

Administration

To: Alders, CC: Mayor McFarland

From: Mason Becker, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives

Date: March 31, 2025

Subject: RDA Home Rehab Grant Program

Background

In 2023, the Common Council authorized allocating \$100,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars with the goal of supporting the preservation of existing housing within the City of Watertown. To that end, the Housing Rehab Grant Program was created, and funds were transferred to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Watertown (RDA) to administer that program. The program opened for applications in January 2024. The RDA collects a 5.00% administrative fee for administering the program.

The program is administered by the RDA, in conjunction with Thrive ED. RoxAnne Witte serves as the primary point of contact at Thrive for this program. This occasionally allows applicants to access other programs that Thrive facilitates, such as funds administered by the HOME Consortium of Waukesha County.

Both owner-occupied and rental properties within the City are eligible to apply. Grant amounts are on a sliding scale based on income (using HUD guidelines), and applicants are required to contribute at least 10% of the project costs. Eligible projects include roofs, porches, exterior paint, windows, doors, HVAC, and power service upgrades to panels (with a correlating plan for upgrading in wiring).

Summary of results so far:

To date, a total of approximately 40 inquiries and a total of 21 applications have been received.

7 applications have been approved to date following review and recommendation to the RDA board for approval.

A total of \$42,662.70 in funds have been disbursed to date, with another \$6,960.18 in approved funds pending completion of an approved project.

Some of the submitted applications that were not approved either did not meet guidelines for approval, were for non-qualifying projects (e.g. garages or new decks), or in some instances the homeowner decided not to move forward with their project.

Promotion of the program consists of a combination of press releases, blog posts on the RDA website, social media posts, as well as word of mouth. These efforts will continue throughout 2025.

The attached spreadsheet summarizes approved projects that have received funding.

We anticipate working to deploy the balance of the remaining funds for this program throughout 2025. The RDA appreciates the opportunity to continue facilitating these funds and helping to meet the goal of preserving existing housing stock within the City of Watertown.

Sincerely,



Mason T. Becker

RDA Executive Director