



LEE'S SUMMIT
MISSOURI

Quality Housing Program

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Section 1: Program Overview

The Quality Housing Program's intent is to improve the safety and maintenance of all housing in Lee's Summit. The Quality Housing Program (QHP) focuses on services to encourage compliance with minimum standards established in the Property Maintenance Code (chapter 16) and the Fire Code (chapter 13). It is an extension of services offered by the Neighborhood Services (NHS) group. NHS operate under a complaint, investigate, abate style approach. QHP compliments NHS through outward education of city ordinances to neighborhoods, providing connections to existing resources, and to establishing a certification program. The certification program encourages compliance to improve the safety of housing.

Current enforcement activities are reactive and are based upon citizen complaints. The (QHP) seeks to correct safety and maintenance issues through education rather than complaints. A more proactive approach will ensure existing properties where violations do not existing continue to remain strong.

In summary, QHP will be composed of the following services:

- External education and outreach
- Certification program
- Voluntary inspection services

Section 2: External Education and Outreach

The QHP will provide education to citizens of Lee's Summit through a variety of methods. Staff will identify target audiences within the community and determine the best methods of delivery based on the needs of those citizens. Examples include HOAs, landlord groups and social service organizations. After the information has been delivered the method will be evaluated and the content reviewed on a continuous basis to determine the effectiveness of the program. The External Education and Outreach function will be evaluated based on performance, interest, and involvement to ensure methods can be adjusted for maximum effectiveness.

Audience Identification

Groups and citizens will continue to be identified and evaluated based on interest and outcomes. As community groups change and evolve the method of communication will also change. Staff will continue to identify and work with new groups based on identified needs. Below are the initial groups that will be contacted at the program's onset, with different types and groups to be added.

Home Owners Associations (HOA): HOAs represent several neighborhoods within the city, but not all neighborhoods. HOA's allow the City to reach large groups of citizens at once through their existing communications network. Staff will work alongside HOA leadership to educate their residents on City standards for property maintenance.

Community Organizations (CO): COs vary in their mission and goals. Depending on how organizations relate to housing, partnering with these organizations will serve as another conduit to share information with citizens. These organizations tend to be non-profit in nature and can vary from a loosely organized neighborhood group to a more

organized group such as a church or incorporated organization. Each group will need to be evaluated for their ability to deliver information on minimum housing standards. ▸

Business Groups and Associations (BGOA): BGOAs are important as they represent additional property within the community and include rental properties. Business have property that are part of neighborhoods and may have a vested interest in quality housing nearby. The QHP will reach out to these groups to establish lines of communication.

Other Citizens: Identification of residents that are not a part of the above groups is critical as some of the older parts of town do not have HOAs and any education efforts need to be customized for effectiveness. The areas of the city that are not served by one of the above groups will be areas that the QHP will seek to create neighborhood forums and other means of communication to reach these remaining citizens.

In summary, under the QHP staff will continuously look for new groups and partnerships within the community to utilize their member lists for distribution of education. In addition staff will seek to create lines of communication to areas not currently represented by an organized group. Lastly staff will evaluate the interaction, participation, receptiveness and the effectiveness of work with these groups to ensure the outreach is effective and welcomed.

Information Delivery

Means of communication based upon the intended audience. As staff meets with various groups we will ask about preferences so information is received. Furthermore the type of information delivered under this program will be updated and change over time and throughout the year. Information will be tailored to the audience it is intended to reach, the climate of the city at that time, the current concerns, and any other condition identified through feedback from the community to ensure that the information provided is aligned with the values and needs of the community. Below are the initial communication channels that will be utilized.

City Website: Staff will utilize the City's website as a means of sharing information about the QHP. Information will help guide users to services provided under this program and Neighborhood Services. Furthermore it will provide a means to connect people to additional resources that are internal and external to the city. Checklists for minimum housing standards and example videos will assist residents in understanding the issues. The website will also be utilized in the certification program outlined in section 3.

Social Media: Staff will utilize online services such as NextDoor, Facebook, YouTube, or other services to deliver information to the community. Staff will work on creating digital media such as videos, informational pictures, or text to share information.

Print: Flyers and brochures will be provided within City Hall and at appropriate interactions with citizens. Printed information will be distributed at public meetings/forums, interactions with citizens, left at houses, or any other interaction that is appropriate to leave this information.

Public Meetings & Forums: Staff will offer to attend community meetings put on by groups outlined above to come speak with citizens and discuss their concerns in person.

These are base methods. As new methods are identified and feedback is gained through the program additional methods will be utilized. Under this program staff will continue to update the information delivered over time.

Section 3: Certification and Voluntary Inspections

Certification is based upon voluntary inspections on a requested basis only. For all residents, renters or owners, staff will offer a free inspection service. This inspection is to check for minimum standards of maintenance and safety on the inside and outside of property, with a report of staff's findings provided to the owner/resident of the outcome. In the case of a rental property the city will provide a certification that the property was inspected by the city and is certified for a period of time as quality housing. This service is being offered to provide services similar to the Police Department's Safe Rental Properties program focused on assisting residents of the City.

Voluntary Inspections

This service will provide residents who elect to have their housing inspected a report outlining concerns as identified by the inspecting NHS Officer. This inspection will be structured to identify common code violations and safety hazards that may exist as they pertain to upkeep and maintenance. Since the inspection is voluntary if a violation is found the owner will be notified but a case will not be opened for enforcement action unless a health or safety hazard exists. In the case of a renter requesting an inspection, only the areas that they are renting would be covered rather than the entire building if it is a multi-unit structure.

The five most common code violations are:

- 1) Overgrown Vegetation
- 2) Improperly placed Garbage and Rubbish
- 3) Unregistered Vehicles
- 4) Parking on Grass
- 5) Trash Receptacle Screening/Enclosures

These standards would be inspected with the upkeep of the exterior and interior of the property. The goal is to identify areas requiring maintenance or are nearing a violation as outlined in the Property Maintenance Code. Suggestions for maintenance will be made by the NHS officer to the citizen that could help maintain their property to avoid future violations. At the conclusion of the inspection the NHS Officer will provide the resident a copy of the report and no further action will be taken by the City unless a violation is later submitted. If a violation is identified that poses an immediate threat to citizens a case will be opened. Inspections performed will be analyzed to identify trends regionally in the city.

Certification

The QHP will offer a rental certification for individuals and businesses that rent units within the city to acknowledge that the property meets minimum standards for safety and maintenance in the city. Landlords will be able to request voluntary inspections the same as homeowners. Based upon the

nature of their rental property the city will inspect a number of units, the exterior of structures and the site for compliance with city codes. A list of suggested maintenance actions will be made to avoid potential future violations and to guide the owner towards improving the quality of the rental property.

Rental property inspections will be considered good for two years. Once the inspection is performed and the property is found to meet these minimum standards, the city will list the rental properties on the website. In addition stickers will be issued that the property owner may choose to place on the property signaling that they are in conformance. As properties expire additional inspections will need to be requested. If additional inspections are not requested the city will remove the property from the website listing.

For properties that are not rented the certification will still be provided certifying that the property meets the minimum standards.

Section 4: Performance Metrics

To insure the program is producing intended results and having an impact the following performance metrics will be used to track the effectiveness of this program and other programs associated with Neighborhood Services and code enforcement.

Case Counts and Complaint Counts by Region

The number of cases and complaints is a measure of NHS Officers activity level. Since all complaints are investigated but not all complaints are violations, this would also serve as a representation of citizen concern. The amount of complaints made after doing outreach and education would be expected to increase as people become aware of the code requirements and that they have the option of submitting a complaint. While an initial increase of cases is expected after an area is targeted for education, the number of violations should decrease over time.

These two counts would be broken down for each NHS Officer's area. Staff utilizes these counts to balance out casework and to regularly update the geographic boundaries of officer areas. This is done to make sure cases are assigned more equally across staff. Furthermore knowing where cases are occurring or not occurring will provide staff with information needed to identify areas that may need attention under this program.

Violation Types by Date & Address

The type of violation will be tracked and tied to the address and date that it was reported. This metric is an indicator of violations occurring most frequently in addition to location. Staff then identifies problematic areas with a certain violations. The data allows the City to focus education efforts based upon need, not speculation. This also gives staff a seasonal indicator when certain violations are more prevalent. The informational component of this program can be focused at the correct time of the year.

Meetings Held and Attendance Levels

The amount of meetings held along with the number of attendees gives a representation of the interest level in the program from the community. As groups become familiar with the program their interest level will change. Quantifying the level of attendance indicates the interest level as well as a representation of the efficiency of the information delivered. This metric also allows staff to identify which groups continue to have a high interest level.

The quantity of meetings held indicates staff time commitment. Staff time spent on public meetings consumes resources of the Department. Tracking allows the Department to identify areas where efforts are no longer needed, needed at a reduced level or if there is need for additional staff to cover these functions as interest level and/or population of the City changes over time.

Participant Interest

During public forums and meetings with groups the City will collect feedback through the use of brief surveys for participants. The information from these surveys will be used to determine the quality and clarity of information provided, and if the meeting was useful and well received by the participants. The survey feedback will be used to evaluate the quality of the meetings and content provided.

Voluntary Inspections Performed

Voluntary inspections indicate the level of interest and the amount of staff resources used in this function. Tracking the amount of inspections performed allows staff to identify interest to the community and benefits. It is also a representation of the time spent operating the rental certification component of the QHP.

Certifications Issued

Tracking the number of issued certifications in addition to the number of active certifications is an indication of interest from rental property owners. This metric also demonstrates the effectiveness of the program for reaching rental properties within the city and the impact that the QHP has towards improving the safety of rental units.

In summary these metrics will be used to evaluate the ongoing demand and utilization of the QHP by the community. Staff will monitor changes in violation types and interest levels by the community to ensure that the information delivered has purpose and that the delivery audience has an interest in receiving the information.

Section 5: Budget Implications

The QHP will operate under existing budgets and staff utilizing existing systems to gather data and generate content. Additional costs that this program will add are covered by existing budget items and the overall effect will be small enough to be absorbed into existing funds.

External Education

The outreach to the public will occur during regular interactions between staff and residents. The program will first seek to use existing communication structures from external groups for staff

participation. Since this program will be utilizing these external networks, there is no anticipated cost to the City to create and maintain these relationships beyond staff time. Existing staff will also be utilized in the generation of content for this program which is also anticipated to not have additional costs.

Information Delivery

Information delivered through the program is expected to occur through verbal interactions, electronic means and printed materials. The verbal interactions and media generation will utilize existing staff time at no anticipated cost to the city. The printed materials will have an associated cost due to the expense of printing handouts and flyers and will be covered by the departments existing budget items for printed materials.

Voluntary Inspections

Inspections performed by NHS Officers will be done as part of regular duties of the position and will be performed under existing staffing levels. Providing hard copies of inspection reports will have a cost associated with the generation of materials however the quantity produced is anticipated to operate within existing budget for printed materials and have a negligible impact to current operating expenses for printing inspection reports.

Certifications

The cost to operate this aspect of the program will be operated under existing staff time and the existing city website. No expected additional costs are anticipated to perform this work. Stickers will require additional costs to print for the program to distribute for property owners whom wish to have them displayed on their property. These expenses will be covered through the existing printed materials budget.

Total Anticipated Costs

Operating the QHP will primarily be done through existing staff time. If the program grows in the future based on public demand and as the city grows over time there become a future need for additional NHS Officers that are spending time on this program in addition to code enforcement activities may necessitate additional staff. At the launch of this program the cost impact is expected to fall within current operational costs of the Department.