

FAX TRANSMITTAL

DATE: 12/10/04 PAGE 1 OF 3

TO: Ald. Joe Davis, Sr., Chair

FAX NO. 286-3456

URGENT? YES NO

FROM: Peter Hoeffel

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COMMENTS: Please distribute a copy of the enclosed written comments to the members of the Community and Economic Development Committee.

Thank you.

Pete Hoeffel



WISCONSIN COALITION FOR ADVOCACY

2040 W. Wisconsin Ave. Ste. 678
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233
Voice & TTY 414-342-8700
1-800-928-8778 for consumers
& family members only
Fax 414-342-7900



WISCONSIN COALITION FOR ADVOCACY

THE PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Comments on the Consolidation Plan
2005-2009
City of Milwaukee
Community & Economic Development Committee
Peter Hoeffel
Advocacy Specialist
Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy

As the State designated protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities in the State of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy(WCA), has an interest in how Funding Allocations are made with respect to people with disabilities in the City of Milwaukee.

WCA is aware of other agencies advocating for people with disabilities providing oral and written comments at the November 8th public meeting regarding the City of Milwaukee Consolidated Plan for 2005-2009 and we have seen the Executive Summary draft.

In the Funding Allocations for 2005, the dollar amount is approximately twenty million dollars. Of that \$20,000,000, only \$205,041, seems to be designated specifically for people with disabilities. That is approximately an allocation of one percent (1%) in a city that, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, has 23.6% of its population identifying themselves as having a disability. The residential distribution of people with disabilities is most dense in the Neighborhood Strategic Planning districts.

People with disability are mothers, fathers, children, employees, neighbors and friends and are all residents of our community and all deserve that you work to guarantee that all programs and services are accessible, and that 5% of all housing produced is accessible for people with physical disabilities.

The Consolidated Plan needs to include Milwaukee residents who have disability labels.

It is toward that goal that Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy requests that the Committee and the CDBG Department acknowledge the following:

- People who have disabilities are roughly three times as likely to live in poverty, with 29 percent having annual household incomes below the poverty level.
- Only 32 percent of Americans with disabilities of working age are employed full or part time
- A large proportion of Milwaukee population targeted by CDBG and other federal funds are people with disabilities.



- Milwaukee needs to ensure that every program, service, and housing is accessible by a person with a disability.
- People with disabilities are part of families, too. Accessible housing should not be single-bedrooms only, and the City should ensure that there is housing available for large families with members with a disability.

To achieve the goal of being inclusive, the City should ensure that:

- All physical projects are designed to achieve maximum accessibility.
- All programs and services comply with Section 504 requirements.
- New housing built using federal funds should be, at a minimum, Visitable¹ and incorporate Universal Design principles.
- All public projects such as Riverwalk be made accessible
- Commercial districts such as the "Main Street" program complies with Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Remove physical and attitudinal barriers toward inclusivity.

Additionally, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council is working on a Fair Housing Impediments report for the City, which should serve as a blueprint for the City to remove barriers. I strongly urge the City to study this report and act proactively, rather than simply shelving this until 2010.

December 3, 2004

¹ Visitable is the principle that homes should be built so that a person with a physical disability would be able to visit the resident. 1) Zero-step exterior path of travel and entrance, 2) Zero-step interior path of travel on the ground floor and 3) Usable bathroom