RENVILLE COUNTY HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (HRA/EDA) BLIGHT REMOVAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Program Approved June 27, 2019
Amended June 22, 2023

A. Goal and Objective.

1. The goal of the Renville County Housing & Redevelopment Authority and Economic Development Authority (HRA/EDA) Blight Removal Program is to partner with public and private property owners to remove blighted structures and encourage reinvestment in the property.
2. The objective of the program is for the HRA/EDA to provide financial help to remove and remediate blighted property in Renville County.

B. Qualifying Criteria, Building Eligibility, and Occupancy Status.

1. Any structure participating in the Blight Removal Program must be located within Renville County.

2. Applicant must own the blighted property or be a local unit of government.

3. A structure may be eligible to participate in the program as the result of four approaches:
   a. *Acquisition by tax forfeiture*
   b. *Acquisition by purchase*
   c. *Private ownership*
   d. *Court ordered demolition/condemnation*

4. Ownership: Applicant must be in possession of clear and marketable title as confirmed by the County Attorney before participating in the program OR be a local unit of government with an approved court order allowing the unit of government to remove the blighted structure.

5. To qualify for the program, county staff will conduct a site visit of the property to determine if it qualifies as blight. A property may be considered blighted if it meets one or more of the following definitions:
   i. *Deemed in unsanitary or unsafe condition by an inspector.*
   ii. *Structures which are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to occupy due to dilapidation, deterioration, defective design or physical construction; inadequate utilities; lack of ventilation, contamination by hazardous substances; or below minimum code.*
   iii. *Structures which hinder the economically viable use or capacity of the property.*
   iv. *Structures in such a condition that is not feasible to rehabilitate.*

6. Applicant will be required to merge the two properties after blight removal, if lot lines are shared, if possible.

7. Property where blight removal and clearance takes place must be made reasonably level; cleared of foundations, footings and debris; backfilled/compacted; seeded for grass. Property should be in buildable condition before the recipient will receive the grant proceeds.

8. A demolition permit or letter of approval must be obtained and approved by the Local Government Unit in which the structure is located prior to the start of project work.

9. Qualifying expenses include any necessary permits, filing fees, environmental analysis, removal/disposal of debris, contractor payments, greening costs and actual tipping fee expenses paid. *(Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to, Renville County discounted demo tipping fees (as allowed for tax forfeited properties owned by local units of government), past utility bills, back taxes, liens and/or judgement on the property and assessments on the property).*

10. Applicant shall have the authority to hire a Certified Type III Demolition Licensed Contractor of choice. Applicant will be responsible for the cost of all: permits, insurance requirements, site clearance, capping of utility lines, filling of excavated foundations, disposition of debris, protection of trees, sealing of any open wells, and the closing or removal of fuel tanks, septic tanks, cisterns or similar receptacles. Applicant may complete demolition work themselves, as long as asbestos and other hazardous materials are professionally abated.

11. Applicant shall be responsible for arranging an asbestos inspection in accordance with all federal, state, and local regulations and laws. Asbestos, hazardous materials, electronics, appliances, rubbish, and other materials not accepted at a licensed demolition/landfill facility shall be properly disposed of at other appropriate facilities. Documentation, such as receipts, will be required for proof of proper disposal.

C. Non-Qualifying Criteria, Building Eligibility, and Occupancy Status.

1. Rural structures such as sheds, barns, outbuildings, etc. are ineligible unless there is a reuse plan such as constructing a new building on the site, etc.

2. If structure has been blighted due to weather damage or other reasons that caused insurance to be claimed on the structure, property will not qualify for the program.

D. Program Administration, Process and Procedures.

1. The primary contact person for the program information, record keeping and administrative tasks shall be the Renville County HRA/EDA. Specific questions may be directed to other departments.

2. Applications should be submitted to the Renville County HRA/EDA – 105 South 5th Street – Suite 311, Olivia, MN 56277 or EDA@renvillecountymn.gov.

3. Applicant may be required to meet with staff onsite to discuss the project and for staff to conduct blight analysis. Photos of property before and after blight removal will take place.

4. The applications will be reviewed and approved or denied by the Renville County Housing Redevelopment Authority and Economic Development Authority (HRA/EDA) Blight Committee. This is a competitive application process where projects will be scored based on a ranking system that includes, but is not limited to:
   a. *Property conditions*
   b. *Project timelines*
   c. *Property plans and potential economic impact*
   d. *Number of applicants*

e. *Dollar amount available*

5. Applicant will submit invoice(s) and lien waiver from contractor(s) stating they have received payment. Documentation must be submitted stating the materials were appropriately disposed of at licensed facilities and/or by a business possessing proper licensing. A copy of the demolition permit or letter of approval must also be submitted.

6. Grants must be applied for and awarded prior to blight removal and remediation.

7. Costs for blight removal and remediation shall be borne by owner. Renville County HRA/EDA will reimburse owner upon completion of blight removal and remediation of the site at a rate of up to 50% of actual cash costs, up to $5,000 residential or $10,000 commercial, upon submission of paid receipts.

8. Policies, priorities and decision-making concerning the program shall rest with the Renville County HRA/EDA.

D. Property Re-Use.

1. If a property sells within five years, 50% of the sale price, up to the amount of the grant from the Renville County HRA/EDA, will be remitted back to the HRA/EDA Blight Removal Program Fund.

E. Timeline.

1. Request for Proposals: Due dates can be found on the Blight Page at https://www.renvillecountymn.gov/housing-and-economic-development/housing-authority/housing/
2. Proof of payment and invoices in twice the amount of grant due to Renville County HRA/EDA Office: December 10 each year