

2008 – 2009 CDBG/HOME APPLICANT QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Name of Organization: **Davis Community Meals-CWS**
Project Title: **Cold Weather Shelter**

1. Does the amount requested include the funds needed for necessary sewer upgrades to the 512 Fifth Street property?

The funds we have requested are operating funds for the CWS only. No amounts were requested for sewer upgrades.

How much would be needed for those upgrades?

The only estimate I have received was approximately \$9,800 to replace the sewer line between the residence and the sewer main on D Street.

2. Are there other upgrades needed to maintain the habitability of 512 Fifth Street?

No other necessary upgrades are known at this time.

3. What impacts, if any have you observed in Davis Community Meals as a result of the operation of the “rotating cold weather shelter” in Davis?

Our CWS has had similar occupancy figures as we had last year. It did not necessarily affect our CWS operations. We did see a very large increase in the number of new homeless adult individuals in Davis during these past few months at our resource center. We generally see a number of new individuals in town throughout the year, some just here for a few days and others for longer periods. New individuals would be those who have not had any prior contact with DCM and I would estimate that we see 5-15 each month throughout the year. Since December 1st, we have counted 82 new adult individuals that have used our resource center and CWS services. The large increase did place somewhat of a strain on the operations of our resource center.

4. For the past three years, DCM has had the addition of the 5th street house, yet DCM continues to refuse service to serve homeless families in crisis. Why?

We have been serving homeless families in crisis in our Family Transitional Housing Program since 1997 when we began with a single family. We have been serving 8 families with transitional housing since 2001. Most of the “homeless” families we see seeking transitional housing or at our resource center are housed: domestic violence victims staying at SADVC, families already in other shorter transitional housing programs, families temporarily staying with friends or family in substandard housing arrangements, and other situations. We rarely see “homeless” families sleeping on the streets of Davis, sleeping in cars, or other outside areas. On the occasions that we do, we refer them to voucher programs such as STEAC for temporary housing in motels or we work with local religious organizations that help pay for temporary stays in local motels.

DCM has limited funding to keep our operations in existence. Due to a variety of factors, our service costs are very low. Many organizations who offer services for similar sized populations do so at budgets 2-3 times that of DCM. We, by necessity, must prioritize how our money is spent so that it goes to serve the greatest needs.

In the several homeless census counts conducted by the Yolo County Homeless and Poverty Action Coalitions (formerly the Homeless Coalition), no homeless family has ever been counted living on the streets of Davis. In the 2007 count, only one homeless family was living on the streets in the entire county; in Woodland. In prior census counts, the numbers were similar. To the best of my knowledge, we have never counted a homeless family living on the streets of Davis since the first homeless census in 1995. The need for shelter for families, while it does exist on occasion, is not continual and not a large need. It is a need, but weighed against the total number of homeless individuals and families needing transitional housing, it is not a large need.

If, however, the Davis Social Services Commission feels that the need is greater than our experience suggests, I can prepare and submit a budget for funding for such a shelter. I will submit such a request with our other 2009 funding applications. I would estimate the costs to be between \$35-45,000 each fiscal year.

5. Does DCM believe that it is better for a family with children sleep in cars, tents or other non-shelter options rather than sharing space with single people or even a room with another family?

No. However, the liability risks of sharing space with single adult homeless individuals is prohibitively high and not a good environment whatsoever for children. Sharing a room with another family results in use permit issues and, as we do not now own the units where our homeless families reside, would be a violation of our lease agreements with the landlords.

6. What steps has DCM taken to address the issue of sheltering families in crisis?

We have for some time been discussing with city staff the issue of acquiring a small apartment complex or other site to centralize our transitional housing program. A complex of the right size would allow for the development of a shelter program for families that would be cost effective considering it's need.

When will families in crisis actually find shelter in Davis through DCM?

As stated above, we do provide housing to homeless families and referrals for several voucher programs. We can work on providing such shelter upon acquisition of a suitable housing complex or by the city increasing it's support of DCM in the amount stated above.

7. Would DCM support development of a voucher system for hotels in Davis that is modeled after Section Vouchers? *For this to work, the Homeless Coalition, backed by the City would enter into an agreement with the hotels and motels in Davis whereby the voucher would cover a room and a reasonable amount (TBD) of money to cover destruction or theft of property, squatting etc... The idea is to give the hotels and motels an incentive that we believe would be needed rarely.*

STEAC does run a voucher program and we are able to access resources from several religious organizations to provide short term housing in local motels when it is necessary. STEAC does not have a local motel that accepts it's vouchers currently. We would be open to the idea of a new system run by DCM that could provide housing at local motels.