

§91.215(b) Affordable Housing Strategy

Will County Housing Goals and Strategies

Area Needs and Policy Statement: The need for affordable housing has been cited by many local and regional entities as necessary for the balanced growth of the county and the region. Metropolis 2020 encourages balanced affordable workforce housing in its Homes for a Changing Region report. Will County’s award-winning land use policies promote a variety of development concepts and offer municipalities and developers guidelines for excellence in development among selected concepts. These policies support affordable housing development. Finally, the Will County Continuum of Care agencies site the shortage of decent, safe affordable housing options for low income persons and families is one of the major contributing factors leading toward the risk of homelessness in our community.

The Will County Community Development Department conducted public meetings and held consultations on housing needs and priorities. The following priorities, based on the identified housing needs discussed in §91.205(a) of this plan are as follows:

1st Priority: Increase the affordable housing supply for low-income households including rental housing production, new owner-occupied housing production, in-fill housing located in revitalization areas, housing designated for persons with disabilities, home buyer programs and housing with supportive services for homeless persons.

Five-Year Goal: Low-income Will County renters and owners will benefit from construction of 350 to 450 rental and owner new affordable housing units. **(Priority-High)**

Strategy: The County will invest Home grant funds:

- In projects with local public housing agency that will leverage investors using IHDA Trust Fund tax credits, taxable bonds for new rental unit development. It is projected that the County will invest up to \$650,000 in Home funds over the five year period to achieve the stated goals.
- In Habitat for Humanity homes for in-fill housing. It is projected that the County will invest up to \$400,000 in Home funds over the five-year period.
- Home buyer programs using American Dream Downpayment Initiative funds (ADDI). It is projected that the County will invest up to \$100,000 in ADDI funds, pending their availability, over the five year period to achieve the stated goals. As other Home funds are available, the County proposes to allocate at least \$50,000 in Home funds for additions to the existing FirstHome first time home buyer program.

Performance Measurement: Performance Measurement templates have been developed for three of the four strategies as listed above and can be found in §91.215(l). Measurement tool for Investments in Habitat new home construction and home buyer programs have been completed.

2nd Priority: The Fair Housing Act of 1968 made it unlawful for anyone to deny housing based on race, ethnicity, religion, or sex. The Fair Housing Amendments of 1988 expanded coverage of the Act to include handicap and familial status. The State of Illinois further expanded the protected classes to include military discharge/status, age, and marital status. Despite these laws, housing discrimination still continues. According to the most recent Will County Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, (June 2005) education, outreach, and the need for a fair housing clearing-house is needed to further fair housing throughout the county.

Five-Year Goal: To expand fair housing choice to all protected classes under the Fair Housing Act as amended. **(Priority-High)**

Strategy: It is projected that the County will invest up to \$125,000 in CDBG Public Service funds, if available, over the five year period to achieve the following goal to expand fair housing choice by:

- Advocating the passage of a County-wide Fair Housing Ordinance
- Creating an expanded outreach/education effort extending to all communities in the county;
- To create a centralized fair housing clearinghouse in order to direct all fair housing complaints to the proper channels.

3rd Priority: Improve existing housing stock for low-income households, focusing primarily on owner occupied housing stock in redevelopment areas and in conjunction to non-housing community development projects.

Five-Year Goal: Invest in owner-occupied existing housing units owned by low-income families located in high impacted areas needing redevelopment. **(Priority-High)**

Strategy: The County will invest up to \$500,000 of CDBG funds to rehab up to 24 existing home owners over the five-year period.

Performance Measurement: A Performance Measurement tool has been developed for Owner Occupied Housing Rehab projects and the template can be found in §91.215(l).

4th Priority: Promote employer-assisted workforce housing that encourages employees to live within close proximity to their workplace.

Five-Year Goal: Promote existing home buyer programs via existing Economic Development agencies and regional housing groups. **(Priority-Medium)**

Strategy: Will County will:

- Promote outreach and marketing efforts with local banks to promote existing home buyer programs to employers;
 - Strengthen and develop partnerships with IHDA to create more affordable housing options for workers.
 - Develop new partnerships with regional housing organizations in order to educate the local employers on the benefits of workforce housing options.
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5th Priority: Housing counseling and credit repair services are needed to help individuals either gain access to available mortgage resources or to be able to remain in their homes. The service is needed by potential low-income buyers and renters.

Five-Year Goal: Approximately 250 low-income prospective buyers will improve their potential to purchase a home through credit repair and housing counseling and educational services. **(Priority-High)**

Strategy: Support existing ongoing programs with investment of CDBG funds to existing HUD certified Housing Counseling agencies over the next five years. It is projected that the County will invest up to \$125,000 in CDBG Public Service funds, if available, over the five year period to achieve the stated goals.

6th Priority: The County proposes to use up to \$210,000 in Home funds for program planning and administration.

Five-Year Goal:

Support, oversee and coordinate new and existing program development under the Home and ADDI grant programs.

Strategy: Provide in-house planning and administration of all new and existing programs under the Home and ADDI Grant programs, and support outside development and administration of Home and ADDI programs as necessary.