
Step Up to Better Housing

*Developed for the City Commission
and the Citizens of Lawrence
by the*

**Housing and Neighborhood Development
(HAND) Committee**

Practitioners Panel

and

**Community Development Block
Grant Review Board**

Staffed by the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department

Emergency Housing

Temporary options for immediate, safe shelter for people who are homeless. Some shelters serve specific groups.

Needs

- Year-round, 24-hour emergency shelter with appropriate services.
- Emergency housing for families.
- A larger shelter for battered women and their children.
- Shelter with peer support for people with severe and persistent mental illness.

Strategies

- ✓ Consider emergency shelter needs when investing available funds.
- ✓ Seek private and public funds to strengthen Lawrence emergency shelters.
- ✓ Endorse expansion efforts of well-managed existing shelters.

Traditional Housing

Housing and services designed to promote residential stability, increase skills, enhance self-determination and move people who are homeless to permanent housing within 24 months.

Needs

- Short term housing units and services.
- Respite housing for people with mental illness.

Strategies

- ✓ Seek private and public funds to develop transitional housing in Lawrence.
- ✓ Consider transitional housing needs when investing available funds.
- ✓ Endorse efforts to develop transitional housing in Lawrence.
- ✓ Secure more tenant based rental assistance.
- ✓ Encourage landlords to accept tenants who receive rental assistance.

Community Groups

- ❖ United Way
- ❖ Service Providers
- ❖ Neighborhood Associations

Permanent Housing

A variety of ownership and rental choices including permanent supportive housing arrangements.

Needs

- Low-income homebuyer and rental assistance.
- Programs to help sustain homeownership.
- Public and private policies that promote permanent housing for people with low income and people with disabilities.

Strategies

- ✓ Continue to invest funds for homebuyer assistance.
- ✓ Consider supportive service needs for low-income elderly and persons with disabilities when investing available funds.
- ✓ Continue to invest funds in rehabilitation, weatherization and emergency loans.
- ✓ Secure more tenant based rental assistance.
- ✓ Encourage landlords to accept tenants who receive rental assistance.
- ✓ Encourage landlords to accept tenants with low, stable incomes and good rental histories.

Revitalized Neighborhoods

- Continued revitalization in target neighborhoods.
- Continued environmental code enforcement.
- Education for homeowners and renters.

Strategies

- ✓ Promote neighborhood improvement.
- ✓ Improve existing housing stock.
- ✓ Encourage neighborhood associations.
- ✓ Define sidewalk fund procedures.
- ✓ Improve mobile homes and mobile home parks.
- ✓ Continue crime prevention.
- ✓ Insure that housing complies with the Uniform Housing Code.
- ✓ Favor mixed-income development.
- ✓ Meet American Disabilities Act and Fair Housing Act requirement.
- ✓ Support public/private partnerships.

Background

In August 1996, the four groups who advise the City on housing policy (Housing Advisory Council, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Committee, Practitioners Panel, and Community Development Block Grant Review Board) met jointly with City staff to develop consensus goals and priority. The groups recommended that the City adopt goals and make spending decisions based on the theme of helping each citizen of Lawrence **Step up to Better Housing**. Four categories of needs emerged: emergency housing, transitional housing, permanent housing and revitalized neighborhoods.

The groups believed that all citizens would benefit from a coordinated approach to housing. The potential gains include enhanced property values, stronger, safer neighborhoods and economic development resulting from investment. In the interim, the four groups have become three, (Housing Advisory Council and CDBG Advisory Committee), and they still make recommendations within this framework. The Strategy, used to frame Lawrence housing policies, is reviewed each year by the City Commission and is included in the Annual Update of the Consolidated Plan.

Lawrence City Commission

Erv Hodges, Mayor
Jim Henry, Vice Mayor
David Dunfield
Marty Kennedy
Mike Rundle

Participating Groups

HAND Advisory Committee

The eleven member HAND AC develops and proposes HAND strategy and policy and reviews Housing Code and Environmental Code appeals. In addition, they make recommendations to the City Commission on the allocation of CDBG and HOME funds.

Practitioner's Panel

The twenty-seven member Panel shares information on housing programs, services and needs and makes recommendations to the HAND Advisory Committee for carrying out strategy.

Community Development Block Grant Review Board

The GRB reviews and acts on housing rehabilitation request, including hearing appeals. The GRB has seven members

Housing and Neighborhood Development Department Staff

Staff works closely with the above three advisory groups, both as members and as resources to the groups. For additional information, please call 832-3108 for information.