

Memo

DATE: 11/13/2014
TO: Ashland City Council
FROM: Linda Reid, Housing Program Specialist
RE: Housing and Human Services Commission Annual Update to the Council

Mayor and City Council,

The Housing and Human Services Commission is pleased to report on the work we have undertaken since the commission met for the first time in January of this year. Further the Commission would like to provide the Council with a brief overview of the commission's areas of focus in the coming year.

Strategic Plan

The first charge given to the newly formed Housing and Human Services Commission was to undertake an evaluation of the City's current social service grant program and for the commission to make recommendations for changes that would make the program more efficient and effective for both the grantees and the intended beneficiaries. To this end the H&HS commission developed a four year strategic plan for the use of these funds, researching demographic data about the community and its social service needs, initiating outreach activities to gather feedback from grantees, service providers, stakeholders, and key informants from a cross section of the Ashland Community. The feedback gained from outreach activities, and research was then used to inform the strategic plan priority goals and implementation strategies. The resulting draft of this work will be discussed further under a separate agenda item.

Student Fair Housing

At their regular meeting on April 1, 2014 the City Council approved a motion to "direct the Housing and Human Services Commission to study and develop a recommendation on whether students should be added as a protected class in the City's Fair Housing Ordinance". To this end the Commission has worked closely with the H&HS commission student liaison and the Fair Housing Subcommittee of the ASSOU Student Government. Currently the commission and students are in the process of gathering feedback from property owners. The Commission expects to have more time to devote to this project upon completion of the Strategic Plan project.



CDBG Consolidated Plan Update

City staff and the H&HS commission are beginning the process of updating the City's 5-year Consolidated Plan for the Use of Community Development Block Grant Funds. That activity kicks off with a community outreach event to be held on December fifth. There are several aspects of this project that the H&HS commission will be assisting with, throughout the next several months. This activity will be completed by June of 2015.

Goals

The Housing and Human Services Commission held their annual goal setting retreat on August 28th. At the retreat the Commission identified several areas of interest to explore including: employment programs, and a variety of housing activities ranging from increasing opportunities for affordable homeownership to transitional housing for vulnerable populations. Given the direction from the Council regarding the Ashland City Council Priority Strategic Planning Goals and Objectives, the Commission is scheduled to review both the Council's priority goals and the Commission's identified goals at their next regular meeting in November. At that time the Commission will further prioritize the areas of interest to be consistent with and support the Council's identified strategic planning goals.

