Healthy Homes Grantees Region X, Northwest/Alaska

Name of Grantee: Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
Name of Project: Healthy Homes In Alaska
Amount Awarded: $ 700,000
Year of Grant: 2001
Contact Info: Mimi Burbage, 907-330-8192

Project Partners: The Rural Research and Development Departments, The Planning and Program Development Department, The Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC)

Summary of Project Activities:

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) is the lead applicant for a coalition of organizations that will address the threats to children's health through the identification of hazards, the remediation of dangerous situations and a statewide education effort on indoor air quality hazards that affect low-income children.

The organizations performing work under this grant include:

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) will be the lead applicant for this Healthy Children proposal. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation received the HUD's Secretary's commendation in Recognition as a High Performer in 2000. For this grant, the Rural Research and Development Departments will provide program and technical assistance to the project team. The Planning and Program Development Department will perform grant administration and financial management for the grant and all subcontracts. AHFC's Accounting department will handle all invoice payments, draw down requests, and fiscal reports to HLJD.

The Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC) will provide the project management and contract administration for all project activities. CCHRC is a non-profit corporation created to facilitate the development, testing and utilization of energy efficient, durable, healthy, and cost effective building technologies for Alaska and the world's cold climate regions. CCHRC will provide all project management and implementation, to include coordinating the efforts of all subcontractors (medical professionals and technical experts).

Alaska is in a unique position to provide substantial advances in housing technology for a number of reasons. The housing-based problems faced by Alaskans are not unlike those of low-income people in the contiguous United States, they just happen much faster and more pronounced in the far north. The length and severity of winters in Alaska, coupled with only of few hours of daylight in the cold months, causes people to spend upwards of 95% of their time indoors, higher than people in more moderate climates. This is major concern to the low-income residents, because they're often in overcrowded conditions and substandard housing.
The Healthy Homes in Alaska project will be conducted in three communities in the state, each representing a unique type of community: Fairbanks is Alaska's second largest city located in the Interior approximately 120 miles south of the Arctic Circle; Noorvik a larger bush community of 632 residents near the Bering Sea coastline; and Unalaska, a town of 4,238 which is located near the center of the Aleutian Islands. These three communities were selected because they represent opportunities to correct some of the most extreme hazards to children's health, have voiced an urgent community need and strong local commitment to solving their problems, and are generally representative of conditions and housing stock throughout the state. The initiative will focus on homes of low-income families with children (to include a sample of mobile homes), provide indoor air quality assessment, health screenings of affected children and housing remediation to selected homes.

The goal of this proposal is to develop and implement cost-effective approaches to identify and control housing based hazards to low-income children throughout Alaska, and to build local capacity to sustain the program after the grant term. The strategy brings a comprehensive and coordinated approach that leverages technical experience, previously completed research, and other efforts to further the understanding and implementation.

This project is structured into four primary phases. The first phase recruits low-income children with respiratory health issues (e.g. asthma) and the homes where they live. An assessment of the indoor air quality within their homes will be completed in this phase. The second phase of the project will address prevention and elimination of the causes of house-based hazards. Phase 3 (post mitigation) consists of health and home post mitigation testing and monitoring to verify clearance of home-based hazards, and to assess the correlation between health and home environment. Additionally, the curricula development for education and training will begin in this phase. The final segment of the project includes a comprehensive training and education program that targets resident education, and public awareness. Data analysis and published reports will conclude this project.

The goals for HUD's Healthy Homes Initiative are addressed in the following ways:

The Healthy Homes in Alaska project coordinates resources, expertise and in-kind contributions from the project partners to achieve a high level of cost-effectiveness and efficiency. We intend to reach the highest number of children in the target communities. The project builds local capacity to solve home environment issues through a strong educational component for the community partner organizations. Economic opportunities will be enhanced through alliance with the project's community partner organizations. The project builds skills and expertise among Alaska's rural and Native populations. Alaska's HUD plan identifies a lack of healthy, safe and affordable housing as the greatest impediment to fair housing in Alaska. This proposal addresses this issue directly.
The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation and the Cold Climate Housing Research Center along and their project partners, will implement an organized approach to address health and housing related issues. This includes developing the standards and personnel for cost effective, affordable assessment and control, performing the mitigation, and monitoring the results of control measures (environment and health improvements) to demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategies. In conjunction with these activities, the Healthy Homes team will develop and implement the educational/public awareness aspect of the project. This approach provides a logical, sequential and comprehensive methodology to addressing the health and safety hazards to low-income children in Alaska.

**Product Outcomes/Outputs:**

We intend to reach the highest number of children in the target communities. The project builds local capacity to solve home environment issues through a strong educational component for the community partner organizations. Economic opportunities will be enhanced through alliance with the project's community partner organizations. The project builds skills and expertise among Alaska's rural and Native populations. Alaska's HUD plan identifies a lack of healthy, safe and affordable housing as the greatest impediment to fair housing in Alaska. This proposal addresses this issue directly.