

National Association for County Community and Economic Development
Awards of Excellence Committee

2018 Awards of Excellence

8/17/2018 deadline

Anoka County
Stepping out of Homelessness

Jump to: [Entry Form](#) [Application Questions](#) [Documents](#)

Submitted: 8/7/2018 12:51:26 PM
(Pacific)

Project Contact
Karen Skepper
Karen.Skepper@co.anoka.mn.us
Tel: 763-324-4603

Additional Contacts
Renee Sande

Anoka County

2100 3rd Ave
Anoka, MN 55303

Director of Community and Govt.
Relations
Karen Skepper
karen.skepper@co.anoka.mn.us

Telephone 763-324-4603

Fax

Web www.anokacounty.us

Entry Form [top](#)

1. Enter the name of the agency or agencies responsible for the program entry:

This information will be on the plaque if your entry wins the award.

Anoka County Community and Government Relations

2. Indicate the brief title of the program or name of the project to be considered for an award of excellence, using the exact wording that you would like to appear on a plaque, should your entry win:

Stepping out of homelessness

3. Indicate Congressional District(s) served by project and name(s) of U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators:

MN Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, CD3 Erik Paulson; CD5 Keith Ellison; CD6 Tom Emmer

4. Indicate the awards category for which you are applying:

REMINDER – Multiple categories require multiple processing fees.

- Community Development
- Economic Development
- Homeless Coordination/Assistance
- Affordable Housing
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program
- Planning/Policy/Program Management
- Innovation

Program/Project Summary

5. Briefly describe the problem, the innovative solution, and results.

This brief summary is important and will be used to describe your program/project in NACCED's awards packet, on the web site, and in any communications with Congress or the Administration.

Homeless shelters have expanded and are still at capacity in the region. The key problem is finding a way to help persons experiencing homelessness identify ways to take the next step and leave the shelter. Three non-profit providers submitted a joint application to purchase four single family houses from the Anoka County Housing and Redevelopment Authority for \$1.00 each. Providers rehabilitated the properties using non-federal funding and lots of volunteer labor.

The providers have created a range of housing alternatives including transitional housing, below market rate rent, shared living and homeownership. Families have started moving into several of the houses. The homes are scattered across Anoka County.

This innovative solution allowed new options for families who were ready to leave the shelters but still needed support. Services will continue to be provided to the persons living in the units.

Problem or Need

6. What circumstances or situation in your county stimulated the need for this program or project? What were the objectives in designing the program or project?

This program was created to fill an urgent need in the community. Over the past few years four shelters have been established. The largest shelter, Stepping Stone, serves single men and women. A youth drop in center, Hope 4 Youth, recently expanded and at it's second location has small apartment-style units for single youth and a few units for pregnant women. Most recently Eagle Healing Nest for homeless veterans (men only) renovated one of the historic cottages at the former Anoka State Hospital A second cottage is close to being completed and will be made available for female veterans. Alexandra House, the local women's shelter was the only facility that was able to serve mothers and their children. The non-profit community has done a great job of creating options to shelter homeless persons. The greatest need today is to find ways to help the persons staying in the shelters find pathways to permanent housing.

With long waiting lists for subsidized housing and Housing Choice Vouchers and rents that are too high for most of the sheltered persons there is a tremendous need for an intermediate step between the shelter and renting an apartment.

three of the shelter providers came together with similar goals and objectives:

- continue to support persons living in shelters
- provide real life opportunity for persons to affect change to their housing situations
- learn skills needed to be successful renters and homeowners
- provide opportunities for clients to improve their credit and rental histories
- make connections to transportation and jobs in the community

Solution

7. Describe the critical elements of your project/program and how they remedy the problem or address the need described above. Include any key steps, decisions, partnerships, etc. How were the objectives met? Describe the innovation in this solution.

The Anoka County HRA owned four single family homes and wanted to partner with the local shelters to help address the critical issue of creating a housing supply chain for persons leaving shelters. Having existing relationships with all of the local shelters made the next steps go smoothly. Three of the shelters submitted a joint application to purchase the properties. Inspectors and contractors prepared scopes of work to identify work that needed to be completed and budgets were put together. Each shelter has a board of directors that needed to approve the final purchase and agree to make necessary repairs with funds non-federal funding.

Each shelter will be using the housing to best meet the needs of their clients. Youth may not be ready to live completely independent but may be very successful in a shared housing arrangement. Families with children will for the first time be able to stay together and pay below market rent without having to wait for traditional subsidized housing. We believe that this innovative program will reduce many of the traditional barriers that clients have experienced when leaving shelters in search for stable housing.

Costs and Sources of Financing

8. Describe in as much detail as possible the source(s) and use(s) of funds to construct the project or start up the program, as well as the sources and uses of ongoing operating funds if applicable. Describe any innovative or unusual cost savings or financing techniques.

Anoka County HRA had the opportunity to purchase four single family homes scattered across the county. Using a model created through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program the HRA purchased the foreclosed properties using CDBG funding and offered them to non-profit partners for \$1.00 with the condition that low and moderate income persons receive the benefit of the housing. A declaration was placed upon each property to ensure long term compliance.

Total CDBG invested in the initial acquisition of 4 single family homes: \$350,000. To keep closing costs affordable for the non-profit organizations the County Attorney office handled the closings. The only cost to the non-profits to purchase the homes was the \$1.00 purchase price and the State Deed tax.

Each of the houses required some degree of rehabilitation to bring the properties up to local building code. To fund the improvements volunteers donated materials and labor whenever possible. In addition, one of the house was sold to a low/mod income household and the proceeds went into making the more difficult repairs.

The cost to rehabilitate the homes ranged from \$1,000 for a house that need fresh paint to \$50,000 for a property that needed extensive repairs that included a new septic system, new HVAC and new sheetrock.

Ongoing costs will be minimal as there are no mortgages on any of the properties. Rent collected will cover property taxes and utility expenses. Each shelter has staff that will oversee the projects so that costs are contained.

Results

9. Describe the tangible results of the program. Describe how the project or program will be sustained over the long term. If the project or program is not currently operating, please explain why not. How or why do you think important aspects of this project or program might be adaptable to other communities?

We are seeing the results we had hoped for! A low income family has qualified to purchase one of the houses. Three young women and their children are living in a shared housing along with a "house parent" who is helping connect the young women with transportation, jobs, education and providing life skills that will help them be successful. The other houses are under construction with an estimated fall move in anticipated.

The Anoka County HRA in partnership with local shelters believes that this is a model that can be easily replicated. As opportunities arise the HRA will continue to sell homes for \$1.00 so that more housing options can be made available to persons leaving homeless shelters.

One of the unique features of this initiative is that CDBG funding is not the only source of funding. Each of the shelters came to the table with funding ideas and volunteer labor/donated materials that truly vested their organizations in the project.

This program has already received inquiry's from other shelter providers. the unique partnership and practical approach to getting forecloses homes into the hands of non-profit providers that can quickly serve persons moving out of shelters can be easily replicated in any location.

Application Questions [top](#)

Documents [top](#)

Documents Requested *

Photos/Visual Documentation

Required? Attached Documents *



[Exterior photos](#)

[Exterior photos](#)

[photo exterior](#)

[photo exterior](#)

[photo exterior](#)

Other

Application ID: 122627

Become a [fan of ZoomGrants™](#) on Facebook
Problems? Contact us at Questions@ZoomGrants.com
©2002-2018 GrantAnalyst.com. All rights reserved.
"ZoomGrants" and the ZoomGrants logo are trademarks of GrantAnalyst.com, LLC.
[Logout](#) | [Browser](#)