

Housing Happenings

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)

Although this issue of MAP AIDSLine Brief focuses on the Ryan White Care Act, it is not the primary source of funding for housing assistance. The main source of funding created specifically to assist people living with HIV/AIDS with housing is Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA). The purpose of the HOPWA program is to help people with HIV and their families obtain or keep housing. HOPWA funds can be used for many housing and housing-related expenses, social services and housing development.

Federal HOPWA Program

Since 1992, HOPWA has helped tens of thousands of low-income HIV positive people by providing stable housing and related support services. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which administers HOPWA nationwide, says that in 1999, \$225 million in HOPWA funds helped more than 51,000 people living with HIV/AIDS.

Minnesota HOPWA Funding

In Minnesota, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) administers HOPWA funding. With community assistance and input they develop guidelines about the types of housing-related services and projects most needed.

In 1995, HUD changed the way HOPWA funds were given in Minnesota. Unfortunately, while this change increased the amount of funding given to the Twin Cities, it totally eliminated it for the rest of the state. This created a loss of valuable programs and caused a gap in services for individuals in Greater Minnesota. For example, until then, MAP had HOPWA funds available to provide rent assistance for people living in Greater Minnesota. After the change funding was eliminated and we were not able to offer the program for over a year until a new funding source was identified. Fortunately, in 1998, HOPWA funding to Greater Minnesota was restored. Each year MHFA receives over \$90,000 in HOPWA specifically designated for Greater Minnesota and an additional \$600,000 for the thirteen county metro area. Although that sounds like a significant amount of money, rents in the metro area have increased 10-20 percent in the last twelve months and there is a reported deficit of 15,000 units of affordable housing.

Below are some examples of recent HOPWA funded programs in Minnesota:

- Rural AIDS Action Network (RAAN) provided emergency housing assistance to approximately four households in rural Minnesota
- Rehabilitation of Clare House resulted in an adult foster care residence and later funding resulted in Grace House II.
- Minnesota American Indian AIDS Task Force and Powderhorn Residents Group constructed Maynidoowahdek Odena, a permanent housing complex of 14 units in Minneapolis
- Minnesota AIDS Project's housing program provided transitional housing assistance to 58 people living with HIV and their families throughout the Twin Cities (since September 1999).

Housing Happenings is a timely update of housing-related information for HIV service providers and consumers. For further information, contact Kim Lieberman, MAP Housing Systems Advocate, at 612-373-9166.