

HOUSING NEEDS IN MILWAUKEE

Organizational Needs

The following needs were mentioned specifically by organizational contacts or came to light after conversations with several different contacts. These needs are not direct housing needs but deal with funding, planning and the capacity of organizations to perform their present missions. The first three issues deal with organizational and planning concerns within and between non-profits. The fourth issue is related to local policy changes.

Realizing the need for creating new or reassessing/revising strategic or long range plans.

These long-range or strategic plans were considered vital to increase funding options for the work of various non-profits. In addition, several non-profit housing developers and providers mentioned the need to stop and assess their current programs in order to discover ways to serve a more diverse population in some cases, and in other cases to target programs more nearly to the needs of populations and neighborhoods already being served.

Need to assess the impact of existing projects.

In relationship to recent changes in CDBG funding in the City of Milwaukee, several contacts mentioned the desire to assess the success of the work they had done over the past, in some cases, fifteen to twenty years. The need to be able to demonstrate to potential funders the impact of existing projects was very important in establishing credibility with a funder with whom the organization had no existing track record.

Development of collaborative efforts between various non-profit organizations with overlapping needs and goals.

With the exception of those organizations involved in providing emergency shelter, there were few non-profits working together to accomplish common goals. While this issue was mentioned by several contacts, it also became apparent through conversations about present and future housing efforts. Organizations which were focused on work in a particular neighborhood seldom mentioned working with a social service provider with housing issues/interests in that geographic area. In several cases there were housing organizations and social service organizations with similar concerns in similar geographic areas. However, the organizations did not know of each other's existence or had not made contact. For example, an organization which had as its mission the provision of housing for persons with developmental disabilities, had not thought of contacting or creating a partnership with a non-profit housing developer working in the area where they were considering a new project. In several cases it was clear that two or more organizations could have worked together on common concerns with better use of resources and a more expeditious, positive outcome. The organization providing housing for persons with developmental disabilities had spent considerable time looking for a site for housing. The local non-profit developer, most likely, was more familiar with available sites in the area and could have been a useful resource.

Survey of Milwaukee Non-profit Organizations Assessing Needs, Efforts and Possibilities

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Need for financial stability and continuity in the face of changes in the way the City of Milwaukee administers CDBG funds.

The change in the way the City administers CDBG funds has changed the focus of many organizations away from housing development and into housing repair. The change has put some organizations out of business. This policy change and the fact that numerous long-standing organizations have been forced to change, consolidate or close, has made many organizations wary of involvement in housing development. The policy change has compelled most housing development organizations to consider new sources of funding for development projects.