

Affordable Housing

FACTS FACTS FACTS FACTS FACTS

Creating healthy communities

Affordable housing is core to a strong economy and a healthy region. Housing is affordable when a family with a moderate or low income pays no more than 30-40% of its monthly income for housing.

Increasingly, housing is not affordable for many Twin Cities area working families. This lack of affordable housing for people of all ages and incomes causes families stress, dampens productivity and stifles job growth.

The Metropolitan Council recognizes that durable and well-maintained housing is important to the local and regional tax base, livability and business climate, as well as to the health of the region as a whole. The Council creates affordable housing opportunities in the region through several programs and initiatives.

Creating choices with housing vouchers

The Council's housing and redevelopment authority (Metro HRA) administers the federal Section 8 Housing

Choice voucher program, and several related programs, in communities throughout Anoka, Carver, and most of suburban Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. The programs use the existing private rental market to provide safe, sanitary and affordable housing for a monthly average of 6,600 low-income seniors, disabled individuals and families. Participating property owners are guaranteed a stable source of rental income. Eligible households pay 30% to 40% of their incomes for rent, and Metro HRA pays the remainder, within established fair-market rent guidelines. Families may rent any type of housing in the Metro HRA service area, thus avoiding a concentration of assisted housing. All housing units in the program are inspected annually by HRA staff.

At the end of 2007, the program had a waiting list of 5,500 eligible households.

Scattered suburban public housing

The Council operates a small, scattered-site public housing program of 150 units located

in 11 cities in suburban Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. The Family Affordable Housing Program (FAHP) gives families with low incomes the opportunity to live in neighborhoods outside areas with high levels of poverty.

The FAHP units are leased to families on the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority and Metro HRA waiting lists. At least 40% of the units are reserved for households with incomes of 30% of area median income or less; the remainder are leased to households with incomes of 80% of median or less.

The cities where the homes are located each identified the need for more affordable rental housing in their comprehensive plans, and signed an agreement with the Council to participate in the program. A private professional firm handles day-to-day property management.

Council determines housing needs

Communities in the seven-county metropolitan area are required by state law to plan to meet their local share of the region's overall projected need

for low- and moderate-income housing. State law also requires the Metropolitan Council to assist communities to accomplish this planning.

As part of the decennial planning cycle, the Council made an estimate of the region's overall need for new affordable housing units between 2011 and 2020, and allocated that need among communities in the region that are connected to the regional wastewater collection and treatment system. Each community is responsible for identifying the amount of land needed to accommodate both its overall forecasted growth and its share of the region's affordable housing need.

Grants support community efforts

The Council, through the Local Housing Incentives Account of the Livable Communities program, makes grants to communities to help create and preserve affordable rental and ownership housing. From 1996 through 2007, the Council awarded \$18.5 million in grants (112 grants to 56 communities). The grants provide gap financing for projects that are expected to add 2,022 new affordable rental units and 670 rehabilitated rental units; and 580 affordable new and 320 rehabilitated ownership units. The projects represent \$482 million in total development investments.

For more information

- Visit <http://www.metrocouncil.org/housing/index.htm> for more details about the Council's housing programs.
- To contact the Metro HRA, call 651-602-1428.
- Related fact sheets:
 - [Family Affordable Housing Program](#)
 - [Livable Communities](#)

Pub. 14-08-053 Sept. 2008