

Community Development

82 Ionia Avenue NW - Suite 390, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Phone: (616) 632-7400 Fax: (616) 632-7405

Mission

To develop viable urban and rural communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income.

Overview

The Community Development Department implements the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in all Kent County communities except Grand Rapids and Wyoming. Funds are distributed from the federal government to the County on a formula basis. The formula considers extent of poverty, population, housing overcrowding, age of housing, and population growth lag in relation to other metropolitan areas.

The Community Development Department awards funding to local projects based on the following requirements: 1) meets a need identified in an established action plan; 2) not less than 70% of funds must be used for activities that benefit low and moderate income persons; and 3) the activity meets one of the CDBG national objectives (i.e., benefits low and moderate income persons, prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community).

Community Development is also responsible for the implementation of two (2) additional programs. The HOME Investment Partnership program (HOME) provides funding for rehab and new construction of single and multi-family units for low and moderate income families earning at or below 80 percent of area median income. The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) was a one-time grant provided by the federal government to address the deteriorating housing stock due to the national foreclosure crises. The NSP grant funds have been utilized, however, program income from the sale of homes continues to be generated.

Strategic Goals

- To provide cost-effective timely service to the 33 funded Local Units of Government, nonprofit partners and County departments receiving Community Development Block Grant funds (Stable Revenues, Efficient Use of Resources, High Quality of Life).
- To utilize HOME Investment Partnership Program dollars to develop affordable housing units for low and moderate income households in partnership with local nonprofit housing organizations. (Stable Revenues, Efficient Use of Resources, High Quality of Life)
- To ensure that CDBG/HOME required expenditure rates are accomplished annually (Stable Revenues, Efficient Use of Resources, High Quality of Life).

Significant Accomplishments

- The Community Development Department worked with the Township Supervisor Association to create a taskforce to review the CDBG funding formula, and propose a recommended alternative. Representatives on the taskforce included individuals from Alpine, Caledonia, Cascade, Nelson and Plainfield Townships as well as the cities of Kentwood and Walker.
- The Community Development Department & Housing Commission prepared for, and completed a merger with ACSETS Community Action Agency. This involved change in leadership, personnel roles, funding strategies and location.

Housing Commission

82 Ionia Avenue NW - Suite 390, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
Phone: (616) 632-7400 Fax: (616) 632-7405

Mission

To eliminate housing conditions which are detrimental to the public peace, health, safety and/or welfare, principally for the benefit of persons of low income.

Overview

The Kent County Housing Commission provides rental assistance to extremely-low and very-low income families. The Commission issues and administers Section 8 Housing Choice Rental Assistance Vouchers provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. After qualifying applicants for the program, Commission staff educates and prepares applicants, assists voucher holders with locating suitable housing, inspects rental units, and reviews lease agreements. They also provide education about the need for affordable housing to property owners and communities, facilitate the construction of new housing, and work collaboratively with other housing providers in Kent County.

As a part of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, the Housing Commission also operates a Homeownership program and a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. FSS aims to move participants from welfare to work by helping families identify barriers to employment and set goals (with time-frames) detailing the steps that families will take to obtain the assistance needed to acquire and retain employment. The goal of the Homeownership program is to successfully transition Housing Choice Voucher participants to homeownership.

Strategic Goals

- Provide rental assistance to ensure safe, decent and affordable housing for low income households, utilizing the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) and thus empowering participating families their transition to self-sufficiency. (Safe Community, High Quality of Life).

Significant Accomplishments

- The Kent County Housing Commission maintained its voucher utilization rate at over 90% (actual – 94%) in the midst of a hot rental market. Whereas during the time following the Great Recession, the rental market was relatively flat, the current rental market continues to see rental rates outpace the CPI, and fair market rent (FMR) calculations established by HUD.
- The Community Development Department & Housing Commission prepared for, and completed a merger with ACSETs Community Action Agency. This involved change in leadership, personnel roles, funding strategies and location.

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Department Mission Statement:

The mission of Kent County Community Development is to develop viable urban and rural communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income.

Service Area: Community Development Entitlement Programs

Service Area Mission Statement:

To develop effective projects with the 33 local units of government, nonprofit partners, and County departments who receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds so that they might assist those most in need.

Goals

- To provide cost-effective timely service to the 33 funded Local Units of Government, nonprofit partners and County departments receiving Community Development Block Grant funds.
- To utilize HOME Investment Partnership Program dollars to develop affordable housing units for low and moderate income households in partnership with local nonprofit housing organizations.
- To ensure that CDBG/HOME required expenditure rates are accomplished annually.

Objectives

- Manage the CDBG funding of the (external) Minor Homeowner Rehabilitation program to provide the program benefit to 70 homeowners.
 - Effectively manage the (internal) CDBG Moderate Homeowner Rehabilitation program to provide the maximum program benefit to 10 homeowners.
 - Provide homeownership opportunities and/or quality rental housing with HOME funds to seven low income household on an annual basis.
 - Maintain the HUD CDBG fund expended rate requirement for the 33 Local Units of Government, nonprofit agencies and approved County departments at 1.5 times the annual grant.
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Indicators	2014 Actual	2015 Expected/ Actual	2016 Expected/ Actual	2017 Expected/ Actual
Outcomes				
Number of (external) Minor CDBG Homeowner Rehabilitation projects completed by end of fiscal year.	105	>70/ 106	>70/ 135	>70
Number of (internal) CDBG Moderate Homeowner Repair projects completed by end of fiscal year.	9	10/ 7	10/ 4	10
Number of HOME assisted units - new construction and/or rehabilitation.	7	7/ 4	7/ 2	7
Spend rate at 1.5 times the CDBG grant amount.	NA	Yes / Yes	Yes / No	Yes

Indicators	2014 Actual	2015 Expected/ Actual	2016 Expected/ Actual	2017 Expected/ Actual
Efficiencies				
Cost per completed (external) CDBG rehabilitation project.	\$1,115	<\$3,000/ \$1,671	<\$10,000/ \$5,507	\$10,000

DEPARTMENT: HOUSING COMMISSION

Department Mission Statement:

To eliminate housing conditions which are detrimental to the public peace, health, safety and/or welfare, principally for the benefit of persons of low income.

Service Area: Kent County

Service Area Mission Statement:

Elimination of barriers to housing for low income individuals.

Goal

- Provide rental assistance to ensure safe, decent and affordable housing for low income households, utilizing the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) and thus empowering participating families their transition to self-sufficiency.

Objectives

- Ensure an Annual voucher utilization rate of 90%.
- Ensure that 100% of Annual Re-certifications are completed on a timely basis.
- Ensure that 20% of annual lease-ups will occur within a 60-day period of voucher issuance.
- Ensure that 20% of HCV participants are capitalizing on the FSS program to move towards economic self-sufficiency.
- Ensure that 10 % of FSS participants are actively employed.

Indicators	2014 Actual	2015 Expected/ Actual	2016 Expected/ Actual	2017 Expected/ Actual
Outcomes				
Voucher Utilization Rate	77.00%	90.00%/ 92.00%	90.00%/ 94.00%	90.00%
Percentage of Annual re-certifications completed annually.	100.00%	100.00%/ 100.00%	100.00%/ 98.60%	100.00%
Percentage of annual Section 8 lease-ups that occur within 60 days of voucher issuance.	NA	20.00%/ 20.00%	20.00%/ 47.00%	20.00%
Percentage of the total HCV participants enrolled in FSS.	NA	20.00%/ 24.00%	20.00%/ 24.00%	20.00%
Maintain a percentage of FSS participants who are actively employed.	NA	10.00%/ 45.00%	10.00%/ 35.00%	10.00%