



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Grants Management Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Elizabeth H. Tyler, AICP, City Planner/Director

FROM: Bob Grewe, AICP, Manager, Grants Management Division

DATE: June 19, 2003

SUBJECT: **Changes to Tenant Based Rent Assistance (TBRA) Program**

Description

Included on the agenda for the June 24 meeting of the Urbana Community Development Commission are proposed changes to the HOME-funded Tenant Based Rent Assistance (TBRA) Program.

Issues

The issue is whether the Commission should approve and recommend to the Urbana City Council the proposed changes to the TBRA Program.

Background

The City of Urbana began the TBRA program in 1995. The program was designed to provide continued rental assistance, for up to two years, to persons leaving transitional housing arrangements. The goal was for TBRA participants to pursue educational or work initiatives that would lead to self-sufficiency at the end of the two-year term. More detailed background information can be found in the attached copy of the *CITY OF URBANA TENANT-BASED RENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION*.

To date, the program has experienced limited participation. Staff believes this could be due to the following:

- TBRA only provides assistance for only two years, as opposed to a more permanent housing arrangement.
- TBRA requires case management, as opposed to Section 8, which does not require case management.
- With staff turnover at transitional housing facilities, new, incoming staff may not be aware of the TBRA program and therefore less likely to make referrals.

- The limited amount of funding and subsequent number of persons that can be served may diminish interest in the program.

The FY 2003-2004 Annual Action Plan provides for an additional \$40,000 of HOME funds to be invested in the TBRA Program. Staff believes that program guidelines should be re-visited and changes considered in order for the program to be better utilized.

The changes proposed by staff are included in the attached document, *CITY OF URBANA TENANT-BASED RENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (Proposed Changes 2003)*. Underline and strike editing note the proposed changes to the TBRA Program.

The following is a summary of the proposed changes.

1.0 PURPOSE AND USE

Include homeless, special needs populations as a population to be served.

This would expand the pool of eligible persons who are eligible to participate in the program. The Consolidated Plan indicates that the Special Populations include the following categories of persons:

- Elderly persons
- Frail elderly persons
- Persons with a severe mental illness
- Persons with developmental disabilities
- Persons with physical disabilities
- Persons with alcohol and other addictions
- Persons with dual diagnosis (both mental illness and substance abuse)
- Persons with AIDS or related diseases

Note that the availability of TBRA coupons is contingent on the amount of HOME funds budgeted for the program and rate of utilization of these funds.

This will clarify that the availability of coupons is contingent on funding and use. Due to the fluid nature of participants enrolling and leaving the program, it is difficult to designate a definitive number of coupons that are available.

2.0 ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS

Include definition of Special Needs Population.

3.0 PROGRAM DESIGN

Note that HOME funds will not be used to provide case management services. HUD regulations are clear that HOME funding for case management is not an eligible HOME-funded activity.

4.3 ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS Residency Requirements

Include special needs populations under the residency requirement provision

Add Prairie Center and Development Services Center

Change six (6) to three (months). This was changed previously, however the program guidelines were not edited to note this change.

Include social service agencies as providers for case management.

5.0 OUTREACH TO PROSPECTIVE TBRA PARTICIPANTS

Include reference to Prairie Center and Developmental Services Center since the proposed changes will include involvement of these organizations.

6.0 ADMINISTRATION OF WAITING LIST

Provide for a window of time to accept application in order to create a pool of applications. Staff will develop a process to prioritize the applicants. The prioritization will be based on the applicant's demonstrated likelihood that they can become self-sufficient at the end of the two-year term of the TBRA Program. The prioritization process will not be limited to reviewing a completed application. The process may include but not be limited to interviews with case managers, checking referrals, etc.

6.2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Include homeless, special needs criteria as one of the eligibility requirements.

Include reference to Prairie Center and Developmental Services Center since the proposed changes will include involvement of these organizations.

Options

1. Recommend the proposed changes to the TBRA Program to City Council.
2. Recommend the proposed changes to the TBRA Program, with additional changes to City Council.
3. Do not recommend the proposed changes to the TBRA Program to City Council.

Fiscal Impacts

This proposed changes would not have any direct fiscal impact as these monies have been previously budgeted.

Recommendations

Community Development staff recommend that Community Development Commission approve the proposed changes to the TBRA Program and recommend approval to the Urbana City Council.

Memorandum Prepared By:

**Bob Grewe, AICP
Manager, Grants Management Division**

Attachments:

CITY OF URBANA TENANT-BASED RENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CITY OF URBANA TENANT-BASED RENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
(Proposed Changes 2003)

**CITY OF URBANA
TENANT-BASED RENT ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

1.0 PURPOSE AND USE

This Program Description has been developed to facilitate the efficient and effective operation of a Tenant-Based Rent Assistance (TBRA) Program by the City of Urbana through its Grants Management Division and by the Housing Authority of Champaign County pursuant to an administrative agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) with the City of Urbana.

The primary objective of TBRA is to help previously-homeless households completing a transitional housing program rent private housing while continuing their progress toward self-sufficiency. The program allows households to select rental units within the Urbana corporate limits. The program promotes improvement of the local housing stock, because dwellings selected by participating households must meet local codes prior to occupancy.

TBRA operates independently of other rent assistance programs such as the Housing Authority Section 8 program. TBRA uses a waiting list separate from the Housing Authority Section 8 waiting list. Preferences established specially for TBRA apply to the program.

TBRA coupons are available to assist up to ten households at one time. Coupons are similar to certificates issued through the Section 8 program.

TBRA is funded through the City of Urbana HOME Program allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). TBRA Program guidelines conform to HOME Program regulations promulgated by HUD.

TBRA-eligible households are assisted up to 24 months.

2.0 ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS

Director The Director of the City of Urbana Department of Community Development Services.

Division Manager The Manager of the Grants Management Division within the City of Urbana Department of Community Development Services.

Household One person living alone, a single family (one- or two-parent), or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

Housing Authority The Housing Authority of Champaign County, a public non-profit agency providing rent-subsidized housing and rent assistance to low-income residents of Champaign County.

HUD U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the federal agency, which provides HOME Investment Partnership, funds for the TBRA Program.

TTP Total Tenant Payment (see Section 4.4)

Very Low-Income Household A household with income at or below 50 percent of median family income for Champaign County, Illinois, as determined periodically by HUD.

3.0 PROGRAM STAFF

The TBRA Program is administered jointly by the City of Urbana and the Housing Authority in accordance with an administrative agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) between the two agencies.

The City of Urbana has ultimate responsibility for the TBRA Program. The City of Urbana is contractually responsible to HUD for TBRA Program administration. Through its Department of Community Development Services, the City of Urbana provides case management services for TBRA participants, procures HOME funds through the federal cash management system for TBRA expenses, and files both financial and programmatic reports required by HOME Program regulations. City staff members assigned to the TBRA Program including the following.

The Manager of the Grants Management Division (Division Manager) oversees work of city staff assigned to the TBRA Program and monitors activities of the Housing Authority with respect to the TBRA Program. The Division Manager accepts and reviews appeals and complaints filed by TBRA participants.

The Grants Coordinator II in the Grants Management Division is responsible for procuring HOME funds for TBRA Program expenses through the federal cash management system and for submission of both financial and programmatic reports to HUD in connection with the TBRA Program.

The Transitional Housing Coordinator in the Grants Management Division is responsible for outreach to prospective TBRA participants, initial review of applications, assistance to participants with housing procurement, and case management services.

The Property Maintenance Inspector in the Building Safety Division participates with Housing Authority staff in joint inspections of TBRA housing units to determine their compliance with City of Urbana property maintenance codes.

The Director of the Department of Community Development Services hears and decides appeals filed by TBRA participants of decisions made the Division Manager.

The Housing Authority is responsible for TBRA application review and verification, participant selection, housing inspections, rent calculations, preparation of participant agreements, and payments to participating property owners and tenants. The Housing Authority administers the TBRA Program through its Section 8 division.

4.0 PROGRAM DESIGN

4.1 Use of TBRA Funds

TBRA funds are used to help very low-income households rent privately-owned dwelling units in Urbana. TBRA funds are used by the City of Urbana to make rental payments to private landlords on behalf of TBRA-eligible households.

4.2 Eligible Dwelling Units

Households receiving TBRA assistance may only rent units that

- * are located within the Urbana corporate limits,
- * meet or exceed Section 8 Housing Quality Standards and Urbana city codes,
- * rent for amounts comparable to unassisted units,
- * do not receive project-based rent subsidies (e.g., public housing units at Lakeside Terrace or privately-owned Section 8 units at Scottswood Manor),
- * are not cooperative units.

4.3 Eligible Households

Income criteria Applicants must have household income at or below 50 percent of median family income for Champaign County as determined periodically by HUD. The definition of income established for the Section 8 Program at 24 CFR Part 813 shall be used when determining income eligibility for the TBRA Program. Participating households may increase their income beyond program income limits during their tenure in the program and not lose their program eligibility.

Age criteria The head of household (or co-head of household) must be at least 18 years

old prior to approval of her/his TBRA coupon.

Residency requirements At the time of TBRA application, households must reside in one of the following transitional housing programs in Urbana-Champaign.

- * City of Urbana Transitional Housing for Homeless Families
- * Center for Women in Transition
- * A Woman's Place
- * Mental Health Center of Champaign County
- * Salvation Army Stepping Stone Shelter
- * Restoration Urban Ministries
- * Champaign House

Applicant households must have been in good standing with their transitional housing program for at least six months prior to being approved for a TBRA coupon. The term "good standing" shall mean timely in rent payments, compliant with transitional housing program guidelines, and cooperative with transitional shelter case management services.

TBRA participants are required to select and work with a case manager while participating in the TBRA Program. A TBRA participant may choose to work with the Transitional Housing Coordinator or with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs identified above. If a participant chooses to work with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs, said case manager shall work cooperatively with the Transitional Housing Coordinator.

4.4 Contract Rent and Subsidy Limitations

Fair Market Rent or Gross Rent is the maximum amount a landlord may charge a tenant for contract rent and tenant-paid utilities. Fair Market Rent is published periodically by HUD based on unit size. Utility allowances are published periodically by the Housing Authority based on area utility costs.

Contract Rent Contract rent is the monthly amount charged by the landlord for the unit. The maximum contract rent for a dwelling unit subsidized through the TBRA Program is Fair Market Rent less a utility allowance calculated specifically for that dwelling unit based on tenant-paid utilities.

Total Tenant Payment (TTP) is the amount paid by the tenant for rent and utilities. Total Tenant Payment is calculated as the greatest of \$40, 30 percent of adjusted household income, or 10 percent of gross household income. Section 8 guidelines are followed in determining adjusted household income.

4.5 Contract Limitations / Period of Eligibility

Once an applicant household receives a TBRA coupon, rent assistance for that household continues up to 24 months as long as the household complies with Program guidelines. Coupon holders are not required to reapply for TBRA assistance each year. TBRA coupons may not be used to rent properties outside Urbana corporate limits. TBRA coupons may not be exchanged for Section 8 certificates or vouchers.

4.6 Waiting List

The Transitional Housing Coordinator maintains a waiting list for TBRA assistance. Administration of the waiting list is described in Section 6.0.

4.7 Income Recertification / Rent Adjustment

The income of each participating household is recertified by the Housing Authority after the household has been in the program six months. Income of households declaring no income at the time of coupon issuance is recertified every 30 days until the household is able to report income on a regular basis. TTP shall be adjusted accordingly. There shall be no income recertifications or TTP adjustments made during the second year of a household's participation in the program.

4.8 Occupancy Standards

City of Urbana property maintenance and occupancy standards apply to properties subsidized through TBRA.

5.0 OUTREACH TO PROSPECTIVE TBRA PARTICIPANTS

The Transitional Housing Coordinator disseminates information concerning TBRA availability to residents of Urbana-Champaign transitional housing programs operated by the City of Urbana, Center for Women in Transition, A Woman's Place, Mental Health Center of Champaign County, Salvation Army Stepping Stone Shelter, Restoration Urban Ministries, and Champaign House. The Transitional Housing Coordinator periodically provides TBRA information to private property owners, property managers, real estate agencies, and community groups through formal and informal discussions, meetings, and presentations. The Transitional Housing

Coordinator maintains a list of properties whose owners have indicated their willingness to participate in the TBRA program.

6.0 ADMINISTRATION OF WAITING LIST

6.1 Applications

Each prospective TBRA participant must complete an application for TBRA assistance. TBRA applications are available through the Transitional Housing Coordinator. Applications are processed from the waiting list on a first-come/first-served basis. Applications are first screened by the Transitional Housing Coordinator for program eligibility. The Transitional Housing Coordinator forwards applications meeting program eligibility requirements to the Housing Authority for final processing. Housing Authority staff verifies application information, including household income, before making a final decision whether to approve the applicant for participation in the program.

6.2 Eligibility requirements

Income criteria Applicants must have household income at or below 50 percent of median family income for Champaign County as determined periodically by HUD. The definition of income established for the Section 8 Program at 24 CFR Part 813 shall be used when determining income eligibility for the TBRA program.

Age criteria The head of household (or co-head of household) must be at least 18 years old prior to approval of her/his TBRA coupon.

Residency requirements At the time of TBRA application, households must reside in one of the following transitional housing programs in Urbana-Champaign.

- * City of Urbana Transitional Housing for Homeless Families
- * Center for Women in Transition
- * A Woman's Place
- * Mental Health Center of Champaign County
- * Salvation Army Stepping Stone Shelter
- * Restoration Urban Ministries
- * Champaign House

Applicant households must have been in good standing with their transitional housing program for at least six months prior to being approved for a TBRA coupon. The term "good standing" means timely in rent payments, compliant with transitional housing program guidelines, and cooperative with transitional shelter case management services.

Subsidized Housing Debt An applicant owing money to any agency in the United States which manages subsidized housing is ineligible for TBRA assistance until said debt has been fully repaid.

Case Management TBRA participants are required to select and work with a case manager while participating in the TBRA Program. A TBRA participant may choose to

work with the Transitional Housing Coordinator or with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs identified above. If a participant chooses to work with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs, said case manager shall work cooperatively with the Transitional Housing Coordinator.

Utilities A TBRA applicant must be able to obtain utilities in her or his name prior to being approved for a TBRA coupon.

7.0 ISSUANCE OF COUPONS

Once a household has been approved for the TBRA program and a coupon is available, the Housing Authority issues the household a TBRA coupon so that the household can begin to search for an appropriate unit. A household has 60 days from receipt of its coupon to locate an acceptable unit. The household may request an extension of this deadline for up to an additional 30 days. The recipient is required to submit a Request for Unit Approval to Housing Authority staff with both landlord and tenant signatures.

At the time the TBRA coupon is issued, Housing Authority staff briefs coupon recipients of their rights and responsibilities. The following topics are covered at each briefing.

- * responsibilities of the City of Urbana and the Housing Authority
- * responsibilities of the Transitional Housing Coordinator
- * responsibilities of the tenant
- * responsibilities of the landlord
- * time limit of the coupon
- * termination of assistance
- * maximum contract rent, eligible units, minimum housing standards, lead-based paint hazards, and fair housing issues
- * formal and informal reviews and hearings
- * occupancy standards
- * total tenant payment and rent calculations

The following materials are distributed at each briefing.

- * TBRA Coupon and program form which describes responsibilities of the tenant, landlord, Housing Authority, and City of Urbana
- * Request for Unit Approval (to be submitted by the tenant to the Housing Authority to request approval of a particular unit)
- * Lease Addendum
- * Utility Allowances
- * Fair Housing Pamphlet
- * Lead-Based Paint Brochure (HUD 1993-351-568)

8.0 APPROVAL OF UNITS AND RENTS

The Housing Authority may approve a unit selected by the coupon holder only if the following standards have been met.

- * Rent Reasonableness The Housing Authority shall document that the proposed contract rent is reasonable in comparison to rents charged for comparable units in the local housing market. When determining whether rent is reasonable, Housing Authority shall consider costs incurred by the property owner to bring the unit into city code compliance.
- * Housing Conditions Any unit approved by the Housing Authority for occupancy shall meet both Housing Quality Standards and Urbana city codes as certified by Housing Authority staff in conjunction with the Property Maintenance Inspector.
- * Unit Size City of Urbana property maintenance and occupancy standards apply to properties subsidized through TBRA.

Housing Authority staff schedules an initial inspection with the landlord and the Property Maintenance Inspector upon receiving and approving a completed and signed Request for Unit Approval from a coupon recipient and landlord. Housing Authority staff advises landlords of all inspection findings in writing. Housing Authority staff and the Property Maintenance Inspector conduct a re-inspection to determine whether property maintenance violations have been corrected. If landlords are unwilling to correct property maintenance violations cited by the Housing Authority and the Property Maintenance Inspector, the coupon recipient is given a new Request for Unit Approval form and is advised to search for another unit.

Once a unit has been certified by the Housing Authority and Property Maintenance Inspector as meeting TBRA property standards, the landlord must provide a copy of the proposed lease to the Housing Authority staff which then reviews the proposed lease to verify that it does not violate any program regulation or federal, state, or local code, including the City's fair housing ordinance. All leases are submitted unsigned by the landlord and tenant. Model leases are available from the Housing Authority.

Once the Housing Authority has approved the unit, the Housing Authority executes the TBRA Program Contract with the owner and authorizes the tenant and landlord to execute both the private lease and the TBRA Lease Addendum.

9.0 CALCULATION OF THE TBRA SUBSIDY

The participating tenant pays to the landlord an amount equivalent to the Total Tenant Payment less the utility allowance certified for the unit by the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority

pays to the landlord the difference between Contract Rent and the tenant contribution toward Contract Rent. In the event that the Total Tenant Payment less the utility allowance is a negative number, the Housing Authority pays the full Contract Rent to the landlord and also pays the difference between the utility allowance and TTP to the tenant.

The Housing Authority mails TBRA payments to participating landlords on the first day of each month. Tenants are responsible for paying their portion of rent directly to the landlord in accordance with the private lease and Lease Addendum. The landlord is responsible for collecting the tenant portion of Contract Rent from the tenant.

The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority assumes no responsibility with regard to payment of security deposits, reimbursement for damages, unpaid rent, or vacancy losses that may be caused by the tenant. Participating landlords are solely responsible for filing in small claims court for any damages that may be caused by tenants. The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority assumes no responsibility for damage claims or court costs associated with claims.

10.0 ONGOING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Housing Authority staff shall document that participating households continue to be eligible. The Housing Authority working with the Property Maintenance Inspector shall document that units continue to meet property standards (through annual unit inspections). The Housing Authority shall ensure that owners receive prompt and accurate payments. The City of Urbana

10.1 Annual Contract Rent Adjustments

Rents shall be adjusted annually in accordance with HUD-approved annual adjustment factors.

10.2 Income Recertification

Household income of each TBRA participant is recertified after the participant has been in the program six months. Income of a household declaring no income at the time of coupon issuance is re-certified every 30 days until the household is able to report income on a regular basis. TTP shall be adjusted accordingly. Participating households may increase their income beyond program income limits during their tenure in the program and not lose their program eligibility. There shall be no income recertification or TTP adjustment during the second year of household participation.

10.3 Ongoing Compliance with Property Standards

The Housing Authority in conjunction with the Property Maintenance Inspector shall conduct annual inspections of all units occupied by TBRA participants. The Housing

Authority and Property Maintenance Inspector shall also inspect units in response to complaints from an owner or tenant. If an inspection reveals property standards violations, the Housing Authority in conjunction with the Property Maintenance Inspector shall notify the owner of said violations and require corrections to be made in accordance with the city's property maintenance standards. Items considered of an emergency nature that affect the health or safety of the tenant must be repaired within 24 hours.

Property owners are required to notify the Housing Authority when repairs have been made. If the owner fails to make the necessary repairs by the established deadline, the Housing Authority suspends TBRA payments until repairs are made. Suspended payments are not paid retroactively. The Housing Authority reminds the tenant to continue to pay her or his share of rent.

If the landlord fails to make repairs, the Housing Authority serves the landlord a 30-day written notice of termination of the TBRA contract between the Housing Authority and the landlord. A copy of said notice is sent to the tenant with notification of the tenant's rights and options. The tenant may decide to either uphold the lease and pay the full contract rent or to exercise her/his rights of termination under the lease. If the tenant elects to terminate the lease, the coupon held by the tenant shall be transferable to another unit approved by the Housing Authority.

10.4 Participation in Case Management

Each participating household is required to select and work with a case manager while participating in the TBRA Program. The purpose of this requirement is to maximize each participating household's ability to live independently after termination of their TBRA participation, since TBRA can only be provided for up to 24 months. A TBRA participant may choose to work with the Transitional Housing Coordinator or with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs identified above. If a participant chooses to work with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs, said case manager shall work cooperatively with the Transitional Housing Coordinator.

Participation in case management activities will be reviewed by the Transitional Housing Coordinator prior to completion of each participant's first 12-month lease. Clients not actively participating in a case management plan, as determined by the Transitional Housing Coordinator, may be released from the Program at the end of the first 12-month lease term rather than offered a 12-month extension.

10.5 Lease Enforcement and Termination of Tenancy

The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority are not party to the lease between the TBRA participant and the landlord. The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority are

not obligated to enforce the lease or to intervene in tenant/landlord disputes. The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority are not party to the eviction process. If a household is evicted for cause (as defined by state and local laws), the Housing Authority shall terminate that household's eligibility for the TBRA program.

10.6 Termination of Assistance

Assistance may be terminated for any of the following reasons.

- * The household's assistance contract expires.
- * The City of Urbana no longer funds a TBRA Program.
- * The City of Urbana or the Housing Authority determines that the household has obtained assistance fraudulently.
- * The household has been evicted for cause.
- * The Transitional Housing Coordinator has determined that the household has not actively participated in a case management plan (in this case program termination occurs only after completion of the first 12-month lease).

The Housing Authority shall provide both the owner and tenant at least 30 days written notice of TBRA termination.

11.0 APPEALS PROCESS

Complaints and appeals related to the TBRA Program shall be directed to the Division Manager. The Division Manager shall respond to written complaints regarding the TBRA Program in a timely manner. The Division Manager shall thoroughly investigate all written complaints, including an inspection of the dwelling unit if necessary. Upon completion of an investigation, the Division Manager shall notify all parties to the complaint of her/his decision. The notice includes the nature of the complaint, required remedial or corrective action, and the time by which actions must be completed. The Division Manager shall follow up to determine whether required action has been completed. The Division Manager shall document in the owner, applicant, or participant file all findings, notices, and final actions.

Any owner, applicant, or participant may file a written request for appeal of a decision by the Division Manager. Appeals requests shall be submitted within 10 days of the date of notice from the Division Manager. Appeals are reviewed by the Director of Community Development Services. The Director shall schedule an appeals hearing within 15 working days from the date the written request for appeal is received. The Director shall conduct the hearing, take detailed minutes of proceedings, and notify all involved parties of her/his decision within 10 days of the hearing date. The Division Manager shall file documentation of the appeals process and decision in the appropriate case files.

July 1997

**CITY OF URBANA
TENANT-BASED RENT ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
(Proposed Changes 2003)**

1.0 PURPOSE AND USE

This Program Description has been developed to facilitate the efficient and effective operation of a Tenant-Based Rent Assistance (TBRA) Program by the City of Urbana through its Grants Management Division and by the Housing Authority of Champaign County pursuant to an administrative agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) with the City of Urbana.

The primary objective of TBRA is to help the following populations:

1. Previously-homeless households completing a transitional housing program rent private housing while continuing their progress toward self-sufficiency.

2. Homeless, special needs populations identified in the Consolidated Plan and referred by appropriate Champaign County social service agency.

The program allows households to select rental units within the Urbana corporate limits. The program promotes improvement of the local housing stock, because dwellings selected by participating households must meet local codes prior to occupancy.

TBRA operates independently of other rent assistance programs such as the Housing Authority Section 8 program. TBRA uses a waiting list separate from the Housing Authority Section 8 waiting list. Preferences established specially for TBRA apply to the program.

The availability of TBRA coupons is contingent on the amount of HOME funds budgeted for the program and rate of utilization of these funds. ~~TBRA coupons are available to assist up to ten households at one time.~~ Coupons are similar to certificates issued through the Section 8 program.

TBRA is funded through the City of Urbana HOME Program allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). TBRA Program guidelines conform to HOME Program regulations promulgated by HUD.

TBRA-eligible households are assisted up to 24 months.

2.0 ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS

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Division Manager The Manager of the Grants Management Division within the City of Urbana Department of Community Development Services.

Household One person living alone, a single family (one- or two-parent), or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

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HUD U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the federal agency, which provides HOME Investment Partnership, funds for the TBRA Program.

Special Needs Population The Consolidated Plan indicates that the Special Populations include the following categories of persons:

- Elderly persons
- Frail elderly persons
- Persons with a severe mental illness
- Persons with developmental disabilities
- Persons with physical disabilities
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The Transitional Housing Coordinator in the Grants Management Division is responsible for outreach to prospective TBRA participants, initial review of applications, assistance to participants with housing procurement, and case management services.

*NOTE: case management services will not be funded with HOME dollars.

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4.1 Use of TBRA Funds

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- * are located within the Urbana corporate limits,
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Age criteria The head of household (or co-head of household) must be at least 18 years old prior to approval of her/his TBRA coupon.

Residency requirements At the time of TBRA application, households must reside in one of the following transitional housing programs in Urbana-Champaign or be homeless and identified as a special needs population that is referred to the program by a Champaign County social service agency.

- * City of Urbana Transitional Housing for Homeless Families
 - * Center for Women in Transition
 - * A Woman’s Place
 - * Mental Health Center of Champaign County
 - * Salvation Army Stepping Stone Shelter
 - * Restoration Urban Ministries
 - * Champaign House
- Prairie Center
Developmental Services Center

Applicant households must have been in good standing with their transitional housing program for at least ~~six~~ **three (3)** months prior to being approved for a TBRA coupon. The term “good standing” shall mean timely in rent payments, compliant with transitional housing program guidelines, and cooperative with transitional shelter case management

services.

TBRA participants are required to select and work with a case manager while participating in the TBRA Program. A TBRA participant may choose to work with the Transitional Housing Coordinator or with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs or social service agency identified above. If a participant chooses to work with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs or social service agency, said case manager shall work cooperatively with the Transitional Housing Coordinator.

4.4 Contract Rent and Subsidy Limitations

Fair Market Rent or Gross Rent is the maximum amount a landlord may charge a tenant for contract rent and tenant-paid utilities. Fair Market Rent is published periodically by HUD based on unit size. Utility allowances are published periodically by the Housing Authority based on area utility costs.

Contract Rent Contract rent is the monthly amount charged by the landlord for the unit. The maximum contract rent for a dwelling unit subsidized through the TBRA Program is Fair Market Rent less a utility allowance calculated specifically for that dwelling unit based on tenant-paid utilities.

Total Tenant Payment (TTP) is the amount paid by the tenant for rent and utilities. Total Tenant Payment is calculated as the greatest of \$40, 30 percent of adjusted household income, or 10 percent of gross household income. Section 8 guidelines are followed in determining adjusted household income.

4.5 Contract Limitations / Period of Eligibility

Once an applicant household receives a TBRA coupon, rent assistance for that household continues up to 24 months as long as the household complies with Program guidelines. Coupon holders are not required to reapply for TBRA assistance each year. TBRA coupons may not be used to rent properties outside Urbana corporate limits. TBRA coupons may not be exchanged for Section 8 certificates or vouchers.

4.6 Waiting List

The Transitional Housing Coordinator maintains a waiting list for TBRA assistance. Administration of the waiting list is described in Section 6.0.

4.7 Income Recertification / Rent Adjustment

The income of each participating household is re-certified by the Housing Authority after

the household has been in the program six months. Income of households declaring no income at the time of coupon issuance is recertified every 30 days until the household is able to report income on a regular basis. TTP shall be adjusted accordingly. There shall be no income recertifications or TTP adjustments made during the second year of a household's participation in the program.

4.8 Occupancy Standards

City of Urbana property maintenance and occupancy standards apply to properties subsidized through TBRA.

5.0 OUTREACH TO PROSPECTIVE TBRA PARTICIPANTS

The Transitional Housing Coordinator disseminates information concerning TBRA availability to residents of Urbana-Champaign transitional housing programs operated by the City of Urbana, Center for Women in Transition, A Woman's Place, Mental Health Center of Champaign County, Salvation Army Stepping Stone Shelter, Restoration Urban Ministries, and Champaign House [Prairie Center and Developmental Services Center](#). The Transitional Housing Coordinator periodically provides TBRA information to private property owners, property managers, real estate agencies, and community groups through formal and informal discussions, meetings, and presentations. The Transitional Housing

Coordinator maintains a list of properties whose owners have indicated their willingness to participate in the TBRA program.

6.0 ADMINISTRATION OF WAITING LIST

6.1 Applications

[The Transitional Housing Coordinator shall accept applications for a pre-determined period of time, in order to create a pool of applicants.](#)

Each prospective TBRA participant must complete an application for TBRA assistance. TBRA applications are available through the Transitional Housing Coordinator.

[Applications are first screened by the Transitional Housing Coordinator for program eligibility.](#)

Applications received will be evaluated and prioritized, with highest priority given to individuals that demonstrate the greatest likelihood to become self-sufficient at the end of the two-year term of the TBRA Program. ~~are processed from the waiting list on a first-come/first-served basis. Applications are first screened by the Transitional Housing Coordinator for program eligibility.~~ The Transitional Housing Coordinator forwards priority applications meeting program eligibility requirements to the Housing Authority for final processing. Housing Authority staff verifies application information, including household income, before making a final decision whether to approve the applicant for participation in the program.

6.2 Eligibility requirements

Income criteria Applicants must have household income at or below 50 percent of median family income for Champaign County as determined periodically by HUD. The definition of income established for the Section 8 Program at 24 CFR Part 813 shall be used when determining income eligibility for the TBRA program.

Age criteria The head of household (or co-head of household) must be at least 18 years old prior to approval of her/his TBRA coupon.

Residency requirements At the time of TBRA application, households must reside in one of the following transitional housing programs or identified a homeless, special needs individual and receiving case management by one of the following social service agencies in Urbana-Champaign.

- * City of Urbana Transitional Housing for Homeless Families
- * Center for Women in Transition
- * A Woman's Place
- * Mental Health Center of Champaign County
- * Salvation Army Stepping Stone Shelter
- * Restoration Urban Ministries
- * Champaign House
- Prairie Center
- Development Services Center

Applicant households must have been in good standing with their transitional housing program for at least six months prior to being approved for a TBRA coupon. The term "good standing" means timely in rent payments, compliant with transitional housing program guidelines, and cooperative with transitional shelter case management services.

Subsidized Housing Debt An applicant owing money to any agency in the United States which manages subsidized housing is ineligible for TBRA assistance until said debt has been fully repaid.

Case Management TBRA participants are required to select and work with a case manager while participating in the TBRA Program. A TBRA participant may choose to work with the Transitional Housing Coordinator or with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs identified above. If a participant chooses to work with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs, said case manager shall work cooperatively with the Transitional Housing Coordinator.

Utilities A TBRA applicant must be able to obtain utilities in her or his name prior to being approved for a TBRA coupon.

7.0 ISSUANCE OF COUPONS

Once a household has been approved for the TBRA program and a coupon is available, the Housing Authority issues the household a TBRA coupon so that the household can begin to search for an appropriate unit. A household has 60 days from receipt of its coupon to locate an acceptable unit. The household may request an extension of this deadline for up to an additional 30 days. The recipient is required to submit a Request for Unit Approval to Housing Authority staff with both landlord and tenant signatures.

At the time the TBRA coupon is issued, Housing Authority staff briefs coupon recipients of their rights and responsibilities. The following topics are covered at each briefing.

- * responsibilities of the City of Urbana and the Housing Authority
- * responsibilities of the Transitional Housing Coordinator
- * responsibilities of the tenant
- * responsibilities of the landlord
- * time limit of the coupon
- * termination of assistance
- * maximum contract rent, eligible units, minimum housing standards, lead-based paint hazards, and fair housing issues
- * formal and informal reviews and hearings
- * occupancy standards
- * total tenant payment and rent calculations

The following materials are distributed at each briefing.

- * TBRA Coupon and program form which describes responsibilities of the tenant, landlord, Housing Authority, and City of Urbana
- * Request for Unit Approval (to be submitted by the tenant to the Housing Authority to request approval of a particular unit)
- * Lease Addendum
- * Utility Allowances
- * Fair Housing Pamphlet

- * Lead-Based Paint Brochure (HUD 1993-351-568)

8.0 APPROVAL OF UNITS AND RENTS

The Housing Authority may approve a unit selected by the coupon holder only if the following standards have been met.

- * Rent Reasonableness The Housing Authority shall document that the proposed contract rent is reasonable in comparison to rents charged for comparable units in the local housing market. When determining whether rent is reasonable, Housing Authority shall consider costs incurred by the property owner to bring the unit into city code compliance.
- * Housing Conditions Any unit approved by the Housing Authority for occupancy shall meet both Housing Quality Standards and Urbana city codes as certified by Housing Authority staff in conjunction with the Property Maintenance Inspector.
- * Unit Size City of Urbana property maintenance and occupancy standards apply to properties subsidized through TBRA.

Housing Authority staff schedules an initial inspection with the landlord and the Property Maintenance Inspector upon receiving and approving a completed and signed Request for Unit Approval from a coupon recipient and landlord. Housing Authority staff advises landlords of all inspection findings in writing. Housing Authority staff and the Property Maintenance Inspector conduct a re-inspection to determine whether property maintenance violations have been corrected. If landlords are unwilling to correct property maintenance violations cited by the Housing Authority and the Property Maintenance Inspector, the coupon recipient is given a new Request for Unit Approval form and is advised to search for another unit.

Once a unit has been certified by the Housing Authority and Property Maintenance Inspector as meeting TBRA property standards, the landlord must provide a copy of the proposed lease to the Housing Authority staff which then reviews the proposed lease to verify that it does not violate any program regulation or federal, state, or local code, including the City's fair housing ordinance. All leases are submitted unsigned by the landlord and tenant. Model leases are available from the Housing Authority.

Once the Housing Authority has approved the unit, the Housing Authority executes the TBRA Program Contract with the owner and authorizes the tenant and landlord to execute both the private lease and the TBRA Lease Addendum.

9.0 CALCULATION OF THE TBRA SUBSIDY

The participating tenant pays to the landlord an amount equivalent to the Total Tenant Payment less the utility allowance certified for the unit by the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority pays to the landlord the difference between Contract Rent and the tenant contribution toward Contract Rent. In the event that the Total Tenant Payment less the utility allowance is a negative number, the Housing Authority pays the full Contract Rent to the landlord and also pays the difference between the utility allowance and TTP to the tenant.

The Housing Authority mails TBRA payments to participating landlords on the first day of each month. Tenants are responsible for paying their portion of rent directly to the landlord in accordance with the private lease and Lease Addendum. The landlord is responsible for collecting the tenant portion of Contract Rent from the tenant.

The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority assumes no responsibility with regard to payment of security deposits, reimbursement for damages, unpaid rent, or vacancy losses that may be caused by the tenant. Participating landlords are solely responsible for filing in small claims court for any damages that may be caused by tenants. The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority assumes no responsibility for damage claims or court costs associated with claims.

10.0 ONGOING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Housing Authority staff shall document that participating households continue to be eligible. The Housing Authority working with the Property Maintenance Inspector shall document that units continue to meet property standards (through annual unit inspections). The Housing Authority shall ensure that owners receive prompt and accurate payments. The City of Urbana

10.1 Annual Contract Rent Adjustments

Rents shall be adjusted annually in accordance with HUD-approved annual adjustment factors.

10.2 Income Recertification

Household income of each TBRA participant is recertified after the participant has been in the program six months. Income of a household declaring no income at the time of coupon issuance is re-certified every 30 days until the household is able to report income on a regular basis. TTP shall be adjusted accordingly. Participating households may increase their income beyond program income limits during their tenure in the program and not lose their program eligibility. There shall be no income recertification or TTP adjustment during the second year of household participation.

10.3 Ongoing Compliance with Property Standards

The Housing Authority in conjunction with the Property Maintenance Inspector shall conduct annual inspections of all units occupied by TBRA participants. The Housing Authority and Property Maintenance Inspector shall also inspect units in response to complaints from an owner or tenant. If an inspection reveals property standards violations, the Housing Authority in conjunction with the Property Maintenance Inspector shall notify the owner of said violations and require corrections to be made in accordance with the city's property maintenance standards. Items considered of an emergency nature that affect the health or safety of the tenant must be repaired within 24 hours.

Property owners are required to notify the Housing Authority when repairs have been made. If the owner fails to make the necessary repairs by the established deadline, the Housing Authority suspends TBRA payments until repairs are made. Suspended payments are not paid retroactively. The Housing Authority reminds the tenant to continue to pay her or his share of rent.

If the landlord fails to make repairs, the Housing Authority serves the landlord a 30-day written notice of termination of the TBRA contract between the Housing Authority and the landlord. A copy of said notice is sent to the tenant with notification of the tenant's rights and options. The tenant may decide to either uphold the lease and pay the full contract rent or to exercise her/his rights of termination under the lease. If the tenant elects to terminate the lease, the coupon held by the tenant shall be transferable to another unit approved by the Housing Authority.

10.4 Participation in Case Management

Each participating household is required to select and work with a case manager while participating in the TBRA Program. The purpose of this requirement is to maximize each participating household's ability to live independently after termination of their TBRA participation, since TBRA can only be provided for up to 24 months. A TBRA participant may choose to work with the Transitional Housing Coordinator or with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs identified above. If a participant chooses to work with a case manager from one of the feeder transitional housing programs, said case manager shall work cooperatively with the Transitional Housing Coordinator.

Participation in case management activities will be reviewed by the Transitional Housing Coordinator prior to completion of each participant's first 12-month lease. Clients not actively participating in a case management plan, as determined by the Transitional Housing Coordinator, may be released from the Program at the end of the first 12-month lease term rather than offered a 12-month extension.

10.5 Lease Enforcement and Termination of Tenancy

The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority are not party to the lease between the TBRA participant and the landlord. The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority are not obligated to enforce the lease or to intervene in tenant/landlord disputes. The City of Urbana and the Housing Authority are not party to the eviction process. If a household is evicted for cause (as defined by state and local laws), the Housing Authority shall terminate that household's eligibility for the TBRA program.

10.6 Termination of Assistance

Assistance may be terminated for any of the following reasons.

- * The household's assistance contract expires.
- * The City of Urbana no longer funds a TBRA Program.
- * The City of Urbana or the Housing Authority determines that the household has obtained assistance fraudulently.
- * The household has been evicted for cause.
- * The Transitional Housing Coordinator has determined that the household has not actively participated in a case management plan (in this case program termination occurs only after completion of the first 12-month lease).

The Housing Authority shall provide both the owner and tenant at least 30 days written notice of TBRA termination.

11.0 APPEALS PROCESS

Complaints and appeals related to the TBRA Program shall be directed to the Division Manager. The Division Manager shall respond to written complaints regarding the TBRA Program in a timely manner. The Division Manager shall thoroughly investigate all written complaints, including an inspection of the dwelling unit if necessary. Upon completion of an investigation, the Division Manager shall notify all parties to the complaint of her/his decision. The notice includes the nature of the complaint, required remedial or corrective action, and the time by which actions must be completed. The Division Manager shall follow up to determine whether required action has been completed. The Division Manager shall document in the owner, applicant, or participant file all findings, notices, and final actions.

Any owner, applicant, or participant may file a written request for appeal of a decision by the Division Manager. Appeals requests shall be submitted within 10 days of the date of notice from the Division Manager. Appeals are reviewed by the Director of Community Development Services. The Director shall schedule an appeals hearing within 15 working days from the date the written request for appeal is received. The Director shall conduct the hearing, take detailed minutes of proceedings, and notify all involved parties of her/his decision within 10 days of the hearing date. The Division Manager shall file documentation of the appeals process and

decision in the appropriate case files.

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