



Understanding the Importance of Reaching the Un/underserved

The Federal Law requires that Councils make an aggressive effort to demonstrate that the projects are reaching the unserved or the underserved. The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council places great emphasis on this requirement and applicants and grantees who do not take proactive steps to ensure that project activities contain active efforts to include unserved or underserved populations will not succeed. This section is the highest awarded section outside of the Narrative which is worth 50 points.

Based on P.L. 106-402:

The term "unserved and underserved" includes populations such as:

- ★ Individuals from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds
- ★ Disadvantaged individuals
- ★ Individuals with limited English proficiency
- ★ Individuals from underserved geographic areas (rural or urban)
- ★ Specific groups of individuals within the population of individuals with developmental disabilities, including individuals who require assistive technology in order to participate in and contribute to community life.

It is not enough to classify people with disabilities as disadvantaged individuals. Grantees must be more targeted in their efforts, based on the above criteria. In this 5- Year Plan, the Ohio DD Council is interested in how projects can provide, to the extent it is available, information on the status of individuals with developmental disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse background, including information on disparities.

An Example of a Reasonable Unserved/Underserved Plan of Action

Housing Accessibility/Visitability Training: This training project is directed to housing professionals; therefore, it is appropriate to consider not the professionals themselves, but their tenants and customers in talking about unserved and underserved populations.

Note: The purpose of the questions is to provoke applicants to do critical thinking on which population is considered unserved or underserved in the project area and how best to collaborate with and include those individuals in the project activities and outcomes.

4.1 Who are the unserved/underserved population(s) in your project area?

The Grantee responded by asking the question: What are the populations that have the greatest difficulty in finding accessible housing to meet their needs?

In the greater Cincinnati urban area it is the poor and particularly the African American poor, who have the most limited housing choices. Immediately outside the Cincinnati metropolitan area to the east, there also are several rural Appalachian counties where housing choice is also very limited.

4.2 Identify the unserved/underserved population(s) you plan to serve.

HOME plans to serve these two diverse population groups: (a) inner-city, poor, African American tenants with disabilities in Cincinnati and (b) homeowners and tenants with disabilities in Highland, Brown, and Adams Counties.

4.3 Describe their needs and any barriers to service.

The goal is to reach the housing providers, landlords and real estate agents, of these groups to increase their awareness of accessibility needs. The primary barriers to reaching these

housing providers are that the inner city landlords in Cincinnati are often small real estate investors who have little time for training or professional improvement. Many have full-time jobs and are managing the property on the side or are one-man businesses who have no professional training. In the rural counties the primary barrier to reaching housing providers is the low population density. Marketing a training program is a serious challenge. Much time and effort must be invested for a relatively low number of attendees.

4.4 Describe the affirmative or proactive outreach activities you will perform. What are the expected outcomes?

Outreach to inner city Cincinnati landlords will be primarily through the trade association, Real Estate Investors Association, whose members are small independent owners and landlords. In addition, we will work with the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority to reach Section 8 landlords. HOME has good relations with both these organizations and has done joint projects with them in the past. The rural counties will be more of a challenge. We plan on offering training in the third year of the project in these counties to allow lead time to build relationships with the Realtors and major property owners in counties.

4.5 List key community people/organizations you will work with to serve the unserved/underserved population(s).

Outreach will include contacts over time with the small local Boards of Realtors where they exist and the most active real estate companies. In addition we will seek the help of the disability agencies and groups serving the area. Most counties also have an identified staff person responsible for fair housing compliance and we will enlist their aid in encouraging participation in the courses.

4.6 What are your plans to sustain outreach activities?

The outreach will be focused on gaining attendance at the training courses. The inner city outreach efforts will be

sustained through HOME's ongoing relationships with the key organizations. The outstanding attendance of 121 landlords for the 2007 training at a Real Estate Investor Association meeting shows that this strategy is successful. Assuming the course in the rural counties is successful; the participant housing providers will gain contacts and resources to answer future questions or help seek solutions to accessibility barriers.

4.7 How will you measure progress towards your outreach goals?

Progress will be measured by attendance at the courses.

4.8 What process will you use to address unforeseen barriers?

One identified barriers could be reaching inner city Cincinnati landlords due to changes in the Real Estate Investors Association. Although they have been regular in offering trainings and supportive of HOME for several years, it is possible that a change in leadership could disrupt the relationship or they could decide to no longer offer training. This would require identifying an alternative way to reach inner city landlords. HOME's connections with the housing authorities, the Apartment Association, and individual Section 8 landlords would be tapped to find an alternative training partner. Other barriers in the rural counties would need to be solved through persistent networking in the counties and through seeking the advice of the Advisory Committee. If attendance at a specific training event is less than expected, we would provide another training opportunity to ensure the performance targets are met.

4.9 To the extent possible, describe how the project will identify and report disparities among the populations you plan to serve, including, but not limited to culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This is new information being asked by Council's funding source.

