LIAISON REPORT

AGENCY: __Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance____Liaison: Jane Acker

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.

As the name suggests, Good Neighbor provides emergency assistance with rent, utilities, food, and transportation to Story County residents in crisis or near-crisis situations. Need for support has been substantially impacted by coronavirus this year. Need dropped during the spring moratorium on evictions, when federal supplemental unemployment and stimulus payments were also in effect, then surged when those programs ended. Typical total assistance provided averaged $11,000 per month prior to the pandemic, dropped to $8,000 during May and June, then rose to $23,000 in July. High levels of need are expected to continue.

Good Neighbor coordinates effectively with Bridge Home, MICA, the Salvation Army, City of Ames, and other resource providers. Priority areas its programs address are those concerning financial stability and health.

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.

After an initial adjustment period, Good Neighbor has adapted well to the covid environment. Clients are no longer interviewed in person, but can apply for assistance online using an app on their phones. Internal paperwork has also been simplified and computerized. All forms of assistance are now needs-based, and amounts provided can be larger than previously, depending on household size and situation. The board approved hiring a part-time intern/employee to focus on processing applications and handling calls, which will free up the director to work on fund-raising, donor communications, and other important work that she has been unable to prioritize given the press of daily business.

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.

Dependence on volunteer support has been problematic this year. Senior volunteers have retired for health reasons, and the computer-savvy and energetic ISU student volunteers who have been so helpful in their stead are often unavailable due to scheduling issues, exams, vacations, etc. The future part-time employee should be very useful in providing consistency and reliability.

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 faith communities that form the core of GNEA's financial support are experiencing their own difficulties, and some will be reducing their commitment. In addition, the special fund-raising events that many congregations hold to benefit Good Neighbor have been cancelled this year. Individual donors have stepped up generously, but until the organization develops more systematic fund-raising strategies, that source of funds is unreliable.

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.

The GNEA board meets monthly and is well-informed and involved. Financial reports are detailed and complete. The director is highly capable and is making great progress in streamlining operations and heightening their efficiency and impact.

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.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT: Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance is a valuable part of Story County's safety net. The organization collaborates with other agencies to eliminate duplication and leverage limited resources. Reduction in funding would mean reduction in number of households served and/or amount of assistance per household, with difficult to dire consequences for those affected.