

## 1. Need for Program

ERP provides transitional housing, acts as a homeless shelter, and provides homelessness prevention programs. The need is growing with their available resources full and often times overflowing. They utilize multiple buildings and lease additional rooms when available for those in need but simply can't meet current demands. Their office often receives requests from outside Story County and sometimes outside the state of Iowa inquiring about availability.

**Emergency Shelter** – The shelter opened in 1985. The maximum stay is 2 weeks for occupants. Average shelter capacity is 24. The upstairs is utilized by the men, while the downstairs apartments are for women and families. The shelter has continuously been at capacity for several years. An average stay of 13.8 days with over 255 people receiving 3,650 nights of shelter midway through the year. Overflow occupants are housed at the Ames Motor Lodge which holds 2 rooms when possible and provides them to the shelter at reduced rates. In the last 2 years it's been difficult to secure those rooms based on a large local construction projects due to those workers renting the rooms for extended periods of time.

**Homelessness Prevention:** Rent and utility assistance is provided once every 12 months to help prevent someone from being evicted or having utilities shut off. ERP works in conjunction with Good Neighbor and several other agencies offering similar services. The client requesting funds must show a denial letter first from Story County Community Services and another agency before funding can be approved. Annually, this program The rate of funds available are:

Individual: \$275

Couple: \$300

Family: \$375

### **Transitional Housing:**

The transitional housing apartments have an average stay of 16 months with a maximum of 24 months. The apartments are next to the shelter and provide a sliding fee scale for families.

## 2. Program Strengths

The shelter has donated meals, bathroom and cleaning supplies, clothing, and other miscellaneous supplies provided to them by local churches, individuals, and businesses. The daily evening meals are prepared by volunteers from local churches removing the burden from shelter employees. Additional staff positions are being added and reworked to make the staffing

more efficient. They have a long standing group of board members with over 20+ years of service to provide the new director background and feedback.

### **3. Program Weaknesses**

This is the first time in ERP's history that anyone other than Mr. Moss has directed the shelter. With change sometimes comes bumps along the way, but to date no major issues have occurred in Carrie's first 6 months. The program doesn't have the space or budget to keep up with demands. They average 6-8 people a day being turned away for shelter services and on average 2 families a week for transitional housing. Ames is in need of more affordable housing and although growth in the number of apartment units is quickly rising making more apartments available, we're not seeing a decrease in pricing nor do many landlords want to participate in any type of subsidized housing since they are able to easily rent their units without the hassle of additional paperwork. Credit checks and background checks can also be an obstacle for many seeking housing. Additional funding and space are needed to move this program forward.

### **4. Financial Outlook:**

The shelter has run with deficit funds over the last several years. Additional grants and fundraisers will be crucial to continued/or expanded services.

### **5. Internal Management Practices:**

In recent months a new Executive Director has taken over since the retirement of Vic Moss. With 16 years of non-profit experience she is implementing a few immediate changes. Tracking has begun of the shelter stays through CHIP which will help with tracking better the number of assisted individuals as well as be able to provide data for certain types of funding sources. Multiple grants have been written and several approved since July to assist with budgeting and improvements around the shelter. Carrie is looking to add a half time position to help with data and clerical work in the office. A strategic planning meeting was scheduled for October of 2016 for future planning of the shelter's direction and focus. Additionally, they are implementing a case manager program one day a week to be more proactive working with mental health issues to make proper referrals and provide clients with resources available to them. 700+ people are year are served through the shelter and 35 individuals through the transitional housing.

### **6. Agency suggestions/comments:**

**GENERAL ASSESSMENT:**

The work ERP does in our community is a service that's in high demand, not just in Story County, but throughout the state of Iowa and nationwide. ERP is in a unique circumstance of being able to reinvent/revitalize itself over the next few years. With a new director, adding staff, and seeking additional outside sources of funding, they are poised to make major strides/changes which hopefully will have a positive impact on the lives of many. It sounds as though they intend to include community education on what the demands are for this type of service, even in a community with our positive economic status. Making improvements to the current conditions in the shelter is a priority also. With board members serving over 20 years it provides a stable background of information for the new director to learn from, but we did discuss board term limits as a possibility in the future structure. It's not something they've yet discussed but was mentioned as a possible topic for their strategic planning meeting.