

## HOUSING

### Housing Needs

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

1. Describe Actions taken during the last year to foster and maintain affordable housing.

#### **Program Year 4 CAPER Housing Needs response:**

Affordable housing was fostered and/or maintained in the following ways:

1. Focus area housing rehabilitation
2. Applied for funds to acquire and rehab vacant property
3. Partnered with NW Homestart to create a Resource Center, foreclosure mediation services, roof repair program, and redevelopment program.
4. Code enforcement program
5. Initiated a landlord registry program

From a Public Housing standpoint, both the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) and the Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) have made several partnerships to promote change and progress. These partnerships include the Northern Illinois Regional Partnership for implementation of a housing rehabilitation award, partnering with HomeStart to assist families in moving to home ownership. Jointly RHA and WCHA applied as co-applicants for the 2013 Choice Neighborhoods Initiative grant. It is understood that by working together great outcomes may be achieved.

Furthermore, RHA and its non-profit, Bridge Rockford Alliance, continued its effort to produce new, quality affordable units by completing 6 units funded with CDBG and HOME monies. RHA and Bridge Rockford Alliance persistently search for ways to partner and provide affordable housing units in Rockford. WCHA and its nonprofit component, Winnebago Homes Association (WHA), purchased five foreclosed homes to lease back to the owner in place or lease at affordable housing rents. WHA received three homes through the National Community Stabilization Trust to renovate and lease at affordable housing rents, with one home renovated in partnership with Youth Build to provide a site for their youth training program. There was also an increase in the Rental Housing Support Program by four units in partnership with Shelter Care Ministries and RHA.

RHA enforces updated policies and procedures to promote fair housing. Fair housing trainings are continuously offered and performed for private, Section 8 based landlords. WCHA has applied to the RHA Project Based Section 8 RFP to place 17 homes from affordable flat rents to Project Based Section 8 assistance. WCHA maintains a 754 Housing Choice Voucher Program tenant based assisted housing administered in three contiguous counties. WCHA maintains an 80 Project Based Housing Choice Voucher program for families. RHA maintains a 1574 Housing Choice Voucher Program tenant based assisted housing administered in the City of Rockford and within Winnebago County. RHA administers a 237 Project Based Housing Choice Voucher program for seniors and families.

WCHA is a HUD designated 2013 High Performer agency which allows administrative and regulatory ease, grant preference and increases the Capital Fund budget by 3%. WCHA has also received a University of Illinois/DCEO grant for energy efficiency upgrades to community centers, public housing and affordable housing programs which also lowered tenant utility expense. RHA is a HUD designated 2013 Standard Performer agency. RHA has also received a University of Illinois/DCEO grant (\$656,000) for energy efficiency upgrades to public housing a programs which will lower tenant utility expense.

WCHA maintains a Rental Housing Support Program consisting of 250 housing units for families in five contiguous counties. WCHA provides 1,000 assisted housing units through public housing, tax credit and rural development programs.

The City of Rockford Community Action Agency while administering their various housing programs, require all housing units to undergo and pass a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection and meet local fair market rates. Clients are also encouraged to live in "areas of opportunities" where they can better access services, jobs, education, and anything else they may need.

### Specific Housing Objectives

1. Evaluate progress in meeting specific objective of providing affordable housing, including the number of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income renter and owner households comparing actual accomplishments with proposed goals during the reporting period.

#### Program Year 4 CAPER Specific Housing Objectives response:

The chart below compares the proposed number of assisted housing units to the actual number of assisted housing units.

Type of Housing Activity	Proposed # of Units	Actual # of Units
Rehabilitation Units	10	18
Housing Projects (Non-Profits)	3	8
Homeless Projects/Programs	5	4
Homebuyer Assistance Activities	39	2
Construction of Ramps	6	5
Demolition	19-20	22
Health Department – Lead Abatement	60	48

#### Rehabilitation Units:

Since the 2013 budget, which drives the proposed units above, was estimated late 2012, some assumptions had to be made. The assumptions were as follows: 1) all rehabilitation activities underway would be 100% complete by year end (2012), and 2) all but \$32,275 of the 2012 housing rehabilitation funds would be obligated to a housing rehab activity by year end (2012); therefore, limiting the amount of funds

carried over to the 2013 budget. Using those assumptions, approximately 10 units were proposed to be assisted through the Focus Area Rehabilitation Program (FAR) in 2013.

2013 was year 2 of a 3 year grant agreement with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago (FHLBC). Each FAR unit was assisted with HOME and FHLBC funds. Since the process from intake to completion of a unit using both funding sources took longer than anticipated, and the conditions of the units were requiring more funding than the program limit, the assumptions mentioned previously did not occur. This increased the carryover for 2013 allowing for more units to be completed. A total of 18 units were assisted.

Actual Rehabilitation Units  
Beneficiary Area Median Income Tabulation

Extremely Low Income (at or below 30% Area Median Income)	Low Income (between 30% & 50% Area Median Income)	Moderate Income (between 50 & 80% of Median Income)	Totals
6	8	4	18

Housing Projects (Non-Profits):

During 2013, HUD released the HOME Final Rule which included revisions to the Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) eligibility and underwriting criteria. Although the City and HUD technical assistance are working diligently to enhance City processes to ensure non-profits may, if interested, be certified as a CHDO, no non-profits were certified or re-certified as a CHDO during the year. Therefore, the City CHDO Reserve (CR) funds typically used for housing projects were not awarded to create the proposed 3 units.

The 8 actual units indicated on the chart above included the following:

- 1) In 2013, the construction for 533 Fisher, a conversion of an 8 unit building to 6 units, was finished and all of the units were leased up. Five (5) units were assisted with HOME funds. Two (2) of the 5 units and the 6<sup>th</sup> unit in the building was assisted with NSP funds as well.
- 2) In 2013, beneficiary data for 1921-23 Charles Street, a 4 unit building rehabilitated with CHDO Reserves from a previous year, was provided. Although only 3 of the units were assisted with HOME funds, the initial renter for the 4th unit was a low income household.

Actual Housing Projects (non-profit) Units  
Beneficiary Area Median Income Tabulation

Extremely Low Income (at or below 30% Area Median Income)	Low Income (between 30% & 50% Area Median Income)	Moderate Income (between 50 & 80% of Median Income)	Totals
5	0	3	8

Homeless Projects/Programs:

The City assisted 4 organizations. For more detailed information about the homeless programs, please refer to the Homeless section of the CAPER.

Homebuyer Assistance Activities:

The goal of 39 activities included the following:

<i>ND Homebuyer Assistance</i>	2
<i>Homebuyer Advantage Program</i>	34
<i>Thatcher Blake</i>	3
<b>TOTAL Homebuyer Assistance Activities</b>	<b>39</b>

*Neighborhood Development Homebuyer Assistance:*

HOME funds were not awarded to a developer to create homebuyer units. Therefore, no new funds were obligated to assist homebuyers interested in purchasing units. Homebuyers did purchase 2 units (3423 Chestnut and 727 S Pierpont) which were created during a previous year. Another homebuyer (at 120% ami) purchased 947 N Court, a home rehabilitated with NSP funds.

*Homebuyer Advantage Program:*

NW HomeStart, formally known as the Rockford Area Affordable Housing Coalition and Neighborhood Housing Services of Freeport, was awarded Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) grant dollars which funded their Homebuyer Advantage Program. Since the IHDA grant ended in 2012 and no new funds were available for 2013, HomeStart approached the City for HOME funds to assist 34 homebuyers. The Homebuyer Advantage Program was not approved through City Council and therefore no funds were awarded.

*Thatcher Blake:*

During a previous year, City Tax Increment Financing District dollars assisted with the development of the Thatcher Blake condo units. Therefore, the City set aside funds to assist homebuyers interested in purchasing the units. No homebuyers approached the City for Homebuyer Assistance during 2013.

Actual Housing Projects (non-profit) Units  
Beneficiary Area Median Income Tabulation

Program	Extremely Low Income (at or below 30% Area Median Income)	Low Income (between 30% & 50% Area Median Income)	Moderate Income (between 50 & 80% of Median Income)	Totals
<i>ND Homebuyer Assistance</i>	0	1	1	2

Construction of Ramps:

Although the sub recipient grant agreement proposed 6 assisted units, the agreement expires June 30, 2014. Five (5) assisted units equal 85% of the goal.

Demolition:

The City completed 22 demolitions, which exceeded the goal.

Health Department – Lead Abatement:

The Health Department assisted 48 units. For more detailed information about lead abatement, please refer to the Lead-Based Paint section of the CAPER.

- Evaluate progress in providing affordable housing that meets the Section 215 definition of affordable housing for rental and owner households comparing actual accomplishments with proposed goals during the reporting period.

**Program Year 4 CAPER Specific Housing Objectives response:**

The City of Rockford housing programs are designed to ensure all federally funded housing activities meet the Section 215 definition of affordable housing for rental and owner households.

- Describe efforts to address “worst-case” housing needs and housing needs of persons with disabilities.

**Program Year 4 CAPER Specific Housing Objectives response:**

Through the City of Rockford and CDBG and HOME funds, housing rehabilitation assistance is available to persons with disabilities. Ramps can be constructed at both owner-occupied and rental owned properties. Extremely low-income can be served in both programs.

From a Public Housing standpoint, the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) worked with the Veterans Administration to increase the number of Veterans Assistance Special Housing (VASH) vouchers so that more veterans are taken from homelessness to housing. RHA also issued a Request For Information to project based veterans vouchers to extend additional units for veterans.

From an asset based platform, RHA has realigned its capital funds, its operational expenditures and its equity sources to improve the "worst case needs" of its public housing portfolio. RHA, in partnership with Johnson Controls, has submitted an Energy Performance Contract to HUD which, when approved, will provide nearly \$7,000,000.00 in energy upgrades to 10 public housing developments. In addition, RHA has made the commitment to the Better Buildings Challenge; publicly committing to decrease our energy usage by 20% by 2015.

Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) partnered with RHA to explore application of the Purpose Built Communities program. Moreover, support and participation have been provided by both WCHA and RHA in the Strong Cities Strong Communities program.

WCHA operates a congregate home for Traumatic Brain Injury victims. Furthermore, WCHA has disabled set-aside homes at Collier Garden, Champion Park and Johnston Garden apartments and has disabled only Project Based Section 8 units at Johnston Garden.

During the past year, our local Continuum of Care (CoC) has begun to focus on permanent housing projects including using some of their ESG funds for Homeless Prevention & Rapid Re-housing programs. A large percentage of the CoC funds are dedicated to Shelter+Care units which are specifically designated for those with mental disabilities. By doing this, the CoC is addressing many "worst-case" housing situations with individuals and families who were very hard to house including those that meet the HUD definition of literally homeless. The CoC also added 4 new units of Permanent Supportive Housing for chronically homeless veteran families. The CoC is also beginning the process of a Coordinated Intake and Assessment process which will decrease barriers for those that are hardest to house. This process will give those who have the worst housing needs the first priority and will reduce the barriers associated with their acceptance into housing situations.

In collaboration with the CoC, the Rockford Housing Authority has updated their preference point system within their Administrative Plan to give additional preferences to those people who are homeless and working with one of the service providers that can verify their housing status.

## **Public Housing Strategy**

1. Describe actions taken during the last year to improve public housing and resident initiatives.

### **Program Year 4 CAPER Public Housing Strategy response:**

The Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) has realigned its capital funds, its operational expenditures and its equity sources to improve the "worst case needs" of its public housing portfolio. The effort resulted in improved REAC scores from last year. RHA has also re-examined all of its PNA's to focus improvements that provide the best return on investment and improve living conditions, resulting in the submission of an energy performance contract.

The Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) has worked diligently with Congress to revise and expand the "Moving to Work" legislation.

RHA now has active resident councils at all of its sites. The councils are receiving training and have access to resources previously not available to them. It is believed these resources will best help the residents achieve sufficiency via peer based support and leadership. Both WCHA and RHA have a resident commissioner serving on the Board of Commissioners. These roles allow for the residents to stay informed, participate, empower and let their voices be heard. It also offers the opportunity to get a better understanding of public meetings, the Board and its functions.

Specific to its RHA's Fairgrounds Development and the Choice Planning initiative, nearly 90 initiatives from the community have been identified and focused so that the residents of Ellis Heights receive equal and open access to these efforts. Bridge Rockford Alliance purchased a long time vacant building within the neighborhood and will look to rehabilitate this building into a much needed neighborhood teen center. This building will provide a home base for many of the neighborhood initiatives born from the Choice Neighborhood planning efforts.

WCHA leases the Washington Park Community Center, in turn providing its educational, employment, recreation and supportive services to all area residents and to the Rockford Park District. The Washington Park Community Center's technology lab is also being renovated by WCHA reflecting increased usage and providing classroom environments for new programming.

Office space for the NAACP Rockford office has been provided by WCHA allowing greater access to the residents and their potential needs. Office space was also granted to the Lutheran Social Services RSVP to help them maintain their office and services despite their funding cuts. LSSI RSVP reciprocates by providing computer lab education programs and bilingual services. WCHA provides a building for a Food Bank that is operated with residents. WCHA continues to sponsor the annual Back to School Drive to provide school supplies for all PHA children.

WCHA became a non-smoking housing authority. RHA made the decision to become a non-smoking housing authority with the non-smoking policy becoming effective later this year.

## **Barriers to Affordable Housing**

1. Describe actions taken during the last year to eliminate barriers to affordable housing.

### **Program Year 4 CAPER Barriers to Affordable Housing response:**

The City of Rockford Community And Economic Development Department undertook the following actions during the last year to reduce and/or eliminate barriers to affordable housing:

- Rockford kept overall housing costs down through rehabilitation
- Made access to rehabilitation funds to improve housing stability
- A new program was applied for and then developed to give more people the opportunity to become homeowners with a minimal amount down and funds for both closing costs and rehabilitation.

The local CoC is working on the creation of a Coordinated Intake and Assessment plan that will reduce barriers to affordable housing options. Agencies involved in the CoC will use one screening process (at multiple sites) and are working toward policies and procedures to utilize one set of criteria for housing. Those that are most in need of the assistance will take priority with those who have been homeless the longest getting the housing first. The process will be a way to assess the need for affordable housing in the area.

The Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) supports various initiatives and efforts to promote fair housing. Alongside RMAP (Regional Metropolitan Agency for Planning), the RHA has engaged in assisting with the Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing. Additionally, based on several concerns of severe concentration of race, poverty and poor quality housing, RHA partnered with RMAP and the City of Rockford to research and develop a de-concentration plan outlining the need for new housing opportunities. RHA will use this de-concentration plan for future developments.

The Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) implemented an expansion of its FSS program to include Stephenson and Boone Counties for increased family mobility access to social support, education and employment opportunities. WCHA is actively working with NAHRO to revise the national portability program to remove administrative and cost barriers. There has also been the creation of a partnership with the Freeport Housing Authority for families to be served by their Workforce Development Institute program. In addition, programs regarding the Housing Choice Voucher program are held to educate those who are wrongly or poorly informed. Providing the correct information helps landlords remove barriers of non-leasing due to misinformation.

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

1. Assessment of Relationship of HOME Funds to Goals and Objectives
  - a. Evaluate progress made toward meeting goals for providing affordable housing using HOME funds, including the number and types of households served.

### **Program Year 4 CAPER HOME/ADDI response:**

Please see performance measurements tab in appendix of this document.

2. HOME Match Report
  - a. Use HOME Match Report HUD-40107-A to report on match contributions for the period covered by the Consolidated Plan program year.

### **Program Year 4 CAPER HOME/ADDI response:**

Please see HOME Match/MBE tab.

3. HOME MBE and WBE Report

- a. Use Part III of HUD Form 40107 to report contracts and subcontracts with Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) and Women's Business Enterprises (WBEs).

**Program Year 4 CAPER HOME/ADDI response:**

Please see HOME Match/MBE tab.

4. Assessments
  - a. Detail results of on-site inspections of rental housing.

**Program Year 4 CAPER HOME/ADDI response:**

The City of Rockford conducted on-site physical inspections for six (6) of the total sixty-six (66) rental units for calendar year 2013. The results of the inspections were all positive, and the property owners are continuing to provide affordable housing within program guidelines.

- b. Describe the HOME jurisdiction's affirmative marketing actions.

**Program Year 4 CAPER HOME/ADDI response:**

Affirmative marketing provides information and otherwise attracts eligible persons to the available housing without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status, or disability (e.g. populations protected by the Fair Housing Act).

All City Neighborhood Development Division staff, sub-recipients, developers, owners, and sponsors receiving HOME funds must follow the marketing requirements set by HUD. During 2013, HUD released the HOME Final Rule which revised the affirmative marketing requirements, effective August 23, 2013. Changes in the rule have been included in the City's affirmative marketing policy. To ensure compliance, some of the tasks the City requires are as follows: marketing plans must be utilized; reports regarding inquiries, showing, etc. must be maintained; Fair Housing logo and/or statements must be seen on all marketing materials; marketing efforts must include targeting potential tenants and homebuyers who are least likely to apply for the housing; and the creation and use of minority outreach programs by sub-recipients, developers, owners, and sponsors.

Actions taken throughout 2013 included but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Continuously providing lenders, Realtors, the Rockford Housing Authority, the Rockford Area Association of Realtors (RAAR), and non-profits such as Northwestern Area Agency on Aging (NIAAA), NW HomeStart, Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity, and RAMP, a center for independent living, serving the Rockford area information about the homebuyer and housing rehabilitation programs available through the City. City employees were available to speak at their staff meetings and/or any other events they wanted the City to participate in. The City also encouraged them to include program information in their newsletters. Information was provided via e-mail, meetings, and social networks such as LinkedIn.

- 2) Program information was available via internet, not only through the City web site, but the City site was often a link on other housing web sites such as NW Homestart, and RAAR.
- 3) Direct mailings of housing rehabilitation program flyers to single family homeowners living within the program boundaries. Other departments of the City would include information for our programs with their direct mailings as well.
- 4) City employees serving the community were notified of housing programs through an electronic internal newsletter and through Sharepoint, the City's intranet.
- 5) Program informational seminars are held at various times throughout the day a couple of times during the year.
- 6) City staff attended neighborhood group meetings, and/or provided brochures/flyers to be distributed at the meetings.
- 7) Program flyers were provided to businesses located within the housing rehabilitation program boundaries. Most hung on their community boards or displayed at the front counter.
- 8) Marketing materials were available at City events such as the Annual State of City, Annual Plan public hearings, and National Night Out.
- 9) City representatives participated on various committees or attended meetings related to housing throughout the community. Since these committees or meetings are held regularly, they help ensure that information regarding programs was always available.

c. Describe outreach to minority and women owned businesses.

**Program Year 4 CAPER HOME/ADDI response:**

Outreach to minority and women owned businesses included the following: Consistent with Executive Orders 11625, 12432 and 12138, the City of Rockford will continue its efforts to encourage the use of minority and women's business enterprises.

The City's outreach standards, at a minimum, included:

- The promotion and encouragement of minority and woman-owned businesses and their participation in the city's procurement process as general contractors, subcontractors and suppliers of goods and services.
- The city's purchasing staff continued to seek quotes under \$20 thousand from Minority and Women Owned Businesses who were certified by the city's Diversity Procurement Officer.
- Businesses certified as MBEs and WBEs were placed on the city's web site for internal purchasers and for the community-at-large to recruit MBEs and WBEs for products and services.
- A yearly statement was issued in the Rockford Register Star (and/or a minority publication with a substantial circulation) of its public policy and commitment to minority and women business development.
- Continued networking with local, state, federal, private agencies, Rockford Public School District 205 reporting on bid opportunities and organizations to

enhance the contractual opportunities for minority and women business development.

- Administered the City Council approved Procurement Policy that encourages the use of Minority and Women Owned Business in the city's procurement efforts.

As part of bid requirements, the City of Rockford required Minority and Women Owned Business to certify their business as such and required contractors to register as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) or Women Business Enterprise (WBE) as a means of certification. Certifications from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Central Management Services and the city of Chicago can be reciprocated under this requirement.

- \*Contractors/firms were required to provide a listing of subcontractors at the time of bidding.
- \*Tracked MBE/WBE participation of all contracts awarded through bid & quote process.
- \*Revamped measures to encourage minority and women-owned business participation.
- \* Every City of Rockford bid package was e-blasted to minority and women businesses that are certified as MBEs and WBEs.

The Diversity Procurement Officer of the City of Rockford conducted workshops for general and subcontractors that do business with the City of Rockford. Workshops included training on the Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) Section 3 requirement for reporting for low-moderate income people and businesses introduced the new Section 3 forms used for reporting purposes including reporting Section 3 hiring goals in the Certified Payrolls Reporting system.

Also, an in-house training program was developed and provided to city employees that are commonly the purchasers of goods and services. Instruction was given on how to locate certified businesses on the City's intranet website and how to log dollars spent on the use of minority and women owned businesses. This included instruction on how to use the Intranet for reporting.

The Diversity Procurement Officer met with Business groups such as Rockford Chamber of Commerce's Multi-Cultural Business Council, Salsa Business Network – voted in as Vice President of the Board of Directors, Rockford Area Mexican Business Association (RAMBA), SWIFTT, Hispanic Commerce of Commerce, and Northern Illinois Minority Companies Association (NIMCA). At which time members are explained the City's interest to certifying minority and women owned businesses in the Rockford area.