

Williams, Gray

From: Megin McDonell [mmcdonell@tenantresourcecenter.org]
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2008 2:51 PM
To: Williams, Gray
Subject: Re: Background Data for Programs funded in 2007 by the City of Madison

Hi Gray, I hope this info helps you. The following are what I mentioned to you briefly on the phone just before the new year.

1. The "COMMUNITY PLAN TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS IN DANE COUNTY" (April 2006, Prepared by the Dane County Homeless Services Consortium, with assistance from the Madison CDBG Office)

link: http://www.cityofmadison.com/cdbg/docs/community_plan_to_end_homelessness_final.pdf

This is a pretty long report, but I can list the specific references to TRC:
 p.9 mentions the limited financial assistance that TRC provides to clients in certain circumstances
 p.13 mentions the cdbg-funded Mediation program
 p.51 indicates that TRC is one of several agencies that "build on efforts to improve relationships between those who need housing (tenants) and those who have housing (landlords)."
 p.70 has a general description of Tenant Resource Center

Even though OCS does not fund the same TRC activities as CDBG does, I think the info in this report does a decent job of showing how TRC fits in the continuum with all the other housing agencies/services/programs in town. It will hopefully be of use to the committee to show them about housing and poverty issues in Dane County and maybe a little insight into the kinds of problems people face, in terms of how poverty affects access to housing.

The OCS-funded TRC activities are more focused on helping people with housing solve their problems and learn how to advocate for themselves, whereas the CDBG-funded TRC activities are a little more narrowly focused on eviction prevention. Our outreach activities inform the community of the various ways we can help: people with housing, people who need housing, etc.

2. Data from the National Low Income Housing Coalition (www.nlihc.org) that illustrates the gap between area median income and the cost of rental housing:

<http://www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2006/data.cfm?getstate=on&getnonmetro=on&getmsa=on&msa=312&getcounty=on&county=3025&state=WI>

The table shows four columns so you can see how Madison/Dane County stacks up against the rest of Wisconsin. This report does not specifically mention TRC or any other local housing agencies, but it can be useful for those who are interested in more information about what "affordable housing" means. What people earn relative to what housing costs. Also, you can see that housing is relatively expensive here and as a result renters can rarely afford any kind of legal services to solve housing problems. While we are not attorneys providing legal advice, we are able to help provide a layperson's perspective and expertise in the area of tenant rights and responsibilities. I have also referred people to the census data available at <http://factfinder.census.gov/> howeverm today it seems that their site is down all day and I haven't been able to get on there to link to any information.

I hope this information can be of use to you. I'm sorry that, other than our own stats and reports that we compile and submit to you, I'm not sure that I have much other information. Feel free to give me a call

1/14/2008

COMMUNITY PLAN
TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS
IN DANE COUNTY

April 2006



Prepared by:
Dane County Homeless Services Consortium

THE ROLE of SUPPORT SERVICES in PREVENTING and ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Prevention Activities

In 2004, approximately 5,000 households received assistance to prevent homelessness either through financial assistance or receiving educational services. Prevention of homelessness comes in the form of primary prevention and prevention of re-occurring homelessness. Prevention is the provision of any service or ongoing activity for which the main purpose is to provide housing stability, thereby avoiding homelessness. This can be accomplished through maintaining existing housing or through a planned move from one unit to another affordable housing unit. Prevention and prevention of a re-occurrence of homelessness often come in the same form. For example, eviction prevention funds can be used in both instances.

There are several types of assistance that are classified as prevention activities. These activities are intended to assist households in maintaining their current housing and include protective payees, financial assistance to pay costs related to housing, mediation, and financial and tenant education.

Protective payees assist individuals and families that have been identified as needing assistance with money management. Typically a protective payee receives the money on behalf of an individual and disperses the money to the individual's debtors and to the individual to ensure that all the expenses are paid. Protective payees are typically assigned to vulnerable persons who would have trouble paying bills (such as rent) on their own.

Dane County Human Services provides protective payee services traditionally to persons receiving Social Security, SSI, or SSDI who have been identified as having an inability to manage their finances. DCHS is reducing their role in providing protective payee services as it is reducing resources where the service (such as payee services) is not federally mandated because of budget cuts. Other Dane County non-profits currently provide some level of payee services, including Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin (CACSCW), Jewish Social Services, and Porchlight.

The most common form of prevention services comes in the form of financial assistance that pays costs related to housing, typically in the form of eviction prevention. Eviction prevention funds provide a limited amount of money in the form of a grant paid directly to the property owner/manager to assist households maintain their existing housing. There are numerous programs operating in Dane County that provide eviction prevention assistance. Examples of programs providing one-time financial grants to individuals:

- CACSCW is the largest provider of federal and state eviction prevention funds in Dane County used to pay a portion of the back rent owed by the tenant to avoid eviction.
- Middleton Outreach Ministry (MOM) provides services and financial assistance to prevent homelessness.
- Porchlight's DIGS Program coordinates more than \$300,000 from faith communities, grants and private donations to provide eviction prevention grants.
- Madison-area Urban Ministry (MUM) works with Allied Partners and Northside Communities of Faith to provide eviction prevention grants.
- Tenant Resource Center provides financial assistance to households to prevent eviction using state and federal grant funds.
- St. Vincent de Paul provides financial assistance to avoid eviction through the use of private donations and proceeds from their clothing operation.

- AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) provides financial assistance to avoid eviction to individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS.

Another form of prevention financial assistance comes in the form of ongoing rent subsidies. Ongoing rent subsidies provide a portion of the rent for either a pre-determined term (such as the Rentable Program) or indefinitely (such as the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program). The Rentable Program, operated by CACSCW, uses state funds to subsidize a portion of a low-income household's rent for a 12-month period. The federal Housing Choice Voucher program (also known as Section 8) provides rent subsidies based on household income and the Fair Market Rent amounts for rental units in the private market. Housing Initiatives provides affordable housing through federal rent subsidies from the Shelter Plus Care program for previously homeless persons with mental illness. A requirement for the household receiving the housing subsidy is that they are also receiving case management services. Also, AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin provides monthly rent subsidies to individuals and families who are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

Mediation serves as a prevention activity by avoiding or mitigating an eviction action by helping to negotiate a settlement between a landlord and tenant (i.e. re-payment plan for back rent) or a move-out day without formal eviction proceedings. The Tenant Resource Center, CACSCW, and ARCW all provide mediation services.

Many low-income households are denied rental housing due to poor credit ratings or poor landlord references. This can be overcome with financial and tenant education. Financial and tenant education provides a household with the knowledge they need to successfully apply for rental housing, read and understand their credit report, understand landlord/tenant housing laws, and budget their resources. Examples of programs that provide financial and tenant education to prospective tenants include the CACSCW Financial Literacy Program and the YWCA Second Chance Tenant Education Program and S.K.I.L.L.S. Program for at-risk high school students. In addition, the United Way's Housing in Action Leadership Team and UW-Extension are initiating a drop-in Financial Education Center to provide one-on-one financial assistance, provide information and appropriate referrals to existing services, and access to classes on financial literacy.

Recommendations

Increase the number of existing rental units that are affordable to low-income households through the use of Housing Choice vouchers, Shelter Plus Care, and locally designed rent subsidy programs and by advocating for increases in federal and state funding.

The Homeless Services Consortium will advocate retaining the number of Housing Choice vouchers in the short-term and to increase the number of vouchers available in future federal budgets distributed by the CDA and DCHA.

The HSC will annually apply for Shelter Plus Care slots that can be used to pay a portion of the rent for a disabled household and will advocate for additional funding for community support program slots to ensure that the S+C residents have support services.

The HSC will annually apply for funds that can be used to pay a portion of the households' rent for a specific period of time, thereby making the rental unit affordable.

The HSC will also continue to explore new sources of funding.

Increase financial resources to households so that they are able to afford the cost of housing.

These financial resources include such publicly-funded benefits such as SSI/SSDI, Interim Assistance, Medicare, Food Share (food stamps), Badger Care and access to safety-net supports such as food and clothing to maximize resources for housing.

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	RESULTS	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Provide support services for homeless households and households at risk of homelessness to enable them to access and maintain stable housing. (continued)</p>	<p>Provide education to help households better manage their resources.⁴³ (continued)</p>	<p>Create a format, acceptable to landlords, for a "housing resume" so that households will have personal housing histories and reference information needed to successfully access housing.</p>	<p>20% annual increase (over 2006 level) of potential renters who have a completed "housing resume". Source: FEC</p>	<p>United Way of Dane County HSC agencies Property owners/landlords Private sector</p>
		<p>Increase training of financial literacy skills in public schools.</p>	<p>Increased number of youth who participate in financial literacy and tenant education programs offered by HSC agencies to prevent barriers to housing. Source: HSC agencies</p>	<p>YWCA HSC agencies Private sector</p>
	<p>Build on efforts to improve relationships between those who need housing (tenants) and those who have housing (landlords).⁴⁴</p>	<p>Decrease the number of evictions by providing access to landlord/tenant mediation, financial assistance to pay a portion of back rent and protective payee services when appropriate.</p>	<p>Annually decrease the number of Dane County evictions filed from 2006 levels. Source: Dane County Small Claims Court</p>	<p>Tenant Resource Center CACSCW Porchlight HSC agencies Dane County Human Services Property owners/landlords</p>
		<p>Market to landlords the benefits of the Financial Education Center, Second Chance Tenant Education Program and CACSCW Financial Literacy Program in order to encourage early tenant referrals. Encourage landlords to provide incentives to appropriate tenants to participate in FEC programs.</p>	<p>The number of units operated by landlords who commit to renting to prospective tenants primarily because of the tenants' participation in FEC and other related programs such as the Second Chance Tenant Education Program will increase (over 2006 level). Source: FEC, YWCA</p>	<p>United Way of Dane County Housing in Action Leadership Team YWCA CACSCW HSC agencies Tenants Private sector</p>

⁴³ Further discussion in the Support Services Section narrative.

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safe, affordable housing. Once in housing, the case managers will assist in daily living skills training i.e. money management, personal health, housekeeping, nutrition, and grocery shopping.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul.....Ralph Middlecamp, Executive Director, 278-2920

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a membership organization that serves the poor in Dane County. In Madison, the District Council operates Port St. Vincent de Paul (short-term and long term housing for single men) St. Elizabeth Ann Seton House (transitional housing for single women and women with children), a food pantry at the Williamson Street Service Center and five Thrift Stores scattered around the city.

Tellurian UCANMichael Florek, CEO and President, 222-7311

Tellurian provides services to adults and adolescents in need of alcohol and drug treatment, mental health therapy and housing. Tellurian works with individuals at all points on the continuum but is committed to helping those most in need. Tellurian operates a number of programs that provide housing and services to homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless. The SOS (Start on Success) Project provides intensive transitional housing and services to chronically homeless families who have attempted to enter the Dane County shelter system at least three times since 1990. The THP (Transitional Housing Program) is a 20 bed Community Based Residential Facility for single men and women who are homeless and have a mental illness, a chemical dependence or both. The Community Intervention Team is a 10 member multi-disciplinary team providing assertive outreach and case management services to alcohol and other drug dependent clients, mentally ill clients, dually diagnosed clients and persons who are homeless due to mental illness and/or chemical dependency. UW Campus/Lower State Street project is an outreach program that supports the needs of homeless persons in the area and works to improve the safety of people in the area. Tellurian operates two permanent housing facilities for single adults with serious mental illness and/or chemical dependence who have previously been chronically homeless due to their disabilities. The Willie Street SRO is a 7 unit housing opportunity with a resident manager for persons who are homeless and who also have a serious and persistent mental illness and/or chemical dependency. Tellurian operates two group homes staffed 24 hours a day and serves people who are homeless and have serious and persistent mental illnesses.

Tenant Advocacy Group..... Cynthia Travis, Coordinator, 294-7998 ext 307

TAG is an activist group of formerly homeless community members in the Madison area who work on issues of homelessness, poverty and affordable housing. TAG participates with other advocacy and provider groups at the local level, writes and calls local, state and federal elected officials on issues of interest, and empowers its members to become participants in legislative and decision-making processes through community organizing and training.

Tenant Resource Center (TRC)..... Brenda Konkol, Executive Director, 257-0143

The Tenant Resource Center is a non-profit organization with a small staff that relies primarily on volunteers to provide housing counseling, mediation and office assistance. TRC is dedicated to promoting positive relations between rental housing consumers and providers throughout Wisconsin. By providing information about rental rights and responsibilities, and access to conflict resolution, TRC empowers the community to obtain and maintain quality affordable housing. In addition to their role as educator and advocate on tenant's issues, TRC contracts with Dane County to provide housing counseling and case management at the Housing Help Desk located at the Job Center on Aberg Avenue.

United Refugee Services of Wisconsin, Inc.ThajYing Lee, Executive Director, 256-6400

United Refugee Services (URSW) serves refugees and other minorities, with a primary focus on Hmong, Lao, Cambodian and Kosovar residing in Madison and Dane County, with employment, language and job skills training, advocacy, food pantry, youth and seniors' programming. URSW provides housing assistance, both rental and ownership, including assisting with Section 8 applications.

United Way of Dane County Leslie Ann Howard, President, 246-4350

The mission of United Way of Dane County is to unite and focus the community to create measurable results in improving peoples' lives and strengthening the community. As part of their agenda for change for the community, United Way is focusing efforts so that there is a decrease in homelessness and more affordable housing is available. United Way provides financial, volunteer and in-kind support, access to collaborative networks, management assistance and program expertise to create measurable, sustainable results in our community.

Veterans Assistance Foundation.....Deborah Oswald, Executive Director, 608/372-1282

The Veterans Assistance Foundation is a nonprofit corporation comprised of veterans who are nationally recognized as experts on the issues of homelessness among veterans. The VAF operates two transitional housing programs in the State of Wisconsin, including a facility on Green Avenue in Madison. The mission of VAF is to operate programs designed to assist homeless or those veterans at risk of becoming homeless by providing a safe and secure environment through which they can access a wide array of human services. It is the focus of the VAF to transition homeless veterans into society's mainstream. This will be done by assisting them to obtain meaningful employment and subsequently, safe, decent and sanitary housing.

Wm S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital.....Tim Koerber, Homeless Program Coordinator, 256-1901 x11139