

## LIAISON REPORT

AGENCY: Emergency Residency Project

LIAISON: Michelle Fullerton

**1. Need for Program.** Describe who the target population is and whether their numbers are increasing or decreasing. Indicate the source of this information. Also, indicate how the program/service is different and how it is similar to others and what would happen if the program/service ceased to exist. List the priorities established by ASSET Funders, which the programming addresses.

ERP provides transitional housing, acts as a homeless shelter, helps with rent/utility assistance on an emergency basis, 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 at a local motel 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 30 days. Average shelter capacity is 24. The upstairs is utilized by the men, while the next door apartments are for women and families. The shelter has continuously been at capacity for several years running. They are now able to divert an average of 17 inquiries a month to other resources or find a solution to their living situation that keep them out of the temporary shelter. An average turnaway number is still around 5-8 per day.

**Homelessness Prevention** – Rent and utility assistance is provided once every 12 months to help prevent eviction or utility shut off. ERP works in conjunction with Good Neighbor and several other agencies offering similar services to prevent repetition of services. Annually an individual can receive \$250 and a family \$350.00. Assistance this year for the service is averaging \$13,000-\$15,000 per month.

**Transitional Housing** – This program has apartments with an average stay of 9 months, maximum of 24 months. With the hiring of a Housing & Volunteer Director and a Housing Support Specialist, the agency is focusing heavily on working with local landlords and finding community resources to help transition people to long term housing on their own affordable terms. The apartments are next door to the shelter offering families a sliding fee scale for their monthly rent. This is the only program of its kind in the area.

**2. Program Strengths.** Pick two to four factors that contribute most importantly to the program/service outcomes. Do not list everything that is satisfactory. We will assume that things not mentioned are okay. For each strength describe some supporting evidence.

The shelter has donated meals, cleaning supplies, bathroom supplies, and other miscellaneous items donated by local churches and organizations. The daily evening meals are prepared by volunteers from local churches removing the burden from shelter employees.

They have longtime board members who understand the history of the organization and its challenges. Under the leadership of Carrie Moser, they've now completed a long term strategic plan. Board limits are now in place for new members with a maximum of (2) 3 year terms. Current members are grandfathered in but they have seen some turnover of positions with changes the agency has made over the last 14 months. Increased staffing has helped the organization to begin more planning for outreach programs. They hope to work with Ames PD and ISU PD to get out in the community to areas where they know homeless individuals hang out to see about getting them enrolled in programs or into shelter to begin the transition back into housing. This is in the early stages of planning.

**3. Program Weaknesses.** Select factors that detract most from the program/service achieving its outcomes. Present details as described above. Recommendations for reducing these weaknesses should follow the discussion of each weakness.

The program doesn't have the space or finances to keep up with demands. They average 5-8 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 options" says Carrie, and although the number of apartments has quickly grown in the area, there still is not a decrease in pricing nor do many landlords want to participate in any type of subsidized housing programs due to hassle and paperwork. Credit and background checks can also be an obstacle for many people seeking housing.

**4. Financial Outlook.** Current funding concerns should be described. In addition, the assessment of the program's plan to cope with shrinking resources should be given.

The shelter has run with deficit funds over the last several years. Additional grants and fundraising were key in their audit showing positive funds this past year. The long term plans include wanting to build a new, larger shelter to house their single occupants where the offices would be located and a separate building where families could be housed creating more safe conditions for women and children.

ERP ran out of City of Ames funding in October and the Story County funding will be out by December even with prior increases to funding, for their transitional housing program.

The shelter funds were used by February for the city and March for the county.

**5. Internal Management Practices.** Summarize your assessment of the management of the agency, and the role of the Board. If there are deficiencies, details should be provided. Conclude with recommendations when appropriate.

ERP is working to change sheltering from their main objective to educating and creating long term housing solutions for the homeless. Over several years time they plan to shift more funding to preventative and education programs like Rapid Rehousing to try and prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place. A shelter will always be a mainstay of their organization as well.

700+ people are assisted annually by the agency and they currently have 7 households participating in the rapid rehousing program. They make referrals to Primary Healthcare as needed and are working with other agencies on a network of services that can evaluate the risk an individual faces and get them the necessary services as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**6. Agency Suggestions/Comments.** Make note of any suggestions, comments or questions agencies may have with regard to the ASSET process, budget forms and or anything else that relates to the process.

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**GENERAL ASSESSMENT:**