

City of Alexandria, Virginia

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3-13-01

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 1, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING ALLOCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM AMENDMENT FOR A RENTAL ACCESSIBILITY MODIFICATION PROGRAM (RAMP)

ISSUE: Consideration of an allocation of Community Development Block Grant monies for a new grant program for the modification of rental units to improve accessibility for tenants with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council:

- 1) Approve the establishment of a Rental Accessibility Modification Program that would provide grant funds for the rehabilitation of rental housing units in Alexandria, expressly for increasing accessibility for tenants with disabilities residing in those rental units;
- 2) Allocate \$75,000 for this program, as follows:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
\$60,000	CDBG - Business Assistance Loan Program	Design and construction of accessibility modifications
\$15,000	Housing Trust Fund	Mini-grants for minimal modifications
- 3) Authorize the City Manager to submit the attached program amendment (Attachment I) to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to amend the current year CDBG program to include the activity in Recommendation #1, above.

BACKGROUND: The Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development for FY 2001-2005, approved by City Council on May 23, 2000, calls for staff to work with the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) to explore the development of a proposal for a home rehabilitation program for disabled tenants needing accessibility modifications for their residences.

In developing the proposal, staff first met with the Housing Committee of the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities to discuss key elements of the program's design. Staff then reviewed the concept for a proposed Rental Accessibility Modification Program with the full membership of ACPD and with the members of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). Both ACPD and AHAC strongly endorse the establishment of such a program.

DISCUSSION: Staff recommends the establishment of a Rental Accessibility Modification Program for tenants in residences in the City who require accessibility modifications to their homes to facilitate continued residency. The following are staff recommendations for program requirements for the Rental Accessibility Modification Program:

1. The population to be served is households with income up to the upper Section 8 income limit (currently \$50,200 for a family of four), with at least one household member who has a disability.
2. Funds would be provided for primary residence modifications that are necessary to accommodate the particular circumstances of the disabled member(s) of the household.
3. The primary residence that is the subject of the proposed modifications would be required to be within the corporate limits of the City of Alexandria.
4. Financial assistance would be in the form of a grant from federal Community Development Block Grant monies. The maximum amount for such a grant would be \$50,000. That limit would be revisited following the first year of program experience (or sooner if deemed necessary), to determine whether it provides the appropriate level of service to the community.
5. Rehabilitation services would be provided using procedures for developing work statements and contracting for services currently used by the existing Home Rehabilitation Program of the Office of Housing.
6. The Program would also have a "mini-grant" component, under which applicant households needing limited modifications (for example, installation of bathroom grab bars or specialized fixtures) would be able to request a grant of up to \$1,500, based on a privately provided written estimate of the work to be performed. Under this component, the City would make direct payments to the vendor providing the modification. Staff recommends that the Housing Trust Fund be used as the source of funds for these grants, as the cost of meeting site-specific federal requirements would outweigh the level of financial assistance being provided.
7. Landlords would be encouraged to execute an agreement which deems the modifications to be a permanent improvement to the rental property that is the subject of the rehabilitation. In each case in which a landlord does not enter into such an agreement, the City would commit monies to retrofit the housing unit when the disabled tenant vacates

the unit. Under such circumstances, the landlord may require that the City escrow funds adequate to complete the retrofitting improvements. At the time the need for such funding is identified, staff will identify the most appropriate source of funds. Staff recommends that the Housing Trust Fund be considered as one of the possible sources of funds for this activity. However, because staff hopes to avoid this situation through the agreements noted above, staff is not recommending a budget allocation for this purpose at this time.

Staff recommends that \$60,000 in FY 2001 Community Development Block Grant monies to support the Rental Accessibility Modification Program be transferred from the City's Business Assistance Loan Program, which will not need these monies for loans to small businesses in the current fiscal year. Funding for FY 2002 will be addressed in the context of the City Manager's proposed budget.

FISCAL IMPACT: Transfer of \$60,000 in budgeted Community Development Block Grant monies from the Business Assistance Loan Program, and transfer of \$15,000 from the Housing Trust Fund, to support Rental Accessibility Modification Program grants.

ATTACHMENT: I. Program Amendment

STAFF: Mildrilyn Stephens Davis, Director Office of Housing
Robert E. Mulderig, Deputy Director, Office of Housing
Shane Cochran, Division Chief, Program Implementation Division
Patrice McAuliffe, Rehabilitation Loan Coordinator II
Eric Keeler, Rehabilitation Loan Coordinator I

**U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
 CPD Consolidated Plan
 Listing of Proposed Projects**

Project ID/ Local ID	Project Title/Priority/ Objective/Description	HUD Matrix Code/Title/ Citation/Accomplishments	Funding Sources	
0027	Rental Accessibility Modification Program (RAMP)	14A Rehab; Single-Unit Residential	CDBG	\$ 60,000
	Special Needs/Non-Homeless	570.202	ESG	\$ 0
	This program will provide grants for accessibility modifications to rental units for tenants with disabilities. For cases in which the landlord requests that the unit be returned to its non-accessible state after the disabled tenant moves out, an appropriate source of non-federal funding will be identified.	11 Housing Units	HOME	\$ 0
			HOPWA	\$ 0
			TOTAL	\$ 60,000
			Total Other Funding	\$ 0

Help the Homeless? No Start Date: 04/01/01
 Help those with HIV or AIDS? No Completion Date: 06/30/01

Eligibility: 570.208(a)(2) - Low / Mod Limited Clientele
 Subrecipient: Local Government
 Location(s): N/A

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