

2008 Innovations Awards Program
APPLICATION

CSG reserves the right to use or publish in other CSG products and services the information provided in this Innovation Awards Program Application. If your agency objects to this policy, please advise us in a separate attachment to your program's application.

ID # : 08-E-11MA

State: Massachusetts

Assign Program Category : Health & Human Services

1. Community Based Housing Program
2. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Community Development
3. Karen Langley, Director of Independent Living and Assistive Technology
4. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, 27 Wormwood Street, Boston, MA 02210
5. Phone: (617) 204-3851
6. Fax: (617) 727-1354
7. Karen.Langley@state.ma.us
8. www.mass.gov/mrc
9. The Community Based Housing Program is a housing development program which provides capital funds to nonprofit developers who set aside units for people with disabilities who are residing in institutions or at risk of institutionalization to transition to the community.
10. Legislation to create the program was passed in 2004 and state bond funds became available in 2005.
11. The program was created to address the need for housing for individuals with disabilities residing in institutions or at risk of institutionalization. Because of a lack of affordable, accessible and available housing in Massachusetts, individuals with disabilities had to wait for many years for vacancies. This resulted in long term institutionalization for many individuals with disabilities. This program provides development funds to non-profit developers for units integrated into

existing housing developments. In exchange for these development funds, the developer agrees to accept 'design specifications' specified by the agency to give a higher standard of accessibility than is statutorily required, encourages visitability and universal design to promote 'aging in place' and sets aside for up to 30 years those units that it has accepted development funds for on behalf of individuals with disabilities transitioning from institutional settings or to prevent institutionalization.

12. After the legislation was passed in 2004, staff from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC) met monthly for approximately one year to develop all aspects of the program including program guidelines, program regulations, consumer eligibility and certifications forms. DHCD, who funds the program, contracted with CEDAC, a quasi public entity, to administer the development side of the program including review of architectural drawings, monitoring development proposals, processing development fees and loan funds. DHCD also developed all the application and loan documents, held hearings and published the regulations.

MRC contacted non-profit developers, historically known to submit applications for housing developments from sources such as the Affordable Housing Trust and Tax Credit programs, to solicit their interest in the program. As a result of the need for "gap" funding for some of the developments under consideration, several developers requested CBH funding. As a result of their need, the CBH Program was able to provide funding in FY06 for 14 units. Since the first year, the requests for CBH funding have significantly increased and exceed allocated annual funds. In FY'07 the program received requests for funding of 53 units and for FY'08/09 it is anticipated requests for an additional 53 units. As a result of this program 120 housing units have been developed, or are in development, in integrated settings across the Commonwealth since FY05.

13. The program is new and creative as it meets the needs of both housing developers and human services agencies assisting individuals to transition from institutional settings to the community. It addresses the Commonwealth's Olmstead mandate and its Community First Initiative to assist individuals with disabilities to live in the community, with or without supports. Housing developers often struggle to find sufficient sources of funding to develop affordable housing. CBH provides an additional funding stream. Human services agencies such as; the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Department of Public Health and Executive Office of Elder Affairs assisting their clientele need access to accessible, affordable and available housing. Since units are set-aside for those transitioning from institutional settings or those at risk these agencies have a pool of housing vacancies to access as they come 'on line'.

14. No new staff or additional administrative resources were used to start up the program. Existing staff from DHCD, MRC, and CEDAC who were invested in the start up of the program were utilized.
15. CEDAC receives administrative fees (a percentage for every loan closed) from DHCD for managing the program. Annual “cap” is allocated of funds to be loaned to housing developers. In FY’06, \$1.8 million was utilized. In FY’ 08, there was 4 million in bond “cap” for providing loans to non profit developers.
16. The program is funded with state bond funds.
17. The program was passed by legislation authorizing the program. The legislative bill is 7004-8201.
18. No specific equipment, technology or software is used to operate and administer the program. Excel spreadsheets are utilized to track development elements.
19. To the best of our knowledge, this model originated in Massachusetts. Advocacy organizations such as the Independent Living Centers joined with other disability organizations such the Massachusetts Brain Injury Association (MBIA) to identify a need for housing for people coming out of institutional settings. People with mental illness and mental retardation were getting access to housing developed with funds from the Facilities Consolidation Funds (FCF). The FCF funds were used primarily to develop group homes to transition individuals with mental retardation and mental illness from state operated facilities. The advocacy groups wanted a funding stream like FCF but wanted it geared towards housing that is integrated in the community for individuals other than those served by FCF. These advocacy organizations joined with Citizen’s Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) to develop the legislative language and get legislative sponsors for the CBH program.
20. We are not aware of similar programs in other states.
21. The program has been fully implemented.
22. The program has met the defined need for more accessible, affordable and available housing targeted towards individuals transitioning from institutional settings and those at risk of institutionalization. However, not at the pace we would like due to limits in annual “cap” and not in geographic locations that are desired. The legislation currently limits availability of development funds to non profit developers only. Since there is a very small pool of non profit developers this limits our ability to determine where best to put our funds to meet a geographical need for housing. Most new development of housing in Massachusetts is currently in the hands of private, for-profit developers. Recommendations are being made to allow development funds for private, for-profit developers in the new housing bond bill authorization.

23. The program has not significantly changed since its inception. In the first year developers sought CBH funding to fill a 'funding gap' at the end of the process. However, now CBH funds are sought by developers up front as one of the many funding streams available to them.

24. Limitations or obstacles other states might encounter:

- Resistance to fund with state bond funds
- Passing legislation for the program
- Lack of cooperation among agencies "competing" for resources