

City of Lawrence
Outside Agency
Bi-annual Report
2016

Reports on activity should be submitted electronically to Danielle Buschkoetter, at dbuschkoetter@lawrenceks.org. Reports on activities from January 2016 to June 2016 are due on July 15th 2016. Cumulative reports on activities from January 2016 through December 2016 are due on February 15th 2017.

Agency Name: Ballard Community Services

Reporting Period (please check one):

☒ January - June
(deadline July 15)

☐ January – December
(deadline February 15)

1. Give a brief narrative of the activities that were funded with City funds over the reporting period checked above.

Funding to support ESC was included in the 2016 City of Lawrence Social Service Agency funding allocation in the amount of \$13,210. \$6,605 was distributed through the ESC program between January and June of 2016. ESC provides rent and utility assistance for Lawrence residents who are in imminent danger of being evicted or having essential utility services disconnected. ESC focuses on cases where short-term help can continue an overall pattern of self-sufficiency for the individual or family. These cases include families trying to maintain long-term housing and elderly on fixed incomes facing a one-time utility assistance need. Funds are distributed cooperatively between Penn House, Salvation Army, ECKAN, DCSS, and Willow. Each household is eligible for \$200 in a calendar year, \$600 maximum lifetime assistance.

2. Provide specific detail (and supportive documents, if needed) to demonstrate progress made toward your goals/objectives.

Through June 2016, we have assisted 73 households in maintaining their housing or utility service. This is a marked decrease in the number of households assisted due to our funding cut through the United Way. This makes the average amount of assistance per household \$175.08. Due to work schedules, hours of operation, and loss of phone service, not all applicants have been reached to verify their housing and utilities have remained stable. However, we have contacted the vast majority of recipients, and none of these households have reported losing their housing or utilities after receiving assistance. We will continue to reach out to the remaining households to ensure thorough reporting at year's end.

Due to staffing changes as a result of funding cuts, we no longer have case workers here at the Penn House to work with our clients. However, signing up for and attending a financial literacy class remains a requirement to receive financial assistance.

3. How have you impacted the citizens of Lawrence?

Being able to afford quality housing is a major concern for many Douglas County residents. 20% of households in Douglas County experience “Severe Housing Problems” (Out of Reach, 2012) defined as at least 1 of 4 housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, or lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities. The recent ECKAN Community Needs Assessment (2012), in a survey of Douglas County residents, found that 55.6% of average renters’ wages are spent paying rent, compared to 33.8% statewide. ECKAN partners selected “affordable, quality housing” as the single highest need for low-income people and families. “Paying utility bills” ranked in as the second highest scoring need among ECKAN partners. All provided statistics in above paragraph are referenced from “ECKAN Needs

Assessment Update, Published March 2013, The U.S. Dept. of Housing and Development, and The National Alliance to End Homelessness.

This program ensures that individuals receiving assistance will not fall into the danger of homelessness, which requires a far greater amount of financial resources to climb out of than the \$175.08 average assistance we help with.

4. What barriers, if any, have you encountered?

ESC sees a demand for emergency utility and rental assistance that far exceeds available resources. Currently, only about 10% of calls for assistance are able to be met by the ESC program. The need is further supported by the poverty levels observed in the county.

5. Review the line-item budget you provided in your application. How much of your allocation has been spent?

We have spent the entire \$6,605 provided on payments to ESC clients through June 2016. The remaining \$6,605 will also be spent entirely on ESC assistance as there is no longer a case manager to be paid out of the funding as there was last year. All case work is now handled by the Human Services Program Manager or referred to another local agency.