

Accessibility Program

JANUARY - MARCH 2023



Planning & Development
Housing Services Division

About:

The Housing Services Division administers the **Accessibility Program** which assists low-income homeowners who need to make immediate repairs to their homes in order to deal with immediate health or safety problems such as the following:

- Exterior Ramp
- Bathroom Modifications
- Door Widening
- High Rise Toilet
- Grab Bars

Accessibility Program Grant January-December

2023	Funds	Grant Amount
		\$109,459

Accessibility Statistics

Number of Households Assisted	4
Average Cost of Repairs	\$4,209
30% LMI or Below	0%
80% LMI to 30%	100%

Accessibility Demographics

# of White Households	2
# of Black Households	2
# of Asian Households	0
# of Black and White Households	0
# of Hispanic Households	0
# of Women Head of Household	2
# of Disabled Households	4
# of Seniors Households	2

"This was one of the best experiences in my life! The ramp allows me to step out of my door and keep walking to my car."

Emergency Repair Program

JANUARY - MARCH 2023

Planning & Development
Housing Services Division



About:

The Housing Services Division administers the **Emergency Repair Program** which assists low-income homeowners who need to make immediate repairs to their homes in order to deal with immediate health or safety problems such as the following:

- Furnace Replacement
- Sewer Line Collapse
- Water Heater Replacement
- Significant Waterline, Wasteline, or Gas Line Leakage
- Medically Required and Documented Mechanical Systems
- Roof Replacement (not repair)

Emergency Repair Program Grant January -December

2023	Funds	Grant Amount
		\$289,347

Emergency Repair Statistics

Number of Households Assisted	16
30% LMI or Below	18%
30% LMI to 60%	82%
Average Cost of Repairs	\$4,258
Applicants in Intensive Care or At Risk	20%
Applicants in NIA Neighborhood	50%

Emergency Repair Demographics

# of White Households	5
# of Black Households	5
# of Asian Households	0
# of Hispanic Households	1
# of Women Head of Household	7
# of Disabled Households	5
# of Seniors Households	5

"The Staff went above and beyond. I can't say enough good things about this service"

Emergency Repair Program

JANUARY - March 2023

Planning & Development
Housing Services Division



Completed Projects

Roof Replacement



before

after



before



after

Furnace Placement

Hot Water Heater Placement

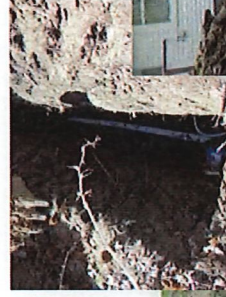


before



after

Replacement of Collapsed Sewer Line



CAC Infrastructure Work Group

21st Century LMI Infrastructure Challenges and Opportunities

April 2, 2023

Following are the recommendations of the CAC Infrastructure Work Group, comprised of Jefferson Square CAC Representative Alicia Barber and CAC At-Large Member Michael Bell. These recommendations include a Sep. 22, 2022, Google Teams Meeting with Bell, Public Works Director Braxton Copley and Public Works staff members Nicole Malott, Heather Chilgren and Jessica Venvertloh.

Those recommendations are:

1. Utility rates need to be determined with the utmost respect accorded to low- to moderate-income Topeka residents, who often have to make choices about which obligations they can meet in a time of mostly stagnant wages and increasing prices. LMI people should not become unhoused because they can't pay for their utilities. Regarding utility rate discussions, Copley said during the Sep. 22, 2022 Teams meeting there had been no discussion of rates other than internal work updating the model we developed to see what the impacts of the extreme cost increases and inflation will be on the Utilities Department forecasted budget in future years. He also said that his department continues to look at opportunities to make changes to the Utility Rate Refund Program to provide assistance to a greater segment of the LMI community. Currently his recommendations are being reviewed by the city manager and staff.
2. Race and class, and how they impact low- to moderate-income people and neighborhoods, should be examined and acted on (<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/infrastructure-plan-21st-century-fs.pdf>). Nationally, the infrastructure failures in Jackson, MS and Flint, MI, immediately come to mind. In Topeka, the consequences of aged and aging infrastructure is a daily fact of life for most, if not all, of Topeka's NIAs. The 21 Topeka NIAs are where many, if not most, of our city's residents of color and LMI residents live.
3. Topeka's changes to its 50/50 sidewalk replacement program (<https://www.topeka.org/engineering/50-50-sidewalk-repair-program/>); where the city now bases the program on financial need as low- to moderate-income property owners can now have their portion of sidewalk replacement costs forgiven based on the area family income guidelines formulated by the federal government, similar to how those guidelines pertain to housing.
4. Copley said he plans on extending the new sidewalk guidelines to other infrastructure projects.
5. The original DREAMS program format, which came from the volunteer- and citizen-based Neighborhood Initiatives Work Group, of each NIA approaching Public Works/Public Utilities with its plans to address challenges and create opportunities should be pursued, not the competitive processes that the City of Topeka put into its interpretation of the DREAMS program. The original DREAMS program is what the CAC adopted.
6. Alleys should be a priority investment area in those NIAs that have them.
7. It's unknown right now what Topeka's share will be of the approximately \$34 billion in federal infrastructure funds that will pass through the state to us or what areas in which the funds can be spent. We need to know what that share will be and what those funds can be spent on, and the City of Topeka needs to commit to directing a large share of it to our city's NIAs.
8. We need to know the arrangements in place for spending the \$35 million in federal American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds that were earmarked for infrastructure activities to ensure that a large share of those funds go to our city's NIAs.
9. The pursuit and enforcement of the Complete Streets multi-modal transportation paradigm needs to occur WITH the complete involvement of the city's residents (from the drawing board through implementation and assessment), not having Complete Streets imposed on them with little resident input and participation like the 12th Street project. Here's a link to Complete Streets: https://s3.amazonaws.com/cot-wp-uploads/wp-content/uploads/planning/MTPO/TSC_CompleteStreets.pdf.
10. The part the digital divide plays in 21st-century infrastructure discussions (I informed Braxton that we had reached out to IBSA executive director Lazone Grays).
11. The commitment the City should have regarding LMI people and neighborhoods, exhibited by former Topeka Planning and Development Director Bill Fiander when he began working for the City in 1998: "what would you like to do and how can we help?"

12. Understanding that the City may not be able to help in ways we'd prefer but can look for alternative ways to achieve NIA goals ("there's more than one way to get to Kansas City").

Regarding the digital divide, its place as an infrastructure issue and its impacts on LMI people and neighborhoods, IBSA, Inc. Executive Director Lazon Grays, who has been a leading local voice on the topic, has offered the following plan currently being pursued in Pittsburgh, PA as a template for what could happen in Topeka:

"Organizations involved in the Pittsburgh Digital Equity Coalition will come together every few weeks to build a detailed playbook for closing the digital divide in Pittsburgh in 5 years. The playbook will:

1. Describe the history of the digital divide in Pittsburgh, including our unique challenges;
2. Map the great work that has already been done by our local organizations, big and small;
3. Outline actions that we must all take to ensure everyone has access to affordable internet service, user-relevant Computers, and the skills to safely and securely use the internet; and
4. Set the stage to apply for federal digital equity grant dollars to make the plan a reality.

<https://pittsburghpa.gov/press-releases/press-releases/5873>

"PDEC's strategy to close the digital divide will focus on achieving:

1. Reliable, robust broadband internet for all residents at a price point they can afford;
2. Access to a computing device that meets the needs of the end-users;
3. Digital skills to safely and securely use the internet for resident needs; and
4. Accessible technical support when technology breaks."



JUNE 2022-

Property Maintenance Rehabilitation

Planning & Development
Housing Services Division



About:

The Housing Services Division administers the **Property Maintenance Repair Program** which assists low-income homeowners who need repairs to bring their homes up to code and make the home safe, livable, and healthy. City of Topeka Property Maintenance staff refer homeowners into the program. All eligible households must have an active property maintenance code violation and be on the deed of the property. Housing code violations must be for the home the person is residing in. Detached garages, weed violations, tree and trash removal are not eligible. The program is funded through a grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of Topeka. For assistance, contact Shane Wilson by phone (785-368-3711) or email (swilson@topeka.org).

before



after



before



after



Property Maintenance Rehab Grant

Funds	Paid	Committed	Uncommitted	Grant Amount
TOTALS	\$22,825	\$15,350	\$711,825	\$750,000

Property Maintenance Rehab Statistics

# of Households Approved	15
# of Persons Approved	36
# of Persons over 50 years old	24
# in Help Area	8
# in NRA Area	15

Property Maintenance Rehab Grant Programs

Applications Received	51
Applications Declined	24
Incomplete Applications in Process	10
Applications in Reimbursement Process	1
Applications Complete	15

Property Maintenance Rehab Demographics

# of White Households	22
# of Black Households	1
# of Asian Households	1
# of Black and White Households	1
# of Hispanic Households	3
# of Non Hispanic Households	22
# of Women Head of Household	12
# of Disabled Households	8



CITY OF TOPEKA

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

MAY 2023

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION SUPPORT FUNDS BUDGET REPORTS

Support funds are provided by the City of Topeka Division of Community Engagement through the Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Federal regulations permit the City of Topeka to enact policies in accordance with federal HUD guidelines. The following table includes items that are permissible and items that are restricted from federal funding use.

NIA Support	\$57,500.00
Contingency	\$ 5,000.00
Citizen Advisory Council	\$ 2,500.00
Total NIA Support Annual Budget	\$ 65,000.00

<https://www.topeka.org/citymanager/neighborhood-association-information/neighborhood-improvement-association-support-fund-budget-reports/>

CHANGING OUR CULTURE OF PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

2023 Mowing Initiative

- [Tip Sheet](#)
- [Community Resource List](#) – English
- [Community Resource List](#) – Spanish

bit.ly/TopekaCOCPM
785-368-9530

TSC GET DIGITAL

The Topeka and Shawnee County Get Digital program provides affordable and equitable access to computer and internet equipment and services, along with technical support, training opportunities, and digital literacy services for low and moderate-income individuals and families. Through community collaboration and partnership, the program focuses on strategies and investments to create opportunities that help to reduce barriers to technology access and use with the overall goal of ensuring that all Topeka and Shawnee County residents and neighborhoods have the equipment and services needed for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to other essential health and human services.

- > 780 DISTRIBUTED COMPUTERS INTO THE COMMUNITY
- > 35 DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING

NEWSLETTERS

Community Engagement is utilizing a new mailing address verification system that confirms both the accuracy and occupancy of each property captured on our NIA mailing lists.

We will make any necessary adjustments. Please note that the adjustments will be reflected on your budget reports at the end of February.

If you find any discrepancies please feel free to contact me and we will make the appropriate changes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESOURCE BAGS

The Community Resource Bag is a printed version of local community resource information to give a quick view of helping agencies you are mostly likely to need when helping yourself or someone else. We probably haven't captured everything, but our team is working hard to constantly improve the information by adding verified community programming on a weekly basis.

If you are interested in obtaining resource bags for your agency/organization please contact Monique Glaude ' at mglaudef@topeka.org or 785-368-4470.

- > 1,510 BAGS DISTRIBUTED

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 2024 Topeka DREAMS 3 Program Workshop, Wednesday, June 27th, 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. in the Cyrus K. Holliday Building, 620 SE Madison Ave. Holliday Conference Room and via zoom. To ensure that we have enough materials, **please RSVP by June 19th 2023.**
- National Night Out Planning Meetings June 15th @ 6:30 p.m. Topeka Shawnee County Public Library 1515 SW 10th Avenue 785-266-8666/info@parstopeka.org

For more information, please contact Monique Glaude ' at mglaudef@topeka.org or 785-368-4470.