



State of Wisconsin
Department of Financial Institutions

Scott Walker, **Governor**

Peter Bildsten, **Secretary**

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Governor Walker Announces Awards for Strategic Blight Elimination Program

DFI and DOJ provide \$1 million to statewide effort

Madison—Governor Walker today announced the Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) and Department of Justice (DOJ) awarded nearly \$1 million to 10 Wisconsin cities for demolition of blighted residential properties. The funds were made available from proceeds of the National Mortgage Settlement received earlier this year by DFI and DOJ. The program is administered by the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA).

“Today’s announcement and the subsequent follow-up work will re-energize deteriorated areas of Wisconsin,” Governor Walker said. “Clearing blighted properties from our communities will pave the way for continued economic development, job creation, and restore a better quality of life.”

Under the Strategic Blight Elimination Program, \$500,000 was made available for demolition projects in Milwaukee and another \$500,000 was earmarked for projects in other Wisconsin cities. For applications within the City of Milwaukee, highest priority was given to properties within Transform Milwaukee, an initiative announced earlier this year by Governor Scott Walker. The 39 units that will be demolished in Milwaukee will support the Transform Milwaukee Initiative. The 26 units that will be demolished in other cities are located in Racine (9 houses), La Crosse (4), Oshkosh (4), Wausau (3), Stoughton (2), Baraboo (1), River Falls (1), Granton (1), and Monroe (1).

“Vacant, dilapidated houses adversely impact property values in many communities across Wisconsin,” DFI Secretary Peter Bildsten said. “Eliminating some of their distressed properties should help these Wisconsin cities improve property values and make for safer neighborhoods.”

The program targeted properties representing a pronounced safety issue, occupying a parcel that will be immediately repurposed for a broader strategic development plan, or inhibiting the re-emergence of a neighborhood. Governmental units, quasi-governmental entities, and non-profits were eligible to apply. Funds will be available for disbursement to applicant awardees beginning Friday, August 17, 2012.

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“WHEDA is delighted to play a key role in administering this critical program breathing new life into neighborhoods across Wisconsin,” WHEDA Executive Director Wyman Winston said. “These blighted areas need attention. I’m hopeful WHEDA and DFI can move provide the resources necessary to begin an economic revival.”

All of the funds earmarked for Milwaukee projects have been allocated. Of the \$500,000 earmarked for non-Milwaukee projects, \$400,521 has been allocated. The remaining \$99,479 will be made available for vacant and blighted properties outside of Milwaukee via another Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) beginning July 30, 2012. Governmental units, quasi-governmental entities, and non-profits will have until September 14, 2012 to apply for the remaining grant funds. Awards will be announced by October 8, 2012.

For more information about the Strategic Blight Elimination Program and to review a listing of awardees, please visit www.wheda.com/WorkingWithWHEDA.