

Public Hearings of the Community Development Board
March 15, 2012

Board Members Present: Kamber Kelly, Emily Shaffer, Patt Leikam, Trent Currie, Cindy Sanders, Martha Sanford, Kathleen Candelaria

Board Members Excused: Fred Button

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Dina Billington-Harmon

Welcome / Introduction: The Community Development Board met for Public Hearings at its regular monthly meeting location in the 4th Floor Large Conference Room, Parmly Billings Library, 510 N. Broadway, Billings, Montana. Chair Kamber Kelly, called the public hearings to order at 9:00 a.m.

Public Comment: None.

CDBG Applicant Presentations:

- Mary Lou Affleck of **Rebuilding Together** was introduced and given the floor to speak about its application for funding. Rebuilding Together was organized in 2000 and it operates strictly through volunteers. Rebuilding Together is asking for \$10,000 to assist 3 to 5 families with repairs including windows, siding, doors, furnaces, water heaters, roofs, etc., depending upon the needs of the project. Receiving this grant will further Rebuilding Together's mission of preserving affordable housing.
- Sue Bailey, Program Manager, for the **Adult Resource Alliance (Formerly Yellowstone County Council on Aging), Minor Home Repair**, was introduced and given the floor to speak about its application for funding. Bea Ann Melichar and Joyce Hutzenbiler were also present. They are seeking \$5,000. Traditionally, they assist 30 to 40 low-income older (60 years of age or older) homeowners. The repairs include railings, handrails and grab bars, faucets and toilets, and door locks to address critical safety concerns. By assisting the elderly with such minor home repairs, it helps them to stay remain in their homes, safely. Accessibility ramps are not included in their repairs because other programs are available in the community to address those needs, but they may provide a nominal amount of funding (\$200-\$300) toward the construction of a ramp with another agency.
- Amber Field, Eligibility Specialist, with **Housing Authority of Billings (Security Deposit Assistance)** was introduced and given the floor to speak about its application for funding. They are asking for \$10,000. Last year they assisted 12 families, 34 people total. Seventy-five percent (75%) of those families (9) were homeless. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the families assisted were at or below 30% of our AMI. Average amount of security deposit assistance was \$385. The Security Deposit Assistance is a one-time grant program for low-income participants. It is a 50%/50% investment in that the recipient must provide 50% of the security deposit and the

assistance program provides the other 50%. It is a partnership between the landlord and Section 8. The Housing Authority makes at least one annual check on the home.

- Denise Armstrong, Executive Director, of **Big Sky Senior Services (Prevention of Elder Abuse)** was introduced and given the floor to speak about its application for funding. They are seeking \$30,000 and this will cover the cost of an additional 20 hr./wk. part-time employee (\$10,000/yr. over the next 3 years). Prevention of Elder Abuse program began with a coalition of people, including Adult Protective Services (APS) that recognized there was an increase in elder abuse situations arising in this community. After identifying this situation, this group of people wanted to establish a way to curtail and prevent elder abuse and exploitation which lead to the creation of Big Sky Senior Services. The program receives an average of 350 referrals on elder abuse every year. The program serves approximately 50 to 55 representative payee clients and respond to an average of 30 referrals per month. They have an ongoing waiting list for representative payee and case management services. The program's goal is to help clients remain in their homes by managing their money. All of their clients are 30% AMI or lower. With the additional staffing provided by this grant, Big Sky Senior Services would be able to address 5-10 clients on the waiting list with representative payee and case management services.
- Carlene Goodheart, Program Coordinator for Youth Employment and Training Program and the Alternative Education Program, with **District 7 HRDC (Future ForGED Training Center)**, was introduced and given the floor to speak about its application for funding. Barbara Perzinski was also present. They are seeking \$15,000. It is estimated that 84,000 individuals living in Montana do not have a GED or High School Diploma. HRDC has developed a referral-based program that prepares individuals to get their GED. The program began in 2009 and is free to all participants and provides one-on-one instruction. All participants in the program must complete their GED testing at the Lincoln Center. The program works with the most at-risk individuals in Yellowstone County (ages 16 to 80). There are similarities between the GED program at Garfield and HRDC's GED program in that they are GED preparation programs. All of the HRDC participants (100% of 22) have received their GEDs after completing the program. The program also tutors individuals to prepare for their written driving tests. HRDC has been recognized by the State of Montana as a "Best Practices" model for their education classroom setting. They received this recognition because HRDC assisted the State in passing a State measure for the first time since 2006. The first year of the grant HRDC would use \$10,000 to purchase technological equipment and software to prepare program participants to test using the electronic GED format. Currently GED testing is done with pencil and paper. However, in 2013 the GED testing will be converted to an electronic version nationwide. Additional costs will come with that change to the testing fees. GED testing fees will increase from the \$55 to \$250. So for years 2 and 3, HRDC would use \$2,500 of the remaining grant to off-set the costs of GED testing fees.

- Judy Stewart, VP Integrated Health Services, for **Yellowstone Health Partnership (Medication Assistance Program)**, was introduced and given the floor to speak about its application for funding. They are seeking \$27,000. The program began in 1994 because a community assessment deemed prescription medication assistance as the number one concern. The program acts as an intermediary between the patient and the pharmaceutical companies for free or low-cost prescription medication by providing an advocate. This is a program for low-income, uninsured individuals and they provide assistance to approximately 260 clients per month. The assistance the patients receive aids with improving their health status. The demand for the Medication Assistance Program's services has increased by 26% in the past 4 years and staff has decreased by 28%. The number of new clients seen each month is approximately 50 to 60. The funding would be used to off-set the costs of providing the advocacy services.
- Debbie Richert, Executive Director, of **Young Families Early Head Start (Building a Better Tomorrow)**, was introduced and given the floor to speak about its application for funding. They are seeking \$30,000. The program assists and supports low-income, primarily teen, parents and prenatal parents in pursuit of their educational goals and the development of their parenting skills, while providing quality child care for their infants and toddlers (up to and including age 3), including those with disabilities. About 75% of its funding comes through the Early Head Start grant. According to that grant, a minimum of 90% of the families they serve must be at or below the federal poverty guidelines and must serve at least a minimum of 10% of the children at the center have to have developmental delays or identified special needs. Last year 98% of the families they served were at or below the federal poverty guidelines.
- Erin Lambert, Program Manager, of **YWCA Gateway House, Domestic and Sexual Violence Victim Services**, was introduced and given the floor to speak about its application for funding. They are seeking \$30,000. The facility has been in its current location since 1998, but the program has been in existence since 1987. The YWCA Gateway House is a temporary emergency shelter (residing up to 12 weeks) for women and their children who are fleeing intimate partner violence in the Billings area and neighboring communities. The shelter can house up to 35 women and their children at any given time and is staffed 24 hours a day. All basic needs are provided during their stay. Support groups, parenting skills and nutrition classes are offered. HIV testing and education is also available. The program provides legal advocacy and assistance with applications for Orders of Protection and provides a support system for women who are involved in court cases. There is a 24-hour crisis hotline. Bus passes are provided for client transportation.

Meeting adjourned 1:00 p.m.