Local Government and Nonprofit Partnerships: Peoria Rehousing Program Case Study

October 25, 2019

Joe Dulin, Assistant Community Development Director

Kathryn Murphy, Grants Manager

Tom Fulop, Tri-County Social Services Director, The Salvation Army
Community Development at a Glance

- Community Development Department
  - Grants
  - Code Enforcement
  - Building Safety
  - Planning and Zoning
  - Neighborhoods
The City of Peoria received the 2018 International Code Council Community Service Award. This award is presented when circumstances warrant a need to recognize meritorious service by an individual, organization, jurisdiction, or community group that promotes the public health, safety and welfare by initiating activities or actions which are above and beyond the normal expectations.
Community Development Department

- Mission Statement:

Striving to educate, encourage and serve community members to create a healthier and more positive Peoria.
What is Code Enforcement

- Code Enforcement purpose:
  - Life Safety
  - Maintaining Property Values
  - Public Safety
  - Community Beautification
  - Building and Maintaining Neighborhoods
Who is involved with Code Enforcement?

- **Who is Code Enforcement?**
  - **Community Development Department**
    - Inspectors, Administrative staff, Management Staff
  - **Internal Departments** – Legal, Finance, HR, IS, City Admin
  - **External Partners** – Residents, Non-Profits, Community Groups, Business
What makes Code Enforcement successful?

• Make External Partners want to help you.
  • Make it easy to report code violations
  • Deliver on promises
  • Communicate why things aren’t moving faster
  • Say “Thank you”
  • Sometimes you can’t solve the problem, be honest
What makes Code Enforcement successful?

• Be consistent.
  ▫ Define your process
  ▫ Make sure everyone follows that process
  ▫ Understand that being consistent is fair.
    • Being fair can make people angry who feel they shouldn’t be held to the same standards as everyone else.
    • That is ok. You can always defend fairness and consistency.
What makes Code Enforcement successful?

- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
  - Educate people who don’t understand the why.
  - Notify when appropriate. Notification doesn’t mean you don’t punish and enforce.
  - Publish as much information as possible.
    - Violations, court dates, code information, programs available.
What makes Code Enforcement successful?

- Measure everything.
Code Encouragement and Code Education

Programs and Processes to improve housing in the City of Peoria.
Create opportunities for citizens to participate to earn their trust. Make sure they understand that...

- That you are a team.
- That you are listening to them.
- That you appreciate them.
- That you support their efforts.
Coffee with Code

- Locations based on code enforcement districts
- Casual conversation
“100 Blocks in 100 Days”

- Each Code Enforcement Inspector walks door-to-door to introduce themselves to the residents of the neighborhoods of Peoria.
Educational Postcards

Creating a More Conscious Community

Peoria Cares

An easy-to-use 311 system which allows you to submit concerns for suspected violations in your neighborhood.

- Tall Grass
- Pot Holes
- Housing Violations
- Crime/Graffiti
- Street Lights
- and more!

Download the free app today!

Tenants have specific rights and responsibilities under the law and the purpose of this fact sheet is to give you general information about them. Consult the city for local ordinances regulating landlords and tenant rights.

**TENANT’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Obtain a written lease to avoid misunderstandings with your landlord.
- Pay your rent on time.
- You may be responsible for any damages to the rental unit beyond normal wear and tear.
- Before you alter the rental unit, ask for your landlord’s approval.
- You must pay the utility bill if so stated in the lease.
- You must give written notice when you intend to move if you don’t want to lose your security deposit. Your lease may stipulate how much notice is required.
- The Illinois Residential Eviction Act prohibits your landlord from evicting you for complaining to any governmental authority (housing inspector, human rights commission, etc.).
Great Neighbor Appreciation Week
For the most up-to-date news and events, check Appreciate Peoria out on Instagram [HERE!](#).
AppreciatePeoria uses neighborhood enhancement, code education, and citizen engagement as ways to engage with their community. Visit their website at www.appreciatepeoria.com for more information.
Partnership with Health Department on Lead ABATEMENT resolution

- Health department tests children in zip codes with older housing stock for lead poisoning
- Elevated levels of lead in blood leads to Health Department’s lead abatement process
  - Where there is peeling paint, there are often other code issues as well.
Other Programs related to Housing

Tenant Education

- Events held throughout the year in partnership with community action agencies and neighborhood associations
- Focus on how to be a good neighbor and connecting renters to neighborhoods
- Partner with Prairie State Legal Services
Other Programs related to Housing

Landlord Training

- Tiered Registration System
  - Owners who do not owe the City money pay $75 per parcel ID, $20 for additional units
  - $250 per parcel ID for owners with outstanding fines, fees, unpaid taxes, or defaults
  - Only owners who owe money are required to attend training to receive a discounted rate of $125
Other Programs related to Housing

Self-Inspection Process for Tenants and Landlords

• Landlords must submit signed self-inspection forms to the City as part of the registration process

• Landlords must disclose to tenant if they have had a housing case in the last 12 months

• Coming Soon: Landlords will be required to provide tenants with a pamphlet on tenant rights and responsibilities
Case Study - Learning from situations.

Creating a new partnership and program.
What sparked the partnership?

- 11 – story complex that had ongoing code enforcement and fire safety issues.
- The City worked with building management to have issues resolved for months.
- After continued lack of process, the building was deemed uninhabitable for safety issues and required all tenants to leave the building.
- 45 individuals needed rehousing
Efforts to Rehouse

- Local social services agencies came together to rehouse the 45 individuals.
- Although individuals qualified as homeless under HUD’s definition, this put a strain on limited homeless resources within the City of Peoria.
- Need was identified for a better process when code enforcement action taken leads to loss of housing and tenant has no other resources to move.
Next Steps

• Meeting with local service agencies held to determine a plan moving forward
• City staff determined how to create a separate funding source and partner with an agency to specifically rehouse individuals from code enforcement actions.
• The City released an RFP to find an organization to run a rehousing program for code enforcement actions that deem the property uninhabitable.
Ordinance change

- From RFP responses, Salvation Army was selected to run the program.
- The City Council approved an ordinance change to provide ongoing funding to the program.
  - All future criminal housing management tickets are dedicated to funding the rehousing program.
  - Ticket issued to landlord for all rehousing expenses. Payments are used as another funding source for rehousing fund.
Agreement with Salvation Army

- Standby fee of $5,000 per year for running program.
- Additional administrative fee per instance of rehousing dependent on number of units needing rehousing.
- Reimburse direct assistance costs up to $2,000.
  - Hotel stay (up to 7 days)
  - Reasonable moving expenses
  - Security Deposit and First Month’s rent
The Salvation Army Rehousing Process

- The Salvation Army contacts the tenant directly to go through an intake process.
- Caseworkers verify number of tenants and income information while the tenant searches for a new location to rent.
- Verifies a lease has been signed, pays the tenants security deposit and first months rent, and other moving expenses.
- The Salvation Army is reimbursed by City of Peoria for the balance accrued and a service fee.
2019 Results Thus Far

- Five rehousing cases with average cost of $2,500
  - Sewer leak, no water service, and leaking pipes