

Summary of Comments on Proposed Moderate Income Housing Program

The following are comments gathered from the public hearings and through written comment received on the draft Moderate Income Housing Program RFP during the public comment period. Notice of the draft RFP was sent to contacts in the KHRC database, the Kansas Association of Counties (KAC), League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM), Kansas Legislative Policy Group (KLPG), and the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (wKREDA).

Approximately 73 people, composed of developers, city and county officials, county and regional economic development representatives, and other interested individuals, attended public hearings in Topeka, Chanute, Lyons, Elkhart and Colby during the last two weeks of June.

1. **The deadline for submitting applications should be extended past August 31 to give more time for preparation.**

We believe that time is of the essence and we want to see construction begin as soon as possible so that we can show results to the legislature, underscore the importance of the program, and seek greater funding next year.

2. **Grants rather than loans should be allowed because they address the need better.**

We expressed flexibility at the hearings for loans or grants and note that we have already stated that grants may be allowed.

3. **Income limits should be removed at least on some of the units.**

We added the word "generally" for households between 60% and 150% of non-metro area median income to allow for flexibility on this point.

4. **Low income housing should be allowed on at least some of the units.**

The legislature wants us to serve the moderate income work force. We already serve the low income population with all of our programs and that is the problem we are trying to address – serving a moderate income person/family that is not served by the other programs. We have left the door open somewhat, however, with the wording change mentioned with regard to comment No. 3.

5. **Developers should be specifically mentioned as being able to assist communities with the applications and developments.**

This was incorporated into the final draft.

6. **Modular and manufactured housing should be mentioned as allowed development.**

This was incorporated into the final draft.

7. **A lack of investor interest should be mentioned as one of the reasons for the difficulties in achieving housing development in rural communities.**

This was incorporated into the final draft.

8. **There should be a higher cap than \$400,000 allowed for each award.**

We want to spread the funding around the state as much as possible in order to help the maximum number of communities. While KHRC recognizes the limitations of \$400,000 per award, to allow for a higher amount would place even more limitations on a severely limited program.

9. **Exceptions should be allowed for historic buildings regarding accessibility and energy efficiency standards.**

This was incorporated into the final draft and includes all older buildings.

10. **More than 12 months should be allowed to complete a development funded through MIHP.**

We need to keep a strict timeline. If the housing is as urgent as every community states, then it should be urgent to complete the construction as quickly as possible. We could allow for more time if absolutely necessary and certainly wouldn't try to stop a development if it were underway but not completed within 12 months.

11. **Suggestions were made to provide more specific guidance on what we are willing to fund.**

The guidelines are purposely open ended in order to allow for the maximum creativity of effort and to make as few regulations as possible.

12. **Favor applications that work with vo-techs, high schools or community colleges to build single family homes using the funds to buy materials, then sell the house and use the funds to build another house, training and educating new labor in the process.**

This is a good idea but we do not want to discourage any ideas or strategies on how to use the funding. We will not know what plans to favor until we do the actual reviews of the applications.

- 13. Favor applications that purchase and rehab historic homes in order to leverage the historic credits.**

This is a good idea but we do not want to discourage any ideas or strategies on how to use the funding. We will not know what plans to favor until we do the actual reviews of the applications.

- 14. Favor applications that purchase and clean up blighted homes providing a broader impact to the neighborhood and community.**

This is a good idea but we do not want to discourage any ideas or strategies on how to use the funding. We will not know what plans to favor until we do the actual reviews of the applications.

- 15. Have grantee workshops after awards are made and provide guidance to unsuccessful applicants.**

We will likely do this but do not think it needs to be in the plan.

- 16. Allow developers and property owners to directly apply for funds as many smaller cities lack capacity to do this.**

Allowing developers and property owners to directly apply for the funds is not allowed by the law but it does not mean they cannot work closely and directly with communities and counties, including those who lack capacity.