

1. Need for Program.

Started in 1997, Good Neighbor provides emergency rental and utility assistance to prevent eviction or utility shut off. Additionally, over the last few years two new programs were added to assist with healthy food and gas vouchers for those families that were struggling. Rent/utility assistance can only be provided once every 12 month period and all payments are made directly to the landlord or utility company. Food vouchers can be received once every quarter up to (6) \$5 vouchers and (1) \$25 gas voucher per year.

FY 16/17 has seen the following number of households assisted already.

Rent/Utility assistance	99 households
Healthy Food Vouchers	354 households
Gas Vouchers	72 households

Good Neighbor joined ASSET in the 08/09 budget process.

2. Program Strengths.

Good Neighbor works with 35+ faith based organizations throughout Story County and alongside several other non-profit agencies within the county. Raising Readers provides books in the waiting area that Good Neighbor shares with ACCESS. Their downtown location is an easy walk, drive, or bus ride for clients. Mike Fisk is the only paid staff employee. The office is open 9 a.m. -12 p.m. by appointment. Mr. Fisk provides budget counseling to clients and often makes referrals to other organizations his clients could benefit from. This organization is mindful of their budget and set their number of appointments based on funding.

The board in recent years has begun an endowment fund and they have placed a 3 month \$12,000 reserve in place in case of emergency funding issues. They allow 5% of the endowment to be added to their operating funds each year. An annual fundraiser is held in the form of a community choral concert raising between \$6,000-\$11,000 annually. Additionally, they hold an Italian Bake dinner and their Dublin Bay Irish event to raise funds. The board is currently in the early planning stages of a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraiser to be held in April of 2017.

Good Neighbor has recently sought additional grant funds from more than one organization to assist in supplementing the higher number of requests than anticipated.

The location and atmosphere of Good Neighbor is a strength. It's open, bright, and welcoming which puts people at ease. Many clients are in very stressful situations and being able to provide a safe place for them to seek assistance and advice is key to how Mr. Fisk wants people to feel when they arrive at Good Neighbor.

### 3. Program Weaknesses.

An up and down need for services based on the time of year, economic conditions, gas prices, food prices, and even the weather can make it difficult to predict funding needs. With a much higher than expected demand the organization had to turn away requests (17 in September) as well as create a waiting list for their services, (currently 7 are on that list) which has never happened before. They are an incredibly fiscally responsible group and their board makes sure to watch spending carefully.

### 4. Financial Outlook.

In order to thrive and provide services for all those who seek assistance, it is imperative that additional funding sources be sought out. More requests for grants or an increased ask in their current ASSET funding, which they are requesting during this budget process in the amount of 2.5%. I was surprised by the lower percentage request, but was told that in 2009 Mr. Fisk asked for a 25% increase (\$4,000) and was denied, so they haven't recently requested an increase, until now.

With their 3 month reserve and a small endowment fund they are in place to easily continue services at their traditional average number of requests which is around 28 per month. With small participation programs like the Nickel back program at Wheatsfield's Grocery and partnering with Worldly Goods for an afternoon of partial profits, they are adding small supplementary sources too. I'd like to see a higher request for ASSET funding from this organization to avoid waiting lists or having to turn away requests for rent/utility services while they maintain their fiscal responsibilities to their contributors. To date no healthy food or gas voucher requests have been turned away.

### 5. Internal Management Practices:

This board and executive director take their financial duties very seriously. They are mindful of their current cash flow and set the number of monthly appointments based on the funds they have. They work diligently to serve their clients through financial assistance but education also.

6. Agency suggestions/comments:

GENERAL ASSESSMENT:

If additional consistent funding were available, I could see them serving a larger number of clients in need, without worry of exceeding their operating funds. As this is a prevention of homelessness, a problem which is becoming increasingly larger issue in Story County due to lack of affordable housing, it's imperative that a program such as this is readily available to those who need it. Supplementing families and individuals with healthy food and gas vouchers can be the difference in making it from one paycheck to another.