

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 97-540
NOVEMBER 17, 1997 AGENDA**

SUBJECT:

**HOME RENTAL REHABILITATION
FUNDS– DES MOINES COALITION
FOR THE HOMELESS**

SUBMITTED BY:

**JIM GRANT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

SYNOPSIS –

The Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless has requested \$120,000 in Home Investments Partnership (HOME) rental rehabilitation funds to fund an expansion of the transitional housing program.

FISCAL IMPACT –

\$120,000 in City HOME Rental Rehabilitation dollars would be utilized in conjunction with State HOME funds and funds from other agencies. No general fund dollars will be allocated to this project.

RECOMMENDATION –

Approval.

BACKGROUND –

City staff has received a request from Gene Jones, Executive Director of the Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless, to utilize \$120,000 in City HOME Rental Rehabilitation funds to expand their transitional housing program by eight single-family units.

The City is poised to conditionally commit \$120,000 to fund this expansion project if the following requirements are met:

1. The Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless obtains a commitment for HOME funds from the

State of Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED). (An application for \$199,900 has been submitted to IDED by the Coalition.)

2. The Coalition leverages funding from other funding sources necessary to complete the project.
3. The project is completed in compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act and other relevant Federal regulations.
4. The general contractor and all sub-contractors meet City insurance and bonding requirements.

At its September 17, 1997 meeting, the Des Moines Neighborhood Advisory Board recommended approving the request for HOME funds for the expansion project.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION –

This item was initially reviewed by the City Council at the October 6, 1997 meeting. The Council deferred action on the item to November 17, 1997, and requested information about the following items:

1. Agency Management/Track Record
2. Addresses of Properties to be Included in Project or Plan to Scatter Selected Properties
3. Maintenance Schedules for Properties
4. Eviction Rules / Ordinance Governing Landlord and Tenant Relations
5. List of Transitional Housing Agencies

Following is information addressing each of the above areas of concern. A section addressing police calls to Coalition properties is also included.

1. Agency Management/Track Record

In the last eight years, the Des Moines Coalition has served 73 verifiable homeless families. They have a 95 percent success rate in moving families that stay in the program for 3 months or longer (61 out of 73 families) into a permanent housing situation.

Eighteen families were served by the Coalition in the last two years. Of these, 7 families who “graduated” from the program moved into homeownership. Although homeownership is not a goal of the program and sometimes is not the best option available for these families, this statistic is testimony to the work of the Coalition.

A detailed description of the management and track record of the Coalition for the Homeless is on file with the City Clerk as Attachment A, Part 1. The report is written by the Coalition. The Coalition has had good success in moving homeless families with children from homelessness to permanent housing. Because these clients are among the most at-risk section of our society, some “bumps” in the road to self-sufficiency are inevitable. The Coalition has very strict policies to curb undesirable behavior; and the staff strives to expand each families’ education level,

increase their social skills, stabilize their financial situation, and encourage each family to improve their lives.

2. Addresses of Properties to be Included in Project or Plan to Scatter Selected Properties

The Expansion Plan is predicated on the scattered-site principle. The Coalition will consider Council requests concerning the distribution of properties throughout the City. The scattered-site principle has guided the program since its beginning in 1989. The Coalition will acquire and rehabilitate houses throughout the City within the limit of their resources. Under the plan, the Coalition will expend an average of \$45,000 per unit for acquisition and \$15,000 per unit for rehabilitation. Under the Expansion Plan, the Coalition will identify, acquire and rehabilitate one house at a time over three years. While the agency has been able to calculate the number of houses that can be completed, they must wait for funding to be allocated to begin the process of acquisition and rehabilitation. Therefore, addresses cannot be identified at this time.

Currently the Coalition has 13 units. They are located in eight areas: Logan, Union Park, Beaverdale, Model Cities, Woodland Wilke, Sherman Hill and Pioneer-Columbus.

3. Maintenance Schedules for Properties

The Coalition has established three levels of maintenance for their properties:

S Emergency maintenance;

S Proactive maintenance, including capital outlay projects; and

S Seven to 10 days of refurbishing work on a house every time a family leaves the program in preparation for placement of a new family.

To document maintenance activities, the Coalition utilizes numerous forms. The pre-inspection and post-inspection form is used for “ walk-throughs” of the house upon entry and exit from the program. When maintenance is required on a unit, the resident submits a maintenance request form to the Coalition’ s property manager. The property manager then completes a work report form to document the maintenance activities completed. Each unit is regularly inspected by the Housing Code Section of the Housing Conservation Division, Community Development Department. All units have current Housing Certificates from the City of Des Moines.

The Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless was awarded \$21,161 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for numerous capital outlay projects on current housing inventory.

The relevant forms, certifications, and CDBG Work Programs are on file with the City Clerk as Attachment A, Part 3.

4. Eviction Rules/Ordinance Governing Landlord and Tenant Relations

The Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless is not a landlord, and participants in their transitional housing programs are not considered tenants. The Coalition enters into a program agreement with their clients. The agency has clarified their legal position with the help of Legal

Aid of Polk County. With this assistance, a legal program/client relation has been instituted through the legal documents governing the program. If the clients violate the program agreements, the Coalition utilizes State ordinances governing eviction to protect the rights of the Coalition and their clients. The Program Agreement, the Conditions Governing the Program Agreement, the Client Evaluation Forms, the Policy Handbook, and the Car Registration Form are on file with the City Clerk as Attachment A, Parts 4 and 5.

5. List of Transitional Housing Agencies

The Federal government defines transitional housing as housing satisfying the following three characteristics:

- S No- or low-cost housing;
- S Provided for a definite period of time, usually up to two years; and
- S Linked with strong support services, usually case management.

Housing provided on a “ per day” or a “ per month” basis and allows tenants to stay in that housing for as long as desired provided they continue to pay their rent is not transitional housing.

There are only four agencies in Des Moines that meet the above criteria:

- S Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless: provides transitional housing for homeless families with children;
- S Good Samaritan: provides transitional housing for mothers with children in Phase I of their program;
- S House of Mercy: provides housing for mothers with children; and
- S Iowa Homeless Youth Center: provides housing for youth.

6. Police Calls

The Des Moines Coalition for the Homeless requested and received “ print-outs” of the logs from the Des Moines Police Department of responses to housing in their program. The police logged responses at eight of the 13 units in the program over a one-year period. The Coalition called the clients at those houses and asked them for clarifications of the date-by-date logged responses. The majority of calls from these homes were to report criminal activities or emergencies in the area, not to report violence or incidences directly attributable to the residents themselves. The Police Logs and the clients’ explanations are on file with the City Clerk as Attachment A, Part 7.