

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 17/18 has seen the following number of households assisted already:

Rent/Utility assistance 95 households – down from 99 in 16/17

Healthy Food Vouchers 390 households – up from 354 in 16/17

Gas Vouchers 92 households –up from 72 in 16/17

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 Fritz is the only paid staff employee. The office is open 9 a.m. -12 p.m. by appointment. Mr. Fritz 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. This year's event was held on November 5th. Additionally, they hold an Italian Bake dinner and their Dublin Bay Irish event to raise funds.

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. Fritz 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. This fiscal year they have

yet to have to turn anyone away requesting assistance, however in fiscal year 16/17 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. That was the first year in which this happened.

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 request will be helpful. Their prior requests in recent years during the ASSET process were considerably low, based on an experience in 2009 when Mr. Fritz had 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. Their endowment fund is now with the Story County Community Foundation so that it can be added as a possible recipient for dollars submitted to support SCCF programs.

A portion of this year's Crop Walk fundraising will be donated the healthy food vouchers program. Good Neighbor has a long tradition of working with other organizations and/or businesses to try and increase funding sources. Last year they participated with Wheatsfield's Grocery for their Nickel back program and had a day of partial profits donated from working alongside Worldly Goods in downtown Ames. Mr. Fritz has been working with local grocery chains to try and seek donations to be used either through silent auction items for fundraising events or assistance with the fundraisers themselves. This has provided some mixed results with lower than expected participation, considering the amount of healthy food voucher dollars spent at their organizations.

I'm pleased 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.

Good Neighbor has recently sought additional grant funds from more than one organization to assist in supplementing the higher number of requests than anticipated. They received a grant from United Way for \$7,500 for their healthy food voucher program and were denied a grant from the Story County Community Foundation due to requests far exceeding their budget.

5. Internal Management Practices:

This board and executive director take their financial duties very seriously. They are mindful of their current cash flow, discuss and monitor frequently, and set the number of monthly appointments based on the funds they have. They work diligently to serve their clients through financial assistance and 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 an 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 with the necessities needed to support themselves and their families.