

Sonoma County
Residential Antidisplacement and
Relocation Assistance Plan
October 2002

I. Background/Introduction

Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5304(d)(4)), Section 105(b)(16) of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12705(b)(16)), and implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 42, specify that a grantee under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs must certify that it has in effect and is following a “residential antidisplacement and relocation assistance plan” (Plan). As a CDBG and HOME entitlement grantee, Sonoma County must certify to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that it has and is following such a Plan.

The Plan must include three components: 1) one-for-one replacement requirements for lower-income housing units, 2) relocation assistance, and 3) a description of the steps Sonoma County will take to minimize displacement.

II. Activities Covered by the Plan

All activities involving the use of CDBG or HOME funds that cause displacement as a direct result of demolition or conversion of a lower-income dwelling are subject to the requirements specified in the Plan. Activities for which funds are first obligated on or after September 30, 1988 are subject to the requirements specified in the Plan, without regard to the source year of the funds.

III. Uniform Relocation Act

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (URA) governs displacement that directly results from acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property when federal funds are used. Sonoma County’s Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan is in no way intended to supercede the URA. CDBG and HOME assisted activities may still be subject to the requirements of the URA.

IV. One-for-One Replacement Units

All occupied and vacant occupiable lower-income dwelling units that are demolished or converted to a use other than as lower-income dwelling units in connection with an assisted activity must be replaced with comparable lower-income units.

Replacement lower-income dwelling units may be provided by any governmental agency or private developer and must meet the following requirements:

- A. The units must be located within Sonoma County (excluding the cities of Petaluma and Santa Rosa). To the extent feasible, the units shall be located within the same neighborhood as the units replaced.
- B. The units must be sufficient in number and size to house no fewer than the number of occupants who could have been housed in the units that are demolished or converted. The number of occupants who could have been housed in the units shall be in accordance with applicable local housing occupancy codes. The units may not be replaced with smaller units (e.g., a 2-bedroom unit with two 1-bedroom units), unless the County has provided information demonstrating that such a proposed replacement is consistent with the needs assessment contained in its HUD-approved Consolidated Plan.
- C. The units must be in standard condition and must at a minimum meet Section 8 Program Housing Quality Standards. Replacement lower-income units may include units brought from a substandard condition to standard condition if: 1) no person was displaced from the unit; and 2) the unit was vacant for at least 3 months before execution of the agreement between the County and the property owner.
- D. The units must initially be made available for occupancy at any time during the period beginning 1 year before the recipient makes public the information required under Section F below and ending 3 years after the commencement of the demolition or rehabilitation related to the conversion.
- E. The units must be designed to remain lower-income dwelling units for at least 10 years from the date of initial occupancy. Replacement lower-income dwelling units may include, but are not limited to, public housing or existing housing receiving Section 8 project-based assistance.
- F. Before the County enters into a contract committing it to provide CDBG or HOME funds for any activity that will directly result in the demolition of lower-income dwelling units or the conversion of lower-income dwelling units to another use, the County must make public and submit in writing to HUD the following information:
 - 1. A description of the proposed assisted activity;
 - 2. The location on a map and number of dwelling units by size (number of bedrooms) that will be demolished or converted to a use other than for lower-income dwelling units as a direct result of the assisted activity;
 - 3. A time schedule for the commencement and completion of the demolition or conversion;
 - 4. The location on a map and the number of dwelling units by size (number of bedrooms) that will be provided as replacement dwelling units. If such data is not available at the time of the submission to HUD, the submission shall identify the general location on an area map and the approximate number of dwelling units by size, and information identifying the specific location and number of dwellings units by size shall be submitted and disclosed to the public as soon as it is available;
 - 5. The source of funding and time schedule for the provision of replacement dwelling units;
 - 6. The basis for concluding that each replacement unit will remain a lower-income dwelling unit for at least 10 years from the date of initial occupancy; and
 - 7. Information demonstrating that any proposed replacement of dwelling units with smaller dwelling units is consistent with the needs assessment contained in the Sonoma County Consolidated Plan.

The one-for-one replacement requirements may not apply if HUD determines, based on objective data, that there is an adequate supply of vacant lower-income dwelling units in standard condition available on a non-discriminatory basis within Sonoma County. In making such a determination, HUD will consider such factors as vacancy rates, numbers of lower-income units in the County and the number of eligible families on the Section 8 waiting list.

V. Relocation Assistance

Each lower-income person who is displaced as a direct result of CDBG or HOME assisted demolition or conversion of a lower-income dwelling shall be provided with relocation assistance.

Relocation assistance includes advisory services and reimbursement for moving expenses, security deposits, credit checks, other moving expenses, including certain interim living costs, and certain replacement housing assistance.

Displaced persons have the right to elect, as an alternative to the benefits described in this Plan, to receive benefits under the URA, if they determine that it is in their best interest to do so. The following relocation assistance shall be available to lower-income displacement persons:

- A. Displaced lower-income persons will receive the relocation assistance required under 49 CFR 24, Subpart C (General Relocation Requirements) and Subpart D (Payment for Moving and Related Expenses) whether the person elects to receive assistance under the URA or the assistance required by CDBG and HOME regulations. Relocation notices must be distributed to the affected persons in accordance with 49 CFR 24.203 of the URA;
- B. The reasonable and necessary cost of any security deposit required to rent the replacement dwelling unit and for credit checks required to rent or purchase the replacement dwelling unit;
- C. Actual reasonable out-of-pocket costs incurred in connection with temporary relocation, including moving expenses and increased housing costs, if:
 1. The person must relocate temporarily because continued occupancy of the dwelling unit constitutes a substantial danger to the health or safety of the person or the public; or
 2. The person is displaced from a lower-income dwelling unit, none of the comparable replacement units to which the person has been referred qualifies as a lower-income dwelling unit, and a suitable lower-income dwelling unit is scheduled to become available through one-for-one replacement requirements.
- D. Replacement Housing Assistance. Displaced persons are eligible to receive one of the following two forms of replacement housing assistance:
 1. Each person shall be offered rental assistance equal to 60 times the amount necessary to reduce the monthly rent and estimated average monthly cost of utilities for a replacement dwelling to the "Total Tenant Payment", as determined under 24 CFR 813.107. All or a portion of this assistance may be offered through a certificate or housing voucher for rental assistance under the Section 8 program. Where Section 8 assistance is provided to the displaced person, the County must provide the person with referrals to comparable units

whose owners are willing to participate in the Section 8 program. To the extent that cash assistance is provided, it will be provided in installments.

2. In lieu of the housing voucher, certificate or cash assistance described above, the person may elect to receive a lump sum payment allowing them to secure participation in a housing cooperative or mutual housing association. This lump sum payment shall be equal to the capitalized value of 60 monthly installments of the amount that is obtained by subtracting the “Total Tenant Payment”, as determined under 24 CFR 813.107, from the monthly cost of rent and average monthly cost of utilities at a comparable replacement dwelling unit. To compute the capitalized value, the installments shall be discounted at the rate of interest paid on passbook savings in a federally insured financial institution conducting business within Sonoma County.

Displaced lower-income tenants shall be advised of their right to elect relocation assistance pursuant to the URA and the regulations at 49 CFR 24 as an alternative to the relocation assistance available under CDBG and HOME regulations.

VI. Eligibility for Relocation Assistance

A lower-income person is eligible for relocation assistance if they are considered to be a “displaced person” as defined in 24 CFR 42.305. A displaced person means a lower-income person who, in connection with an activity assisted under the CDBG or HOME program, permanently moves from real property or permanently moves personal property from real property as a direct result of demolition or conversion of a lower-income dwelling. For purposes of this definition, a permanent move includes a move made permanently and:

- A. After notice by the owner to move from the property, if the move occurs on or after the date of the submission of a request to the Sonoma County Community Development Commission for CDBG or HOME assistance that is later approved for the requested activity; or
- B. After notice by the owner to move from the property, if the move occurs on or after the date of the initial official submission to HUD of the consolidated plan under 24 CFR Part 91 describing the assisted activity; or
- C. Before the dates described in A & B above, if the County or HUD determines that the displacement was a direct result of conversion or demolition in connection with a CDBG or HOME assisted activity; or
- D. By a tenant-occupant of a dwelling unit, if any one of the following three situations occurs:
 1. The tenant moves after execution of the CDBG or HOME agreement covering the acquisition, rehabilitation or demolition and the move occurs before the tenant is provided written notice offering the tenant the opportunity to lease and occupy a suitable, decent, safe and sanitary dwelling in the same building/complex upon completion of the project under reasonable terms and conditions, including a monthly rent and estimated average monthly utility costs that do not exceed the greater of the tenant’s monthly rent before such agreement, or the total tenant payment as determined under 24 CFR 813.107 if the tenant is lower-income, or 30 percent of gross household income if the tenant is not lower-income.

2. The tenant is required to relocate temporarily, does not return to the building/complex, and either is not offered payment for all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with the temporary relocation, or other conditions of the temporary relocation are not reasonable.
3. The tenant is required to move to another dwelling unit in the same building/complex but is not offered reimbursement for all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with the move, or other conditions of the move are not reasonable.

If the displacement occurs on or after the appropriate date described in A & B above, the lower-income person is not eligible for relocation assistance if:

- A. The person is evicted for cause based upon a serious or repeated violation of the terms and conditions of the lease or occupancy agreement, violation of applicable federal, State or local law, or other good cause, and the County determines that the eviction was not undertaken for the purpose of evading the obligation to provide relocation assistance;
- B. The person moved into the property on or after the date described in A & B above after receiving written notice of the expected displacement; or
- C. The County determines that the displacement was not a direct result of the CDBG or HOME assisted activity and the HUD office concurs with this determination.

VII. Minimizing Displacement

The CDBG and HOME regulations regarding the demolition or conversion of lower-income dwelling units are designed to ensure that lower-income persons are provided with adequate, affordable replacement housing. Naturally, involuntary displacement should be discouraged whenever a reasonable alternative exists. Involuntary displacement is extremely disruptive and disturbing, especially to lower-income persons who do not have the means to locate alternative housing.

There are various ways that displacement can be minimized. The following are steps that will be taken to minimize the involuntary displacement of lower-income persons when CDBG or HOME funds are involved:

A. Screening of Applications

All CDBG and HOME applications will be reviewed to determine whether involuntary displacement is likely to occur. Those applications involving displacement will receive a lower priority recommendation for funding unless it can be shown that alternatives are not available.

B. Acquisition of Property

Applicants who apply for CDBG or HOME funds to acquire property for the development of lower-income housing will be encouraged to purchase vacant land. In the case of in-fill and other projects where this is not feasible and the project involves potential displacement, the applicant shall agree to allow the displaced lower-income person(s) to occupy the new housing at an affordable rent.

Applicants who utilize CDBG or HOME funds to rehabilitate or convert a lower-income unit to a non-residential use will be required to supply replacement housing consistent with paragraph IV, as well as relocation assistance.

C. Cost of Relocation Assistance

The cost of any required relocation assistance and the provision of replacement housing will be borne by the applicant and may be paid for out of CDBG or HOME funds awarded to the project.

VIII. Definitions

- A. “Comparable replacement dwelling unit” means a dwelling unit that:
1. Meets the criteria of 49 CFR 24.2(d)(1) through (6); and
 2. Is available at a monthly cost for rent plus estimated average monthly utility costs that does not exceed the “Total Tenant Payment” determined under 24 CFR 813.107 after taking into account any rental assistance the household would receive.
- B. “Lower-income dwelling unit” means a dwelling unit with a market rental (including utility costs) that does not exceed the applicable Fair Market Rent (FMR) for existing housing and moderate rehabilitation established under 24 CFR Part 888.
- C. “Standard condition” means units that at a minimum meet the Existing Housing Quality Standards of the Section 8 rental subsidy program.
- D. “Substandard condition suitable for rehabilitation” means units with code violations that can be brought to Section 8 Housing Quality Standards within reasonable monetary amounts.
- E. “Vacant occupiable dwelling unit” means a dwelling unit that is in a standard condition; a vacant dwelling unit that is in substandard condition, but is suitable for rehabilitation; or a dwelling unit in any condition that has been occupied (except by a squatter) at any time within the period beginning 3 months before the date of execution of the agreement by the County covering the rehabilitation or demolition.