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### Agencies get homelessness grants

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By Rich Suwanski, Messenger-Inquirer

Published: Saturday, September 26, 2009 12:19 AM CDT

Two area agencies received more than \$219,000 in grant money from the state this week as part of the national stimulus program to combat homelessness.

Green River Area Development District got \$139,352 for the seven counties it serves.

OASIS received \$80,000 from Kentucky's Housing and Emergency Assistance Reaching The Homeless Program, which received a total of \$11.6 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

GRADD's grant will go to help those at the Boulware Center Mission here and at Matthew 25 in Henderson.

"These funds are very important because some are going to be used for short-term rental assistance, security deposits, utility deposits, utility payments and motel-hotel vouchers," said Barry Johnston, housing programs manager for GRADD.

Boulware and Matthew 25 will also help provide some case management, legal services, housing search and placement and credit repair to get people housed, Johnston said.

Johnston said GRADD should expect to get about \$10,000 more later on, according to the Kentucky Housing Corporation.

"They felt we were slighted," Johnston said.

Other money may also be received if other areas in the state don't use all the funds, in which case the money will be shifted to needier locations.

Individuals must fall into a certain income categories to be eligible for assistance.

OASIS, a state-funded women's shelter, received funds as part of a statewide coalition called the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association. The coalition received \$788,000, with \$80,000 going to the local agency.

"We're going to use our funds for our financial literacy program," said Brenda Jones, OASIS director. "We do credit repair and set up savings accounts and banking accounts, and teach financial literacy education. We then incorporate that in with going back to school or going to work. It's one of the last pieces we do to stabilize a person so that she can remain independent.

"It's one thing to teach our clients to be safe and sober and have better parenting skills, but if they don't have the life-skills to manage their finances, they're likely to return to homelessness."

Jones said the KDVA will retain some of the group's funds for vouchers that will help with utility payments, under certain circumstances -- for example, in order to prevent someone from becoming homeless.

Kentucky's 2009 Point-In-Time Count of the homeless indicated that almost 7,000 people, outside of Louisville and Lexington, were on the verge of homelessness, or "precariously housed," meaning multiple families living under one roof.

For more information about the program, contact Anne Colly Rose at (800) 633-8896 or e-mail

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