

## **Other Harris County OHED Actions**

### **Fostering Decent Housing**

To foster decent, safe, and affordable housing, OHED will continue to collaborate and partner with local non-profit housing developers, for-profit builders and the residents of Harris County to measure the needs, discuss the issues and find solutions to problems of the Harris County housing market. Through these programs, OHED will work to foster and maintain decent and affordable housing for low- to moderate-income residents of Harris County through homeownership and rehabilitation programs.

OHED will promote the transition of low- to moderate-income families to self-sufficiency through funding support of homeownership programs. In addition, through escrow accounts and other opportunities provided by the Housing County Housing Authority Family Self-Sufficiency program, Section 8 families and individuals are able to move toward becoming self-sufficient, thereby increasing the availability of rental assistance opportunities for at-risk families.

In an effort to remove barriers to affordable housing, OHED will use the following strategies:

- (1) Promote and support affordable housing opportunities, including downpayment assistance programs, new construction, minor home repair, and rehabilitation of affordable housing units for the purpose of increasing the availability of housing to the very-low, low- and moderate-income persons.
- (2) Develop a Housing Resource Center that will be an information clearinghouse for those interested in the search of affordable housing initiatives in the OHED service area.
- (3) Promote the development of collaborations and partnerships of both non-profit and for-profit builders, developers, and other interested parties for the purpose of increasing the capacity for the development of affordable housing in the OHED service area.
- (4) Promote and assist in the development of applications for additional funds for the use in development of affordable housing in the OHED service area, including Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Homeownership Zones.
- (5) Promote and provide technical assistance for the review and revision of land-use regulations in cooperative cities that may present an obstacle in the development of affordable housing.

#### *HOME Tenant Based Rental Assistance*

The ability to which the housing market is responding to household income needs is another factor affecting housing availability. To adequately meet the housing needs of all households, housing products must be available at a wide variety of prices. Due to current market conditions and strong higher-end housing demands, housing development in Harris County primarily meets the needs of higher income households. For reasons such as perception and low profit margins, the development and availability of low-income/affordable housing is not adequate to meet the needs of the low- and moderate-income population.

There are approximately 4,656 multi-family, renter-occupied low-income housing units available in Harris County supported through federal and state programs. These units are supported by HUD's Section 8 Project Based Housing and the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. In addition to these units the Harris County Section 8 Program assists approximately 1,455 individuals and families with housing certificates and vouchers for housing units located throughout Harris County. In total, approximately eight percent of the multi-family housing stock is available specifically for low-income persons in the service area. The total number of affordable housing units available to low and moderate-income persons is not expected to decrease over the next 5 years. Five out of six low income families who qualify for government housing assistance do not receive it because of the shortage of subsidized housing.

## **Evaluating/Reducing Lead Based Paint Hazards**

The Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services Department will administer the Harris County Lead Hazard Control Program. This program tests for the presence of lead-based paint and provides abatement services to low- and moderate-income households. In addition to assessment and abatement services for lead-based paint, the department also administers a Lead Poisoning Prevention and Childhood Blood Surveillance Program, which screens and tests children under the age of 6 years for the presence of high blood/lead levels. This program operates in conjunction with the Lead Hazard Control Program by referring households with high blood/lead level children for assessment and abatement services to remove the health hazard, which is most likely contaminated paint in the housing unit.

In accordance to HUD's lead-based paint reduction regulations, OHED began implementing its Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction strategy in the fall of 2000. As a result, subrecipient training includes information regarding implementation, documentation and reporting on all housing activities that are affected by changes in regulations.

## **Anti-Poverty**

### Harris County Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies

Due to its unique nature, the urban county, which is largely the result of the sprawl of a large metropolitan city, suffers the ills of urban decline but benefits from the least federal programs offered to urban areas. This unique problem emphasizes the need for the urban county to be creative in solving problems for low- and moderate-income areas, which, in Harris County's case, are many in number but far between in distance. Harris County's response to assisting its low- and moderate-income communities is the development of the Harris County 2000 program. The main purpose of Harris County 2000, a neighborhood level planning process, is to stimulate the depressed HUD target areas in the county through a grassroots, community-oriented planning process. The ultimate result of the planning process being the creation of an action plan specifically tailored to the community and which identifies other resources available to assist in meeting the needs of the community.

Harris County 2000 has three phases: 1) awareness and preparation, 2) actual development of the plan, which consists of meetings to garner community input, and 3) implementation of the plan. Through the planning process, community residents guide direction and address problems critical to improving the quality of life.

## **Benefits of Neighborhood Planning for OHED target communities**

Communities that are a part of OHED's target neighborhoods slated for redevelopment gain a number of benefits from the planning process. Once a plan is developed, the community will receive priority consideration for Federal funding from OHED, given that the project is consistent with goals and objectives identified during the neighborhood planning process. The process pulls together various forces in the community that promotes positive community development.

The plan can be used as a basis for obtaining funding from federal, state and local governments, as well as private foundations, since it represents a well thought out, clear-cut strategy for redeveloping the area with a comprehensive focus. (Most governmental entities fund organizations that have a strategic plan that incorporates the overall benefit of funding individual projects.) Lastly, organizations can partner with precincts to enhance local infrastructure development projects given that the precinct will coordinate capital improvement plans with OHED's planning efforts.

### Typical Planning Process

The typical planning process for neighborhood is as follows:

- Collect data and factual information on target area
- Identify issues and obstacles to neighborhood development
- Formulate goals, objectives and strategies to arrest negative patterns in these areas
- Develop final plan document
- Create neighborhood based Community Development Corporation (CDC) to implement revitalization activities

OHED has proposed to complete community plans for one target area per year. As outlined in the 2003-2007 Consolidated Plan. During PY03, OHED intends to continue to develop and submit to HUD a Community Revitalization Strategy for the community of McNair/Linus. OHED is also continuing to provide technical assistance to the McNair CDC during its first years of incorporation.

## **Developing Institutional Structure/Enhancing Coordination**

### Coordination of Efforts, Institutional Change

Over the course of the past year the Harris County Commissioners Court has streamlined Harris County's HUD operations as a means of concentrating on the mission of community development, strengthening the administrative and financial oversight, and resolving all outstanding issues.

Over the next year, OHED will continue to maintain and improve the coordination of its internal divisions, as well as communication and coordination with other service providers, local governments and other county departments.

## **Affirmative Marketing; Minority/Women's Business Outreach**

All subrecipients of OHED contractually must follow the affirmative marketing procedures and requirements in accordance with 24 C.F.R. § 92.351 of the HOME Program, for HOME-assisted housing containing 5 or more housing units. The affirmative marketing steps consist of actions to provide information and otherwise attract eligible persons from all racial, ethnic, and gender groups in the housing market area to the available housing. OHED will annually assess the affirmative marketing program to determine the success of affirmative marketing actions and any necessary corrective actions.

## **Affirmative Action**

### 1. Approved Plan

The OHED Subrecipient agrees that it shall be committed to carry out pursuant to the Grantee's specifications an Affirmative Action Program in keeping with the principles as provided in President's Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1965. The Grantee shall provide Affirmative Action guidelines to the Subrecipient to assist in the formulation of such program. The Subrecipient shall submit a plan for an Affirmative Action Program for approval prior to the award of funds.

### 2. W/MBE

The OHED Subrecipient will use its best efforts to afford minority- and women-owned business enterprises the maximum practicable opportunity to participate in the performance of this contract. As used in this contract, the term "minority and women business enterprise" means a business at least fifty-one (51) percent owned and controlled by minority group members or women. For the purpose of this definition, "minority group members" are Afro-Americans, Spanish-speaking, Spanish surnamed or Spanish-heritage Americans, Asian Americans, and American Indians. The OHED Subrecipient may rely on written representations by businesses regarding their status as minority and women business enterprises in lieu of an independent investigation.

## **Harris County's Affirmative Marketing Policy And Procedures**

OHED has adopted policies and procedures regarding affirmative marketing for housing containing five or more HOME-assisted units.

This affirmative marketing policy pertains to all Office of Housing and Economic Development (OHED) and all Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) receiving HOME program funds for HUD-assisted housing containing five or more units. OHED will annually assess the affirmative marketing program to determine its success and will take any necessary corrective actions.

The affirmative marketing requirements and procedures include the following:

1. OHED will use the Equal Housing Opportunity logotype and/or slogan in all press releases or notices to the public or solicitations pertaining to housing of more than five units.
2. OHED will notify the local Houston Community Housing Resource Board on an annual basis of its commitment to an affirmative marketing program.

3. OHED will require owners of HUD-assisted housing of five or more units to adhere to the following:
  - a) When advertising or listing vacancies, owners must use major and community newspapers, community contacts and Equal Housing Opportunity logotypes or slogan. Owners must also display the Fair Housing poster in high traffic areas on the premises of the assisted housing.
  - b) Owners must perform special outreach to persons in the housing market area who are not likely to apply for the housing without special outreach. Targets of special outreach could include community centers, places of worship, employment centers, housing counseling agencies, etc.
  - c) OHED will assess the results of efforts taken by the owners to affirmatively market the housing units. Copies of all materials used to affirmatively market the housing and records describing actions taken by the owner to affirmatively market the housing must be submitted to the OHED or on a quarterly basis. The quarterly report must also include information on families residing within the property. The family information must include the following: the number of units and monthly rent (utilities included) by bedroom size; number of tenants remaining in place; size of household and for each head of household, age, race, sex, and gender.

OHED will assess the success of the affirmative marketing efforts. If the affirmative marketing efforts do not result in attracting eligible persons from all racial, ethnic and gender-groups in the housing market area, OHED and will determine the necessary corrective actions. Owners that fail to comply with affirmative marketing requirements will face the possibility that housing assistance payments will be abate until corrective action is taken. If the owner fails to take corrective action in a timely manner, the remainder of the rehabilitation loan will be due and payable upon demand.

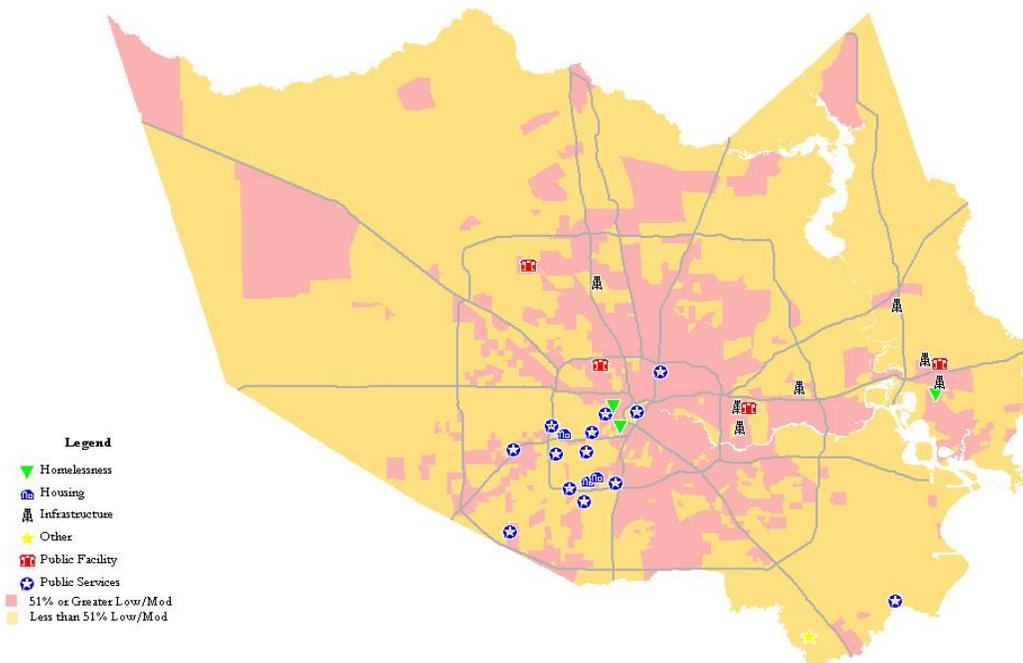
## Geographic Distribution

### Concentration of Low- and Moderate-Income Persons

Harris County defines a concentration of low- and moderate-income persons as a block group in which at least 51 percent or more of the total population is low- and moderate-income according to HUD guidelines. Forty-eight areas within the county meet this criterion, and OHED has designated these areas as targeted areas for community development in Harris County. Priority consideration is given to projects that impact the target areas of Harris County, particularly those that provide local impact, such as infrastructure projects and community centers. Furthermore, 15 of 33 incorporated cities within Harris County have signed cooperative agreements with the county, and also submit applications for funding.

For PY03, 41 projects were selected to specifically meet priority needs in seven of the 39 unincorporated target areas. Additionally, two of the fifteen cooperative cities are to be assisted with meeting priority needs for low- and moderate-income persons. Cooperative city projects range from public facility planning to infrastructure improvement projects. Map 2 illustrates all proposed projects in relation to the low- and moderate-income areas of the county.

Map 2 Proposed Projects and Low- and Moderate-Income Areas



Concentration of Minorities

Harris County defines a concentration of racial minorities as a census tract in which 30 percent or more of the total population is non-white. Minority concentration and low- and moderate-income areas coincide within Harris County. Primarily, minorities are concentrated within the incorporated areas. Map 3 illustrates locations of proposed projects in relation to areas of minority concentration.

Map 3 Proposed Projects and Areas of Minority Concentration

