

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development

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.

Program Year 5 Action Plan Community Development response:

The jurisdiction's priority community development needs are illustrated in appendix 9 of this document.

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.

Program Year 5 Action Plan Community Development response:

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 provides an illustration of the City of Rockford's long-term and short-term community development goals and objectives and year to date accomplishments for program year 2013.

Antipoverty Strategy

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

Program Year 5 Action Plan Antipoverty Strategy response:

The City of Rockford Human Services Department also acts as a two county Community Action Agency. Therefore, this organization is routinely engaged in exploring ways to improve services to have the greatest impact upon the community. Each year they look to improve programming to further address priority population community needs and target specific neighborhoods enmeshed in poverty. Through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and other funding from local, state and federal governments, Rockford Human Services will provide

residents of Boone and Winnebago Counties access to economic development, education and training, community health and prevention services, financial literacy, housing resources, self-sufficiency programs, emergency services, and neighborhood and community revitalization.

Human Services - Community Services Division, which includes CSBG, HUD Programs, Community Health and Prevention and our Energy Division, supports all agency programs and services with the exception of early child services including Head Start. This has led to a streamlining of services and support and improved customer service abilities. The Head Start Division assists prenatal to three and pre-school aged children with education, family social services, special needs services, health/nutrition services and parent/family education and development. During the school calendar year of 2012/2013, Head Start Division served 864 children. Additionally, their Community Health and Prevention program conducted a community strategic plan in collaboration with our local Minority Health Advisory Council. The goal of their strategic plan is to reduce the number of youth engaging in alcohol and substance abuse/use residing in specific zip codes (which are traditionally low-income).

Through the combination of the community needs assessment and strong community partnerships, they identify the service needs in our community that are not being sufficiently addressed. From this process, Rockford's Human Services Department has chosen to address the following in their Work Plans:

1. Economic Development

CSBG Loan Program

Rockford Human Services allocated 15% of our CSBG funding to loan programs in 2013. Both micro-loans and small business loans are made with these funds.

Employment Training Program

Plan to add additional youth and target population employment and training opportunities. This program results in the lives of low-income persons being improved by providing employment and training to those from economically challenged families.

2. Education

Scholarship

CSBG staff provides educational enhancement of low-income persons in our service area through our scholarship program. Interested candidates can be either self or agency referred. Potential recipients complete a formal application and interview process.

3. Income Management

Energy Conservation Education

Offer opportunities for low-income residents to learn and practice energy efficient strategies to reduce utility costs.

Financial Literacy

Teach financial literacy to low-income individuals on savings, predatory lending, budgeting and banking.

5. Emergency Services

Direct Client Assistance

Rockford Human Services assists clients through emergency assistance to meet basic needs, assist with employment and training, transportation and increase self-sufficiency and perform needed life/safety repairs. Through this program rental assistance is provided, temporary hotel stays, medical costs, utility bills (including water/sewer), car repairs and other transportation costs such as bus tokens. These funds are not limited to these categories but they are the most frequently requested. These services are normally requested as part of a crisis and are intended to stabilize the individual or family and avert additional crisis such as breakdown of an automobile, which will inhibit the low-income resident from maintaining gainful employment. Through this program, clients are also assisted with condemnation relocations and crisis caused by natural disasters.

6. Nutrition

Summer Food Program

The Summer Food Program provides nutritious meals to children ages 2-18 during the summer when the public school lunch program is unavailable. Meals are served at a variety of low-income community sites. Sites offer both recreation and education programming to children. Programs provide their own supervision of the lunch and/or snack program. The Illinois State Board of Education provides meal funding for this project. Rockford Human Services sub-contracts with an outside vendor to prepare and deliver the food. Without this project, many low-income children would not have at least one nutritious meal during their day.

Community Garden Project

The Community Garden Project provides funding to neighborhood groups to create community gardens within their neighborhoods. The Community Garden Project is an active pursuit in yielding fresh food and a partnership with Neighborhood Network. By neighborhoods growing some of their own food, individuals and families have access to fresh, nutritious food that supports nutritional health. As well as promoting physical fitness and health and encourages good relationships amongst neighbors. The program in 2013 added a component of consumer education for all gardens.

7. Neighborhood Development

Convening and Supporting Efforts to Support Low-Income Populations

CSBG dollars will be used to support the activities of a variety of community groups that work on low-income issues. This includes providing staff support and meeting supplies. Some of the groups supported include the Continuum of Care, the Fair Housing Board, the Rockford Alcohol Free Teens Coalition, and others.

Neighborhood Network

The partnership with Neighborhood Network has provided significant benefits to both agencies and neighborhoods. By providing organizing, training and education in low-income neighborhoods, access to and understanding of these neighborhoods has dramatically increased the provision of more targeted services to these areas.

8. Self Sufficiency

Family and Community Development

Community Services will provide Family and Community Development (FCD) case management services to families at risk for homelessness due to poverty, violence or economic turmoil. The intent is to link FCD to specific financial

assistance programs already provided such as rental assistance in order to increase the effectiveness of FCD. CSBG will provide intense self-esteem, linkage and follow-up to increase long-term success of area low-income residents.

9. Health

Youth Prevention Programs

Human Services will provide community health prevention services to students in elementary schools in low income areas. These services will include prevention classes on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs as well as violence prevention and bullying.

Specifically, Community Action will provide the following services to reduce the number of families in poverty.

Paid Job training and Job Skills- estimated to be served- 50 persons
Loan Program- estimated jobs created- 10 jobs
Scholarship Program-estimated number of scholarships-5 scholarships
Financial Literacy Classes- estimated to be served- 100 households
Energy Conservation classes- estimated to be served-95 households
Emergency Financial Assistance- estimated to be served-125 households
Community Gardens-estimated to be served-150 households
Summer Food-estimated to be served-1500 children
Case Management-estimated to be served-100 households
Health and Prevention Programs-estimated to be served- 250 youth