

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g)

Introduction

The annual goals listed previously specify the following production numbers for housing assistance and for homelessness, non-homeless, and special needs populations.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	0
Non-Homeless	49
Special-Needs	6
Total	55

Table 59 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	0
The Production of New Units	6
Rehab of Existing Units	49
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	55

Table 60 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type

Discussion

These figures relate to production targets specified in the annual goals for 2015. CDBG and HOME funding for these activities may target more households.

AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

Introduction

Collectively via a partnership between the jurisdictional housing authorities (Winnebago County housing Authority (WCHA) and Rockford Housing Authority (RHA)) exists a memorandum of understanding to advance collaborative approaches to meeting the needs of affordable housing. It is under this relationship both agencies jointly submit the intent to address the needs of housing within the region.

Actions planned during the next year to address the needs to public housing

As a means to provide the greatest opportunity to PH clients, Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) and Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) address the needs of public housing by continuing to support the de-concentration of public housing as well as the advancement of opportunities to improve existing public housing stock. These efforts may include but are not limited to the support of grant, tax credit and financing applications, the promotion of home ownership programs and education and the promotion of resident networks or councils under the Neighborhood Network structure as well as through community policing via a neighborhood officer relationship. WCHA and RHA will continue to provide wait list preferences for working families, disabled families, veterans and the surviving spouses of veterans, elderly families and families displaced by natural disaster and domestic violence.

With public housing sites in Rockford, South Beloit, Winnebago County, Stephenson County and Boone County, with other affordable housing programs and partnerships in Winnebago County, Stephenson County, Boone County, Ogle County, Jo Daviess County and DeKalb County, which encourages resident's mobility to need for supportive services such as employment, education, veteran support and disability support, the needs of public housing are being addressed. A Statement of Housing Needs is also conducted to analyze community and program needs and provide targeted housing response within these areas.

Actions to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership

In terms of home ownership, the Public Housing Family Self Sufficiency and Housing Choice Voucher Family Self Sufficiency programs are in place to guide residents to realizing the dream of owning a home. Computer technology programs are offered under the site lab Networks that brings homeownership resource assistance to all HA sites. The programs are also made available to the general public which promotes community growth. RHA and WCHA are committed to continue to work as partners to advance homeownership possibilities.

Resident councils are supported by the HAs at all sites and have sponsored a resident council coalition to result in an agency-wide Resident Advisory Board. All policy matters such as the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy, Administrative Plan, Agency Plan and other documents that may be required by HUD are presented to the resident councils and to the resident bodies through both formal hearing and informal meetings. The comments of the resident council are then provided to the board at the board meetings. The Executive Director and CEO meet monthly with the resident councils. All updates and changes are directed to each of the resident council presidents. The presidents then share this information with the resident council members.

In an effort to provide instant and continuous information to all residents and the public, the use of electronic media (Facebook) has been implemented. The board advertises through the media and post notices at the sites for each board meeting. Also, the regular monthly meetings are held at different sites to allow for easier access for the residents to attend. Although attendance is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that the residents participate in these meetings.

If the PHA is designated as troubled, describe the manner in which financial assistance will be provided or other assistance

WCHA is a HUD designated top performer agency; RHA is a standard performer agency. Neither WCHA or RHA are troubled housing authorities; however, to the extent of availability of funds and application for qualified CBDG or HOME program fund dollars, the jurisdiction will assist in the application for such funds as a means to advance HA housing quality.

Discussion

RHA and WCHA will work to create cost effective affordable housing integrated into opportunity areas and partnered with educational resources. Jointly, the Housing Authorities will continue advancing efforts related to access and the inventory of QUALITY affordable housing. These efforts will be in tandem with the HA's instrumentalities. For RHA, this includes Bridge Rockford Alliance (RHA instrumentality) and its subsidiary, Illinois Housing Alliance. For WCHA this includes Winnebago Homes Association its instrumentality. The specific instrumentality and subsidiary actions include the acquisition and restoration of foreclosed properties, the renovation of existing units, the ongoing review of process and policies and the participation in local and regional efforts.

AP-65 Homeless and Other Special Needs Activities – 91.220(i)

Introduction

Funding from the Emergency Solutions Grant allocation is used to support non-profit homeless services providers in Rockford. These funds provide agencies with additional means to target specific activities. In the coming program year, the following goals were identified for the ESG request for proposals.

(1) Street Outreach funds may be used for costs of providing essential services necessary to reach out to unsheltered homeless people; connect with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services; and provide urgent, non-facility-based care to unsheltered homeless people who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility.

(2) Emergency Shelter funds may be used for costs of providing essential services to homeless families and to individuals in emergency shelters, renovating buildings to be used as emergency shelter for homeless families and individuals, and operating emergency shelters.

(3) Homelessness Prevention funds may be used to provide housing relocation and stabilization services and short and/or medium-term rental assistance necessary to prevent an individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter or another place.

(4) Rapid Re-housing Assistance funds may be used to provide housing relocation and stabilization services and short and/or medium term rental assistance as necessary to help a homeless individual or family move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

(5) Relocation and Stabilization Services funds may be used to pay financial assistance to housing owners, utility companies and other third parties.

(6) HMIS funds may be used to pay the costs of contributing data to the HMIS designated by the Continuum of Care for the area.

Describe the jurisdictions one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including

Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs

The Rockford/Winnebago/Boone Rock River Continuum of Care, the coalition of local homeless service agencies, conducts annual surveys of homeless individuals, including unsheltered persons. These surveys serve to help focus agency activities for the coming year, as well as provide documentation in response to HUD program requirements. ESG funding includes street outreach activities.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

Homeless providers are focusing efforts on increasing the bed count for both emergency shelter and transitional housing programs. Funding for these efforts are limited, however.

Helping homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living, including shortening the period of time that individuals and families experience homelessness, facilitating access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units, and preventing individuals and families who were recently homeless from becoming homeless again

Proposed funding for the ESG program include activities targeting improvements in the areas of rapid rehousing and homeless prevention.

Helping low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless, especially extremely low-income individuals and families and those who are: being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care (such as health care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); or, receiving assistance from public or private agencies that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, or youth needs

Homeless prevention is a major focus of the participants in the Continuum of Care. Agencies include homeless prevention as a support program in conjunction with the provision of shelter and other support services. The City is funding homeless prevention activities in the FY 2015 Annual Action Plan.

Discussion

The participants in the Continuum of Care work closely together to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families through the continuum of services coordinated through the partnership. The City participates in the planning efforts and provides a framework through the ESG funding process to focus attention on specific programmatic areas.

AP-75 Barriers to affordable housing – 91.220(j)

Introduction:

City of Rockford and Regional Public Policy – Barriers – There is a need to enact public policies in the City of Rockford and by Regional Governments that effectively support de-concentration and neighborhood revitalization.

A proposed new intake tool is described in the discussion section below.

Actions it planned to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment

The City of Rockford has begun planning efforts relating to changes needed with regard to public policies that have fostered concentrations of poverty within the city. These concerns stem from a recently completed Regional Fair Housing Equity Assessment commissioned by the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning. These efforts have resulted in detailing of the problem as found in the Strategic Plan - Section SP-55, Barriers to Affordable Housing. Given the space dedicated to the issues there, they won't be repeated here. The City is committed to addressing needs identified with regard to de-concentration and neighborhood revitalization and will provide more detail for addressing the issues in the coming months.

Discussion:

Coordinated Intake and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool - The City of Rockford will evaluate the use of a common intake, case management, and assessment tool designed to guide frontline workers and team leaders in an intensive case management approach to service delivery. This common intake tool would be used by housing, homeless and social service agencies as part of a coordinated assessment and service strategy. The tool is intended to allow communities to triage and prioritize clients, helping to ensure that clients get the right housing and service intervention at the right time and insures that as service providers, they are addressing the root causes of the client's homelessness, housing needs, or other constraints.

Coordination will be by The City of Rockford - Continuum of Care, Community Development Department, Human Services Department, NW Homestart, and Winnebago County and Rockford Housing Authorities - will develop a system for to implement the SPDAT in their processing of applicants for housing and services.

System Features - Ciity of Rockford and maybe Winnebago, Stephenson, and Boone Counties geographical area.

Coordinated intake applications and Assessments performed of the housing and service needs links clients to a coordinated referral system.

Includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment / intake application and tool that captures primary data needed by all member agencies and has a second portal or module to be completed for individual agencies.

Initial, comprehensive assessment of the housing and service needs for all people entering the assisted housing, affordable housing, and homeless assistance systems.

Referrals designed in response to individuals/ family's needs and conditions comprehensively addressing the determinants that are negatively impacting there current condition or "pathway to prosperity" such as a lack of a high school diploma, unemployment, need for job training, needed treatments – substance abuse, mental health and medical care.

Benefits

It should send a household to the best fitting intervention from the start.

It provides a system wide prevention and diversion opportunity.

It improves system efficiency.

It fosters more collaboration among providers.

It hopefully transitions clients out of the need for public assistance and public intervention programs permanently.

AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction:

The City currently provides a variety of services to the residents of Rockford, some funded by CDBG, HOME, and the ESG allocation, with private, State, and City funding bringing additional assets to bear on these problems. Below are some of the actions currently performed by the City or under consideration for the future.

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

The City will continue to look for new funding sources for programs to address underserved needs. Funding is the major obstacle in providing the services needed to focus on the vast variety of issues that prevent families from breaking out of poverty and from living in the best, most affordable housing possible.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

The City will provide financial assistance for Tax Credit Projects for affordable housing development to expand multi-family rental development projects and homeownership opportunities. Additionally, acquisition, soft costs and site development funds will be used for affordable housing development. Consideration for additional funding will be given upon completion of the pre-development phase.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

- Continue to meet HUD lead-based paint abatement standards in housing rehabilitation programs.
- Identify additional funding to perform abatement on pre-1978 housing in the target census tracts and perform abatement to reduce affected units by 10 percent during the five-year period ending December 2018 based on current estimates of lead-based paint affected units.
- Seek funding as it becomes available to provide testing and abatement of lead-based paint hazards in single-family housing where young children are present.
- Expand the stock of lead safe housing units through housing initiatives.
- Seek funding as it becomes available to provide for testing, abatement, training, and educational awareness.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

The City will continue its efforts in conjunction with the Continuum of Care and the Rockford Housing Authority to reduce the number of poverty-level families through the development of services needed to assist those families with educational opportunities, job growth, and life skills training through the various social service agencies operating in the city.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

1. Work with non-profit organizations to address community needs and provide support to federal and non-federal funding initiatives.
2. Work with private industry to address important issues that hamper housing and community development efforts.
3. Identify opportunities to create private/public partnerships for project finance and development to leverage federal funds.

Actions planned to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies

The City will continue to coordinate planning activities with private housing and social service agencies, including participation in the Rock River Continuum of Care meetings for Winnebago and Boone Counties, development of the Continuum of Care, and enumeration of point-in-time and homeless surveys. City staff will also continue its participation in other coalitions and study groups as the opportunity arises.

Discussion:

The actions are primarily the continuation of what the City is currently doing in the various areas. No major obstacles in the institutional structure have been identified that need to be addressed. The City is also satisfied with its efforts to coordinate with private housing and social service agencies.