

HOMELESS

Specific Homeless Prevention Elements

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

1. Sources of Funds—Identify the private and public resources that the jurisdiction expects to receive during the next year to address homeless needs and to prevent homelessness. These include the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act programs, other special federal, state and local and private funds targeted to homeless individuals and families with children, especially the chronically homeless, the HUD formula programs, and any publicly-owned land or property. Please describe, briefly, the jurisdiction's plan for the investment and use of funds directed toward homelessness.
2. Homelessness—In a narrative, describe how the action plan will address the specific objectives of the Strategic Plan and, ultimately, the priority needs identified. Please also identify potential obstacles to completing these action steps.
3. Chronic homelessness — The jurisdiction must describe the specific planned action steps it will take over the next year aimed at eliminating chronic homelessness by 2012. Again, please identify barriers to achieving this.
4. Homelessness Prevention — The jurisdiction must describe its planned action steps over the next year to address the individual and families with children at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
5. Discharge Coordination Policy — Explain planned activities to implement a cohesive, community-wide Discharge Coordination Policy, and how, in the coming year, the community will move toward such a policy.

Response:

1. Sources of funds include:

- Continuum of Care Competitive Grants- approximately \$1.6 million- used for transitional and permanent supportive housing including shelter plus care.
- Emergency Solutions Grants- approximately \$150,000 toward emergency shelter and street outreach.
- DCFS Housing Advocacy funds- provides housing advocacy to DCFS involved families whose sole barrier to reunification is housing.
- Illinois Department of Human Services Homeless Prevention funds- provides approximately \$65,000 to prevent eviction or rapidly rehouse homeless families.
- Rockford Township funds- provide \$10,000 to rehouse households made homeless by condemnation.

Our local Continuum of Care (COC) receives approximately \$1.6 million dollars which it uses for several programs including Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Shelter Plus Care. Our jurisdiction also receives ESG funding from both federal and state funds which total approximately \$150,000. Many of the ESG funds go to agencies that provided services to families with children, domestic violence victims, or homeless (and parenting) youth. All of the funding received for COC and ESG are specifically designed to help people or families that are either homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. In addition, many of the 60 HUD-VASH vouchers that were mentioned earlier are earmarked for "chronically homeless" veterans.

IDHS HP provides approximately \$63,000 to provide one-time financial assistance to families and individuals at-risk for immediate homelessness, eviction, foreclosure, and/or for individuals who are already homeless. Applicants must be able to demonstrate an ability to obtain and/or maintain self-sufficiency upon approval of assistance. Applicants demonstrate this by being gainfully employed, in receipt of governmental benefits or are able to provide some other source of documentable income. A temporary crisis must preclude a request for monetary assistance. Said crisis could include, but is not limited to, loss of employment, natural disaster, illness, or victim to criminal activity. Funding for the program is coordinated through the Illinois Department of Human Services and is further supplemented by monies distributed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Rockford Township.

By collaborating with Rockford Township (\$10,000), CSBG staff assist low-income persons who have been forced to vacate their homes due to unsafe and/or unhealthy living conditions with at least one (1) month's rental assistance. This program is further supplemented by FEMA funds for temporary shelter when available.

The City of Rockford Human Services Department provides direct client assistance via 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. CSBG staff also partners with area faith based organizations, community foundations, and/or fellow social service providers to match large dollar projects.

The specific steps of the strategic plan include; prevention, outreach, rapid rehousing, systems prevention/discharge, supportive services, and housing. Prevention is addressed through both the new Hearth ESGP and State homeless prevention funds. Outreach is a component of the new ESGP, and we anticipate greater community outreach specifically to the chronically homeless, Rapid rehousing is addressed through both the new Hearth ESGP and State homeless prevention funds. We have completed the systems prevention/discharge portion of the plan and have agreements in place. The new 211 system will be a significant addition in terms of supportive services, making it easier for both providers and clients to access supportive services. Housing stock continues to be our largest barrier to stable housing. Much of our affordable housing stock is in extremely poor condition and is concentrated within certain areas of our service area. Our experience has been that the low-income population does not maintain tenancy for long, either because of the condition of the housing or due to their limited circumstances. We will continue to develop affordable housing and to explore ways to either demolish or rehab this housing to make it suitable for human habitation.

2. The local Continuum of Care will look to use its' annual Point-in-Time homeless count to address the gaps in services that the homeless population faces. They are also working to begin a "Centralized Intake" system that will be utilized by all agencies. This will allow homeless persons to be better served, as they will have a single intake then be referred to the appropriate agency for service. In addition, the new ESGP focuses on street outreach which will assist our community in performing street outreach to the chronically homeless who make up the majority of our street homeless population.
3. IDHS HP provides approximately \$63,000 to provide one-time financial assistance to families and individuals at-risk for immediate homelessness, eviction, foreclosure, and/or for individuals who are already homeless. Applicants must be able to demonstrate an ability to obtain and/or maintain self-sufficiency upon approval of assistance. Applicants demonstrate this by being gainfully employed, in receipt of governmental benefits or are able to provide some other source of documentable income. A temporary crisis must preclude a request for monetary assistance. Said crisis could include but is not limited to loss of employment, natural disaster, illness, or victim to criminal activity. Funding for the program is coordinated through the Illinois Department of Human Services and is further supplemented by monies distributed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Rockford Township.

ACTION STEPS: Secure funding through IDHS, Assess persons for housing needs, Provide counseling and/or financial assistance to avoid homelessness and stabilize housing, Customers who should be receiving child support but are not will be referred to the child support enforcement agency, Refer applicants for enhanced budget counseling, Mediate tenant/landlord disputes, Maintain CSBG data base. Client Action includes: Providing necessary documentation to qualify for services, Follow through with counseling and other referrals, and Cooperate with bi-yearly follow-up by CSBG outreach staff.

4. Discharge policies have recently been put into place between local homeless providers and local medical facilities, mental health/substance abuse agencies, local probation office, and the foster care system to ensure that people are not being released into homelessness. Local homeless providers will work with these agencies to make sure appropriate after-care plans are used.

Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)

(States only) Describe the process for awarding grants to State recipients, and a description of how the allocation will be made available to units of local government.

Response:

This question is not applicable to the City of Rockford.