

**2002-2003 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT APPLICATION**

**Organization Name:** City of Davis Fair Housing Services

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**Total Amount Requested:** \$47,000.00

On-going Support

New Project

**CDBG Eligible Category:** Public Service

**National Objective Compliance/Low and Moderate Income Benefit:** Area Benefit

**City Council Identified Critical Needs**

1. Homeless Prevention Services
2. Housing

**Beneficiary Information:**

898 Total number of beneficiaries in program

880 Total number of beneficiaries served with CDBG funds

     Percentage of the CDBG beneficiaries with low/moderate income

\$52 Cost per beneficiary (CDBG request/CDBG beneficiaries)

## PROJECT NARRATIVE

### Need

The City of Davis Fair Housing Services addresses significant needs of Davis residents while ensuring the City's compliance with the requirements of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Housing Investment Partnership Program (HOME).

Equal and free access to residential housing is fundamental to meeting essential needs and pursuing personal, educational, employment and other goals. Where we reside affects the schools our children attend and their future educational opportunities. Our choice of housing affects our employment and career opportunities. Our economic security is compromised when we are unfairly denied the opportunity to buy a home based on unlawful discriminatory practices. Because equal and free access to housing choice affects many aspects of our lives, federal, state and local laws exist to protect this choice. The activities and programs of the City's Mediation and Fair Housing Services Program are essential factors in the protection of individual fair housing rights and housing choice.

During the first six-months of the current fiscal year, Mediation & Fair Housing Services opened 272 new cases and handled an additional 645 requests for information and technical assistance. Low-income and moderate-income households make up 93% of the total clients served during this period. The need for information on fair housing rights and assistance with resolution of tenant/land owner difficulties continues to be evident by the steady demand for these services. In the current rental market where rents have increased and vacancy rates have decreased significantly, low-income and very-low income families and individuals demonstrate the need for information and counseling on their rights and responsibilities as they face challenges of seeking affordable rental housing in Davis. The proposed activities focus on addressing three primary needs of low-income, very-low-income and moderate-income households:

#### 1. Information, Education and Technical Assistance:

One of the key deterrents to housing discrimination is information and understanding about the rights and responsibilities of housing consumers and providers. There is significant ongoing need in Davis for information on fair housing regulations and related tenant/land owner rights and responsibilities. Home seekers need to know when housing providers are discriminating against them and to distinguish unlawful discriminatory acts from other actions housing providers may take. Housing providers need to learn about the fair housing guidelines and regulations in order to comply with these regulations. Fair housing technical assistance is also needed by the various community groups and organizations, which receive federal funds through the City of Davis to service very-low, low and moderate income households. These groups need access to current fair housing and employment information and effective conflict resolution services. The City's Mediation & Fair Housing Services program currently provides technical assistance to these organizations through workshops, one-on-one consultations, printed information and voluntary dispute resolution services.

#### 2. Investigation and Enforcement:

A significant tool in reducing the incidence of housing discrimination complaints is the use of appropriate and adequate investigation and enforcement mechanisms. The case intake and investigation processes employed by Fair Housing Services ensure the timely and appropriate handling of housing discrimination cases with investigation, mediation as appropriate and referral to HUD or the Department of Fair Employment and Housing for further enforcement.

#### 3. Identification of impediments to Fair Housing:

Participation in the consolidated plan development, specifically the analysis of impediments to fair housing and implementation of actions to overcome impediments is a necessary and critical function of the Mediation & Fair Housing Services Program.

### **Benefit**

The proposed fair housing activities are designed to continue to provide needed services to Davis residents while fulfilling the City's obligation to affirmatively further fair housing. The City's Mediation & Fair Housing Services program benefits very low-income, low-income and moderate-income households through provision of various direct services to individuals and CDBG sub-grantee agencies.

During the first six-month period of the current fiscal year, the Mediation & Fair Housing Services Staff handled 6 cases of housing discrimination and 645 information and technical assistance cases involving tenant/land owner disputes. Mediation & Fair Housing Services Staff were effective in assisting individuals with prevention of homelessness by intervening with information and mediation services in potential eviction situations. Technical information provided by Mediation & Fair Housing Services staff to housing providers has helped to ensure rental policies and practices comply with provisions of the Fair Housing Act and other local regulations. One educational seminar for tenants and rental housing providers was conducted to increase awareness of fair housing services and distribute information on current laws related to fair employment and housing. Mediation & Fair Housing services are provided in English and Spanish and all printed information is available to the public in these two languages.

### **Target Group**

The proposed services and activities are targeted to very low, low, and moderate-income households. It is expected that a minimum of 500 households will benefit from direct services provided by Mediation & Fair Housing Services Program staff. An additional 500 individuals will benefit from educational and community outreach activities focused on prevention of housing discrimination and expansion of housing choice. Low-income households and those groups specifically protected under provisions of the federal, state and local fair housing laws comprise the target group for eligible services under CDBG guidelines. Fair housing laws protect against illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, disability, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation and source of income.

The production of fair housing literature on audio tapes and on the internet are activities designed to make information more accessible to individuals with hearing and sight impairments. The needs of individuals with mobility disabilities will be addressed through the fair housing seminars where tenants and landowners will receive information on laws and practices related to the rights and responsibilities of disabled individuals.

### **Other Resources and Collaboration**

Through the joint administration of two related services, Community Mediation Service and Fair Housing Services the City successfully maximizes use of limited resources. The mediation component of the Fair Housing Services is provided by community volunteers who are trained in mediation skills and are highly successful in assisting individuals with resolution of fair housing and tenant/land owner disputes. Mediation & Fair Housing Services works closely with various local agencies and groups who refer individuals in need of our services. These agencies include; Legal Services of Northern California, University of California, City and County departments, law enforcement agencies, rental property managers, Yolo County Environmental Health, Yolo County Superior Court, Yolo County Social Services and CDBG and HOME recipient organizations.

The City's Mediation & Fair Housing Services continues its work with the City of West Sacramento, the City of Woodland and the Yolo County Housing Authority as the fair housing services provider for these agencies. Mediation & Fair Housing Services has been successful in fostering collaborative working relationships with the City of Woodland, West Sacramento and the Yolo County Housing Authority to identify and accomplish significant fair housing goals. Mediation & Fair Housing Services staff are active in the Northern California Fair Housing Coalition, a network of fair housing agencies established to provide support and information to fair housing advocates and service providers.

## Organizational Capacity

The City's Mediation & Fair Housing Services staff skillfully develop and implement procedures for effective fair housing case management and analysis. The office functions within the Parks and Community Services Department. The Dispute Resolution Specialist, under the supervision of the Social Services Administrator will continue to administer the City's Fair Housing Services and provide direct services to Davis residents. Mediation & Fair housing Services benefits from the use of community volunteers who provide mediation services in many tenant/land owner disputes and fair housing cases.

### **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

This section includes a description of services and proposed goals for the various service areas.

1. **FAIR HOUSING SERVICES:** There are four categories of fair housing services proposed for the 2002-2003 funding year.
  - a. Respond to Inquiries: Program staff will respond to all inquiries regarding illegal housing discrimination based on race, sex, national origin, familial status, physical and mental handicap, religion, and all other arbitrary forms of discrimination as defined in state, federal and local laws.

**Proposed Goal:** Program staff responds to a minimum of five hundred (500) fair housing inquiries.

- b. Complaint Investigation: Program staff will conduct investigations of all reported housing discrimination complaints. Complaints will be investigated within thirty days, using testers trained in objective testing procedures as appropriate and necessary. When investigation shows evidence of illegal housing practices or policies, the following services will be provided:
  - Intake interviews and counseling with complainants.
  - Conduct of preliminary investigation including testing to gather facts and determine validity of complaint.
  - Preparation of all documents and evidence and copies provided to the complainant.
  - Provision of mediation services as appropriate and as the complainant desires
  - Referral of complaint to HUD when appropriate.
  - Referral to the State Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) when appropriate.
  - Follow-up on all cases until cases are resolved including the tracking of all cases referred to private attorneys or state and federal government agencies.

**Proposed Goal:** Program staff will investigate all housing discrimination complaints and provide services outlined above as necessary. It is expected that a minimum of five (5) cases investigated will result in referrals to HUD or DFEH.

- c. Fair Housing Community Education and Training: Various community education methods will be employed to increase public awareness of the laws and issues surrounding fair housing. These methods will include fair housing workshops and seminars, regular public service announcements and news articles in the local media, development of a fair housing web site, and speaking appearances before appropriate groups and organizations.

**Proposed Goal:** A minimum of two training seminars will be conducted for rental property managers, and home seekers.

- d. Technical Assistance: Fair Housing services staff will work with CDBG and HOME grantees to ensure compliance with fair employment and housing regulations.

**Proposed Goal:** A minimum of one seminar on fair employment and housing issues specific to CDBG and HOME regulations will be conducted for local non-profit organizations.

2. **TENANT & LANDOWNER SERVICES:** There are four categories of tenant & landowner services proposed for the 2002-2003 funding year.

a. Information and Referral: Various methods will be employed to increase community awareness of fair housing laws and tenant/land owner rights and responsibilities. Efforts will be targeted to members of the rental housing industry, home seekers and current tenants. Specifically, the following services are proposed:

- Responding to information requests over the telephone and with written informational material as appropriate.
- Development and distribution of brochures and fact sheets to appropriate individuals and groups, and the use of local media and the internet to promote awareness of tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities.
- Presentations to organizations in the community which represent and provide services to the target groups.

**Proposed Goal:** Fair Housing Services staff will respond to a minimum of 800 requests for information and technical assistance from individuals and groups.

b. Mediation Services: Mediation services will be offered in all tenant/land owner cases and will be conducted by trained community mediators.

**Proposed Goal:** A minimum of 100 tenant/land owner cases will be referred for mediation.

c. Referral to Legal Services/Small Claims Court: Referral to attorney, legal services and small claims court will be provided to individuals as requested and as appropriate.

**Proposed Goal:** A minimum of 50 cases will be referred to legal services or small claims court.

d. Tenant & Land Owner Community Education and Training: Various community education methods will be employed to increase public awareness of the laws and issues for both tenants and landlords. Some of the methods include workshops for tenants and landowners, educational workshops for property owners and managers, regular publicity of tenant/land owner services through local media and speaking appearances before appropriate groups and organizations.

**Proposed Goal:** A minimum of two tenant & landowner workshops will be conducted during the contract year.

**TIMELINE**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Conduct Fair Housing case intake and investigations.	Ongoing through 6/30/03
Provide conciliation and mediation services.	Ongoing through 6/30/03
Educate and counsel individuals about fair housing rights and responsibilities.	Ongoing through 6/30/03
Conduct two educational seminars for home seekers and housing providers.	January, April 2003
Produce and mail fair employment and housing fact sheets for CDBG & HOME grantee organizations.	March 2003
Provide technical assistance to CDBG & HOME grantees in person as requested.	Ongoing through 6/30/03
Participate in a minimum of two community outreach events.	June, 2003

**PROJECT BUDGET**

Budget Category	Proposed Project
Salaries/Wages/Benefits	\$46,183.00
Facility rent/maintenance	500.00
MIS & telephone Services	
Office Supplies	
Equipment replacement/maintenance	
Printing/Duplication/Postage	200.00
Advertising and Outreach	117.00
Staff Development/Training	300.00
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET</b>	<b>\$47,000.00</b>