

Merrimack Valley YMCA • Administrative Offices

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April 16, 2009

Susan E. Fink
Manager of Financial & Administrative Services
City of Lawrence
Community Development Department
147 Haverhill Street
Lawrence, MA 01840

Dear Ms. Fink,

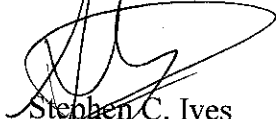
On behalf of the Merrimack Valley YMCA Boards of Directors and Trustees and the children and families we serve, thank you and the City of Lawrence for the opportunity to submit the attached concept paper towards funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009- Homelessness and Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program. The Merrimack Valley YMCA- Housing and Community Services Branch respectfully requests a \$70,012 grant for the **Single Room Occupancy** located at 40 Lawrence Street.

The \$70,012 investment would be used over three years in the following areas:

1. Short-term rental assistance for up to three months.
2. New tenant security deposits.
3. Hiring a new part-time 30 hour per week Case Manager.

Once again, thank you for your continued support of programs within the City of Lawrence and the YMCA. We hope that we will continue to partner with the City towards our unified goal of enhancing the lives of its community members. Should you need any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jessica Greus, Director of Grants and Contracts at (978) 725-6681.

Sincerely,


Stephen C. Ives
President & CEO

Enclosures

We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

Andover/North Andover Branch • Camping Services Branch • Housing & Community Development Branch • Lawrence Branch • Methuen Branch



Established in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1880, the Merrimack Valley YMCA is one of the oldest YMCAs in the United States. For the past 129 years, it has responded to the needs of the communities it covers - Lawrence, Andover/ North Andover, Methuen, and Southern New Hampshire - a geographical area covering 113 square miles and a population of 200,000. Annually, over 30,000 individuals benefit from the programming and services at one of the Merrimack Valley YMCA's five branches- Andover/North Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, Camping Services and Housing and Community Services Branch. The latest branch, Housing and Community Services Branch was established in October of 2008 and is also located at 40 Lawrence Street in Lawrence. The Merrimack Valley YMCA offers a wide variety of activities which include character-building programs for youth and teens, after school programming, leadership training, child care, transitional housing for homeless or near homeless men, swim lessons and aquatic safety, exercise and wellness, sports, and both day and residential youth camping. Each day, nearly 1,000 children are cared for at one of the eight childcare sites, establishing the Merrimack Valley YMCA as one of the largest pre-school and after-school child care providers in northeastern Massachusetts. The Merrimack Valley YMCA offers a variety of programs and resources to fulfill its mission and, in turn, builds strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

The Merrimack Valley YMCA- Housing and Community Services Branch is respectfully requesting a \$70,012 grant through the City of Lawrence Community Development Department and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The \$70,012 would be broken down over three areas within the Single Room Occupancy of the Housing and Community Services Branch located at 40 Lawrence Street in Lawrence, Massachusetts over the next three years.

The Housing and Community Services Branch houses 73 single room occupants (SRO)-all tenants who are male. Rent for tenants is decided on a sliding scale based on tenants income and HUD guidelines. Rent for tenants includes utilities, public restroom, public kitchenette, public recreation room, 24 hour security, membership to Lawrence Branch YMCA and SOS services.

The Housing and Community Services Branch is requesting the \$70,012 to be used as follows over the next three years:

1. \$11,000 for short-term rental assistance for up to three months. Due to personal issues which hinder some tenants ability to maintain a steady income the YMCA is looking to provide tenants the opportunity to apply for a one time up to three month rental assistance program. Although, the YMCA is providing transitional housing it deems it necessary to provide its tenants support during times of needs and can currently not due this due to budget restraints. If the YMCA could offer rental assistance it would allow the YMCA the opportunity not to have to evict a tenant and accrue all of the finances that associate eviction and rather allow a leeway for a tenant to secure the funds necessary to pay rent.
2. \$8,000 for security deposits. Once a room is available for a potential tenant in the SRO tracking down the tenant becomes very difficult. Tenants are either literally living on the streets or in homeless shelters. Often a potential tenant may not

have a security deposit which is equal to one months rent for many different personal reasons. However, the YMCA is hoping that by providing security deposits to potential tenants who may not have the money at the time a room become available will alleviate a lapse in filling a potential room vacancy and provide the tenant an opportunity to secure housing.

3. \$51,012 for a 30 hour per week part-time Case Manager. The YMCA is currently serving 73 men with two full-time staff (Director of SRO and 1 Case Manager) seven days a week, 24 hours a day which often limits availability of staff due to such an aggressive schedule and case load. The YMCA is eager to add one part-time 30 hour per week Case Manager to ensure quality of services to all men and allow the current case load to be spread over three staff members instead of two. Currently the YMCA is referring tenants to the following programs- Resource Educational Center, local drug and alcohol rehabilitation, mental health and counseling services, employment services, etc. The part-time case manager would work 30 hours per week at \$10 per hour for three years. The \$51,012 covers the salary and taxes associated with hiring this position for the next three years. The YMCA is in desperate need of a second case manager to ensure quality of support to all residents.

By securing \$70,012 and partnering with the Community Development Department, the Single Room Occupancy would be able to increase case management in the hopes of increasing the opportunities for tenants. Also, this funding would allow the Single Room Occupancy the opportunity to provide financial assistance to tenants in times of need.