

CityFocus

highlighting issues important to Dubuque residents

// Spring 2014 //

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A Better Way of Living

In This Issue

- > Sustainable Living
- > Neighborhood Revitalization
- > Community Development
- > Safe and Healthy Homes

THE CITY OF
DUBUQUE
Masterpiece on the Mississippi

DUBUQUE CITY COUNCIL



ROY D. BUOL
MAYOR



RIC W. JONES
AT-LARGE



DAVID T. RESNICK
AT-LARGE



KEVIN J. LYNCH
1ST WARD



KARLA A. BRAIG
2ND WARD



JOYCE E. CONNORS
3RD WARD



LYNN V. SUTTON
4TH WARD

The Dubuque City Council meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Monday of the month in the Council Chambers on the second floor of the Historic Federal Building at 350 W. 6th Street.

www.cityofdubuque.org/citycouncil

CITY MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Dubuque is at a time of unprecedented prosperity, and oddly enough, when the rest of the country still struggles to come out of the "Great Recession." The Dubuque Metropolitan Statistical Area exceeded 60,000 job (60,900) for the first time ever, compared to 37,600 working in 1983. Dubuque's unemployment was 3.5% in November 2013, half the national average, and the gross domestic product (GDP) rate of growth at 5.1% is more than twice the national average and the 17th best rate of any city in the country.

Still, there are some people who need temporary help as they work to move up the income ladder. There are also the elderly and disabled who need long-term help.

This issue of City Focus highlights the ongoing transformation of the City of Dubuque Housing and Community Development Department as well as the programs and services it provides. The programs serve a critical role in improving the lives of people living in poverty and, by extension, help make Dubuque a sustainable community in which everyone can do well. This is accomplished through engaging people across class barriers, expanding human and social capital, integrating approaches to housing interventions, and building community partnerships.

Mayor Roy D. Buol and the City Council have set forth goals and priorities that will lead to a Sustainable Dubuque. The Housing and Community Development Department is supporting the Mayor and the City Council's emphasis on moving families out of poverty, creating economic opportunity, and keeping the neighborhoods healthy and safe. The City's goal is to create a model program through neighborhood revitalization, the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, the "Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin'-by World" educational experience, and the Circles Initiative.

These programs promote economic empowerment and assist families in creating their own personal paths out of poverty, expanding opportunities, making connections, and eliminating barriers in the community that make it difficult for families to thrive. The success of DubuqueWorks, Project HOPE (Helping Our People Excel), the HEART Program, Bridges Out of Poverty, Every Child I Every Promise, Opportunity Dubuque, Green and Healthy Homes, the Third Grade Reading Initiative, and the Drop-out Reengagement Center, are part of the transition.

The programs and initiatives of the Housing Department, with its many City and community partners, are being designed to transform homes, lives and neighborhoods to the realization of greater possibilities. Alvin Nash, our Housing and Community Development Director since July 2012, is new to Dubuque and has brought a fresh perspective. Alvin believes in total accountability, respect, and fairness as guiding principles to do business. The new housing slogan says: "Dubuque@Home: A Better Way of Thinking Leads to a Better Way of Living." I fully support Alvin's approach. We have a tremendous staff of dedicated and experienced people who are committed to assisting residents improve their lives.

Thank you for your support of our efforts to better serve you and our entire community. ✚

Sincerely,



// Michael C. Van Milligen //



A MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

I am extremely proud of the programs and staff of the Housing and Community Development Department. It gives us a chance to make a tremendous contribution to the community by improving the lives of residents and the sustainability of our community. The goal of the programs and services administered by this department is to create a system where people become motivated and uplifted by meeting the challenges of everyday living.

Dubuque@Home is the name of our new flagship initiative, developed by Housing and Community Development staff, designed to use our resources and services to provide just the right opportunities for people to prosper. Dubuque@Home offers paths for families and individuals to become self-sufficient because self-sufficiency is the goal of all people, self-sufficiency is the American way of life, and self-sufficiency is Sustainable Dubuque.

The management of the programs and services offered through the Housing and Community Development Department is a business that we take very seriously because it is an opportunity to do all the right things for all the right reasons. We do not believe in a “free lunch.” Everyone who participates in our programs accepts responsibility and everyone is held accountable for their behavior. There is zero tolerance for actions that do not contribute to the overall health of our community.

Dubuque@Home is an initiative facing many challenges, the biggest of which is making sure that no family or segment of our community is left behind as we contribute to a Sustainable Dubuque. We are strong believers in the human spirit and that there is nothing more satisfying than to hear someone who previously had very little inspiration and confidence say they love what they do and cannot wait to move forward to contribute to their family and the community. ✚



// Alvin Nash //

Housing & Community
Development Director

DUBUQUE OFFERS UPWARD MOBILITY

The Equality of Opportunity Project, a study conducted by researchers at Harvard University and the University of California-Berkeley, shows that children raised in Dubuque are among the most likely in the U.S. to move upwards into a higher income class.

The study found that children born to parents in the nation's lowest income category had a 17.9 % chance of being in the highest income category before reaching age 30. This is well above the national average of 10.6% and, of the 741 metropolitan commuting areas examined, places Dubuque in the top 60. When compared to similar-sized metro areas, Dubuque ranks first out of 58 areas.



DUBUQUE@HOME is a strategic initiative with programs and services contributing to our sustainable community.

We promote and support individuals, families, and healthy homes with sustainable living. This initiative provides neighborhoods with opportunities for growth. It serves as an economic engine for the community. Dubuque@Home is a better way of thinking that symbolizes a holistic approach to community living.

Through our work in revitalizing neighborhoods, assisting families in buying and preserving their homes, and creating safe, affordable rental housing, the City of Dubuque Housing and Community Development Department strives to enhance the quality of life for families throughout our city.

We are proud of our work and appreciate an opportunity to present what we do. Our goal is to invest in change through community development because everyone should have a chance to share in the prosperity Dubuque has to offer. We invest in housing stability and economic security to help families save and build assets to move up the economic ladder and create opportunity for generations of Dubuque area families to live and grow in a sustainable community.

A sustainable community helps people recognize and develop their abilities and potential to organize themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share. Our policies support the establishment of strong communities that control and use assets to promote social justice and help improve the quality of community life. It also enables community and public agencies to work together to improve the quality of life in Dubuque. As a strategy to implement a sustainable community, we offer Dubuque@Home, a new day for our community.



Affordable Housing must be **SUSTAINABLE** Affordable Housing



An expanded definition of “affordable housing” is necessary to avoid the narrow interpretations of the word “affordable” to mean only one thing: low-income. Affordable means more than just the costs of a housing unit; it means the use or function of the unit, the emotional impact, and the sustainability of the housing unit. In order for Dubuque to meet its diverse housing needs, we are developing an agenda for housing that is in proportion to current demands, as well as expected growth and economic impact.

Dubuque has an opportunity to be the first community to define affordable housing as it relates to the entire city population. As the City Council sets goals and priorities for economic development and sustainability, Dubuque's ability to meet the housing needs of the entire population, from workforce to retirement and everything in between, is critical to our future.

The Housing and Community Development Department has adopted the term “Sustainable Affordable Housing.” We define it as housing that is well-designed, responsibly owned, professionally managed, and connected to services and amenities. Sustainable Affordable Housing creates dignity and opportunity for working families, seniors, and those with disabilities or special needs.

Affordable housing costs are generally accepted to consume between 25% and 40% of a family or person's gross income being spent on housing costs i.e. rent/ mortgage payment, insurance, taxes, and utilities. Other measurements of Sustainable Affordable Housing are based on the average medium income or AMI as it applies to Dubuque's housing needs. There are at least six categories of Sustainable Affordable Housing:

- market rate,
- workforce,
- subsidized,
- special needs,
- unsubsidized, and
- retirement.



As Dubuque continues to grow, there is a need to provide housing to an expanding population. There are three main reasons for housing growth in Dubuque. First, existing businesses are expanding and hiring more employees. Second, our low cost of living attracts people and affects how they view the community as a great place to relocate for retirement. Third, new companies relocating to the community need housing for their employees.

The best approach to address the challenge of housing growth is strategic planning which includes working with our partners such as Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, Dubuque Main Street, Washington Neighborhood Development Corporation, Community Housing Initiatives, private developers, neighborhood associations, and others. Dubuque's Housing and Community Development Department is preparing for the expansion by utilizing our Community Development program and the City's Economic Development department to facilitate a strategic plan. Sustainable Affordable Housing is in direct alignment with City Council's goals and priorities.

WHERE YOU'LL WANT TO LIVE IN 2032

A 2012 Gallup analysis examined 13 forward-looking metrics encompassing economic, workplace, and community factors as well as personal choices that might predict future livability. Results showed that the West North Central region of the U.S. (Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota) is the region poised for the brightest future and likely to be one of the best areas to live in 20 years. Why?

- Workers in this area are likely to be employed full time for an employer in the type of good jobs associated with high GDP.
- Residents have the highest economic confidence in the nation.
- Most likely to report easy access to clean, safe water — one of the critical resource challenges of the future.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

The Family and Assisted Housing programs within the Housing and Community Development Department focus mainly on the Housing Choice Voucher programs, Family Self-Sufficiency programs, and the Circles Initiative.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Housing Choice Voucher Program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. This federally funded program is administered through the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department. Eligibility is limited to U.S. citizens and specified categories of non-citizens who have eligible immigration status, and is based on income.

Housing staff determine the amount of housing assistance payment to the property owner based upon the family's income. The average amount of assisted housing benefits per household paid by HUD is \$367 for each unit per month. Generally, tenants pay 30-40% of their monthly adjusted income for rent and utilities.

Housing staff educate and counsel program participants to assist them in improving family situations by reviewing progress, problems, and successes; obtaining housing stability; and through community partnerships.

Each year, staff reexamine the income and household composition of the assisted individual or family. This reexamination determines continued eligibility and establishes the housing assistance payment.

If you have trouble affording your rent, contact the Housing and Community Development Department to find out if you qualify for assistance.

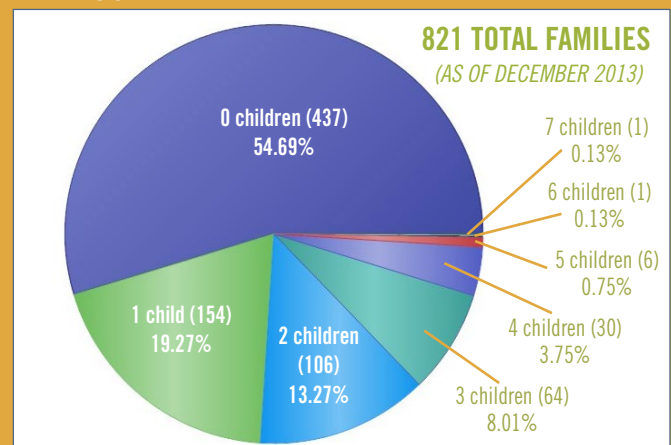


Dubuque Housing Choice Voucher Program Households

76% have an annual gross income under \$15,000
70% are 1- or 2-person households
54% are elderly and/or disabled



NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD



Audrey's Story

In addition to the tenant-based voucher program, the Housing Choice Voucher Program includes two additional types of assistance: the Project-based Voucher Program and the Voucher Homeownership Program.

The **PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER PROGRAM** includes 17 units at the 70-unit The Rose of Dubuque affordable assisted-living facility at 3390 Lake Ridge Drive in Dubuque. These vouchers are for the benefit of low-income seniors and disabled persons who need to reside at an assisted-living facility.

The **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM** is a program funded by HUD to assist first-time homebuyers. Participants must meet minimum income requirements and be employed full-time (not applicable for elderly and disabled families), complete homeownership counseling sessions, be financially capable to provide at least 3% of the purchase price as a down payment and qualify for an approved loan. Since 2002, 21 Housing Choice Voucher families and Family Self-Sufficiency families have moved onto homeownership.



The **MODERATE REHABILITATION PROGRAM** provides project-based rental assistance for low-income families. Families residing in these units pay 30% of their adjusted income for rent and the difference is paid by HUD to the owners of the rental units.

The **SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** (Shelter Plus Care Program) provides rental assistance in connection with supportive services for homeless persons with disabilities. The City of Dubuque contracts with Project Concern, a nonprofit organization, to lease units, provide case management, and ensure participants engage in supportive services.

In April 2012, I wrote a letter that ended up changing my life. I wrote a letter to Habitat for Humanity.

My family moved to Dubuque from Cuba City, Wis., when I was young. My parents always tried to do the best they could for me. Even with all their love, we struggled financially.

We moved three times growing up and it was hard. I had to switch schools and lost friends every time we moved. I graduated high school in 2008 and was married a year later. My husband and I moved to Arizona where I started college. My son, Payton, was born in January 2010, and my husband left us shortly after he was born.

There I was, living in Arizona, a new, single-mother, determined to finish school to give something to Payton. I graduated in May of 2010 and moved back home.

I got an apartment in July of 2011 with help from the Housing Choice Voucher Program and signed up for Family Self-Sufficiency. I meet with Housing Department staff regularly for support to meet my goals to budget, save money, fix my credit, and manage my home and family.

I work and enjoy my job, but I wanted more. I wanted to own a home. I met with Erica in Housing, and we started working on a homeownership plan, and in a few months, I wrote that letter to Habitat for Humanity.

On April 13, 2012, I listened to the best voicemail. My application to Habitat for Humanity had been accepted and my home would be built! I was so excited! I was going to have a house.

I spent every Saturday I had off work with the people from St. Columbille's working on my house. I learned so much -- from painting, to drywall, and siding. I learned how to be part of a team. My team is part of my community, and I learned how the community can come together to build more than a house. My community built me a home!

(Excerpts from a thank-you letter written to the Housing and Community Development Department)

DID YOU KNOW?

In the last year, over \$3.6 million was reinvested in the community through housing assistance payments.

During the past year, 153 families participated in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY (FSS) is a HUD program for Housing Choice Voucher Program participants. The program encourages communities to develop local strategies to help voucher families obtain employment that will lead to economic independence and self-sufficiency. The City of Dubuque is expanding its Family Self-Sufficiency Program by incorporating and including the Circles® Initiative programs, which promote **economic empowerment** and assist families in creating their own personal paths out of poverty, expanding opportunities, making connections, and eliminating barriers within the community and their families.

The City of Dubuque and the head of each participating family enter into a five-year FSS contract of participation that specifies the rights and responsibilities of both parties, as well as goals and services for each family. HUD requires that two goals be met through FSS, the first of which is to **seek and maintain suitable employment**. The second is that all members of the household be free of cash welfare for 12 consecutive months prior to

graduating the program. Participants are able to set other goals according to their personal plans and ambitions. An interest-bearing FSS escrow account is established for each eligible participating family. Families earn escrow if their portion of the monthly rent is increased due to an increase in the households' earned income. The escrow is credited to this account monthly during the term of the contract. Once the family completes the contract, the balance of the escrow account is paid to the head of the family. Most participants complete their contracts within two and half years.

In 2013, three City of Dubuque FSS coordinators worked with **153 families**, meeting monthly to provide support services including financial and homeownership counseling, job search and retention training, and resource referral to prepare them for economic self-sufficiency, including the possibility of homeownership.



"Circles has made me feel more empowered and more connected to the community." *Amy, Circle Leader*

"Circles has given me the many different resources I was looking for. For example, I had the goal of continuing my education, and I'm proud to say that I'm currently enrolled as a student." *Shantae, Circle Leader*

"There are many great opportunities in Dubuque, but Circles is as good as it gets." *Bob, Ally*



The Circles Initiative is part of an innovative national movement that connects volunteers and community leaders to families wanting to make the **journey out of poverty**. Volunteer Allies help families break the cycle of poverty by **sharing their time and friendship**. There are barriers that keep even the most motivated from achieving prosperity, but Circles breaks down these barriers by **expanding opportunity and support for families as they create their own paths to stability**. Circles encourages growth from people of all financial classes and engages the community as a whole, so we can work together to create deep and lasting change in Dubuque.

We believe in the power of individuals working together, and the notion that

WE CAN END POVERTY... ONE FRIENDSHIP AT A TIME.

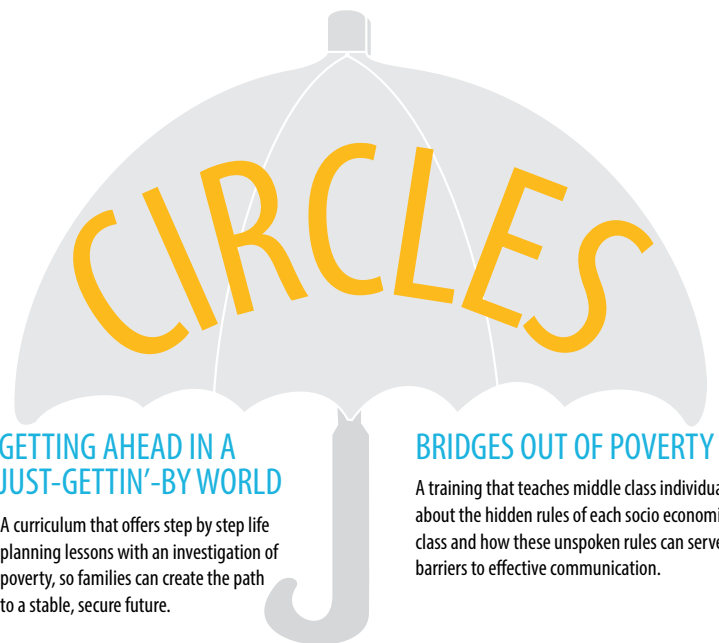


How Circles Works

If you didn't grow up in poverty, you may be unaware of the "hidden rules" that govern many aspects of our lives and how these unspoken rules can keep people in poverty. **Bridges Out of Poverty** trainings teach middle- and upper-class individuals about how these rules can serve as barriers to effective communication.

Those interested in becoming an **Ally** to support someone who wants to get out of poverty go through Bridges training to help them build strong, healthy connections with Circles participants.

Circles also sponsors a 16-20 week curriculum called **Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' by World** that offers life-planning lessons for individuals interested in creating a more stable, secure future for their family. Individuals graduate from this class to become **Circle Leaders**. These Leaders put their plans into action, with the support of 2-5 volunteer Allies. The group works to achieve goals, volunteer in the community, and assist in the planning and organizing of Circles, all while building friendships along the way.



GETTING AHEAD IN A JUST-GETTIN'-BY WORLD

A curriculum that offers step by step life planning lessons with an investigation of poverty, so families can create the path to a stable, secure future.

BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

A training that teaches middle class individuals about the hidden rules of each socio economic class and how these unspoken rules can serve as barriers to effective communication.

WEEKLY COMMUNITY MEETINGS

This is where it all comes together!
Once a week, Circles members come together to build friendship and gather support as they work toward their goals.

Project HOPE, a partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, and Northeast Iowa Community College, is designed to serve as a catalyst that helps service providers, employers, and job seekers connect to create opportunity for long-term employment. To understand how Project HOPE connects with the Housing and Community Development Department, consider Stacy's story. Stacy is a single mother who admits some past indiscretions left her in a situation where she was unable to support herself. In May of 2011, Stacy had been receiving housing assistance for six years and had decided it was time for a change.

She joined the Family Self-Sufficiency Program and set some goals and received support from her Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator to move forward. By the end of the year, Stacy graduated from Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-by World, an initiative of Project HOPE. After Getting Ahead, Stacy moved on to another of Project HOPE's programs, Opportunity Dubuque, which connects workers to training offered by Northeast Iowa Community College and connects employers with skilled workers. Stacy finished a CNC training program offered through Opportunity Dubuque and not long after landed a full-time job paying a good wage. For the first time, she is earning enough to support herself and envisions a future free from rental assistance. Throughout Stacy's journey, she took the time to stay connected with her Family Self-Sufficiency coordinator. At the same time, her coordinator was staying connected with Project HOPE — making sure opportunities for education, training, and employment are accessible to people just like Stacy who are ready to make a change, but just need a little HOPE.



Neighborhood REVITALIZATION



// Mural at 18th & Washington Streets //

"I tell everyone about how I purchased my first home at 61 years old. It's like brand new! If I were renting, it would cost double to have a place like this and now this is ALL mine.

The Rehab staff was not going to let me get in over my head; the staff was not going to set me up to fail. That was very important.

I'm very excited about the Bee Branch project in my backyard and how wonderful it's going to be. I'm hoping to help build the community in my new neighborhood."

Judie Root, Bee Branch
Neighborhood homeowner



// Judie Root, the proud new owner of a Bee Branch neighborhood home //

Neighborhood Revitalization staff assist Dubuque homeowners and rental property owners in rehabilitating their properties to meet housing code regulations and rehabilitation standards along with weatherization, beautification, accessibility, and lead-based paint removal activities. Federal, state, and local funds are utilized for rehabilitation of properties to revitalize neighborhoods and create affordable housing for new and existing homeowners and renters.

Staff facilitate projects ranging from minor home improvements to large-scale housing rehabilitation to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood and assist new homebuyers in acquiring homes and existing homeowners in rehabilitating their properties. Neighborhood Revitalization staff also facilitate the rehabilitation, relocation, and, if necessary, deconstruction of derelict/abandoned properties.

Neighborhood Revitalization programs increase community and homeowner pride, foster relationships between residents, and increase the taxable value of properties through renovation. Program and service offerings include:

Bee Branch Creek Homes

The City purchased 10 properties in the 2200-2300 block of Washington Street as part of the construction of the Bee Branch Creek Restoration and Gateway Project. The homes are being historically renovated and resold as single-family homes to mixed-income homebuyers with purchase incentives offered. After restorations are completed, the homes are sold by local realtors. The result is an increase in homeownership in the neighborhood while reducing the number of vacant houses. Seven of the properties have been sold and others will be listed as they are completed.

First-Time Homebuyer Program

This program provides a \$5,000 no-interest loan to income-eligible homebuyers for down-payment assistance. All loans are repaid over a maximum 13-year term. Any single-family or owner-occupied duplex property located within the city limits is eligible. These funds help decrease the mortgage amount for first-time homebuyers.

HOME Workshop

The City offers this workshop to help promote homeownership. Classes consist of learning about City programs, financial solutions, basic banking tips and mortgage information, and energy efficiency. Since 2010, 132 participants have received certificates of completion and 51 have become first-time homebuyers.

Homeowner Rehabilitation Program

This program provides low-interest loans of up to \$25,000 to income-qualified applicants to improve conditions of owner-occupied, single-family homes and duplexes. To be eligible, the property must be located within the city limits and there are income guidelines for participation.

*The house we bought
became a home to us.*



// Before //



// After //

“The rehabilitation project turned my house from a mismatched mess into a place I am truly proud to call my own. After the work started, the praise from those passing by was constant and I still have people stopping just to tell me how nice it looks and how much it has improved the area.”

~ Kim Rennison,
Washington Neighborhood homeowner

Home Repair Program

This program provides loans of up to \$5,000 to income-qualified applicants to improve conditions of their owner-occupied, single family or duplex home at 0% interest. Several exterior and interior repairs are eligible. Call for details.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program

The City received \$440,000 in Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds (NSP) to acquire vacant/abandoned or foreclosed properties, restore/renovate them, and then resell them to income-qualified homebuyers. To date, seven properties have been sold and one remains for sale. More properties may become available.

The following programs are intended for the Washington Neighborhood. Visit www.cityofdubuque.org/neighborhoodrevitalization for a map of the area.

Washington Neighborhood Homebuyer Program

This down-payment assistance program provides up to \$15,000 or 20% of the purchase price of a home/property in the Washington Neighborhood. Five thousand dollars is forgiven after five years of occupancy and the remainder is due upon sale of the property. There are no income guidelines for participation in this program.

Washington Neighborhood Row Houses

This rehabilitation project was completed and received the Ken Kringle Historic Preservation Award in 2012. Five of the six units located at 1767-1795 Washington Street have been sold, and one sale is pending. Up to \$40,000 in financial incentives are available to income-qualified buyers.

Washington Neighborhood Homeowner Rehabilitation Program

This program provides up to \$25,000 to improve conditions of owner-occupied, single-family homes or duplexes. No income guidelines apply. Five thousand dollars is forgiven after five years; \$10,000 is due upon sale of home; and \$10,000 is loaned at \$42/month with 0% interest for 20 years.

For additional information on any of these programs or activities, please call 563.589.4239, email kneyen@cityofdubuque.org, or visit www.cityofdubuque.org/neighborhoodrevitalization.



What does
HOMEOWNERSHIP
mean to you?

Peace of mind

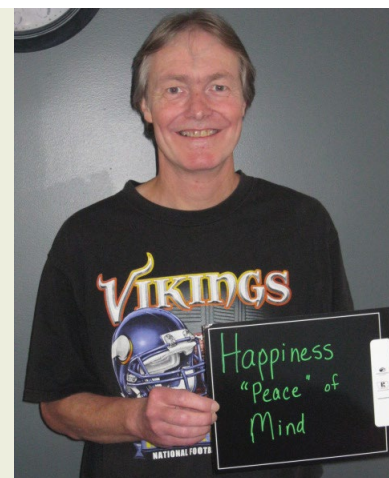
Growing roots!

Living the
American Dream

Happiness

Home sweet home

Being part of the
community

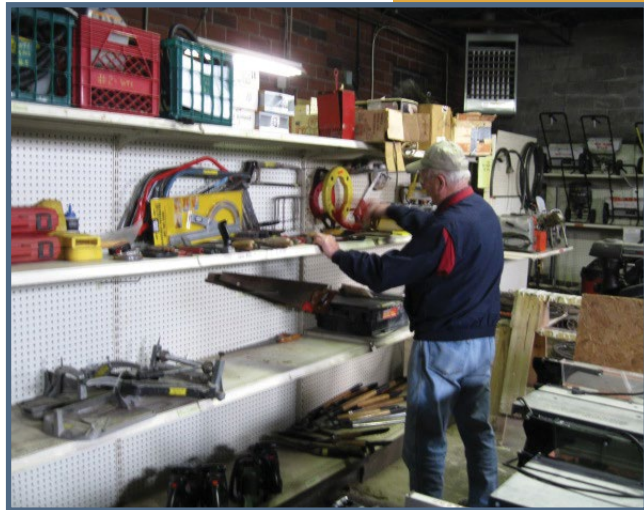


COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Housing and Community Development Department provides leadership and support to community development efforts through development and administration of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. This program is funded annually with a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for eligible activities in the areas of housing, economic development, public services and facilities, neighborhoods, and administration. Federal regulations require the funds to be used primarily to assist persons of low and moderate income, reduce slum and blight, or meet an urgent need.

Dubuque has been receiving CDBG assistance since this federal program was adopted in 1974. The use of these funds has enabled us to assist many local agencies and provide many valuable programs. These include Information and Referral and Child Care Resource and Referral through Project Concern, programs for the elderly at the Hills and Dales Lifetime Center, lending tools at no cost for household improvements through the Washington Neighborhood Tool Library, construction of accessible curb ramps, asphalt street overlays in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, sidewalk improvements for low- and moderate-income property owners, and zoning inspection and enforcement. Funding is also used to assist property owners in housing rehabilitation and individuals in becoming homeowners for the first time.

CDBG funding also allows the City to provide many neighborhood recreation programs through the Leisure Services Department, including the community basketball league, recreation scholarships for low-income persons, day camp at Four Mounds, music lessons, open gym, playtime for tots, swim passes for low-income families, and after-school programs at Audubon and Prescott schools. The Neighborhood Grant program uses CDBG funds to assist neighborhood organizations, in conjunction with other agency partnerships, with neighborhood clean-ups, landscaping and beautification projects, and family enrichment programs.



// Washington Neighborhood Tool Library //



// Neighborhood Program //



Dubuque's Green Alley Program, partially funded by CDBG, uses interlocking, permeable pavers to assist in infiltration of water, reducing flooding and improving quality of water entering the Mississippi River.



// Before //



// After //

The Housing and Community Development Department also facilitates the City's Urban Revitalization Program, which focuses on the revitalization of properties in Dubuque's older neighborhoods. Owners of residential property in Dubuque's designated urban revitalization areas are eligible to apply for a 10-year property tax exemption for qualified new improvements.

The Purchase of Service Grant Program is designed to provide support for human service programs in Dubuque that further the City's goals, objectives, and priorities. Non-profit organizations that provide year round human services programs are eligible to apply.

Community development is extremely important to Dubuque's continued economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social and cultural vibrancy. We continue to do our best to provide quality, livable neighborhoods.

PROGRESS *through Partnerships*

HEART Program

The Housing and Community Development Department has an ongoing partnership with the Four Mounds Foundation HEART (Housing Education And Rehabilitation Training) Program to rehabilitate residential properties in preparation for sale to first-time homebuyers. To date, 24 properties have been renovated through this partnership. The HEART Program provides hands-on training and programming for at-risk and disengaged youth. Participants are revitalizing the community while working toward post-secondary education, developing viable careers, and becoming better leaders. City staff work closely with HEART staff in the rehabilitation of targeted properties with youth trained to do numerous jobs in the renovation process, from removing lead-based paint all the way through finishing touches such as painting or installing trim.

Washington Neighborhood Development Corporation

Washington Neighborhood Development Corporation (WNDC) works in collaboration with the Housing & Community Development Department to build awareness and educate current and potential residents about housing programs and incentives offered in the Washington Neighborhood. This successful partnership has helped

WNDC achieve its mission to empower people and revitalize the Washington Neighborhood in a sustainable manner by leveraging public and private resources to promote housing, economic opportunity and human potential. The housing department continues to partner on a number of programs including the annual neighborhood block party, Washington Neighborhood Community Garden and monthly resident gatherings.

Community Housing Initiatives

Community Housing Initiatives (CHI) has committed \$800,000 to partner with the City of Dubuque to continue rehabilitation efforts and promote homeownership opportunities within the Washington Neighborhood. These funds will be used for acquisition, rehabilitation and resale of approximately 18 homes. Rehabilitation efforts are underway with CHI purchasing 1623, 1629 and 1635 Washington Street. This property was a 3-plex (all rental) and is being converted to three separate owner-occupied properties completely rehabbed with garages. This is just one example of the work that CHI and the City will be doing over the next three years. Special funding incentives will apply.

SAFE & HEALTHY HOMES

Dubuque City Ordinance requires that landlords renting properties complete the Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program. This training provides comprehensive information on all aspects of managing rental housing, with emphasis on how to reduce crime in rental property.

City Code requires rental property owners, managers, or licensed real estate professionals to conduct background checks on all prospective tenants. To support property owners, the City offers free nationwide criminal background checks of prospective tenants through the Dubuque Police Department.

INSPECTIONS

There are currently more than 10,500 rental units licensed by the City in Dubuque. Each unit is periodically inspected by the Housing and Community Development Department for compliance with the Housing Code and to ensure that the units provide decent and safe rental housing. Each rental unit must be annually licensed and an annual fee is charged. All owners are required to comply with these requirements.

The inspections are conducted by professionally trained inspectors who are certified in the areas of lead paint, healthy homes, structural, plumbing, electrical, fire and safety, and heating and ventilation. Inspectors examine both the interior and exterior of rental properties and any accessory structures on the premises.



Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

GHHI is working collaboratively across jurisdictions and silos of funding to identify and remove barriers in order to achieve holistic, household-centric approaches to improving health, safety, livability and affordability of housing in Dubuque. The Initiative identifies citizens' needs in their homes, helps them address the needs, and assists residents learning how to maintain and sustain the improvements. Key partners are the City of Dubuque Housing and Community Development Department, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, City Health Services Department, Operation New View, Visiting Nurses Association, Northeast Iowa Community College, and the U.S. HUD Department, which provides funding through the Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes Production Grants. For more information, visit www.cityofdubuque.org/ghhi.

RENTAL LICENSE & INSPECTION FEES

The City's Housing Code requires all rental dwelling units to hold a current, unrevoked rental dwelling operating license. The Housing and Community Development Department maintains an inventory of all licensed rental units, issues license applications, and receives all fees.

APPEALS

A City Council-appointed Housing Code Appeals Board meets periodically to hear requests from landlords regarding code enforcement orders. Any person claiming to be aggrieved by a notice issued under the Housing Code may file a written complaint with the Housing Code Appeals Board within 14 days of the receipt of the notice and order. The board, by majority vote, may sustain the notice and order, or grant a variance or extension of time or grant a waiver for penalties assessed for missed inspections, rescheduling fees and re-inspection fees.

Would your home or property pass an inspection? You can request a sample of the inspection check list, or report a possible code violation, by contacting the Housing and Community Development Department at 563.589.4231. A sample check list is also available online at www.cityofdubuque.org/housing.



HEALTHY HOMES PRODUCTION PROGRAM

The Healthy Homes Program provides integrated health, safety, lead hazard reduction, energy efficiency, and weatherization interventions to low- to moderate-income homes. These comprehensive interventions not only stabilize individual homes but also strengthen neighborhoods by allowing residents to safely remain in properties that are healthier and safer. This benefits the community in the areas of economics, environment, health, and well-being. A healthy home results in a decreased economic burden as a result of reduced school and work absenteeism and decreased health care costs. In addition, pride of ownership is fostered through the programs as the property owners are educated on maintaining the improvements and additional interventions they can perform themselves to improve their living environment.



LEAD-HAZARD CONTROL PROGRAM

Dubuque's Lead Hazard Control Program utilizes funds to provide financial assistance to low- and moderate-income homeowners and rental property owners to reduce lead-based paint hazards in homes with young children.



For additional information on these programs or activities, please call 563.589.1724, email bhenry@cityofdubuque.org, or visit www.cityofdubuque.org/housing.

Real people. Real lives improved.

Low- to moderate-income families face a myriad of challenges. Many families struggle to provide the basic necessities, let alone make improvements to their homes that ensure they are safe, healthy, and energy-efficient. This can lead to serious health problems within the families and excessive medical costs to families and the community.



Rachel's Story

Rachel is a single mother of two young boys, ages three and five. She is employed but still must rely on assistance from nutrition programs to help feed her family. Although Rachel has been able to purchase a house, she could not afford the improvements necessary to make the home energy-efficient, safe, and healthy for her family. In addition, Rachel's sons suffered from frequent respiratory illnesses. She felt as though she lived at the doctor's office with them. During the first 12 months after the Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control program's interventions, the doctor's visits for Rachel's sons dropped 70%!

Barb's Story

Barb is a grandmother of 10 grandchildren who could not visit her home without having to use rescue inhalers. Asthma is the most prevalent chronic illness among children. Of the 22.9 million Americans living with asthma, approximately 4.6 million cases are caused by mold, mildew, roaches, mice, dust mites, and cleaning agents, among many other "triggers." Since the improvements made in her home through the Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control programs, Barb's grandchildren can now visit without inhalers and without the risk of being lead poisoned. Barb has also been able to eliminate five medications from her daily regimen, saving approximately \$100 per month!

Postal Customer

Contact Us:

The Housing and Community Development Department can be reached several ways:

Visit:

www.cityofdubuque.org/housing

Call:

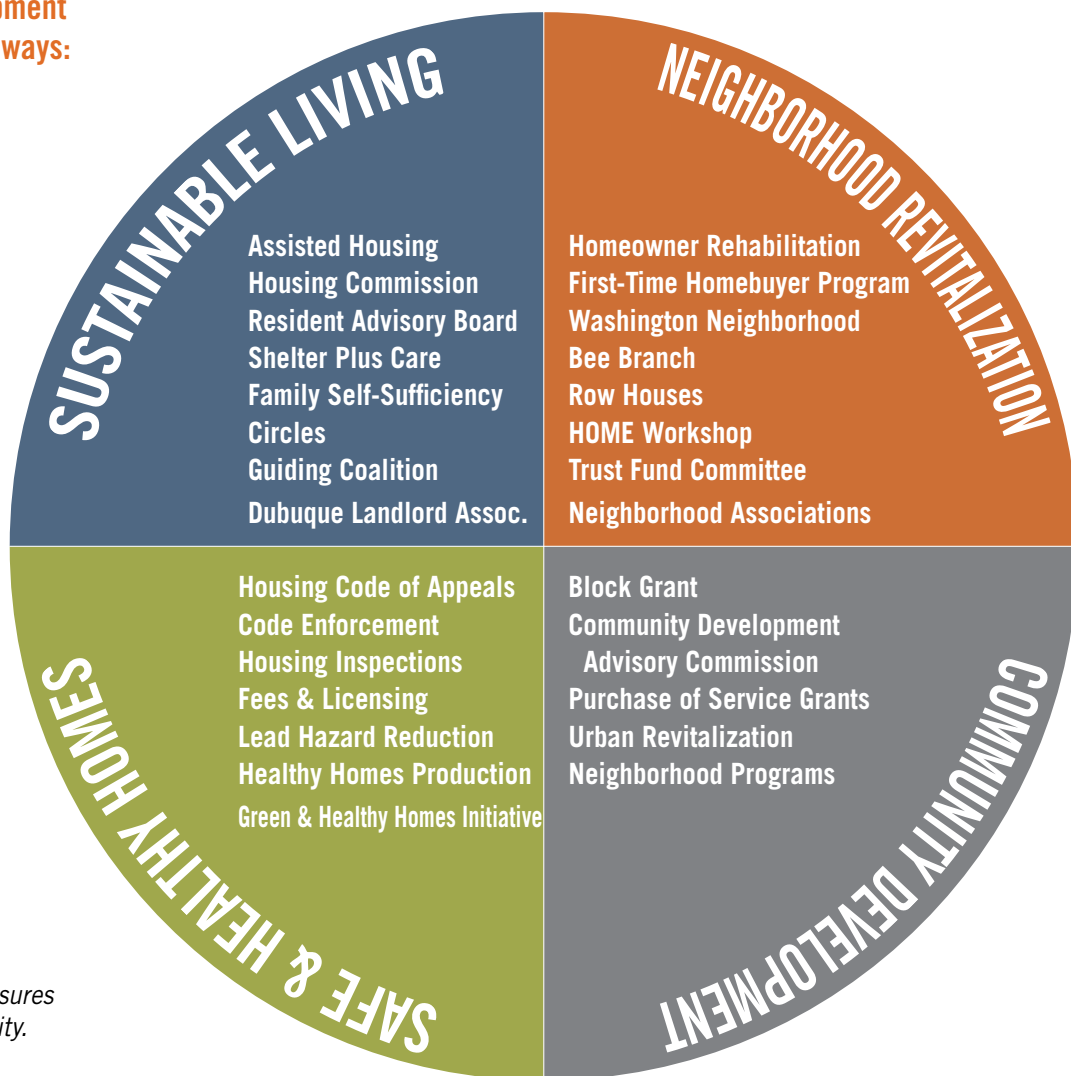
General Housing - 563.589.4231
Community Development - 563.589.4212
Circles Initiative - 563.589.4230
Family Self-Sufficiency - 563.589.4230
Assisted Housing - 563.589.4230
Neighborhood Revitalization - 563.589.4239
Lead Hazard Control - 563.589.1724
Healthy Homes - 563.589.1724

Stop in:

Historic Federal Building
350 W. 6th St.
Suite 312
Dubuque, IA 5001



*The City of Dubuque ensures
equal housing opportunity.*



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

City Focus is published by the
City of Dubuque Public Information Office
563.589.4151, publicinfo@cityofdubuque.org

Archived issues of *City Focus* are available
online at www.cityofdubuque.org/cityfocus



www.cityofdubuque.org



[FACEBOOK.COM/CITYOFDUBUQUE](https://www.facebook.com/cityofdubuque)



[TWITTER.COM/CITYOFDUBUQUE](https://twitter.com/cityofdubuque)