

Community Assistantship Program

**Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership Survey
Analysis**

Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership Survey Analysis

Prepared in partnership with
Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership

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October, 2005

CAP Report 082

October 2005

CAP is a cross-college, cross-campus University of Minnesota initiative coordinated by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

Funds for this project were generously provided by the McKnight Foundation.

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Table of Contents

Overview.....	3
Analysis.....	4
Conclusion.....	9
Challenges.....	10
Appendix.....	11

Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership Evaluation

Overview

During the months of June, July and August, a customer service evaluation survey was developed, distributed and collected for the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP). The purpose of this survey was to measure the SWMHP's ability to meet their client's needs and to assess the knowledge that their clients have about the SWMHP's programs in addition to what that particular client had worked on. The survey was mailed to 38 individuals from different communities and with varying roles in their communities' projects. Fifteen or 39.5% of the surveys were returned, with one survey only completed up to question two. Those that responded represented 6 City Officials, 1 County Official, 4 Lenders, 2 HRAs, and 2 EDAs. Ten of the communities have a size of 3500 or less people, with a breakdown of five fewer than 1000 and five between 1001 and 3500, two were between 3501 and 5000 and three were in excess of 10000 people. Five of the individuals from the communities worked with the SWMHP prior to 2000 for the first time and six communities during or after 2000. Two communities worked with the SWMHP for the last time prior to 2000 and 10 in 2000 or later. Seven of the communities worked with the SWMHP in 2005. This indicates a strong return rate of clients to the SWMHP following a community's first interaction with the SWMHP.

Analysis

This survey was an attempt to answer two questions about the SWMHP; How can the SWMHP meet the needs of their clients in customer service? and what knowledge do their customers have about the services of the SWMHP? To measure aspects of customer service several questions were asked for both quantitative and qualitative measurement. To identify the level of satisfaction in a diverse group of project areas, it was asked for the participant to indicate their level of satisfaction on a four point scale, with a range of very satisfied to very unsatisfied, in the following areas: project planning, preparation of financial package or grant writing, the preparation of the project, management of the construction process, asset management of assistance with property management, financial management throughout the project, project marketing and the sales, financing and mortgage counseling. The breakdowns of responses are as followed in *Table A*.

Table A Satisfaction

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	N/A or Blank
1. Planning for your project	4	8	3
2. Preparing the financial package/grant writing	6	5	4
3. Preparation of project/closing on funding/processing	3	6	6
4. Management of the construction process	2	5	8
5. Asset Management and Assistance with property management	1	5	9
6. Financial Management throughout project	2	5	8
7. Project Marketing	2	5	8
8. Sales/Financing/Mortgage Counseling	1	4	10

Of the eight project areas were individuals were to identify their level of satisfaction only one, the preparation of financial package, received more answers marked as *very satisfied* with six in very satisfied, five as satisfied and four that were either blank or marked as not applicable. In the

rest of the categories double or more individuals marked that they were only satisfied, versus very satisfied, with the particular area of the project. Planning of the project and preparation of funding had 200% or double satisfied responses compared with very satisfied. Management of construction, financial management throughout the project and project marketing had 250% response rate marked satisfied compared to very satisfied. Asset management and assistance with property management and sales, financing and mortgage counseling each had 25% or less marked as very satisfied compared with satisfied. In order to qualitatively determine reasoning for indication of very satisfied with a component, it was asked that they explain. Responses varied from ability to work with dramatic weather conditions, such as a tornado, to comments about the ability of the SWMHP staff to work with the communities and knowledge of financial programs and aid.

In order to measure differing aspects of the process, a four-point scale was used to individually measure the understanding of community goals by the SWMHP, answering of questions by the SWMHP, availability of information, consistency of information and advice, clarity of verbal communication, the SWMHP's ability to inform individuals/communities in order to successfully complete the process, advise if there was a problem, reasonable amount of time to complete the project, and if the goals of the community were effectively met. The breakdown in responses is outlined in **Table B**.

Table B. Process

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	N/A or blank	Total
The goals of the community/organization were effectively understood by the SWMHP	3	9		3	15
My questions were answered.	2	11		2	15
The information I needed was available.	3	10		2	15
I received consistent information / advice.	2	11		2	15
Written and verbal communication was clear.	3	10		2	15
I was informed about everything I had to do in order to successfully complete the process.	1	12		2	15
It was clear what to do if I had a problem.	1	11	1	2	15
It took a reasonable amount of time to complete the project.	1	10		5	15
The goals of the community/organization were effectively met	2	7	1	4	15

The responses to questions of process vary between strongly agree and agree with two instances where the individual disagreed, constituting of 7.7% of the response for clarity about what to do if there was a problem and 10% of those who responded to effectively of meeting the goals of the community/organization. When questioned about process, individuals responded less to the extreme positive compared to when asked about levels of satisfaction. When asked if the goals of the community were effectively understood, only 20% responded with a *strongly agree* whereas 60% responded with an *agree*. Overall, when asked about process 16% of the responses were a *strongly agree*, 81% *agree*, and 1.8% *disagree*.

When asked about staff no negative response, where the individual disagreed on the characteristics asked, was given. The break down of responses is summarized in **Table C**. However, in the characteristics of “Communicates well with others” and “Be responsive to communication”, responses were less in *strongly agree* and greater in *agree*. When asked if the staff communicates well with others 42% or six strongly agreed and 57% or eight agreed. When asked if the staff is responsive to communication 50% or seven of those who responded, strongly agreed and 50% agreed. In both areas this is lower than the average 56.4% of responses about staff that were strongly agree to the 43.6% of responses as agree.

Table C. SWMHP Staff

	Strongly Agree	Agree	N/A or blank
Be Courteous / Respectful	9	5	1
Be Knowledgeable/Competent	8	6	1
Meet Project Timelines	8	6	1
Communication well with Others	6	8	1
Transition well between staff	6	6	3
Be Helpful	9	5	1
Be Flexible	9	5	1
Be Responsive to Communication	7	7	1

When questioned as to their satisfaction overall with the SWMHP, seven, or 46.7%, indicated that they were very satisfied, seven indicated that they were satisfied and one was left blank indicating no response.

Responses to the question “Please list three areas the SWMHP can improve on” that involved customer service were:

- “Provide education for the first time home purchasers”
- “Increase affordable house purchase with local banks”
- “Could use a better understanding of banking loans/regulations on joint projects with local banks”
- “Communication”
- “Keep clients more informed with their ongoing projects”
- “Make contact with clients at least quarterly for possible needs”
- “Inform client as new laws/regulations change or update”
- “More knowledge of programs available”

These concerns reflect a desire for increased education about products and communication about the individuals or communities’ project and the issues around their projects, such as regulations and laws. This is also true with an additional comment that stated that the SWMHP should “consider an informative newsletter for all of your clients”.

The other purpose of the survey was to assess the knowledge that a community has about the additional programs offered by the SWMHP besides those that that community had worked on. Amongst the 14 respondents it is suggested that there are a total of 33 projects (**Table D**) that have been worked on, or are being worked on, in these communities. Furthermore, the surveys suggest that the total responses to programs that they are familiar with is offered is 52. (**Table D**) This indicates that the total number of responses of familiarity of additional programs is 19, or an average of 1.36 programs in addition to programs that the community has worked on. An average additional knowledge of 1.36 programs per community would equal 12.4% of the programs listed. This takes into consideration one response which indicated familiarity with 7

additional programs. Additionally, no survey responded with *very familiar* with any program, including those that they worked on with the SWMHP. Of those that completed the survey, the participants were familiar or very familiar with an average of less than 2 other programs offered by the SWMHP with 4 individuals indicating no familiarity with any additional programs and one individual indicating familiarity of 7 additional programs

Table D. Survey Number	Number of Projects Worked On	Number of Projects Familiar With	Difference
1	2	2	0
2	1	1	0
3	1	2	1
4	4	6	2
5	1	2	1
6	2	4	2
7	1	1	0
8	1	3	2
9	6	7	1
10	2	3	1
11	3	10	7
12	2	3	1
13	2	3	1
14	5	5	0
total	33	52	19

Conclusion

The conclusions that can be made from an analysis of the data involves both customer service and familiarity of communities with additional programs. When asked about process not only was there 2 negative responses but there was a smaller amount of strong positive responses proportionately to that of other areas such as satisfaction. Additionally, when asked about the characteristics of staff, questions involving communication also received a proportionately less number of *strongly* agree compared to other areas. By being less willing to indicate a *strongly agree*, or extreme positive, the participants indicate less assurance with the functionality of the process and communication. However, due to the small number of participants who replied, differing conclusions could be made by understanding the situations of each participant. Regarding the knowledge that the participants have of additional programs offered by the SWMHP, the small number of programs that the participants are familiar with in addition to the projects that their communities have participated in, and the lack of strong familiarity with the projects they have worked on suggests a lack of understanding and knowledge of all the SWMHP offers in programs as well as all of the components of each individual program.

Challenges

Some of the challenges that were faced during the project were due to communication difficulties and my level of experience. The obvious challenge of communication is a product of the distance between the SWMHP and my place of work, limiting communication to e-mail, a few visits, and a few phone calls. This slows communication and allows for misunderstanding, of which both occurred and was difficult to remedy. Additionally, my experience in practically applying my research in program evaluation from start to finish has been limited. In many instances, this lack of experience made me unsure when drafting the survey and applying previously gained skills. This uncertainty limited, along with the limitation of long-distance communication, made it difficult to articulate concerns to their full extent with those at the SWMHP. Additional challenges were technical problems with computer hardware and software, which slowed production and analysis of the survey greatly, but only delayed the final product.

Appendix

Areas to improve on as indicated by participants in the survey:

- “Provide education for the first time home purchasers”
- “Increase affordable house purchase with local banks”
- “Could use a better understanding of banking loans/regulations on joint projects with local banks”
- “Communication”
- “Keep clients more informed with their ongoing projects”
- “Make contact with clients at least quarterly for possible needs”
- “Inform client as new laws/regulations change or update”
- “more knowledge of programs available”

Additional Comments made by participants in the survey

- From Prinsburg, MN “we did not get funding for our project, so we were quite disappointed. We wonder if the state is biased against new development like we proposed. We didn’t have any old buildings to rehabilitate.”
- From Dawsom, MN “Consider an informative newsletter for all of your clients.”
- From Fulda, MN “For the city of Fulda the EDA would be interested in single family development and subdivision development.”

Survey #	1	2	3a	3b	4a	4b	4c	4d	4e	4f	4g	4h	4i	4j	4k
1	6	2	2000	2002	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2	2	1	2004	2005	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	4	2	1992	2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
4	2	2	1998	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	2	1	2003	2005	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	2	1	1993	1999	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	7	1	2004	2004	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	2	1	1992	1996	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	7	2	1997	2005	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
10	4	5	2000	2005	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
11	2	3	0	2005	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
12	3	5	0	2005	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	4	2			1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
14	4	5	2000	2005	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
15	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
				Sum	9	3	4	3	3	0	3	1	0	4	2

Entities	# of Entities
1	0
2	6
3	1
4	4
5	0
6	2
7	2

Size of Communities	
1	5
2	5
3	2
4	0
5	3

First Time Worked with SWMHP	
-2000	5
2000+	6
Last time worked with SWMHP	
-2000	2
2000+	10

Worked with SWMHP in 2005
7

4l	5a	5b	5c	5d	5e	5f	5g	5h	5i	5j	5k	5l	6	7a	7b
0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
0	2	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	2	2
0	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	0	1	2	1
0	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	3	3	0	1	2	1
0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
0	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	0	1	2	2
0	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1
0	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	1	2	0
1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	0	1	2	1
0	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	1	1	0	1	0	2
0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	0	1	1	1
0	2	2	3	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	0	1	1	1
0	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	0	1	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1													0	0	0
													12		
													1's	4	6
													2's	8	5
													0's	3	4

10k	10l	11a	11b	11c	11d	11e	11f	11g	11h	12a	12b	12c	12d	12e	12f
0	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	0	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2
1	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	2
2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
1	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		9	8	8	6	6	9	9	7	3	2	3	2	3	1
		5	6	6	8	6	5	5	7	9	11	10	11	10	12
		1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	2

	62	18
	48	91
		2
110		111

12g	12h	12i	13
2	0	0	1
2	0	0	2
2	2	2	2
2	2	1	1
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
2	2	3	2
2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2
2	2	2	1
2	2	2	1
2	2	2	1
3	2	2	2
0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0
1	1	2	7
11	10	7	7
2	4	4	1

ONE Answered 3

ONE Answered 3

Survey Number	Worked on	familiar with	difference
1	2	2	0
2	1	1	0
3	1	2	1
4	4	6	2
5	1	2	1
6	2	4	2
7	1	1	0
8	1	3	2
9	6	7	1
10	2	3	1
11	3	10	7
12	2	3	1
13	2	3	1
14	5	5	0
total	33	52	19