units and 2,155 section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. RHA realigned its goals and continue to realign our organization to not only become a better provider of public housing, but to have a more positive influence on our residents, the economy, social fabric and livability of our city. RHA's overriding intent is to move more family population residents toward independence and improve quality of life for senior/disabled residents.

RHA is implementing new data tools and case management to:

- Identify the needs, skills, and necessary training for residents
- match residents with appropriate internal and external programs
- monitor and encourage progress via our new internal case file audit system

WCHA intends to reduce the number of families in poverty through the following measures:

- Provides an impact to reduce community poverty and the number of property level families through the family self-sufficiency programs.

- Will continue to achieve a High Performer designation which brings additional HUD funding to be used in impacting area poverty.
- Will continue its programs that exceed HUD federal targeting for families at or below 30% of AMI in public housing and the Housing Choice Voucher program.
- Uses a rent policy that supports and encourages employment and education.

NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Non-homeless Special Needs (91.220 (c) and (e))

*Please also refer to the Non-homeless Special Needs Table in the Needs.xls workbook.

1. Describe the priorities and specific objectives the jurisdiction hopes to achieve for the period covered by the Action Plan.
2. Describe how Federal, State, and local public and private sector resources that are reasonably expected to be available will be used to address identified needs for the period covered by this Action Plan.

Response:

1. The jurisdiction works with partners such as RHA and WCHA to end discrimination in rental housing, continues to educate on fair housing regulations, instill a rental housing registration program, improve landlord accountability, and improve access to quality affordable and accessible housing options for all residents especially those with special needs

The following table describes the priorities for each special needs category:

<u>Special Needs Category</u>	<u>Housing</u>	<u>Support Services</u>
Elderly	High	High
Persons w/severe mental illness	High	High
Disabled	Medium	Medium
Persons w/alcohol or other drug addictions	High	Medium
Victims of Domestic Violence	High	Medium
Persons w/AIDS	Low	Low

2. RHA will leverage entitlement agency funding from HUD with competitive funding and grant awards from federal, state and local (government and non-government) sources to improve the quality of its affordable units. Additionally,

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