

County survey seeking input on low-income housing

By Amy Smith, Union staff writer | Posted: Monday, August 18, 2014 9:23 am

JEFFERSON — The Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium is asking area residents to participate in an updated Housing and Community Development Plan survey.

The survey, a federal requirement for counties participating in a HOME consortium, addresses the communities needs and its shortfalls, according to JCEDC Executive Director Genevieve Borich. It also asks residents to identify whether the plan is targeting the right areas, Borich added.

To participate in the survey, visit www.waukeshacountyconplan.com/survey.html.

The federal government requires that the plan be updated every five years. In 1998, Jefferson, along with Washington and Waukesha counties, joined to form the HOME Consortium, making them eligible to receive federal HOME program funds to support the creation and maintenance of affordable housing. Ozaukee County joined the consortium in 1999.

The goal of the HOME Consortium is to advance home ownership opportunities with a downpayment assistance program and to maintain the quality of the existing housing stock through low-interest housing rehabilitation loans.

All programs are available to households in the participating counties that earn 80 percent or less of the area median income. Every municipality in Jefferson, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha counties, with the exception of Sullivan (Jefferson County) and Chenequa and Oconomowoc Lake (Waukesha County), is recognized as a participant in the HOME consortium.

Borich said Jefferson County's participation in the consortium mainly focuses on senior housing.

The HOME consortium receives an annual allocation of HOME money through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The consortium then publishes an annual budget for public comment by September, and the budget is approved by the HOME Board in October.

The HOME Consortium allocates its funding into three basic categories: administration, core programs and CHDO projects. Funding for the core programs is given directly to eligible families, and CHDO funds are awarded to eligible organizations through a competitive process.

The consortium also has funding available for non-CHDO development of affordable housing. This funding is open to nonprofit and for profit developers based on availability.

In total, the consortium has been awarded \$20,810,780 since 1998. Currently the HOME Consortium operates a home ownership assistance program, a purchase/rehab program and home rehabilitation assistance programs .

The consortium also carries out large-scale development projects using CHDO set-aside funding as well as some program income and other dedicated revenue sources.