Dear colleagues at Housing and Urban Development,

In order to accommodate the reporting system for submitting our deliverables, I want to let you know that this document contains the University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment’s formative reports for the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHH) program for Years 1-4 of the Iowa Watershed Approach.

For your reference, each report begins on the corresponding pages within the document:

- Year 1 – Page 2
- Year 2 – Page 26
- Year 3 – Page 50
- Year 4 – Page 92

A final report for this component has been submitted separately.

Thank you,

Valerie Decker

Assistant Director, University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment
Table of Contents
Introduction............................................................................................................................................................................... 1
Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Evaluation Plan.............................................................. 1
Assist in developing the BBHHRP Home Advocate Data Collection........................................................................ 2
IWA Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Home Advocate Interview Summary........... 2
IWA Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program ECIA Interview Summary........................ 8
Next Steps ................................................................................................................................................................................. 15
Appendices ............................................................................................................................................................................... 16
   Appendix A: Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Evaluation Plan from the Center for Evaluation and Assessment ........................................................................................................ 17
   Appendix B: Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Home Advocate Interview Protocol ................................................................................................................................. 19
   Appendix C: Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program ECIA Interview Protocol ........... 22

Introduction
During Year 1, the City of Dubuque Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHHRP) accepted and reviewed applications for participants and conducted home inspections as well as Home Advocate-driven intake assessments. Though team members noted that administrative setbacks have delayed beginning construction on homes, they have already seen benefits related to participants’ relationships with Home Advocates and remain confident that the BBHHRP will have a positive impact on participants’ lives.

Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Evaluation Plan
The Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) worked collaboratively with team members from the City of Dubuque to develop an evaluation plan for their work with Dubuque. Specifically, CEA is providing program evaluation services for the Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHHRP). The full evaluation plan can be found in Appendix A. As written in the plan, the evaluation plan is based on the current project plan. If the project implementation plan changes, the evaluation plan will be revised.

CEA had six tasks for Year 1 specified in the plan:

1. Design evaluation plan
2. Assist in developing the BBHHRP Home Advocate Data Collection
   a. BBHHRP Home Advocate Resilience Survey developed by IWA Flood Resilience Team
   b. BBHHRP Home Advocate Client Interview developed by BBHHRP Team
3. Develop CEA BBHHRP Home Advocate Interview protocol and Interview Home Advocates
4. Develop CEA BBHHRP ECIA Interview protocol and Interview ECIA Team Members
5. Work with Home Advocates to determine format, develop, and administer CEA BBHHRP Client Follow-up Survey
6. Develop first year formative report to BBHHRP

The BBHHRP Team asked the CEA to postpone contact with program clients until after work has been completed in their home. This was done to be sensitive to clients’ time and the fact that their feedback would be negatively impacted when the work had not been completed. The CEA will work with the BBHHRP team to develop and begin to administer this survey in Year 2.

**Assist in developing the BBHHRP Home Advocate Data Collection**

During Year 1, the BBHHRP team and the IWA Flood Resilience Team (FRT) requested that CEA provide feedback for their client data collection tools.

*BBHHRP Home Advocate Client Interview*

BBHHRP team members built the Client Interview (aka Intake Assessment) starting with items from multiple existing survey or interview tools. The CEA provided feedback as requested in the development process related to format, item redundancy, item wording, and flow of conversation. Specifically, BBHHRP team members asked for feedback related to wording sensitive items (e.g., any items related to finances). All feedback was provided to the Home Advocates to incorporate at their discretion.

*BBHHRP Home Advocate Resilience Survey*

As members of the FRT, the CEA participated during the development of the BBHHRP Home Advocate Resilience Survey (aka Supplemental Resilience Survey). The CEA provided feedback as requested related to survey format, survey flow, and item wording. All feedback was provided to Cristina Muñoz as the lead in the development process.

**IWA Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Home Advocate Interview Summary**

The following is a summary of information gathered from the two Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Home Advocates (HA). Survey items were developed with input from Sharon Gaul, Resiliency Project Coordinator for the city of Dubuque. Survey items were reviewed by the University of Iowa Human Subjects Office. Both interviews were conducted via telephone by Center for Evaluation and Assessment staff members during August 2017. The interviewees were selected by the BBHHRP leadership team because of their role in the program.

Because the two Home Advocates share a role in this program, their responses were combined for review. The interviewees were provided an opportunity to review and update or edit the completed summary before it was included in this report.

To maintain the limited anonymity promised to interviewees as required by the University of Iowa IRB, pseudonyms are used for all interviewees: Mae and Kathleen. The pseudonyms used do not necessarily represent the gender presentation of interviewees.

*Role with the BBHHRP*

CEA 2017
Mae and Kathleen are case managers with the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) contracted by the City of Dubuque to provide home advocacy services for the BBHHRP. They both said it is the role of the HA to meet with the family, often at the same time as the home inspection, to learn about their personal needs and connect them to community resources from which they could benefit. According to the interviewees, the HA assessment covers the following general topics:

- Health, health care needs, and safety of family members
- Energy Efficiency, overall safety of the home, flood related issues
- Financial needs
- Stress levels
- Family's goals for improvement
- Any other needs the family members may have such as employment and education needs

Kathleen said that follow up with each family varies depending on their specific needs: “It just depends from person to person. Sometimes everything’s fine and they were able to get the help they needed. But things can change for them and they may need additional resources. It differs with each client.” Some families only require a periodic check in. Families being referred to community resources will receive additional follow up. Additionally, the HAs will follow up with service providers to see how the interaction went.

When asked if participants understand their role in the program, Mae and Kathleen tentatively agreed. Both described how they communicate their role to families. Mae specified that the HAs call the participants before the visit to describe who they are and what they do. Both Mae and Kathleen said they often do some education when they get to the home about why they are there and what they can provide to the family. After which, people typically warm up. Kathleen described a specific situation: “Once I explained my role, the resident participated in the conversation. I followed up yesterday on different resource needs and helped him connect to resources he wasn’t aware of.” Mae specified that it is helpful to describe how the HA and Home Inspector roles differ.

When Kathleen was asked if this job is a good fit for what she typically does with the VNA, she said that it is because they do care coordination and “have a lot of resources at our finger tips.” The VNA has many connections in the community, so, “It goes hand in hand with what I did previously before I started doing the home advocacy.”

**Home Visits**

**Participant Engagement During Home Visits**

Both Mae and Kathleen said most people are engaged during home visits. Kathleen said some people who have fewer needs wonder why the HAs asks some of the assessment questions. Mae said she has noticed less engagement from parents who are attending to their children while also doing the assessment. She also said that although the HAs prefer to have “both parents” present for the assessment interview, sometimes they split up and one goes with the inspector.

**Typical Home Visits**

Mae and Kathleen approached their response to the item, “Describe for me the process of a typical home visit” somewhat differently.

When asked about a typical home visit, Mae’s initial response was, “Is there any typical?”
Mae said she does not bring a bag with her, but the HAs bring a packet of materials for the participant including information related to the program and the supplemental survey to be given to the participant after the interview is complete.

She attempts to call all the participants before they go to their homes so they know the HA is coming and to confirm that someone from the family will be home. After that, HAs meet the participants when they walk through the door. They sit down with the families and have a conversation which informally hits on the points outlined in the assessment. She said that the conversations often do not go in the order of the assessment because “different things spur different conversations with other people.” However, she mentioned that the HAs try to keep a few items on the assessment for last (e.g., What are your goals? What do you want to see different with your home or your life?). She said she writes notes as she talks to the family.

According to Mae, a home visit typically lasts an hour to an hour and a half. She said sometimes participants have less time available and sometimes participants talk about different issues and “go off on different tangents” so the interview may take longer. She said the conversation is typically very friendly.

When asked about how recommendations for services are made to the participants, Mae said she will make recommendations as they come up in conversation: “If they have concerns about different things, I let them know their options and what I can do for them and what resources are available for them.” She also said that they review everything at the end of the conversation and tell the participants what they will plan to follow up on. When asked about follow-up, Mae said that follow-up varies depending on what the participant needs: “It all depends on what they want and what they need.” As an example, she said that if a family needs cleaning supplies, she can make a follow-up visit to bring supplies by their house for them, as available.

Kathleen addressed some specific aspects of the visit process. According to Kathleen, the BBHHRP Intake Specialist schedules the appointments. HA appointments are scheduled to begin 30 minutes after the inspection begins so that the inspector can speak with the participants for a few minutes at the beginning of their inspection. When the inspector and the HA arrived at the same time, it either disrupted the assessment or the HA had to wait. Kathleen said that the HAs are in good communication with the inspectors if anything comes up during the assessment that the inspectors need to know.

Kathleen said that the team is just now getting into the multi-family units. With multi-family units, the tenants seem to be harder to reach by phone to set up appointments. If the Intake Specialist is unable to schedule an appointment with the tenant the HA will attempt to call the family. This allows the HAs to call to reschedule if the tenant is not home at the scheduled time or conduct the interview over the phone. Kathleen said that the landlords can let the inspectors into the building for their portion.

*Difficult Home Visit*

When asked to describe a home visit they would consider to be particularly difficult, both Kathleen and Mae said that overall most visits have been positive. However, both mentioned that some participants are somewhat resistant to the assessment interviews for various reasons: they are less talkative, feel the assessment is an intrusion, or the assessment is not relevant to their situation. For example, Kathleen said one man did not feel the questions were relevant to him. He also
refused the supplemental survey and told her he did not need any follow-up: “He did have some issues, but he was not accepting of any help. He said he knew what he needed to do and where he needed to go.” Even though this interaction was more difficult than others, Kathleen said she followed his lead. She said that she didn’t pressure him to continue the interview and he was “very nice about it.” When asked if she would follow up in any way with this participant, Kathleen said she would likely call him once work gets started on his home just to see how things are going. Mae said that in her “difficult” situation, the participant warmed up throughout the conversation. She said she “just kind of works with them, and usually it’s okay.”

Mae mentioned some additional difficulties working with families. She described a more challenging interview where she conducted the assessment outside while the participant was waiting for the mini-bus to take her children to therapy sessions. In that situation, “You have a lot of different things come up, people she knows walk by, and so it kind of disrupts the conversation a little bit.”

Mae also mentioned having more issues with tenants than with homeowners since the homeowners are already invested because of the home improvement piece of the program. Initially, tenants feel like they are participants for their landlord but “once they talk to us, they understand we’re there to help them, too, and find out what their needs are and the health and safety of their children and the individuals that live there.”

Another barrier Mae has encountered has been lack of response to initial phone calls or the family not being home at the appointed time.

**Resources**

*Most Recommended Resources*

Both HAs mentioned home improvements in their responses to what were the most recommended resources. Kathleen mentioned home resources related to weatherization and lowering high energy costs. Mae said many of the recommendations they make are for agencies that help out with the home including Operation New View (for weatherization) and Green Corp Iowa.

Mae and Kathleen also mentioned education and/or career improvement. Kathleen said the HAs make referrals to the Career Pathway program through Northeast Iowa Community College. This is a program that provides support and education for career change and job placement. These services are suited for participants who are looking for a job or for a different job. Mae said that participants are interested in services to help them better themselves or their education, like Opportunity Dubuque, but, “We haven’t had a lot that have followed through with it...It doesn’t mean that they don’t want to do it, I just think things come up, and sometimes that’s on the back burner for them.”

Kathleen mentioned additional resources in her response. She said some participants need support for basic healthcare needs. The HAs can help them find a dental provider or coach them about insurance coverage related to Medicaid. As team members with the VNA, the HAs have good resources for this type of support including lists of providers who accept Medicaid.

Kathleen said that during the summer, participants are interested in summer programs for kids. There are free programs available through Dubuque Parks and Recreation at some downtown schools.
Kathleen also said she discusses food programs with some of the participants and provides referrals for the food pantry and other local food programs.

*Resources Not Currently Available in Dubuque*

Both HAs described limited financial resources as a barrier for some families. Mae mentioned that some people have issues finding affordable housing and others need payment plans for their bills and expenses. She said, “It’s hard to meet all those needs when it’s more money that they need.” Mae said that some people are very happy with what they have despite the fact that it’s minimal; others want to do better, but it’s “just not the right time for them to change jobs or go back to school.”

Kathleen said transportation and affordable child care are issues for some people. She highlighted a case where a woman was paying for childcare out of pocket because she did not work the minimum number of hours needed for state assistance. Because of this, she is having difficulty paying her electric bill. Additionally, she walks two and a half hours to work because she has trouble affording a bus pass. She said, “She’s just having a difficult time trying to get ahead.” Kathleen said she’s been working with this participant to find a solution to getting a bus pass.

She said it is difficult to make any generalizations at this point since each client is so different and the work is just getting underway.

*Improvement of Life for Citizens*

*Impact of BBHHRP Home Advocate Counseling*

Though both positive, responses to the question of how the HA work had improved the lives of their clients were different. Kathleen began by saying that they hadn’t done too many visits yet, but, “I think for the most part, the ones that need assistance, are very appreciative.” She said that often participants do not initially understand the resources, especially community resources, the HAs can connect them with. She shared an example of a man who had lived in Dubuque a long time who was “doing okay” but was very appreciative to hear about budgeting classes being offered: “He’s going to try to go and he just kept thanking me.”

Mae said, “I think it’s a great asset with the program.” She said that the HA counseling is needed because HAs are providing and educating the participants on the resources in the community and showing them how to access those resources. The goal of the HAs is to make sure that participants understand and know the resources in the community and how to access them, so that in the future, they are able to navigate the system and become self-sufficient.

*Impact of BBHHRP Home Repairs*

Again, although positive, responses to this item were different, however, both HAs said that it is early to tell what the impacts will be. Mae said that there have not yet been any home repairs, so it’s difficult to tell how they will improve the lives of participants. However, the Healthy Homes team have been able to provide small updates to homes in the meantime. She mentioned providing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to make the homes safer as well as teaching the family how to properly clean their home. She said, “Even if the work isn’t done yet, we can begin making the home safer.”
Kathleen said, "I definitely think it will help." Participants who have already received their bid packages have been surprised about how much can be done to improve their home.

*Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program*

*Communication Among Team Members*

Responses differed on this item. Kathleen said email typically works best for communicating among team members: "I feel like if I have questions, I get responses back pretty quick. For the most part, I haven’t really had any specific challenges with communication."

Mae said there are team meetings with the other Healthy Homes team members, but agreed that most of their communication is via email. She said that “communication could be a little bit better” because it is a new program and everyone is working on different things, but Mae did not have any suggestions at this time. Mae also emphasized how good communication is between the two HAs. According to Mae, the HAs “talk all the time.” They often bounce ideas off of each other and discuss any emails they receive related to the program about what’s going on and who is going to do what.

*Technology*

Both Mae and Kathleen had concerns about the iPads for data entry and the GIS system. According to both women, they take handwritten notes during the assessment and enter the data into the GIS system after the fact. There are multiple reasons for this. Both said that entering data directly into the iPads would interrupt the flow of the conversation and ultimately lengthen the interviews. Additionally, Kathleen explained that having an additional item to juggle could cause difficulties during home visits. She said the HAs take precautions in every house against potential risks to the HAs themselves: bedbugs. She said, “There are certain protections that we have to take when we do home visits.” To prevent bedbugs from getting into their things or onto their person, HAs bring their own stools, wear shoe covers, and have only a small bag they wear continually on their shoulder. Kathleen said while in the home, she keeps everything in her lap, and an iPad would be difficult to juggle along with writing notes.

Both women had concerns related to accessing assessment data from the GIS system. Mae said that data entered by the HAs have only recently become viewable. Until that point, they wanted to keep their written records to be sure they could review participant information. Kathleen had very targeted feedback related to this aspect of the technology.

- She’s working with the City of Dubuque to fix this problem, but there are still fields with character limits so she can’t enter everything she wants to write.
- Every time a change is made to the system, the team members have to re-download the system.
- Some of the data the HAs have entered are not viewable from their end. She said that sometimes she cannot view whole responses and other times selected questions like the “Additional Comments” section, adding, “It makes it hard to go back and to look up what you did.” [Please note this has been resolved since the interview.]
- Responses in the GIS system are not printable and it is time prohibitive to type it once in GIS and once in Excel. [This has been resolved since the interview.]
- The fields related to follow-up conversations are accessible, but they are not easy to follow.
She said, "That’s the main concern right now with our notes and our documentation. It would be nice if it was all in one place and we can just look it up. I’m keeping a Word document now with all of my follow up notes."

Kathleen said that the HAs previously did their data entry in Excel then sent their records to the BBHHRP Intake Specialist for filing which seemed to work. Now the information is entered into GIS where everyone is supposed to be able to see it, but,"I don’t know how much they can see. [This has improved since the interview.]

**Biggest Challenges**

Both Kathleen and Mae reiterated problems with the GIS system when asked about biggest challenges in the program.

Kathleen mentioned that she has some difficulty knowing how frequently to follow up with participants when they do not return phone calls. She said that in previous work she’s done, she just uses her best judgement: “I don’t want to bother somebody by calling too often. I’ll leave them a message and if I don’t hear from them in a few weeks, then I’ll try to call them back.” Additionally, Kathleen said she does not know the status of the construction piece of the program. She said that information would be good to know so they have some knowledge of it when they speak to families.

**Recommendations**

Mae said there have been some struggles with scheduling in the past where HA visits were scheduled on different days than the inspections, but that is not really the case anymore which is an improvement.

She said that the HAs will be starting a resource group which is another opportunity for the team to get together and talk about the program in a different way. Mae said the group would be starting in September 2017 and would be an opportunity for service providers to get together and help facilitate connections and better understanding of the resources available. The goal will be to know “exactly where to go, who to send them to, what the numbers are, and what programs work best together.” Mae mentioned that the following groups are being invited to participate: Healthy Homes team members, Operation New View, Green Corp Iowa, Crescent Community Health Center, Alliant Energy, Black Hills, Dubuque Community Schools, Multi-Cultural Family Center, Ect

**IWA Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program ECIA Interview Summary**

The following is a summary of information gathered from the three Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) team members. Survey items were developed with input from Sharon Gaul, Resiliency Project Coordinator for the city of Dubuque. Survey items were reviewed by the University of Iowa Human Subjects Office. All three interviews were conducted via telephone by CEA staff members during July and August 2017. The interviewees were selected by the BBHHRP leadership team because of their role in the program.

The interviewees were provided an opportunity to review and update or edit the each summary before it was included in this report. Because these three interviewees are all from ECIA, their responses were combined after review. However, since the roles of the three ECIA team members
are so different, no attempt has been made to analyze their comments together. Additionally, because of differences in their roles, some respondents chose not to answer specific items.

To maintain the limited anonymity promised to interviewees as required by the University of Iowa IRB, pseudonyms are used for all interviewees: Elaine, Pat, and Eric. The pseudonyms used do not necessarily represent the gender presentation of interviewees.

**Interview Summary**

**Role with the BBHHRP**

Elaine is the intake specialist for the BBHHRP. Her services have been contracted for BBHHRP through the ECIA. She described her many roles in the program:

- Meets with people who may qualify for the program (e.g., applicants, potential applicants, homeowners, rental property owners, tenants) to review the application and provide the documentation required to determine eligibility.
- Conduct some radon testing.
- Schedule meetings between owners or tenants and the inspectors and home advocates.

Elaine said her job is to do “the basic ground work, the grunt work, to get the applicants approved.”

When asked what interactions with potential applicants are like, Elaine said that she has gone so far as to visit the home and fill out an application with clients. She said that not everybody understands the information on the application, so it is often more comfortable to work through the application with the applicants. She reiterated that it has been helpful to visit homes because people are less anxious and more comfortable in their space. She described some skepticism with giving out the amount of personal information required for the application and said, “If you can go to their home and make them feel comfortable and make them understand that you’re not trying to steal their identity, you’re just going to fill out this application, no one else is going to see it—I think that helps a lot.”

When asked about her role in radon test placement, Elaine said that if the inspectors are not available she will set the radon kits up or pick them up when testing is complete.

Elaine reflected that this conversation was a quick overview of her role and that there are a lot more details in what she does.

When asked whether participants understand her role in the program, Elaine agreed that they did. She said that anytime she has met with a participant, she will have exchanged phone calls or emails with them in advance. She said that phone calls are important to describe what she needs because she is compiling the information the participants need to provide for their application and making copies of their original documents. She said, “A lot of people need copies and they can’t afford to get their copies made.” Elaine agreed that she has to stay nimble to what each participant needs from her.

Pat is a construction inspector coordinator with East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA). He said that he works directly with the homeowners participating in the program.
Eric said his role with the BBHHRP is as the program administrator and grant administrator director. He is the main contact for Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) for both contracts Dubuque has for the Bee Branch. He said all IEDA information flows through him.

When asked if he works directly with the program participants, he said he does so occasionally because he has done a couple of inspections when they have needed backup. He said his contacts with participants have been “extremely positive.” He said people are excited to have their water issues addressed.

When asked if he has had a participant interaction that was difficult in any way, he said that his contacts have been very limited, but that he has not had any negative experiences with participants.

When asked if he believes that participants understand his role in the program, he responded, “As much as is necessary.”

**Interactions with Participants**

**Typical Participant Interactions**

Elaine said she begins every interaction with a phone call to explain the program, describe the process, and ask if they are interested in an application. She said that the application is available online and on paper, but most participants prefer the paper format. According to Elaine, at this point some people request a copy of the application and other people want to discuss it more with her. She provides her email and phone number to participants and offers to help answer any questions. Elaine said she also sometimes follows up an interest phone call with a letter to say thank you for calling and for letting us know about your interest. In that letter she would also provide the application (if requested) and tell potential applicants to contact her if they have any questions or need help filling out the application.

Elaine said that she’s developed a specific form for tenants on Section 8 which streamlines the data gathering process. This process allows the tenants to sign a form that allows ECIA to retrieve participant information (e.g. pay stubs, social security benefits) from the housing department.

When the interviewer commented about Elaine being very busy, she responded “I love it. I absolutely love it.”

Pat said that inspections are scheduled by a different team member. He goes to the house at the appointed times and meets with the owner of the home or renting tenants and landlord. He said that he starts his meetings with a conversation about the flooding history of the home: “What issues have they experienced in the past? Are there any ongoing issues or are they just related to larger flood events?” He says that he takes some notes about that conversation before starting the direct inspection. Pat said the inspection starts at the basement and he “[works] his way through the house,” including the outside of the home. Inspections include taking photos for his reference and for “historical clearance that needs to be done through the Iowa Economic Development Authority.”

According to Pat, after the inspection, he returns to the office to write “rehab specifications.” Although it has not happened in many homes yet, at this point Pat said he would reconnect with the owner to review the proposed work. That would be followed by the bidding process.

**Participant Engagement During Home Visits**

CEA 2017
When asked how engaged participants are in the process, Elaine said that the program is getting underway slowly and participants are “very excited about it and they want to see results now.” She said, “If you filled out an application in November last year, and you’ve got your inspection done and everything’s done...I think you’re starting to get impatient waiting for us to get something done.” Elaine said that she has had good experiences reassuring participants by being honest about the roadblocks in the process. She specifically mentioned talking with participants about the bids that came back higher than anticipated and the fact that this is the first program like this and they are working out the kinks.

Pat said engagement in the process has been good. He said participants are particularly interested in what is going to happen, how the project will all come together, and what projects they are eligible for.

**Difficult Participant Interactions**

Elaine said she has not had any difficult interactions with participants. She said, “Most people have been very accommodating for us and vice versa, we’ve been pretty accommodating for them.”

Related to scheduling, Elaine said that there have been some difficulties scheduling visits in a multi-plex unit. She said sometimes they cannot get them all in one day or people are unable to take off work for the visit. She said that this is “not even an issue.” She said, “It’s just something we have to work around, and the home advocate has been awesome with that. They take that on themselves and kinda work with it.” Reflecting on the home advocates, Elaine said, “We have a good crew. We do have a good crew.”

When asked if he has had any interactions that have been difficult, Pat described a situation he reconnected with the homeowner to discuss the proposed work and the homeowner was joined by someone who claimed he would be his “worst nightmare.” The extra person was the homeowner's brother who does maintenance work in the Dubuque area. Pat said this person was engaged to “set the record straight.” Pat said that ultimately the conversation ended up “cordial,” but that ultimately he will be interested to see how that project progresses. Pat said that he knew how to handle the situation because he has had worse experiences: “It didn’t alarm me. Typically, I’m going to work through those issues and they always come up, and you just have to be cordial and polite and work your way through it.”

**Resources**

*Structural Resources Not Currently Available in Dubuque*

Elaine said the inspectors would be the best for answering questions regarding resources not available in Dubuque “because they do the nuts and bolts inside the houses.” However, Elaine continued to say, “I know that people want everything done.”

Pat said the list of resources available for structural improvements continues to grow and that the funds that are available for these homes have a wide range of uses. He said that in each home “we could do more,” but the team wants to be able to make improvements in the anticipated 320 houses, so they have to be careful not to use the funds in the first 100. He said, we are “just trying to be fair across the board in doing the best we can and due diligence in [each] place so that everyone is being treated fair and equally.”
When asked what sort of needs led them to expand their list of eligible services, Pat said the city has made it a priority to find funds to do the more work, like replacing lead service lines and damaged sewers or addressing pests like bed bugs and cockroaches. Because of reframe, additional points to address are included in the inspection.

Eric explained that there are issues to be resolved in some of the homes that are not on the approved list of projects for this grant. For example, he described a scenario where an inspection found a wood burning stove that violated code because it was too close to the wall. He said that this was not the participant’s primary heat source and eventually the stove would need to be removed.

**Improvement of Life for Citizens**

Elaine said, “I definitely think it will improve the lives of participants.” She described a period of heavy rain in the previous couple of days, and said that people who have not yet applied to the program contacted her because they had rain in their basement again. She said that people get anxiety thinking about fixing their homes, especially if they do not have the funds to do it. Elaine said people want to protect their property and belongings, “Your basement ruined…your stuff that you stored there, whether it’s good stuff or bad stuff, it’s your stuff and it’s important to you.”

She described her interactions with an 89 year old man who was not interested in the program despite the fact that his neighbor has been enrolled. This man was apprehensive about participating because he did not want a lien on his property since he has not owed money on his property for a long time—despite the fact that Elaine reassured him that the lien with this program is not something to worry about. Elaine said that he eventually called her because he was tired of his basement flooding. He “hit a boiling point” and decided to apply for the program. She also said that when she took photos of his property, she also identified some electrical problems for which the team believes they can also find funding to fix.

Elaine said, “In the end [the community] is going to see some great results. I think people’s lives will be better for it. Not only that, the property values will be better... I think we’re going to see lots of good.” She said that even if the improvements are not clearly visible, it will make a difference in participants’ lives.

Pat said he hopes for a “positive impact.” He described the reduction of stress for people who are frequently flooded and not having to deal with those repeated recovery expenses, especially for people with limited resources. He said, “I really hope that what we’re doing and the rehab process will make a difference and potentially even reduce cost for the owners down the road because the houses have a higher level of reasonably being protected from water.” He followed that comment with a disclaimer that they cannot guarantee the houses will be dry after rain events, but he said, “It should certainly have a positive impact on those structures.”

Eric said that the work will be very good and that the program will “resolve a lot of their problems with water getting into basements and ruining floors, etc.”

**BBHHRP Internal Logistics**

**Communication Among Team Members**

Elaine said that the seven team members work well together. She said that the ECIA team members have worked together for a long time and have always worked well together. She said that working
with John Tharp, Sharon Gaul, and the home advocates is new, but “everybody gets along really well.” Elaine said that sometimes there is tension with the home advocates for getting them the information that they need when they need it with her being as busy as she is, but “[We] work through it. I think we do well. I think we’re a good team.”

When asked about the primary forms of communication among the teams, Elaine said that she typically uses phone, email, or text with ECIA. She said that she typically emails with the home advocates unless they need to talk over something difficult; then they use the phone. She said she shares an office space with John and Sharon.

Pat said communication has been good overall. He said the team has had a lot of meetings and sometimes the meetings are productive and other times they are just updates which are less productive. He said that emails back and forth and conversations have been positive; however, Pat did admit to “dropping the ball” on an email to Sharon that day.

Pat said, “Dealing with HUD and state and local regulations and trying to bring them all together into one cohesive package has been an issue that we’ve all struggled with.” When asked if he has any suggestions for making that better, Pat said, “I think those issues are being ironed out.” He described the engagement of City of Dubuque attorneys in this process. He described his frustration with waiting for regulations to line up and how this has slowed down the process for getting projects out to bid. Pat admitted to being frustrated with waiting and also said that homeowners are also wondering why work is not moving forward.

Eric clarified that he works mostly with IEDA and representatives for the City of Dubuque. When asked if he interacts with the inspectors or home advocates, Eric said that he works with the inspectors, but that his interactions with the home advocates is fairly minimal. However, he said the advocates have been great about sharing information to the inspector about specific needs or concerns from the participants.

**Biggest Challenges**

Elaine said the biggest challenge is navigating this new process. She said, “You don’t know what the unexpected is until you reach it.” She said that they have been working through each part of the process as they’ve reached it, so far they have just worked on applications and inspections. She said now they are working through the bid process and making changes as necessary.

Pat anticipates that the process will go smoothly once they “get this thing rolling.” He anticipates everything will fall into place once they get contractors and the contractors get used to the regulations of the program.

Pat said that he does not believe that working with the city will be a barrier: “They’ve got good staff, and we’ll be successful working together with them.”

Pat said that the difficult experience he described earlier with a participant is something that you anticipate with rehabilitation projects. He said, “You have to deal with those... it’s just, roll with it and make it work.”

When asked about interactions with the home advocates, Pat said he has had good interactions with the home advocates. He said that he is typically on-site when they are, and that is a good thing. He said that the occupants are usually more open with the home advocates, and the home advocates
have shared concerns from the occupants themselves about the home. He said, "Because they spend more time with them, maybe they start feeling more comfortable... it works well." He said that he has listened to some of the conversations the home advocates have had with participants, and they have done a great job.

Pat said that there have been challenges related to the rules changing as IEDA gets more information from Housing and Urban Development (HUD). He said, "HUD has been of the opinion that [Dubuque] is way ahead of the rest of the country on [this program], and they don't think it's a big deal to change rules. Because we've already got some things that we've had in place and moving forward, we end up having to go back and redo things and come up with additional documentation because it wasn't needed before." Eric said this is a barrier to getting things "implemented and moving." He clarified that this is no fault of the city or IEDA. When asked about an example for rules being changed, Eric said that "duplication of benefits" has been changed a couple of times.

When asked if there have been other challenges, Eric specified that there have been challenges with the environmental review. However, he said that much of that stems from changing program rules. Despite these challenges, he said that "It's not horribly unusual for us to run into some of these things, but it certainly delays projects. No doubt about it."

Technology

According to Elaine, the team has been having issues with the GIS system. She said that it was supposed to be running last November but, "We just are getting it running now." She said that the team has to go back and hand-enter the previous data. However, she said, "It's not really a problem, it's just another thing—a step in the right direction." She said that learning as you go is true of any kind of technology.

Elaine also said there was an issue with the online application that they only knew was a problem when someone attempted the online application and then called the office when it did not work. However, for the particular case she mentioned, she was able to mail a paper survey to the participant, and she got enrolled.

According to Pat, the city has a GIS program that is working very well for single family residences: "It works quite well with single family, and I'm perfectly happy with that." However, he's been struggling using the program with multi-family units. He said he needs to work with city staff about this issue. He wondered whether they expected him to put each unit's information into one GIS package for the whole building. He said, "The last couple times I've done large apartment buildings, I've just abandoned it and gone back to paper and pencil, so I need to address that with the city and try to figure out a better way to do it."

Eric said that he works with Iowa Grants, IEDA's online system, and that it has been working really well: "We haven't had any issues with that. That's one of the pieces that does work well!"

Recommendations

Elaine said she did not have any recommendations at this time because they need to get into the homes before they know what they could improve. She said she would answer this question differently in six months or a year.
Pat said, “We just need to get started. Once we get started, then we can look at tweaking it and making it better.” He said that it’s exhausting just trying to get to the point of starting. He said that he will be telling a very different and positive story during next year’s interview.

Eric said that it would be helpful to have additional funding available to address needs identified in homes that are not covered under the current grant. He speculated that funding will end up tight by the time the program gets rolling and the restrictions on number of dollars to spend on each house are limiting. He said, “That's not unusual at all, but if there was more funding available, we could certainly do more work.”

When asked if some homes have already been recommended for more changes than the grant funds allow, Eric said that when the first round of bid packages came back, only one company had bid and they were higher than expected. He continued to say that some of those bid packages will be rejected and others have been put on hold because of “procurement issues.” He said procurement policies require you to have at least two contractors bid on any one package. The city will need to request state approval to accept a bid from only one contractor. Eric said that the city tried packaging bids to get better pricing and attract bigger contractors, but that did not appear to work in this case. He said that moving forward, they will take bids on each home individually.

Eric described some complications because IEDA focuses on federal policy and the City of Dubuque focuses more on state policy. He said that bonding is complicated but, “We’re working through it.”

*Other comments*

Elaine said, “I think we’re a valuable resource for the City of Dubuque. I’ve worked with a lot of people, different departments that have been very helpful. I think it’s going good.” She then reflected in a positive tone that “it can be way better.”

She emphasized that the slowness of the process has been a barrier, but that she sees a future where “it’s going to be really really good.”

Eric said that he hopes the program can move forward and get implemented. He continued to say that this is a concern because, “We were hoping to have a lot of places under construction by this time, and literally, we haven’t signed our first contract.”

*Next Steps*

During Year 2, CEA will continue to administer BBHHRP Team Interviews to collect formative feedback. Additionally, CEA will report the results of additional BBHHRP Administrative Team Interviews that were requested after-the-fact by the Dubuque administrative team.

CEA will collaborate with BBHHRP team members to build and administer surveys for clients to be collected after work has been completed on their home.
Appendices

Appendix A: Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Evaluation Plan

Appendix B: IWA Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Home Advocate Interview Protocol

Appendix C: IWA Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program ECIA Interview Protocol
Appendix A: Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Evaluation Plan from the Center for Evaluation and Assessment

Points of contact for Center for Evaluation and Assessment: Valerie Decker & Julie Kearney
Points of contact for Dubuque: Sharon Gaul & Cori Burbach
Points of contact for IIHR: Larry Weber & Breanna Shea

The Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) will be providing program evaluation guidance and services to the Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program¹ (BBHHRP). The CEA will be centering its evaluation activities on the role, accomplishments, and effects of this home advocate service and flood resilience program as components of the Iowa Watershed Approach Project (IWA). In addition, in the IWA proposal, CEA is charged with documenting progress toward the following metric related to BBHHRP: Home improvements will result in increased opportunities for resilient, affordable housing for these populations and home improvements will result in reduced mental stress associated with the life disruptions common during flood events.² All of these purposes will be addressed in CEA’s evaluation activities.

Primary program evaluation activities

0. CEA BBHHRP Evaluation plan (June, 2017)
1. BBHHRP Home Advocate Data Collection: CEA will provide guidance, where requested, related to the BBHHRP Home Advocate Client Interview and Flood Resilience Survey.
2. CEA BBHHRP Home Advocate Interview² (Annual): CEA will interview home advocates annually to inform program improvements and document processes.
3. CEA BBHHRP East Central Intergovernmental Association Interview² (Annual): CEA will interview team members from the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) annually to inform program improvements and document processes.
4. CEA BBHHRP Client Follow-up Survey² (Rolling, after construction has been completed for each client): CEA will survey or interview BBHHRP clients about their experiences with the home advocate and outcomes related to recommendations received. This activity informs improvements and documents outcomes.
5. CEA Formative Report to BBHHRP Team and IWA Project Team (Annual, Years 1-4)
6. CEA Final Report to BBHHRP Team and IWA Project Team (Year 5)

This evaluation plan is based on the current project plan. If the project implementation plan changes, the evaluation plan will be revised.

¹ http://www.cityofdubuque.org/2339/Bee-Branch-Healthy-Homes-Resiliency-Prog
³ If anything particularly noteworthy emerges from the evaluation, CEA will provide a brief quick-turnaround report for the BBHHRP team. Otherwise, evaluation findings will be reported annually (activities 4 & 5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Year</th>
<th>Evaluation Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016-September 2017</td>
<td>0. Design evaluation plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Conduct BBHHRP program evaluation activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Assist in developing the BBHHRP Home Advocate Data Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. BBHHRP Home Advocate Resilience Survey developed by IWA Flood Resilience team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. BBHHRP Home Advocate Client Interview developed by BBHHRP team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Develop CEA BBHHRP Home Advocate Interview protocol and Interview Home Advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Work with Home Advocates to determine format, develop, and administer CEA BBHHRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Deliver first year formative report to BBHHRP—Due September 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 2:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017-September 2018</td>
<td>2. Conduct BBHHRP program evaluation activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Delve CEA BBHHRP Home Advocate Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. CEA BBHHRP Client Follow-up Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Deliver second year formative report to BBHHRP—Due September 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 3:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2018-September 2019</td>
<td>2. Conduct BBHHRP program evaluation activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. CEA BBHHRP Home Advocate Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. CEA BBHHRP ECIA Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Deliver third year formative report to BBHHRP—Due September 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 4:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2019-September 2020</td>
<td>2. Conduct BBHHRP program evaluation activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. CEA BBHHRP Home Advocate Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. CEA BBHHRP ECIA Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Deliver fourth year formative report to BBHHRP—Due September 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 5:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2020-September 2021</td>
<td>2. Conduct BBHHRP program evaluation activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. CEA BBHHRP Home Advocate Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. CEA BBHHRP ECIA Interview CEA BBHHRP Client Follow-up Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Deliver final report to BBHHRP—Due September 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Home Advocate Interview Protocol

Read this section to all interviewees:

As part of the evaluation of the Iowa Watershed Approach Project, the Center for Evaluation and Assessment is conducting interviews with key personnel from Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resilience Program. The purpose of the interviews is to document the processes of the Healthy Homes Program and inform program improvements.

Your responses will not be reported by name, however because there are only a small number of home advocates/home inspectors, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may decline to be interviewed, you may decline to answer particular questions, and you may ask that the interview not be used even after we have completed the interview.

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You may end the interview at any time. Please let me know if you need to leave or if you’d like to take a break and finish the interview later.

Findings from all interviews will be summarized, and you will be given the opportunity to review the summary and make comments, corrections, or additions before the summary is considered final. When it is finalized, it will be given to the Healthy Homes Program staff for their use in planning and to the project funding institution, HUD, at which point it becomes part of the public record for the project.

Ask for permission to record the interview

I. Home Advocate Role in the BBHHRP

First, I would like to learn about your current position.

1. How would you describe your role with the Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

2. Generally, do you think BBHRP participants understand your role in the program?

Possible probes:
   a. (If they do not understand) What could be done to help clarify your role to participants?
      Who needs to do this?

3. How engaged are participants during your home visits?

Possible probes:
   a. (if they are not engaged) What have you tried to improve participant engagement?
      What could be done in the future by you or others?

4. Describe for me the process of a typical home visit.

Possible probes:
   a. Is it more common for home visits to be easy or difficult to complete?

5. Tell me about a home visit that you would consider particularly difficult.

Possible probes:
a. What made it difficult to complete?
b. What strategies did you use to make the experience more comfortable for either you or the participants?
c. Do you need any help in figuring out how to make the visits more comfortable?

II. Recommended resources

6. During the home visits, as the home advocate, you make referrals for participants to address their needs. Can you tell me which resources participants have been most interested in?

7. What resources (if any) are there that participants need or could benefit from, that are not available in Dubuque?

Possible probes:
   a. (If yes to some missing) How did you identify these resources?

III. Improvement of life for citizens

8. You’ve told me about what a home visit looks like, the referrals, and level of participant engagement. When you consider all of these experiences how effective is Home Advocate counseling in improving the lives of participants?

9. When you consider all of these experiences how effective are home repairs in improving the lives of participants?

IV. BBHHRP Logistical Considerations

10. Now we are going to switch gears and talk more about your experiences working with the program team, challenges, and any recommendations you might have to improve the program. First, how effective would you consider the communication between yourself and other team members?

Possible probes:
   a. What could improve this communication (if needed)?

11. Your role as a home advocate entails the use of iPads to collect interview and survey data from participants. How has this use of technology worked? Have you had any problems entering participant responses?

Possible probes:
   a. (If yes) Any suggestions to improve this process?
   b. Did you receive enough training prior to beginning home visits with the iPads?
   c. (if not enough training) What other training would you suggest?

12. Thinking about the whole BBHHRP in general. What would you say are the biggest challenges, if any, you have encountered in your role as a HA.

Possible probes:
a. In working with the city?

b. For the advocacy portion of project – [for next 6 mos, next year?]

c. With participants?

d. Unexpected needs or problems?

13. My final question is about improving the program. What recommendations, if any, do you have that would help improve the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

a. Are there any organizational changes that you would recommend?

b. Are there things that need to happen for this program to succeed that are not happening (what are they)?

14. Do you have other comments that about the program, the process – anything else at all?

Any questions for me?

Thank you for your time.
Appendix C: Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program ECIA Interview Protocol

Read this section to all interviewees:

As part of the evaluation of the Iowa Watershed Approach Project, the Center for Evaluation and Assessment is conducting interviews with key personnel from Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resilience Program. The purpose of the interviews is to document the processes of the Healthy Homes Program and inform program improvements.

Your responses will not be reported by name, however because there are only a small number of home advocates/home inspectors, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may decline to be interviewed, you may decline to answer particular questions, and you may ask that the interview not be used even after we have completed the interview.

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You may end the interview at any time. Please let me know if you need to leave or if you’d like to take a break and finish the interview later.

Findings from all interviews will be summarized, and you will be given the opportunity to review the summary and make comments, corrections, or additions before the summary is considered final. When it is finalized, it will be given to the Healthy Homes Program staff for their use in planning and to the project funding institution, HUD, at which point it becomes part of the public record for the project.

ASK FOR PERMISSION TO RECORD THE INTERVIEW

V. ECIA Role in the BBHHRP

First, I would like to learn about your current position.

1. How would you describe your role with the Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

2. Generally, do you think BBHHRP participants understand your role in the program?

Possible probes:

   b. (If they do not understand) What could be done to help clarify your role to participants? Who needs to do this?

3. Do you work with participants in person or on the telephone? Describe for me what a typical interaction with participants might be like for you.

4. How engaged are participants during your work with them?

Possible probes:

   b. (if they are not engaged) What have you tried to improve participant engagement? What could be done in the future by you or others?

   b. Is it more common for participant contacts to be easy or difficult to complete?

5. Tell me about a participant contact that you would consider particularly difficult.

Possible probes:
d. What made it difficult to complete?

e. What strategies did you use to make the experience more comfortable

f. Do you need any help in figuring out how to make the visits more comfortable?

VI. Recommended resources

6. Are there any resources to address property structure needs that participants need or could benefit from, that are not available in Dubuque? What (if any) are the most important needs in property structure improvements that you’ve seen that cannot be addressed by this project?

Possible probes:

b. (If yes to some missing) How did you identify these needs?

VII. Improvement of life for citizens

7. How effective do you think the property improvements aspect of the BBHHRP is in improving the lives of participants?

VIII. BBHHRP Logistical Considerations

8. Now we are going to switch gears and talk more about your experiences working with the program team, challenges, and any recommendations you might have to improve the program. First, how effective would you consider the communication between yourself and other team members?

Possible probes:

b. What could improve this communication (if needed)?

9. Thinking about the whole BBHHRP in general. What would you say are the biggest challenges, if any, you have encountered in your role in the project?

Possible probes:

a. In working with the city?

b. In working with the home advocacy portion of project – [for next 6 mos, next year?]

c. With participants?

d. Unexpected needs or problems?

10. Your role entails the use of various technology to collect data and/or to use or process data. How has this use of technology worked? Have you had any problems?

Possible probes:

d. (If yes) what were the problems (and have they been resolved?)

e. Any suggestions to improve this process?

f. Did you receive enough training prior to using the technology for this project?

g. (if not enough training) What other training would you suggest?
11. My final question is about improving the program. What recommendations, if any, do you have that would help improve the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

   c. Are there any organizational changes that you would recommend?
   d. Are there things that need to happen for this program to succeed that are not happening (what are they)?

12. Do you have other comments that about the program, the process – anything else at all?

   Any questions for me?

   Thank you for your time.
Iowa Watershed Approach:
Year 2 Dubuque Evaluation Activities Report

September 28, 2018

As submitted to:
Sharon Gaul, Resiliency Coordinator for Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes
Valerie R.M. Decker, M.A., Assistant Director and
Julie M. Kearney, M.A., Associate Director

Center for Evaluation and Assessment
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
valerie-decker@uiowa.edu
julie-kearney@uiowa.edu

The Iowa Watershed Approach is supported by a contract to the State of Iowa (Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) as fiscal agent) from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Disaster Resilience Competition. Under the auspices of a sub-contract between the IEDA and the University of Iowa, The University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment is conducting the program evaluation supported by funds from the Community Development Block Grant- National Disaster Resilience Contract # 13-NDRP-013. This report covers IWA work conducted from August 15, 2017-August 15, 2018.

COPYRIGHT: Center for Evaluation and Assessment, 2018

Copyright CEA 2018
Table of Contents

Executive Summary .......................................................................................................................... 3

Dubuque Evaluation Study Activities .......................................................................................... 3
  Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Team Interviews ........................................... 3
  Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Client Interviews ......................................... 4

Appendix V. Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Team Interviews Summary: Year 2 ........ 8

Appendix W. Summary of Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Participant Interviews ...... 18
Executive Summary

During Year 2, there were two elements of the CEA evaluation related to the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Project: interviews with the BBHH team and interviews with the first set of BBHH clients.

BBHH team members described that they are getting both busier and more comfortable with their work. They described that participants are already benefitting from the BBHH program in various ways: families can use their basements again, there is less water in properties, reduced stress and worry, families are receiving referrals for needed resources, and there is a “human touch.” A major theme throughout the interviews was that no property (or family) is “one size fits all;” it’s important to be responsive to the needs of each individual.

A majority of BBHH participants who were interviewed described that participating in the program will have a positive impact on their lives financially, personally, and through increased pride in their neighborhood. One participant said, “I think it’s a wonderful project. I think that the work they did, outside of just helping the homes and the sustainability of the homes in this area that they did for Bee Branch, the landscaping and the securing of all that...is beautiful.” The group described the “best parts” of the program to be the work done on their home to prevent further water damage, working with the City of Dubuque staff and contractors, and low-to-moderate income residents have access to this type of program.

Dubuque Evaluation Plan and Deviations from the Plan

During Year 1, the CEA collaborated with the City of Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Coordinator, Sharon Gaul, to create an evaluation plan for BBHH activities. For Year 2, in addition to the planned evaluation activities, at the request of Dubuque, the CEA collaborated with Gaul to create a short survey of contractors who had done work for BBHH. The purpose of the survey is to understand how the work of contractors with the BBHH is going, any challenges contractors experience in their work, and how project staff could improve the project for contractors. Findings from this survey will be reported to the BBHH team in Fall 2018 and will be included in the Year 3 annual report.

Dubuque Evaluation Study Activities

In alignment with the Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Evaluation Plan (included in CEA’s Year 1 report), the CEA conducted interviews with Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) clients and team members. Those findings are reported below.

In addition to the planned evaluation activities, at the request of Sharon Gaul, BBHH Resiliency Coordinator, and the CEA collaborated with Gaul to create a short survey of contractors who had done work for BBHH. The purpose of the survey is to understand how the work of contractors with the BBHH is going, any challenges contractors experience in their work, and how project staff could improve the project for contractors. The online survey was sent to contractors on September 11, 2018.

Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Team Interviews

Center for Evaluation and Assessment conducted phone interviews with the seven City of Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program BBHH team members during July and August 2018. The purpose of the interviews was to document the processes of the BBHH and inform program improvements. Interviews asked team members about their role in the program, interactions with participants, day-to-day processes, participants’ resource needs, anticipated effects of the program on
participants, and internal program processes and recommendations. The full report of findings can be found in Appendix V.

During Year 2, the BBHH team members reported that their roles were very similar to a year ago. However, some team members reported having extra responsibilities (e.g., facilitating the bid process) and others said that although their role hadn’t changed, they were now more comfortable with their understanding of participants’ needs and the resources available in Dubuque. Team members said they had very few difficult interactions with participants, but in the cases where they have difficult situations, it has helped to focus on being responsive to the specific situation and communicating well.

Team members reported the most common structural property improvements at this point: sump pumps and drains; external drains, gutters, and spouts; tuck-pointing work and foundation repair; dehumidifiers or fans; and landscaping. One team member emphasized that what is needed "depends on the house" and that, "It’s not one size fits all.”

Team members reported effectiveness of structural property improvements on changing participants’ lives in the following ways: families can use their basements again, there is less water in properties, and reduced stress and worry. In addition to comments about how participants’ lives are different, individual team members also commented that the contractors did high quality work and participants recognize that the city did something good for them.

Team members reported the most resource referrals made by the home advocates at this point were: school and workforce development; financial services; food resources and programs; healthcare and health insurance; weatherization; and counseling and mental health. One team member said there has been some difficulty with follow-through because participants are too busy and an outside agency’s response to requests can be an issue.

Team members reported effectiveness of home advocacy on changing participants’ lives in the following ways: referrals for resources and the “human touch.” One team member reflected that they will know more about the benefit after the yearly follow-ups.

Team members’ perceptions of BBHH internal logistics are reported by theme within this report. Highlights include:

- Team members are satisfied with the work that they are doing with the community.
- Though the team is high quality, there have been staff changes which have made understanding everyone’s roles and responsibilities more difficult; however, they are hopeful that the new Acting Housing and Community Development Director will provide a positive benefit.
- The process would be smoother if more contractors were bidding on BBHH projects.
- There are specific challenges to working with houses in the oldest part of Dubuque and within the confines of federal grant funding.

**Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Client Interviews**

In April 2018, the CEA conducted 10-minute telephone interviews with a convenience sample of volunteer participants in the BBHH. The CEA and the Dubuque BBHH team worked together to create an interview protocol to provide the program team with information to: 1) help them improve the program, and 2) to fulfill program evaluation needs.

Copyright CEA 2018
In order to maximize the response rate, at the recommendation of BBHH team members, the CEA conducted short telephone interviews instead of a written survey. Additionally, the CEA was also able to secure non-HUD funding from the Iowa Flood Center to provide a small incentive for interview participation in the form of a chance of winning one of two $25 Target gift certificates to be distributed to two random winners at each of the six month intervals.

Because the first list of potential interviewees for the pilot of the interview was only seven, the CEA agreed to contact as many as possible. Random sampling from interested participants will occur in subsequent rounds if the potential number is greater than 20 in order to reach the target number of total interviews over the course of the project.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. One CEA staff member read all the interview transcripts and wrote the summary and full report. Two points of confusion arose during the analysis of interview responses. First, several participants indicated that they were taking part in other Dubuque home improvement programs and it was not always clear to them which program they were being asked about, and therefore not always clear which program they were describing. Second, several interviewees did not seem to know who their Home Advocate they had been in contact with was and mentioned several other names of people who work for the City of Dubuque.

The process will be repeated every six months until the program is complete in 2021. The following is a brief summary of the interviews that CEA wrote for the BBHH to use in informal settings and for the clients. The full report of findings from April 2018 can be found in Appendix W.

What was the best part of working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

The “best parts” mentioned by participants included the following (with the number of people who named each category in parentheses):

- The actual work done on their homes to prevent further water damage (3)
- Working with the City of Dubuque staff who ran the program and with contractors (2)
- Low-to-moderate income residents able to get work on homes done (2)
- Smooth planning and construction process
- Benefit to homeowners and to the City of Dubuque

In their own words, BBHH participants described the best parts as:

- “Getting the house fixed.”
- “It helped so that it [water damage] won’t happen again.”
- “I was able to talk with the contractors that were doing the work. The workers were very, very cordial. They informed me about everything they were doing, why they were doing it. ...If they didn’t have the answer, they’d call the city housing department. So that was probably the best part.”
- “Probably the best part, to be honest with you, is the people that I dealt with. Because they’re all there for us. If we had questions...they got back to us in a timely manner. Always very polite, very courteous, always seemed to have our best interest at heart. They’re all pretty awesome.”
- “I’m not a wealthy person. I don’t have those means, so it was important to have that opportunity.”
- “I liked the idea that people who were qualified actually got the help or assistance...I think it’s an incredible program that they have.”
• “I liked the fact that it was all pretty much laid out.”
• “You know it benefits the homeowners, but also I guess they might say the city. It just keeps people...happy while paying their taxes...if that makes sense!”

What problems, if any, did you have in working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

Most participants reported having no problems with the program. A few people (3) mentioned that it took longer than they thought it would, but most appeared to take this with good humor. {One participant said, “That was no problem because my kids thought they were on vacation.” Another laughingly said it was only a problem because they had to use a porta-potty for seven weeks instead of three.}

A few participants said that program staff and contractors went out of their way to be helpful by checking in on them, referring them to other home rehabilitation programs, installing new blinds (participant-purchased), and just doing “sweet things like that.”

Other problems reported include: construction costs that were quite a bit higher than original estimates; {a broken window latch that still needs to be resolved (waiting for a new window);}¹ and having their whole yard torn up. The participant with the yard problem said that the sub-contractor did a good job on the sidewalk and that city employees came and put straw on the yard, adding that they commended the city for helping out.

Participants were also asked to rate parts of the program on a 1-5 scale (where 5 was most the most positive and 1 was the least positive). The four questions asked:
• How easy it was to complete the application (All but one rated the easy of applying for the program as a 4 or 5 – one said 3.)
• How easy it was to work with the contractor (All rated the ease of working with the contractors as 4 or 5.)
• How helpful it was to work with the Home Advocate (Five of the six rated the helpfulness of the Home Advocate as a 4 or 5.)
• How likely they were to recommend the BBHH to friends and neighbors. (All but one said they’d recommend the BBHH to others – one person didn’t answer the question.)

In what ways will participating in the BBHH have an impact on your life?

Five of the participants said it would have a positive impact on their lives. The other participant said, “I can’t say it made a real big impact on my life.” The participants who said being part of the BBHH would have a positive impact on their lives mentioned the following ways it would have an impact:

Financial:
• “I could never afford to do it on my own, ever....A new furnace, new central air, water-proof basement, and all that. I mean, that’s a lot of money.”
• “To be able to have that work done on my home, and have that available because of my financial status, was a benefit.”
• “Because of the program, not only were we financially able to take on a lot in a short time.”

¹ Where curly brackets { } are used throughout this summary to enclose text, the participant described work that may have been part of a different Dubuque program in which they were also a participant, not the BBHH.
Personal:
- “One of the things they put in my house is something to kill germs...My kids have health problems, so they also changed to central air because [kids] have lung problems.... That has helped with lung problems – having the right humidity in the house.”
- “We’ve got a beautiful home (that is now handicap accessible)....We wouldn’t have been able to do all this as fast as we did without this program. So for us it was a blessing.”
- “I would give the homes to everybody if I could...We had water coming in the basement and kids would actually miss school the next day because of taking care of this. I just can’t say enough about what they have done.... It truly changed our whole life with everything in our home. It really did.”

Increased pride in home and neighborhood:
- “It’s good to see the neighborhood still being worked on...I think that the programs in general provide a great opportunity for people who wouldn’t be able to do this stuff...I think they’re great programs.”
- “I think it’s a wonderful project. I think that the work they did, outside of just helping the homes and the sustainability of the homes in this area that they did for Bee Branch, the landscaping and the securing of all that...is beautiful.”
- “I take a little more pride... The value of your home increases. So yeah, there’s definitely an impact on my life and my family’s. You bet.”
Appendix V. Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Team Interviews Summary: Year 2
Executive summary

Center for Evaluation and Assessment conducted phone interviews with the seven City of Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program BBHH team members during July and August 2018. The purpose of the interviews was to document the processes of the BBHH and inform program improvements. Interviews asked team members about their role in the program, interactions with participants, day-to-day processes, participants’ resource needs, anticipated effects of the program on participants, and internal program processes and recommendations.

During Year 2, the BBHH team members reported that their roles were very similar to a year ago. However, some team members reported having extra responsibilities (e.g., facilitating the bid process) and others said that although their role hadn’t changed, they were now more comfortable with their understanding of participants’ needs and the resources available in Dubuque. Team members said they had very few difficult interactions with participants, but in the cases where they have difficult situations, it has helped to focus on being responsive to the specific situation and communicating well.

Team members reported the most common structural property improvements at this point: sump pumps and drains; external drains, gutters, and spouts; tuck-pointing work and foundation repair; dehumidifiers or fans; and landscaping. One team member emphasized that what is needed "depends on the house" and that, "It's not one size fits all.”

Team members reported effectiveness of structural property improvements on changing participants’ lives in the following ways: families can use their basements again, there is less water in properties, and reduced stress and worry. In addition to comments about how participants’ lives are different, individual team members also commented that the contractors did high quality work and participants recognize that the city did something good for them.

Team members reported the most resource referrals made by the home advocates at this point were: school and workforce development; financial services; food resources and programs; healthcare and health insurance; weatherization; and counseling and mental health. One team member said there has been some difficulty with follow-through because participants are too busy and an outside agency’s responses to requests can be an issue.

Team members reported on the effectiveness of home advocacy on changing participants’ lives in the following ways: referrals for resources and the “human touch.” One team member reflected that they will know more about the benefit after the yearly follow-ups.

Team members’ perceptions of BBHH internal logistics are reported by theme within this report. Highlights include:

- Team members are satisfied with the work that they are doing with the community.
- Though the team is high quality, there have been staff changes which have made understanding everyone’s roles and responsibilities more difficult; however, they are hopeful that the new Acting Housing and Community Development Director will provide a positive benefit.
- The process would be smoother if more contractors were bidding on BBHH projects.
- There are specific challenges to working with houses in the oldest part of Dubuque and within the confines of federal grant funding.
**Introduction and methods**

The following is a summary of information gathered during interviews with seven Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHH) team members. The purpose of the interviews was to document the processes of the Healthy Homes Program (BBHH) and inform program improvements. Interview protocols were designed during Year 1 in collaboration with Sharon Gaul, Resiliency Project Coordinator for the City of Dubuque. All seven interviews were conducted via telephone by the Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) staff members during July and August 2018. Interview recordings were transcribed then coded and analyzed by one CEA staff member.

At the request of Gaul, where possible, responses were aggregated to provide limited anonymity for the respondents. However, due to the varied roles in the program, team members may be identifiable by their specific responses to interview questions. This is different from the Year 1 summary (See Year 1 Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Annual Report) which was reported by category of interviewee and each team member was given a pseudonym.

This report integrates information from three separate sets of interviewees each with two different interview protocols (Appendices A and B). The three sets of interviewees are:

- BBHH Home Advocates (Visiting Nurses Association)
- BBHH Inspector, Intake Specialist, and Administrative Services Manager (East Central Intergovernmental Association)
- Bee Branch Healthy Homes Administrators

Interviewees were invited to review this summary and make corrections or additions before the summary was considered final and submitted to United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Role with the BBHH**

Six of the seven interviewees had been previously interviewed by the CEA (See Year 1 Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Annual Report). In these cases, we asked each team member to reflect on how their roles have or have not changed over the course of the year. All six indicated that their role was very similar to last year but provided some examples of how things have changed.

Home Advocates (HAs) described having a better understanding of the housing and Healthy Homes aspects of their work and the specific needs of the elderly participant population. Additionally, they are more comfortable with their assessments, and with recommending and accessing resources available to meet participants’ needs. The HAs formed a BBHH Resources Coalition which helps them better understand local resources. One advocate said, “[The process] definitely runs more smoothly. We can get into contact with the right people quicker and have a better time frame to get back with families with the information they need.”

The Administrative staff and ECIA team members said the biggest change is that they have been busier with two specifically stating that they have taken on extra responsibilities (conducting inspections and administering the bid process). Overall, the program is more construction-oriented this year than last with a revolving door of inspections, bids, contracts, and monitoring constructed work.
One team member had not previously been interviewed by the CEA. Generally, she said her role is to “inspect the properties once they’ve been deemed eligible for the program.” She described the following responsibilities in her conversation with CEA:

- Conduct inspections of eligible properties including determining the scope of work and which parts of the work are eligible for BBHH funding
- Conduct inspections of in-progress projects to monitor progress
- Issue change orders for unexpected work “which there is in almost every job because we’re dealing primarily with Dubuque’s oldest housing stock”
- Mediate communication between the contractors and the property owner when necessary
- Review and approve contract paperwork

She said that she has frequent contact with program participants while she is doing the inspections. During these interactions, they can ask questions or point out concerns they have in the house. Additionally, participants will sometimes tell the HAs something they are concerned about and the HA will pass it to her. She believes participants understand her role, but that property owners have a clearer understanding than tenants.

Difficult participant interaction

All interviewees who described having participant contact were asked to describe a participant contact that they would consider particularly difficult. Interviewees indicated that they did not have many difficult interactions. Some examples of interactions they shared are:

- Discomfort with financial portion of the HA assessment
- Supporting tenants is different than supporting homeowners. They can be less engaged, have more severe issues, and sometimes their housing issues are confounded with landlord responsibilities
- Following up with a participant who believed they had additional water issues as a result of the work done on their property

In talking about these difficulties, team members considered solutions. Two team members talked about the importance of being responsive to specific situations. On one of these cases, the team member said: “We got everybody in there, we made some adjustments, so we’ll see how that goes. If that doesn’t work, we’ll do something else.” Two emphasized communication in their responses: “It’s figuring out what types of communication style people appreciate and then trying to help and meet their expectations after that.” One mentioned specifying program processes to clarify questions.

One team member said, “You just have to remember every person is different, and they all have limits of what they can handle...we just have to step back and remember that we understand it all, and they don’t. So, look at it differently and help explain it to them.”

Property improvements

Most common structural property improvements

Four team members were asked the structural practices most needed by participants to address their needs (2 Administrators, 2 ECIA). They reported:

- Sump pumps and drains (4): One team member said they have been installing sump pumps with battery backups.
• External drains, gutters, and spouts (3): Three team members said they have been installing, fixing, cleaning, or redirecting existing downspouts, gutters, and drains.
• Tuck-point work and foundation repair (3): One said this foundational repair is necessary because of the limestone foundations.
• Dehumidifiers or fans (2): One team member said they have installed bathroom vent vans with humidity level detectors which reduces the need for an additional dehumidifier.
• Landscaping (2)

Additional improvements stated by individuals included: furnaces; water heaters; outdoor concrete work (sidewalks, driveways); basement windows or doors; drywall and trim; drain tiling and “dry walls”; electrical, GFCI, smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide detectors; and “mechanical improvements.”

Two team members stated that what is needed “depends on the house” and that “it’s not one size fits all.”

**Effectiveness of structural property improvements on changing participants’ lives**

All team members were asked to reflect on how the structural improvements part of the BBHH program is improving the lives of participants. All seven indicated some kind of improvements.

One team member said:

> From what I hear from people after we’re completed and have gone through a couple of rain events and don’t have any water or have very minimal water, we’re making a huge impact. They’re able to sleep through rain events, able to store things in their basement again. Most of these basements, again 99% of them are not habitable. Their mechanicals are down there, and their Christmas ornaments or whatever, down there. They are much better functioning and healthier spaces when we’re done.

Another summed up their comments by saying: "I think [water is] at least one less thing to worry about for a lot of our participants, and that’s good enough.”

Specifically, team members identified the following ways that the structural improvements are changing their lives:

• Families can use their basements again (3)
• There is less water in properties (3)
• Reduces stress (2)
• Motivated additional house improvements
• Improved children’s health issues
• Replacement of water damaged furnace and water heater allows more peace of mind; the family does not have to relight either regularly

One team member reflected that families would not have been able to make these improvements without the support of BBHH. Another team member said that they will see more impacts in the future.

In addition to comments about how participants’ lives are different, individual team members also commented that the contractors did high quality work and participants recognize that the city did something good for them.
Home advocacy

Most common resource referrals
Three team members were asked about the referrals most needed by participants to address their needs (2 HA, 1 ECIA). They reported:

- School and workforce development (2): The respondent who said workforce development specifically mentioned a specific education program.
- Financial services (2): Services stated included budgeting classes and programs to support paying utility bills
- Food resources and programs (2): specific services stated included food pantries, access to food for kids during summer
- Healthcare and health insurance (2)
- Weatherization (2)
- Counseling and mental health (2)

Additional resources stated by individuals included: mentoring program for kids and community involvement.

One team member said there has been some difficulty with follow-through because participants are too busy and an outside agency's response to requests can be an issue.

Effectiveness of home advocacy on changing participants' lives
All team members were asked to reflect on how the home advocacy part of the BBHH program is improving the lives of participants. The responses below include response from all three categories of team members, including the home advocates themselves. Five team members made general positive comments about the HAs or their role.

One of these team members said: "I think Amy and Amanda [are] outstanding and have taken a great interest in the project... They're bought into it and [participants] know they're there to help. A lot of times, they're the only help."

Five team members described that the HAs are providing referrals for resources to the participants (e.g., "[HAs] are there to give them the tools that they need in the future" and "I know [the HAs] are finding resources for people like, schooling, and healthcare, and just community involvement"), and three team members indicated that participants are taking advantage of these resources. One said, "Some of [the participants] that had a higher need level certainly remember [the HAs] and talk about the place they held in [the participant’s] life for the few months that [BBHH team members] were along for the ride. It is effective, I think the data is going to tell that story."

Two team members described the benefit of the “human touch” for participants: It is beneficial "just to have somebody to talk to...I think there’s a lot of people that just felt like they were kind of alone."

One team member reflected that they will know more about benefit after the yearly follow-ups.

Needs unable to be addressed through BBHH funding
(See also 'Characteristics of properties and other improvements needed' Section)

One of the following two questions was asked of each team member. Responses to these items are combined below.
What (if any) are the most important needs in property structure improvements that you’ve seen that cannot be addressed by this project? (ECIA, Admins)

What resources (if any) are there that participants need or could benefit from, that are not available in Dubuque? (HAs)

Two team members specified that if the BBHH program does not offer the services participants need, they will refer participants to other programs when possible. Additionally, an administrator clarified that “We can address some safety items and we’ve been doing that across the board as we can.” Life safety items (e.g., smoke alarms, radon) are eligible for the HUD grant.

Improvement needs or identified community or personal needs that cannot be addressed by this project:

- Improvement needs
  - Storm damaged roofs (3)
  - Sewer issues (2)
  - Items on the main or upstairs level
  - Electrical

- Personal needs
  - Transportation and gas money (2)
  - Child care
  - Mental health

The following comments were provided in response to these items:

- This program serves “old housing stock” which has varied problems. Dubuque keeps a list of all the issues that they will share with Iowa Economic Development Authority.
- Rental code or non-compliance items that are not always resiliency eligible are referred to the landlord to address in a tenant situation; team members educate the owners in owner-occupied situations.

**BBHH internal logistics**

All seven interviewees were asked the same set of items about the communication and processes of the BBHH team. These questions asked about communication (internally and with contractors), perceived challenges, and recommendations for program improvement. Due to the more fluid nature of response to these items, responses to these items were analyzed together and are reported by theme. Themes are presented in descending order of comment frequency below.

**Positive comments**

Six team members made general comments either to indicate that things are going well or that they have not encountered many challenges. Some particularly enthusiastic quotes are:

"It's actually fun to come work and know you're going to help somebody then to hear about it when they're done. That's kind of what's really nice, you know?"

"I'm happy to be involved. I think we're doing good things. These properties have been flooding and having water intrusion for a hundred years or more."

"We're trucking along... It's better than it was a year ago. We're all going to have challenges, but I'm happy with where we are for the time being."
"We’ve met some wonderful people that I really think we’ve helped. We’ve done some great things to benefit. You know, their lifestyle changes when they don’t have to worry about the basement filling up."

**BBHH team**

Six interviewees made comments specifically related to the BBHH team.

Five team members commented about how the team has changed over the past year. Four team members described challenges of a fluctuating team members including difficulty knowing everyone’s roles and who to ask specific questions. Three respondents indicated that things are improving and that the team is becoming more stable: “I think that as we get [a] more permanent team in place, things are just going to get better.” Two team members specifically mentioned the transition from the previous Housing & Community Development Director to an Acting Housing & Community Development Director. Both of these team members made positive comments about the Acting Housing & Community Development Director being engaged in the work. One even said, “Hopefully she’ll become the permanent person because we’re clicking along pretty good with her at the helm.”

Two team members made comments about the quality of the team and its members. One team member also said that the BBHH team is handling the unexpected very well. She described the BBHH team’s excellent response to a recent heavy rainstorm where two participant calls came in saying they had water in their properties. She also said BBHH team members have been working “smoothly” with other city departments (i.e., housing, lead, inspection).

Two team members specifically mentioned how busy the Intake Specialist is. One respondent said that the Intake Specialist now has support for processing new applications and other similar tasks. Another team member mentioned the possibility of hiring interns for support next summer who could “catch us up on some of our data and that sort of thing.”

**Communication**

Six interviewees made comments specifically related to communication.

Five team members said communication was good. For example, two people remarked that “Everyone’s pretty accessible” and “We can call each other at any time.” Another team member said that greater team cohesion has led to less need for face-to-face meetings.

Five team members described various strategies for communication. Some listed specific modes of communication used among the team members: email (4), face-to-face meetings (3), phone (2), Microsoft Sharepoint, and reporting “from both sides of the fence.” One team member talked about how beneficial it is that the HAs share relevant information from their assessments with the ECIA team members. One team member requested that team meetings be more spread out in the future because sometimes they will go a stretch without any meetings, then have three in one week.

Three team members indicated a need for more consistency within the team. Two talked about the importance of consistency of priorities and processes (“What we can and cannot do, where you draw the line…”); the other said they are working to streamline processes.

**Contractors**

Four interviewees made comments specifically related to working with contractors. All four of the team members who mentioned contractors said that they wish they had more contractors to do the
BBHH work; two of them said it has been a problem since the beginning. Two said that a limitation to getting contractors engaged is the economic boom in Dubuque right now: "It's wonderful economic times [in Dubuque] and everybody's busy. If contractors weren't so busy right now with projects on their own, they would probably be receptive to this." Two team members said that contractors have expressed interest early in the process, but they are not bidding. One team member said, "We've brainstormed, we've tried things, we've called people, and we've talked to people. We keep striking out."

Individuals expressed the following about working with contractors:

- Work with contractors has been pretty smooth. There are sometimes questions, but nothing more than challenging than "business as usual."
- ECIA tries to minimize the extra effort required for federal grants for the contractors.
- Contractors might assume more rigidity than reality (no opportunity for change orders, for example).
- BBHH was changing the bid process every couple of months; that was difficult for contractors to get on board with.
- It is a challenge to keep enough projects coming to keep the contractors they do have busy.

Recommendations

Team members were asked if they had any recommendations for how to improve the program. Four team members made a recommendation or a "pie in the sky" wish:

- Schedule assessments or inspections with tenants or homeowners further in advance (2)
- More time at the end: "All grants run out, we understand that, so we're just going to do our best to get to the end of it."
- More staff
- Flexible funding to support administrative duties, inspections, and practices that are not eligible for BBHH funding
- Target the program to owner occupied units so that the BBHH funding better supports low income families.

Characteristics of properties and other improvements needed

Three interviewees made comments specifically related to characteristics of the participants’ properties and improvements needed beyond the BBHH funding (See also ‘Needs unable to be addressed through BBHH funding’ section).

Two team members said that the properties where they are working have specific challenges: oldest part of the city, not having places to discharge sump pumps, and limestone foundations. When commenting on the sump pump discharge, one team member said, “Those are things that are totally out of our control.”

Two team members described considerations for when properties need improvements which cannot be funded by BBHH. One said it is a challenge simply because some participants do not understand the rules and limitations of the grant and do not understand why the inspectors or contractors cannot do more for them. The other described that they can often find limited funding for other things, but that sometimes the family is unwilling to make their own effort to access a resource or their own or pots of money are shared among multiple programs. For example, the HAs

Copyright CEA 2018
could make a case for purchasing cleaning supplies through the Visiting Nurses Association, but that budget also supports other programs.

**Geographic Information System (GIS)**

Two interviewees made comments specifically related to GIS.

One said that the interface with the GIS software has improved since last year, but it still has some limitations. She said it was a barrier that things were constantly being updated. When asked how things have improved, she said she can now view all the data available in GIS by address including photos: “It’s just definitely bigger picture of everything that’s happening.”

The other was more satisfied with the progress that has been made with GIS over the last year: “The GIS is all put together on the front as well. Now we’re working at that backside, looking at the outcomes, aggregating the data, telling the story, putting it all together and what it means... There’s 43 units complete. So, we can start actually having something to talk about now.”
Appendix W. Summary of Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Participant Interviews
Summary of Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Participant Interviews

During the fall of 2017, University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) staff members began working with personnel from the Bee Branch Homes Resiliency Program (BBHH) in Dubuque, IA to decide how the CEA program evaluation could best capture the impact of the program on resident participants. These interviews were conducted as part of the CEA program evaluation of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development funded Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA).

As part of the IWA grant from HUD, during 2016-2021 the BBHH\(^2\) will provide $8.4 million in the form of forgivable loans to improve up to 320 housing units (including owner-occupied homes, single-unit rentals, and small, multi-family residential units). In eligible areas, funding is available to qualified low-to-moderate-income residents to improve stormwater management and address changes needed to improve the health, safety, and quality of life of the residents. In addition to the construction, BBHH participants work with Healthy Home Advocates to address other concerns in their lives that may be related to experiencing chronic floods. The Home Advocates provide information about and referrals to community services related to: employment; education; food and nutrition; financial help; parenting and childcare; legal advice; lead testing and mitigation; pest control; medical and dental needs, home weatherization and maintenance; and many other areas of potential need.

Methods

The CEA and the Dubuque BBHH team worked together to create an interview protocol to provide the program team with information to: 1) help them improve the program, and 2) to fulfill program evaluation needs. In order to allow for construction to be complete and participants to have a chance to have time to experience the improvements made to their homes, the CEA and the Dubuque team decided to gather information from participants no sooner than four to six months after construction on participants’ homes was complete. The first interviews were conducted in April 2018. The process will be repeated every six months until the program is complete in 2021.

During the planning phase, the Dubuque team let the CEA know that some program participants had been reluctant to complete voluntary surveys at the time of application. In order to maximize the response rate, the CEA asked the Dubuque team for their recommendation as to the data collection mode that might work best for program participants. The Dubuque team suggested that participants might be more willing to take part in a short telephone interview rather than completing a survey. The CEA was also able to secure non-HUD funding from the Iowa Flood Center to provide a small incentive for interview participation in the form of a chance of winning one of two $25 Target gift certificates to be distributed to two random winners at each of the six month intervals.

The CEA, in collaboration with the Dubuque team, crafted a ten-minute interview to be conducted with a convenience sample of volunteer participants. Because the first list of potential interviewees for the pilot of the interview was only seven, the CEA agreed to contact as many as possible. Random sampling from interested participants will occur in subsequent rounds if the potential number is greater than 20 in order to reach the target number of total interviews over the course of the project.

\(^2\) http://www.cityofdubuque.org/2339/Bee-Branch-Healthy-Homes-Resiliency-Prog

Copyright CEA 2018
The CEA submitted the protocol for these interviews to the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board and received approval to conduct the interviews.

In April 2018, the Home Advocates contacted all seven of the program participants for whom construction had been completed in the previous four to six months to provide them with information about the opportunity to participate in the interview. Those who expressed interest were asked to provide convenient times for the CEA to call within the next two weeks. The Home Advocates provided the CEA with contact information for six interested participants. Two CEA staff members interviewed all six participants during the first two weeks of April 2018. These interviews served the purpose of learning about the participants’ experiences with the program, but also were considered as a pilot for subsequent interviews.

A few points of confusion arose during some of the interviews. One confusion was about which program the interview was asking about. Several participants indicated that they were taking part in other Dubuque home improvement programs and it was not always clear to them which program they were being asked about, and therefore not always clear which program they were describing. The Dubuque team had recommended that the interviewers refer to the program as “BBHH” but some did not know that acronym, some called it “the Bee Branch Project,” and some referred to other projects including the “lead project” and “the resilience project.” After this summary was written, the CEA asked a Dubuque team staff member to review the summary and point out any areas in which they thought the participant was likely describing something associated with a different program. This report indicates those by enclosing the participant’s comments in curly brackets {}.

The second confusion was about who the Home Advocates were. The CEA interviewers had the name of the Home Advocate who had made contact with each household, but several interviewees did not seem to know who that person was and mentioned several other names of people who work for the City of Dubuque. In several cases it was only possible to determine that they had an experience with someone from the City office without knowing whether it was the Home Advocate or someone in another role.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. One CEA staff member read all the interview transcripts and wrote the summary below. The interviews were strongly positive and revealed participants’ gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the program. Because the interviews were conversational and short, the report summarizes participants’ responses, but also honors the words of the interviewees by including direct quotes throughout.

Survey Findings

**What was the best part of working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?**

Most respondents named more than one “best part” so response total is greater than six. Responses fell into six categories (with frequency in parentheses if greater than one):

- The actual work done on their homes to prevent further water damage (3)
- Working with the City of Dubuque staff who ran the program and with contractors (2)
- Low income residents able to get work done (2)
- Smooth planning and construction process
- Benefit to homeowners and to the City of Dubuque
Three participants said that the actual work done on their homes was the best part. Two simply said the best part was, “Getting the house fixed” and one said that it was great to “secure the foundation of my home...in the older part of Dubuque.” Two people added that it was good to know that the work would protect them from further erosion and water damage, “…so that it won’t happen again.”

Two interviewees said that working with the City of Dubuque and with the contractors who did the work was a good experience. One person said, “I was able to talk with the contractors that were doing the work. The workers were very, very cordial. They informed me about everything they were doing, why they were doing it. ...If they didn’t have the answer, they’d call the city housing department. So that was probably the best part.” Another person said, “Probably the best part, to be honest with you, is the people that I dealt with. Because they’re all there for us. If we had questions...they got back to us in a timely manner. Always very polite, very courteous, always seemed to have our best interest and concern, best interest at heart. They’re all pretty awesome.”

The fact that the program made it possible for low-to-moderate income people to have the repairs to their homes done was named as the best part by two interviewees. One person said, “I’m not a wealthy person. I don’t have those means, so it was important to have that opportunity.” Another interviewee said, “I liked the idea that people who were qualified actually got the help or assistance...I think it’s an incredible program that they have.”

One respondent described the best part by saying how easy and well-planned the whole process was from start to finish. The interviewee said, “I liked the fact that it was all pretty much laid out.” The same interviewee also said that part of what made it smooth was that during construction the program provided temporary housing near their home so they were able to keep track of construction and check in on progress.

Another interviewee said that the best part was that the program’s benefits to the participants go beyond the participants themselves saying, “You know it benefits the homeowners, but also I guess they might say the city. It just keeps people...happy while paying their taxes...if that makes sense!”

**What problems, if any, did you have in working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?**

Five of the six interviewees began their response by saying they really had no problems with the BBHH. {Two of these people said the construction ended up taking longer than they thought it would, but indicated that they weren’t too bothered by that, with one adding, “That was no problem because my kids thought they were on vacation.” The other laughingly said the extended timeline was a problem only because they ended up with a porta-potty for seven weeks instead of the three they had planned on.}

Rather than describing problems, several interviewees took the opportunity to explain ways in which contractors or program staff had gone beyond their job descriptions to make the program work well for them. One person said before the work was to be done their old blinds were removed and the homeowner bought new blinds to install when the work was done. Rather than leaving that for the homeowner to do, the contractor even installed the new blinds for them. The same interviewee said that the Home Advocate also referred them to another Home Rehabilitation program, for which they
were likely going to be eligible, to have additional exterior work done on their home including roofing, painting, and porch repair.

Two additional interviewees who reported no problems said that the Home Advocate “went outside her job description” by calling to check on them. One person added that the Home Advocate did “sweet things like that” and the other said, “She followed up to see if we were having any problems.”

{Another homeowner who initially said they had no problems, remembered that they had a problem with a broken window latch in the basement that someone had come to check on, but weren’t able to replace the latch. The participant said they were told that the window itself would be replaced, but that hasn’t happened yet and they would like to make sure that everything is secure.}

When asked if they had any problems, one participant started out by saying “Oh, yeah – oh, yeah,” but then immediately said that the contractor was a “very good guy” and “the work they did was good.” The participant went on to describe several things that went wrong during the process. The participant seemed most concerned that the end costs of construction were quite a bit higher than the original evaluation and the participant said they had not been adequately informed about the rising costs. The participant was concerned about “having that on my mortgage” even though the participant indicated they understood that it was a five-year forgivable loan. The participant said the work itself “went fine inside,” but that “They [the sub-contractor] tore up my whole yard. My whole yard is a mess.” The participant said someone from the city came and put straw all over (adding “Those gals from the City were the ones I commend”) and the participant also added, “They did a good job on the sidewalk.” According to the participant, the other problem was that the whole job also took longer than expected.

**Ratings of Program Components**

Interviewees were asked to use a one to five scale (where five was most the most positive and one was the most negative) to indicate how they felt about four different aspects of the project. The table below reports response frequencies for the six interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Don’t know/ No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it for you to complete the application for the BBHH?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it for you to work with the contractor on the construction work?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How helpful was it for you to work with the Home Advocate?*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to recommend the BBHH to friends or neighbors?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The interviewer mentioned the Home Advocate associate with each participant. In three cases, the interviewee did not know who the Home Advocate was by name, but two of those said the city staff they worked with rated a 5 (mentioning Gail, Joann, Liz, and Sharon, by name) and one person said they didn’t know who their Home Advocate was and couldn’t give a rating.
Nearly all responses were strongly positive with only one response at the neutral rating regarding the program application. The conversational nature of the interview allowed for participants to make additional comments while providing their rating. Comments are quoted or paraphrased below:

**Program Application**
- “Definitely a five – a pretty easy process.”
- There were questions as to the dollar amount that construction would be – that “She should have informed me beforehand.”
- “We had to gather information together that we had scattered…. Obviously we understand when you go through a process like this that it’s the bureaucracy involved and there’s going to be paperwork.”

**Contractor**
- “Absolutely a five – 100%.”
- One contractor was not as good, “But the rest were a five.”
- One contractor didn’t take care of things – “But yeah, most were pretty good.”

**Home Advocate (or City Staff)**
- “She would always follow up, check on progress…She was always there.”
- “A five would not be a high enough number. Truly, they were just…I mean a six even!”

**Recommend program**
- “Definitely – I already have.”
- “I have already recommended it to a few neighbors.”
- “Already done that.”

**In what ways will participating in the BBHH have an impact on your life?**

All interviewees said that participating in the program had an impact on their lives in some way with five strongly positive descriptions of the impact and one simply saying, “It was nice to have the work done and everything, but I can’t say it made a real big impact on my life.”

Five of the six interviewees said that they would have been financially unable to do the work that the program allowed them to do.

The three categories identified as areas in which the program had an impact on their lives were:
- Financial
- Personal
- Increased pride in home and neighborhood

Some of their comments regarding the financial help included:
- “I could never afford to do it on my own, ever….A new furnace, new central air, water-proof basement, and all that. I mean, that’s a lot of money.”
- “To be able to have that work done on my home, and have that available because of my financial status, was a benefit.”
- “We knew there would be a lot to be done, and we’re no spring chickens anymore… Because of the program, not only were we financially able to take on a lot in a short time,… but we’re at the
Several participants mentioned the personal impact the program had on them and their families, including helping with children’s health problems, increasing mobility, and helping parents be able to get children to school.

- “One of the things they put in my house is something to kill germs... My kids have health problems, so they also changed to central air because [kids] have lung problems.... That has helped with lung problems – having the right humidity in the house. I think that’s a good answer to your question!”
- “We’ve got a beautiful home {that is now handicap accessible....} We wouldn’t have been able to do all this as fast as we did without this program. So for us it was a blessing.”
- “I would give the homes to everybody if I could. I am a single [parent]... My life’s been turned upside down... We had water coming in the basement... and kids would actually miss school the next day because of taking care of this. I just can’t say enough about what they have done.... Every contractor on the job was 100% -- everybody doing everything in a timely fashion.... It truly changed our whole life with everything in our home. It really did.”

Several participants mentioned the impact that it had on them as homeowners and the impact it has had on their neighborhood.

- “I grew up in this neighborhood... It’s nice to see some of these old houses being refurbished and have somebody put something in to them. They’re nice homes. They’re the old fashioned neighborhood type of homes. It’s good to see the neighborhood still being worked on... I think that the programs in general provide a great opportunity for people who wouldn’t be able to do this stuff... I think they’re great programs. We’re very happy with every aspect of it.”
- “I think it’s a wonderful project. I think that the work they did, outside of just helping the homes and the sustainability of the homes in this area that they did for Bee Branch, the landscaping and the securing of all that... is beautiful.”
- “I take a little more pride. I walk in my house and I’ve got new basement doors and new windows and stuff like that.... I don’t want to say I’m sticking out my chest or whatever, but it makes you feel pretty good. The value of your home increases. So yeah, there’s definitely an impact on my life and my family’s. You bet.”
Iowa Watershed Approach: Year 3 Dubuque Evaluation Activities Report

September 30, 2019

As submitted to:
Sharon Gaul, Resiliency Coordinator for Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes

Asih Asikin-Garmager, PhD, Evaluation Research Specialist
Valerie R.M. Decker, M.A., Assistant Director
Hacer Karamese, M.A., Research Assistant
Julie Kearney, M.A., Associate Director
Reuben Vyn, PhD, Postdoctoral Research Scholar

Center for Evaluation and Assessment
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
valerie-decker@uiowa.edu
reuben-vyn@uiowa.edu
asih-asikin@uiowa.edu

The Iowa Watershed Approach is supported by a contract to the State of Iowa (Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) as fiscal agent) from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Disaster Resilience Competition. Under the auspices of a sub-contract between the IEDA and the University of Iowa, The University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment is conducting the program evaluation supported by funds from the Community Development Block Grant- National Disaster Resilience Contract # 13-NDRP-013. This report covers IWA work conducted from August 15, 2018 to August 15, 2019.

COPYRIGHT: Center for Evaluation and Assessment, 2019
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 3
IWA Mid-program Review: Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program ................................................................. 4
Dubuque Evaluation Activities ......................................................................................................................................................... 5
Appendices ................................................................................................................................................................................................ ... 12
   Appendix W- BBHH Program Participant Interviews: Fall 2018 ............................................................................ 12
   Appendix X: BBHH Program Participant Interviews: Spring 2019 ................................................................. 17
   Appendix Y- BBHH Resiliency Team Interviews Summary .................................................................................. 26
   Appendix Z- BBHH Project Contractor Survey Findings .......................................................................................... 40
Executive Summary

During Year 3, the three main elements of the IWA evaluation related to BBHH project included: 1) interviews with BBHH clients, 2) interviews with BBHH team members, and 3) a BBHH program contractor survey. Based on the collection and synthesis of these data sources, the BBHH project appeared to be in full swing and achieving all benchmarks with limited setbacks.

The feedback from a majority of BBHH clients about their involvement in the program was overwhelmingly positive. Major themes throughout the interviews were an appreciation for the financial assistance to complete the various flood resilience projects on their homes, as well as increasing the safety and security they experienced as a result. Many of the clients interviewed described how impressed they were by the coordination efforts of the BBHH staff. They reported that BBHH program staff were helpful throughout all stages of the process, ensuring that everything ran smoothly from start to finish.

Although clients consistently praised the BBHH staff, their experiences working with contractors was reportedly much more diverse. Some expressed varying levels of frustration with the overall quality of the contractors’ workmanship and effectiveness of their communication, as well as the time of the project from start to finish. Issues with contractors ranged from simple lack of attention to detail and miscommunications, to more alarming safety violations. Some clients were able to have their problems remedied through intervention from the BBHH home advocates; however, others felt reluctant to reach out to their advocate or were unaware of the scope of the advocate’s role in the program. Despite any setbacks, BBHH clients were grateful for the work that was done on their homes.

BBHH staff reported that their roles were largely unchanged from prior years. They described ways the following ways that BBHH clients were benefitting from the program: physical improvements in keeping water from their homes; less stress among the families resulting from financial difficulties; improvement in the health of the residents; and up-to-date information about services available to residents that they did not previously know existed. The BBHH team members were asked to identify gaps in available programming to meet Dubuque residents’ needs. They generally reported that Dubuque does a great job; however, a couple staff mentioned some areas that could be improved, including assistance with pest control, public transportation gaps, and access to mental health services. Challenges experienced by the BBHH team members included contractor shortages, weaknesses in internal communication for the home advocates, and staffing issues.

The BBHH program contractors who responded to the survey indicated that they did not feel deterred by the complexity of the process from bidding on BBHH projects and planned to continue bidding on future projects, despite some differences of opinion in the bidding process. Much of the challenges they reported related to their experiences as sub-contractors working with general contractors. They recommended that the BBHH team should act as the general contractor or that there should be no general contractor at all.

In support of the BBHH work, UI FRT has been collaborating with the BBHH team to develop and administer social resilience surveys to participants in the BBHH program. The BBHH team reported that the response rate has been low. Accordingly, the UI FRT and BBHH made changes to the survey, including moving it to an online format. Other changes that were cited as helpful in increasing response rates by the BBHH home advocates were customizing sections, offering fewer response options, and improving item wording.

In summary, the IWA was steadily making progress toward achieving its goals during Year 3 of the grant. The extent of the progress and the milestones achieved by individual watersheds naturally varied according to a host of contextual factors. However, many WMAs began to pivot toward applying the lessons learned and seeking avenues by which to ensure the future sustainability of their entities. In the words of Larry Weber, this grant continues to be “a voyage of discovery,” the benefits of which are beginning to be manifested.
IWA Mid-program Review: Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program

Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHH) in Dubuque, IA is a program helping low- or moderate-income home or property owners through forgivable loans to increase the flood resilience and safety of their homes. Additionally, home advocates, social workers from the Visiting Nurses Association, conduct assessments with all participants to match them with community resources from which they could benefit. Based on the collection and synthesis of the data sources, the BBHH Project appeared to be in full swing and achieving all their benchmarks with limited setbacks.

During Year 1, the City of Dubuque BBHH accepted and reviewed applications for participants and conducted home inspections, as well as Home Advocate-conducted intake assessments. Though team members noted that administrative setbacks had delayed the onset of construction, they had already witnessed benefits related to participants' relationships with home advocates and remained confident that the BBHH would have a positive impact on participants' lives.

During Year 2, BBHH team members described that they were getting both busier and more comfortable with their work in serving the needs of eligible residents. They continued to cite the following ways that participants were benefitting from the BBHH program: less water in properties, families could use their basements again, families were experiencing less stress and worry, were receiving referrals for needed resources, and there was a “human touch.” A major theme throughout the interviews was that there is no “one size fits all” approach to this kind of work. Accordingly, it is important to be responsive to the needs of each individual.

Also in Year 2, during evaluation interviews, a majority of BBHH clients believed that participating in the program would have a positive impact on their lives financially, personally, and through increased pride in their neighborhood. One participant said, “I think it’s a wonderful project. I think that the work they did, outside of just helping the homes and the sustainability of the homes in this area that they did for Bee Branch, the landscaping and the securing of all that...is beautiful.” The group described the “best parts” of the program to be the work done on their home to prevent further water damage, working with the City of Dubuque team members and contractors, and that low- or moderate-income residents have access to this type of program.

During Year 3, the feedback from a majority of BBHH clients about their involvement in the program was overwhelmingly positive. Major themes throughout the interviews were an appreciation for the financial assistance to complete the various flood resilience projects on their homes, increasing the safety and security they experienced as a result, and how impressed they were by the coordination efforts of the BBHH team members.

Although clients consistently praised the BBHH staff, their experiences working with contractors was reportedly much more diverse. Some expressed varying levels of frustration with the overall quality of the contractors’ workmanship and effectiveness of their communication, as well as the time of the project from start to finish. Issues with contractors ranged from simple lack of attention to detail and miscommunications, to more alarming safety violations. Some clients were able to have their problems remedied through intervention from the BBHH home advocates; however, others felt reluctant to reach out to their advocate or were unaware of the scope of the advocate’s role in the program. Despite setbacks, BBHH clients were grateful for the work that was done on their homes.

BBHH staff reported that their roles were largely unchanged from prior years. They described ways that BBHH clients are benefitting from the program: physical improvements in keeping water from their homes; less stress among the families resulting from financial difficulties; improvement in the health of the residents; and up-to-date information about services available to residents that they did not know existed. The BBHH

Copyright CEA 2019
team members were asked to identify gaps in available programming to meet Dubuque residents’ needs. They reported that Dubuque does a great job in general, but a couple mentioned some areas that could be improved, including assistance with pest control, public transportation gaps, and access to mental health services. Challenges experienced by the BBHH team members were contractor shortages, weaknesses in internal communication for the home advocates, and staffing issues.

The BBHH program contractors who responded to a survey indicated that they did not feel deterred from bidding on BBHH projects and planned to continue bidding on future projects, despite some differences of opinion in the bidding process. Much of the challenges they reported related to their experiences as subcontractors working with general contractors. They recommended that the BBHH team should act as the general contractor or that there should be no general contractor at all.

**Dubuque Evaluation Activities**

In alignment with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Evaluation Plan (included in CEA’s Year 1 report), the CEA conducted interviews with Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) clients and team members. The purpose of these interviews was to document and describe the processes, experiences, and outcomes of the program from multiple perspectives in order to inform ongoing program improvements. Additionally, the CEA attended and documented two BBHH and UI FRT coordination meetings, which provided context for the current activities and future plans. The CEA also conducted a survey of project contractors to understand the nature of their work, any challenges they experienced, and how BBHH team could improve the project for contractors. Based on the collection and synthesis of these data sources, the BBHH project appeared to be in full swing and achieving their benchmarks with limited setbacks.

*Summary of activity*

The following meeting notes from two BBHH and UI FRT coordination meetings provide a lens through which to understand the needs of the Dubuque area related to flood mitigation, as well as the progress made during Year 3 in completing projects and providing services to meet those needs.

**November 13, 2018**

**Attendees:** Cori Burbach, Valerie Decker, Sharon Gaul, Terri Goodman, Kristin Hall, Ashlee Johannes, Amanda Josvanger, Krista Lawless, Cristina Munoz, Misty Rebik, Amy Smith, Eric Tate

**Meeting Notes**

**Design and Resiliency Team (DART)**

- DART focuses on sustainable design and aims to provide a report that communities can use in planning (e.g., Dubuque designed a 2-page checklist).
- The Flood Resilience Team wants to adapt some strategies from this design.

**Existing Needs in Dubuque**

- Sharon Gaul shared a list of issues that the team has encountered in the homes and with the families, and how well Dubuque has been able to address the issues.
- Amy Smith stated that sometimes the needs are clear and other times they are more nebulous (counseling or substance abuse).
- Gaul said that they try to meet people where they are, but they don’t always want support.
- Gaul described that outcomes are being measured by client interviews with CEA at 6 months (with incentives to participate) and follow-ups with home advocates at 12 months. There are also social resilience surveys that are now filled out as part of the online application.

**Status Updates**

- Gaul stated that they have completed 57 units and have 81 contracts.
• They took on multiplexes to increase their numbers, but the multiplexes have ended up being more work on the qualification, inspection and environmental sides. Moving forward, they plan to stick more to individual properties because they are more straightforward.
• The group discussed the demographics of the multiplexes and engagement from large complexes versus single family residences.
• Gaul said that the contractor survey provided an opportunity to get an outside perspective.

Other Updates/Issues
• Gaul reported that Smith and Amanda Josvanger are working to build rapport with the Marshallese population in Dubuque, helping with things like guardianship papers and healthcare.
• There have been issues in aligning the BBHH work with the offerings from Operation New View because they have income qualifications which are lower than those specified by HUD.
• Other topics covered at the meeting included: how to share the press release story at the Iowa Water Conference; Gaul's upcoming presentation at the National Hazards Conference in Boulder, CO; and any feedback Gaul gets about the BBHH program as she is presenting it to people.

February 28, 2019
Attendees: Valerie Decker, Sharon Gaul, Kate Giannini, Amanda Josvanger, Craig Just, Cristina Munoz, Amy Smith, Eric Tate

Meeting Notes

Iowa Watershed Approach
• Discussed progress in the rural watersheds with the cost-share implementation.
• Flood Resilience Team shared about the resilience game and the purpose of the Flood Resilience Action Plans.
• Craig Just and Eric Tate discussed options related to the social vulnerability maps the team created (additional information, develop worksheets). Specifically, Tate suggested they use the language “groups likely to have unmet needs” so people are not being defined as vulnerable.

Status Updates
• The home advocates have met with approximately 120 families to date.
• The home advocates reported that tenants in apartment complexes have different experiences and require different services than participants living in single family homes, which has added different challenges (paperwork, turnover, etc.).
• Home advocates described building their networks with different resources to be able to support these participants. They had 20 people at their last coalition meeting.
• All contractors are now getting intercultural training.
• Gaul reported they have received 375 applications for renovations and 229 units have been approved. They are encouraging people to apply to demonstrate a need in the community.
• 63 units were finished and 28 were in progress, and the multiplexes will double these numbers.

Other Updates/Issues
• Gaul is looking at trends from the first 100 units. They are establishing a baseline and looking at differences between tenants and owners to inform planning.
• Gaul reported that the social resilience surveys are continuing to trickle in. The home advocates reflected on improvements to the survey which make them more approachable for participants: customized sections, fewer response options, and better wording. Related to the low response rates, Tate said that the more responses they get, the more factors they can look at.
BBHH client experience
Over the course of Year 3 of the program, a total of 17 clients were interviewed following the completion of projects designed to improve the flood resilience of their homes. Of those, 12 were homeowners, three were landlords, and two were tenants.

The feedback from most participants about their involvement in the BBHH program was overwhelmingly positive. Recurring themes that arose throughout the interviews were a deep and sincere appreciation for the financial assistance to complete the flood resilience projects on their home, as well as the safety and security they experienced as a result. Additionally, several respondents gave glowing reviews of the BBHH program team, describing how helpful they were throughout all stages of the process, ensuring that everything ran smoothly from start to finish. See Appendices W and X for full reports of each set of interviews.

Ratings of program components. Interviewees were asked to rate how they felt about four aspects of the BBHH program using a one to five scale (where five was most the most positive and one was the most negative). As illustrated in Table 4, participants’ responses were mainly positive regarding all aspects of the program, apart from the ease of working with contractors. Despite the varied response to this item, participants still reported a high likelihood of recommending the BBHH program to others. Thus, even minor complications with completing the application and interacting with contractors did not preclude participants from being satisfied.

Table 4. Client response to various aspects of BBHH program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Don’t know/ No answer</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How helpful was it for you to work with the Home Advocate?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to recommend the BBHH to friends or neighbors?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it for you to complete the application for the BBHH?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it for you to work with the contractor on the construction work?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: One respondent indicated 3.5 in their answer. This has been classified as 3 for this table.

Best part of working with the BBHH program. The most frequently cited “best part” of participants’ involvement in the program was the actual work done on their homes. One interviewee stated pointedly, “We have no water in our basement and that was the goal, so that’s a plus.” Several others echoed similar sentiments about the benefit of the projects. Two interviewees specifically pointed toward the financial benefit. One recalled, “When I first bought the place, I was scratching my head [saying], ‘How am I going to get this done or that done?’” So, the availability of direct financial support in accomplishing those home improvement tasks was critical. In similar fashion, a second participant described how he had recently been trying to save up for some “things that I wanted to fix, and this gave me the ability to do that.” Another participant, who is both a homeowner and landlord, reported that this project “really made me feel a lot safer” for her family and her tenants.

More than one third of interviewees shared that the best part of their participation in the program was the effectiveness of the team and the quality of their communication. Multiple participants described how
impressed they were by the coordination efforts of the team. For example, one participant shared, “They arranged for all the contractors and the work and basically, it was worry-free for me.” Particularly, as changes in the construction plans occurred, effective communication was an essential component in ensuring positive outcomes. As one participant exclaimed, "It’s been a really good experience as far as communication between the contractor, the Bee Branch people, and myself. When things came up, they were dealt with and addressed as they happened.” Another participant stated, "The staff were great, they always made sure to contact me and let me know what was going on." Finally, one summed up the experience saying, "I couldn't believe the efficiency of the personnel of the program overall." Thus, the human element and connections that team were able to make with participants appeared to have a positive impact on their experience.

Challenges working with the BBHH program. While nearly half of the participants interviewed reported having no problems whatsoever, the remaining nine participants expressed varying levels of frustration with the overall quality of the contractors’ workmanship and the timeline of the project from start to finish. Six participants voiced dissatisfaction with either the contractors themselves or some aspect of the work that was done on their homes. Issues ranged from simple lack of attention to detail and miscommunication, to more alarming safety violations. Examples included being unsatisfied with the cement work, windows being improperly installed, cheap supplies being used to cut corners, windows and stairs being unnecessarily sealed off, exposed electrical wiring, damage to personal property, the exterior of the home being left without siding for months, and debris and other materials being left on site. Some clients were able to have their problems remedied through intervention of the home advocates; however, others either felt reluctant to reach out to their advocate or were unaware of the scope of their role in the program. As one client described, “I was just so grateful to be having this work done that I was afraid to say anything if I felt it was sub-par.”

A few participants also expressed disappointment with the length of time that it took from when they initially applied to the program to when the work began on their homes. One recounted how “it took a very, very, very long time to get the process rolling.” Still, this person expressed a great deal of understanding regarding the nature of large-scale projects taking time to get underway, and ultimately the delay in the projected timeline was not of great consequence.

Overall, most participants were forgiving of minor nuisances and remained grateful for the work that had been done on their home. Their comments included, “That's no big thing,” and “We never complained. I mean we were grateful that we even were able to get it done without paying for anything.”

**BBHH team member experience**

During the summer of 2019, the CEA conducted telephone interviews with six BBHH team members. The purpose of the interviews was to learn more about team member roles, the successes and challenges of the program, their interactions with BBHH participants, and their perceptions of the impact on participants’ lives.

Overall, the team members said that the program is going well, and they are satisfied with being part of a program that brings positive changes to the Dubuque residents who take part in the BBHH. The team members indicated that the program is making a difference to the community in general, and that community members are pleased with the program and proud of their homes. See Appendix Y for the full report.

**Roles in the BBHH program.** The roles of the six interviewees included two home advocates, a rehabilitation specialist/inspector, a grant administrator, and the project coordinator. The two home advocates are contracted for their work on the project through the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) and the other team members work either for the City of Dubuque or the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA). All interviewees had been interviewed during Years 1 and 2, and they all said that their roles were largely unchanged from prior years. A few team members cited some slight differences in their roles due to staffing changes rather than changes in how the work of the program is accomplished.

**Improvements due to BBHH.** *Primary construction improvements.* According to BBHH team members, the main flood mitigation improvements that have been completed as part of BBHH were installing sump pumps,
basement dehumidifying fans, and drainage tiles, gutters and downspouts, as well as tuckpointing foundations; replacing or moving furnaces and water heaters; and replacing leaky roofs.

*Primary home advocacy benefits.* The home advocates supported participants through referrals or resources for weatherization assistance, medical and dental insurance, and food assistance, budgeting, employment, legal assistance, mental health services, and energy assistance.

When asked to identify any gaps in available programming to meet Dubuque residents’ needs, team members said that Dubuque does a great job in general, however, one or two team members mentioned a few areas in which there continue to be unmet needs including assistance with pest control, public transportation, and access to mental health services.

**Difficult interactions.** When asked to describe any difficult interactions with participants, the interviewees emphasized that most interactions have been extremely positive. One team member said that problems occur in “one in six or maybe ten” cases.

**Impact of BBHH on participants’ lives.** *Effectiveness of structural improvements.* All six BBHH team members said the improvements have had a great impact on participants’ lives. While they highlighted the actual physical improvements in keeping water from the homes, especially during the past year when there have been numerous heavy rainfall events, they also emphasized the power of the improvements to decrease stress among the families, lighten the burden of financial difficulties, and improve the health of the residents. An example of a typical comment is that the BBHH program, “…takes the weight and burden off their shoulders and I think it does give them some kind of relief.” Team members also mentioned that receiving forgivable loans for flood-related repairs allows BBHH participants to use their own money to do other improvements to their homes. One team member said, “I think it’s been a huge positive effect throughout the town.”

*Effectiveness of home advocacy.* Both the home advocates themselves and the other team members said that the main contribution of the home advocates has been to provide up-to-date information about services available to residents that they did not know existed. One home advocate said that often residents “live day by day” and do not know how to go about finding resources to meet their needs. Another team member said that the home advocates give clients valued information about programming to meet educational, financial and health needs. The team see the home advocate role as building relationships with the clients so that they can both help them through the construction process and help them access other programs to meet long-term needs. One team member said, “If we can fix their little things like leakage, and the advocates can fix some of their other things, I think it goes a long way. Yeah, it gives them a better life.”

**Program challenges.** Team members were asked to describe any challenges that they experienced in their BBHH work. While team members were largely positive about the program, two ongoing challenges were identified: the need for additional contractors to best meet the program’s construction goals and issues with internal communication.

**Contractor shortage.** All four of the City of Dubuque and ECIA team members interviewed identified as a challenge the limited numbers of contractors who are bidding on the BBHH work. They said this problem exacerbates itself because most of the contractors who work on BBHH projects are quite small operations and this has led to contractors not having the capacity to get the work done on a timely basis. A couple of the interviewees said that although they’d like to have a few more contractors bidding on projects, the positive side of the small number of contractors is that those who work with BBHH have become very familiar with the specific needs and processes of the flood mitigation work, and that makes it easier to work with them on subsequent projects.

**Internal communication.** There were different opinions within the group as to whether communication was a problem. Most team members from the City of Dubuque and ECIA were pleased with the way they work and communicate with each other and with the home advocates, with two team members describing internal communications as “really good.” The home advocates, however, described weaknesses in internal
communication that leave them feeling that they don’t know what is going on with clients and that, consequently, they cannot provide the best service to clients. They suggested more frequent meetings and a structured method for updating the home advocates on the status of construction projects and any issues that may arise during the construction phase.

Other challenges. Staffing issues were also mentioned by several interviewees, but these were described as issues typical to any organization. Additional challenges described include issues with scheduling (also a communication issue), seeking additional resources for clients, and finding time to use the data being collected as part of BBHH to really understand and strategize how to address the needs of Dubuque residents.

In an item asking about difficult interactions with clients, one problem that several team members identified as challenging was the need to “manage expectations.” Three main areas were described in which they need to work harder to manage client expectations: time – the length of time it will take to complete the work; eligible improvements – definitions and limitations on the type of work that can be done based on the project’s goal of flood mitigation; and reduction of water flow – making it clear that work will reduce but may not eliminate water entering clients’ homes.

Recommendations for program improvement. The main recommendations for improvement made by the interviewees were aligned with the main challenges identified. The team members sought to improve internal communication so that home advocates can more effectively meet clients’ needs. They are also seeking ways to increase the number of contractors submitting bids so that they can expand the amount of BBHH construction done in the program’s final two years. One team member suggested modifying the bid process to allow BBHH to allocate work to a pool of approved contractors to effectively distribute the work across willing contractors with the capacity to complete the work. Finally, team members continue to work on managing expectations so that clients completely understand the BBHH process and expected outcomes. Although there were challenges identified in the BBHH process, the overall sentiment among team members is that good work is being done to great effect on the Dubuque community. As one team member said, “We’ve made a difference, and we’ve just got to remember that.”

BBHH contractor experience
On September 11, 2018, the CEA invited 14 contractors or sub-contractors who had previously bid on and carried out construction for the BBHH program to complete an online survey about their experiences. Among the seven participants (a response rate of 50%), one indicated that they were a general contractor and the remaining six were sub-contractors. More than half of the respondents (N=4) had completed more than five construction projects through the BBHH program. The survey responses are presented in Table 5. See Appendix Z for the full report.

Table 5. Contractors’ satisfaction with and preferences related to BBHH bidding process (N=7, except where indicated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the current bidding process.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer that multiple projects be bid together.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer that trade work bid on its own.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently, there are requirements of the contractor bid specifications that deter me from working on some of the BBHH projects.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to bid on future BBHH projects. (N=6)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 5, despite some differences of opinion in the bidding process, the contractors overwhelmingly agreed that they did not feel deterred from bidding on BBHH projects and planned to continue bidding on future projects. Some subcontractors reported challenges or dissatisfaction in working...
Some subcontractors reported not receiving payment on time or at all from their general contractor; meanwhile, others pointed to a lack of leadership and organizational structure resulting from the use of general contractors. Three respondents explicitly suggested that either the BBHH team should act as the general contractor or that there should be no general contractor at all. For example, one subcontractor encouraged the BBHH team to “be the general. You would save tons of time by bidding this out with subs and having BBHH act as general.” Another echoed this sentiment by stating, “You need to get this project restructured. There should be an in-house or third-party GC for all projects. You are already putting the project together, then you have to babysit the GC’s, who hire the subs, who usually are left in the blind until the last minute.” Finally, another subcontractor stated their opinion as follows, “Most things that are being bid on are very separate from other trades. Again, have better generals or bid the work out to the sub with no general. A true general contractor is not needed.” Although they were not asked to provide direct feedback about the BBHH team members, the fact that the contractors placed enough confidence in the team members to suggest that they also serve as general contractor, serves to underscore the quality of the work put forth by the BBHH team.
Appendices

Appendix W- BBHH Program Participant Interviews: Fall 2018

This is a summary of interviews with participants in the Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) program carried out by the Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) during the fall of 2018. This was the second of a series of interviews to be conducted every six months with BBHH participants whose home improvement project was completed at least six months prior to the interview. For a full description of the program, the role of the CEA in the program, and development of the interview protocol and process, consult the Summary of Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Participant Interviews submitted to BBHH Resiliency Coordinator, Sharon Gaul, in May 2018.

Methods

In October and November 2018, the BBHH home advocates contacted the program participants for whom construction had been completed in the previous six months to provide them with information about the opportunity to participate in the interview. Of the 10 participants who expressed interest in being interviewed, the CEA was able to connect interview seven. The seven participants were composed of homeowners (4), landlords (2), and tenants (1).

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. One CEA team member read all the interview transcripts and wrote the summary below. Because the interviews were conversational and short, the report summarizes participants' responses, but also honors the words of the interviewees by including direct quotes throughout.

Pronouns used in the summary below have been assigned randomly to improve readability and protect anonymity.

Survey Findings

What was the best part of working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

Responses about “best parts” fell into two categories: physical home improvements done and the project staff made the process easy.

Five participants said the actual work done on their homes was the best part. Two people specifically mentioned that the work will prevent flooding. One described the work done on their home including installation of a sump pump and dehumidifier. A landlord said that the best part is that their buildings are being improved for their tenants in ways that would either not be feasible without the BBHH funding or would have required rent increases.

Two respondents said the process was easy and the staff were helpful. One said, “They arranged for all the contractors and the work and basically, it was worry-free for me.” The other, a landlord, described that the application process was easy, the staff were helpful, and the process ran
smoothly because the program team worked directly with the tenants instead of the landlord “having to be the mediator.”

**What problems, if any, have you had working with the BBHH?**

Five out of seven participants stated that they did not have any problems while working with BBHH.

One participant stated that the time from original application to contractor work took too long. In the case of one of the landlords, during the wait time, tenants changed, and they needed to re-start the paperwork with new tenants. She detailed that wait times had caused some frustrations as the tenants wanted to know what was going to be fixed and on what timeline. Another participant said that he did not like the contractors since they are not “very good at the lead removal part of the project”. He explained that the mold in his basement had not been removed.

**Did you work with a home advocate?**

Five participants were asked whether they have worked with a home advocate. If they indicated that they had worked with a home advocate, they were asked in what ways their interactions were helpful. One participant stated that she did not work with a home advocate but also said that Amanda was at her house a few times. Two participants said that they worked with a home advocate, but they did not remember anything about their interaction. One participant stated that the project was good for the whole community and that the home advocate was accessible and had good communication skills. Another participant stated that the home advocate was very helpful, and added, “I didn’t need anything that they were offering, but I thought they were very thorough.”

*Interviewees were asked to use a five-point scale to rate (five being the most positive and one being the most negative) the following questions about the project.* The table below reports response frequencies from the seven interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Don't know/No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it to complete the application for the BBHH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it to work with contractors on construction work?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How helpful was it to work with the home advocates?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely would you be to recommend the BBHH to friends or neighbors?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Respondent indicated 3.5 in their answer. This has been classified as 3 for this table.

**Note: One respondent did not provide a rating for work with their contractor. He simply indicated, “They did what they had to do.”**

**In what ways do you think participating in the BBHH (either the construction itself or any assistance you may have received from the home advocate will have an impact on your life?**

Two participants did not report any positive impact of the project on their life. One participant said that flood does not affect her since she lives in the second floor. However, she said the project will
Protect the neighbor on the first floor from flooding. Additional respondents indicated the following (frequency reported in parentheses if greater than one).

- The value of property increases, and the property is more attractive and safer for tenants. (2)
- The interviewee’s house doesn’t get rain inside anymore when it rains heavily.
- The participant met with people at City Hall [Dubuque] and the staff there connected them to other city departments so they learned about other resources that they can have.
- Improved the house but doesn’t know how they will be affected since they don’t know how long they will live in that house.

**Do you have any other thoughts about the BBHH you’d like to share?**

At the end of the interview, participants asked about any other thoughts about the project that they would like to share. Six participants responded to this question and their responses are paraphrased below.

- He is thankful to the project team for helping them.
- The project was very helpful, especially financially. This person said, since he was retired, he could not have afforded the home improvement done by the project team.
- He has recommended the project to other people.
- The program is great, and staff is helpful but the amount of time to get things done is long.
- The project should have been started earlier (“a year ago”).
- She did not like that contractors could change plans without discussion with the homeowner. Additionally, she said that when they would add work, there would be paperwork, but if work was not done, “It just got taken off, nothing to sign, no money returned.” She continued, “I think that’s wrong.”
In October and December 2018, the University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment conducted telephone interviews with seven volunteer participants in the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHH). The interviews were intended to provide BBHH staff with information to help them improve the program. The following is a brief summary of the interviews.

Pronouns used in the summary below have been assigned randomly to improve readability and protect anonymity.

**What was the best part of working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?**

Responses about “best parts” fell into two categories: physical home improvements done (5) and the project staff made the process easy (2).

Physical home improvements: the work will prevent flooding (2), participant had a sump pump and dehumidifier installed, and buildings are being improved for tenants

Project staff made the process easy: the program staff arranged for all the work (“It was worry-free for me.”) and the application process was easy, the staff were helpful, and the process ran smoothly because the team worked directly with the tenants.

**What problems, if any, have you had working with the BBHH?**

Most participants reported having no problems with the program. One participant said that the application process took too long causing extra paperwork due to tenant turnover and frustrations about the work and the timeline with tenants. Another participant said that he did not like the contractors. He explained that the mold in his basement had not been removed.

**Did you work with a home advocate?**

Five participants were asked whether they have worked with a home advocate (non-landlords). Three people described that they either didn’t receive services from a Home Advocate or they did not remember.

- One participant stated that the project was good for the whole community and that the home advocate was accessible and had good communication skills.
- Another participant stated that the home advocate was very helpful, and added, “I didn’t need anything that they were offering, but I thought they were very thorough.”

**Rating Parts of the Program**

Participants were also asked to rate parts of the program on a 1-5 scale (where 5 was most the most positive and 1 was the least positive). The four questions asked:

- How easy it was to complete the application (All rated the ease of applying for the program as a 4 or 5.)
- How easy it was to work with the contractor (Most rated the ease of working with the contractors as 4 or 5, one rated this 3.5 and two didn’t provide an answer)
- How helpful it was to work with the Home Advocate (All five who had interacted with a Home Advocate rated the helpfulness of the Home Advocate as a 5.)
• How likely they were to recommend the BBHH to friends and neighbors. (All but one said they’d recommend the BBHH to others (4 or 5) – one person indicated 3.)

**In what ways do you think participating in the BBHH (either the construction itself or any assistance you may have received from the home advocate will have an impact on your life?**

Five of the participants said it would have a positive impact on their lives. One participant said that flood does not affect her since she lives in the second floor. However, she said the project will protect the neighbor on the first floor from flooding. Additional respondents indicated the following (frequency reported in parentheses if greater than one).

- The value of property increases, and the property is more attractive and safer for tenants. (2)
- The interviewee’s house doesn’t get rain inside anymore when it rains heavily.
- The participant met with people at City Hall [Dubuque] and the staff there connected them to other city departments so they learned about other resources that they can have.
- Improved the house but doesn’t know how they will be affected since they don’t know how long they will live in that house.

**Do you have any other thoughts about the BBHH you’d like to share?**

At the end of the interview, participants asked about any other thoughts about the project that they would like to share. Six participants responded to this question and their responses are paraphrased below.

- He is thankful to the project team for helping them.
- The project was very helpful, especially financially. This person said, since he was retired, he could not have afforded the home improvement done by the project team.
- He has recommended the project to other people.
- The program is great, and staff is helpful but the amount of time to get things done is long.
- The project should have been started earlier (“a year ago”).
- She did not like that contractors could change plans without discussion with the homeowner. Additionally, she said that when they would add work, there would be paperwork, but if work was not done, “It just got taken off, nothing to sign, no money returned.” She continued, “I think that’s wrong.”
Appendix X: BBHH Program Participant Interviews: Spring 2019

This is a summary of interviews conducted with participants in the Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) program carried out by the Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) during the spring of 2019. This was the third of a series of interviews to be conducted every six months with BBHH participants whose home improvement projects were completed at least six months prior to the interview. For a full description of the program, the role of the CEA in the program, and development of the interview protocol and process, consult the Summary of Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Participant Interviews submitted to BBHH Resiliency Coordinator, Sharon Gaul, in May 2018.

Methods

In April 2019, the BBHH home advocates contacted the 26 program participants for whom construction had been completed in the previous nine to 11 months to provide them with information about the opportunity to participate in an interview. A list of interested participants was shared with the CEA including their contact information and availability. Of the 11 participants who expressed interest, the CEA was able to connect with and interview a total of 10 during the second week of May 2019. Eight of the interviewees were individual homeowners, one was both a homeowner and landlord of a multi-unit dwelling, and the final participant was a tenant. An important note about this sample is that many of those who did not respond to the home advocates (10 out of 15) were tenants; therefore, the feedback summarized herein may not be representative of the participant population.

All but one of the 10 interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to ensure accurate representation of the feedback provided by participants. One CEA team member read all the interview transcripts and wrote the summary below. Because the interviews were conversational and relatively brief, the report summarizes participants’ responses, but also honors the words of the interviewees by including direct quotes throughout. Pronouns used in the summary below have been assigned randomly to improve readability and ensure anonymity of the participants.

Survey Findings

Introduction

The feedback from a majority of participants about their involvement in the BBHH program was overwhelmingly positive. Recurring themes that arose throughout most of the interviews were the deep and sincere appreciation for the financial benefit that the program afforded its participants, as well as the safety and security they experienced as a result of the completion of the various home construction projects. Moreover, select individuals reported feeling an increased sense of pride in their homes and surrounding community and a desire to continue carrying out home improvement efforts of their own. However, two participants expressed considerable frustrations with the lack of quality and timeliness of the work that was completed by the contractors and construction crews assigned to their homes. Their cases will be explored in greater detail below in order to better understand the nature of their concerns and the potential for process improvement moving forward.
What was the best part of working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

The most frequently cited “best part” of participants’ involvement in the program was the effectiveness of the staff and the quality of their communication. In different ways, four of the 10 interviewees indicated having a positive experience interacting with the home advocates and contractors alike throughout the process. For example, one participant stated, “The staff were great, they always made sure to contact me and let me know what was going on.” Another participant who appreciated having a staff member handle the communication with the contractors reported, “It’s been a really good experience as far as communication between the contractor, the Bee Branch people, and myself. When things came up, they were dealt with and addressed them as they happened.” Particularly, as such changes in the construction plans happened, effective communication was an essential component in ensuring positive outcomes. As one participant exclaimed, “I couldn’t believe the efficiency of the personnel of the program overall.” Thus, the human element and connections that staff were able to make with participants appeared to have an impact on their experience.

Three participants indicated that the actual work done on their homes was the best part of working with the program. One such interviewee stated pointedly, “We have no water in our basement and that was the goal, so that’s a plus.” The other two echoed similar sentiments about the benefit of the various projects that were done to improve their homes. Even one of the two participants who had an overall negative experience still acknowledged the fact that water infiltration was no longer an issue. To that effect, he stated, “You know, my basement’s not leaking.”

Two interviewees indicated that the financial benefit was the best part of participating in the program. One recalled, “When I first bought the place, I was scratching my head, ‘How am I going to get this done or that done?’” So, the availability of direct financial support in accomplishing those home improvement tasks was critical. In similar fashion, a second participant described how he had recently been trying to save up for some “things that I wanted to fix, and this gave me the ability to do that.”

The foremost positive outcome of this program for the participant who was both a homeowner and landlord, was the degree to which she now felt secure in the safety of her home. This participant described that having the work done “really made me feel a lot safer.” She continued by saying, “the feeling as a landlord, too, that I want to make sure I’m providing a safe home for people that would rent from me… [and] with my grandchildren being at my house all the time.”

What problems, if any, did you have in working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

Client responses to this question varied widely and appeared to depend mostly on the quality of the contractors’ workmanship and effectiveness of their communication. Of the 10 participants, three reported having no problems whatsoever, three had only minor issues that they did consider to be disruptive, two had problems that required additional attention or repair, and two clients’ experiences were markedly negative.

Among those participants who described only having minor issues, one initially stated that they did not have any issues, but then recounted how “it took a very, very, very long time to get the process rolling.” Still, they expressed a great deal of understanding regarding the nature of large-scale projects taking time to get underway, and ultimately the delay in the projected timeline was not of
great consequence to them. A second participant mentioned that he never received the rebate for the furnace he was initially promised, but he remained extremely grateful for the work completed and the financial assistance received. The third client reported being unsatisfied with the cement work that was done on the driveway, but that it was remedied after reaching out to the program staff. Each of these clients was very sympathetic toward those that completed the work and were very forgiving of such minor nuisances. For example, they stated things like, “That’s no big thing” and “We never complained. I mean we were grateful that we even were able to get it done without paying for anything.”

Two participants expressed moderate frustration with the quality of the workmanship and the lack of attention to detail on the part of specific contractors. One commented that after the contractor received payment for the job, “There were a couple of things that never got fixed or never got re-addressed.” The other noticed that the windows were not installed properly and described, “I really had some concerns about it, but I was afraid to say anything.” It was only when a different contractor noticed the issues that he was encouraged to speak up and have the work inspected, which lead to the eventual repair of the windows. However, this participant also reported other instances where contractors did not fully clean up after their jobs, leaving debris and leftover materials on site.

Finally, there were two individuals who reported having rather significant problems with the process and outcomes of the work completed on their homes. One elderly woman was most upset by the fact that the external stairs leading out of her basement were sealed off, something that she felt could have been avoided. Especially given her limited mobility and the narrow access to the basement through the inside stairwell, she described no longer being able to make use of the downstairs level of her home. Additionally, she reported that a basement window was unexpectedly bricked in, the furnace was of poor quality and broke down within a year, a downspout blew away, her yard was left a mess, and carpet was unnecessarily torn away, which exposed lead-based paint on the ground. Much of these issues she attributed to the lack of quality workmanship and cheap supplies being used to cut corners. She lamented the fact that her contractor hired out many of the projects to other businesses whose employees were inexperienced and unreliable. Summing up how her participation in this program could have been better, she simply stated, “I just wish I had a different contractor... that guy, I don’t think he cared about anything.”

In a similar vein, the lone tenant from among the interview participants, who had a family with young children, experienced a 14-month long whirlwind of constant disruption, incomplete projects, and even damage to their possessions and home. The laundry list of issues reported by this participant included holes in the floor and wall, exposed electrical wiring, windows left uncaulked, and the exterior being left without siding for months on end. At one point, the family was displaced for a period of multiple weeks for certain projects to be completed. “They took over our whole house. They threw stuff around, they broke stuff... everything they did, they left garbage.” Upon their return, the house was allegedly in such disarray that they “were up until 3:30 in the morning cleaning, just so that we could come back in because there was so much dust and debris.” The participant described that the crews hired to work on the various projects were of questionable repute, didn’t show up when anticipated, and often left hazardous work incomplete and with significant messes to clean up. What made this situation even more alarming for the participant was the fact that the contractor responsible for overseeing the work being completed on the home was
also her landlord. This led to a very contentious relationship, which resulted in the participant and her family eventually leaving the home and moving away from Dubuque.

Despite some of the challenges that arose on individual projects, three clients expressly indicated that their home advocate or program staff members were helpful resources in responding to issues. For example, when recalling the benefit of having a point person to be able to call when the work was not completed to specification, one such participant stated, "I called Sharon up and they came right back and, you know, re-did it." Another client described that, "It helped having the Bee Branch doing the talking with the contractors instead of me going to contractors." Thus, the BBHH team members were able to act as intermediaries, ensuring the eventual quality of the project outcomes. In some cases, however, there was either a reluctance on the part of clients to reach out to their advocate, or perhaps a lack of awareness of the scope of their role in the program. As one client described, "I was just so grateful to be having this work done that I was afraid to say anything if I felt it was sub-par." Meanwhile, another expressed regret for not contacting them sooner to help resolve issues as they came up.

**Ratings of Program Components**

Interviewees were asked to use a one to five scale (where five was most the most positive and one was the most negative) to indicate how they felt about four different aspects of the program. The table below illustrates the response frequencies for the 10 interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Don't know/No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it for you to complete the application for the BBHH?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it for you to work with the contractor on the construction work?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How helpful was it for you to work with the Home Advocate?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to recommend the BBHH to friends or neighbors?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants' responses were predominantly positive regarding all aspects of the program, apart from the ease of working with contractors. As reported above in the section on problems with the BBHH program, contractors were a strong indicator of participants' experience. Despite the varied responses to this aspect, participants still reported a high likelihood of recommending the program to others. Thus, even minor complications with completing the application and less than flawless interactions with contractors did not preclude participants from being satisfied with the outcomes of their participation in the program. The conversational nature of the interview allowed for participants to make additional comments while providing their rating. Comments are quoted or paraphrased below.

**Program Application**

- “Oh that’s a five. Yeah, that was real easy!”
• “It was a little confusing because I was also a landlord, but they helped me go through the paperwork.”
• “It was a lot of work to do, but in the long run it was worth it.”
• “Yeah, that was good.”

**Contractor**
• “The one contractor was very good and followed up with me. The other contractor, there were delays and things like that.”
• “I really thought that the contractors did a really good job.”
• “If you have a contractor, you’re gonna get the cheapest work possible. I was just unhappy with the whole thing.”
• “I had absolutely no problems at all... When they said they were gonna be here at 8 o’clock, about one minute to 8 they’d be at the back door.”
• A couple were just ok, but the rest were great.

**Home Advocate (or City Staff)**
• “Oh, 5. Any time I had problems I could call her.”
• “Any questions I had I called her, and she would answer them and right down the line.”
• “If I needed something, or something wasn’t right, I’d just tell em and they’d stop up or look at it.”

**Recommend program**
• “I've already recommended it to tons of people.”
• “I believe 5, because I did recommend it to a neighbor.” *(Note: the individual to whom this participant recommended the program also participated)*
• “I'd recommend it to anyone that qualifies. You bet.”
• “Oh, I'm still recommending it.”

**In what ways will participating in the BBHH have an impact on your life?**

All interviewees reported that participating in the BBHH program had an impact on their lives in some way, with eight providing strongly positive descriptions of the benefits they experienced. The three main categories identified as areas in which the program had an impact on their lives were financial, safety, and stress reduction.

The financial benefit was the most pronounced among the reported impacts, with seven of the 10 interviewees citing the importance of receiving monetary support and/or the value that the projects added to their home. For example, their comments regarding the financial help included:

• “Financially it helped greatly, because at the time I wasn’t working. I don’t know how we would have done it without them.”
• “They took care of the stuff we couldn’t fix on our own. You know, we couldn’t do any of that.”
• “Well, it made my home worth more money than what it was.”
• “It makes it a more desirable property in the neighborhood.”
• “When I go to sell the house, it’ll help because the basement isn’t leaking in that corner anymore.”
Several participants also mentioned the personal impact the program had on them and their families, centering on the improved safety and the benefit of having a healthier environment in which to live. To that end, participants shared the following comments:

- “It gave me the ability to make my home safer... I have children and grandchildren over all the time. So that was something that really made me feel a lot safer.”
- “It makes it a healthier environment to live in.”
- In reference to the detection and mitigation of radon completed on his home, a participant stated, "You don’t know what adverse effects this could have possibly had on our health... They’re just, outstanding. They find these things that I wasn’t even aware of.”

Perhaps related to the increased safety afforded by the work completed, a few participants indicated that the outcomes of the project helped alleviate their stress levels. In their own words, they shared the following:

- “I have less worry right now, which is huge, you know, stress is a big part of people’s lives.”
- "It took a lot of work, away that I didn’t know how I was going to do.”

Finally, one participant cited the impact as simply being the mitigation of the water issues for which he applied to be part of the program. In reference to the recent precipitation, he said, “It’s already had an impact cuz I don’t have the drainage problem.”

**Final Remarks**

Participants were asked to share any closing thoughts or comments that they felt would be pertinent to for the program personnel. For the most part, they were very appreciative for the outcomes, as well as the individuals that offered genuine assistance. For example, one participant mentioned repeatedly how grateful they were to have the work done. "We’re grateful. It’s a very good program to help people out that really need it.” One simply offered, “I'm thankful, very thankful.” Another encouraged, “Just keep it going, because everybody down here loves it!”
Brief Summary of May 2019 Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Participant Interviews

In May 2019, the University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment conducted telephone interviews with ten volunteer participants in the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHH). The interviews were intended to provide BBHH staff with information to help them improve the program. The following is a brief summary of the interviews.

What was the best part of working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

The “best parts” mentioned by participants included the following (with the number of people who named each category in parentheses):

- Working with the City of Dubuque staff who ran the program and with contractors (4)
- The actual work done on their homes to prevent further water damage (3)
- Financial benefit for low- or moderate-income residents to get work on homes done (2)
- Safety of the home and sense of security
- Benefit to homeowners and to the City of Dubuque

In their own words, BBHH participants described the best parts as:

- "The staff were great, they always made sure to contact me and let me know what was going on."
- "It's been a really good experience as far as communication between the contractor, the Bee Branch people, and myself. When things came up, they were dealt with and addressed them as they happened."
- "I couldn't believe the efficiency of the personnel of the program overall."
- "We have no water in our basement and that was the goal, so that's a plus."
- "You know, my basement's not leaking."
- "When I first bought the place, I was scratching my head, 'How am I going to get this done or that done?' They took care of it for me."
- "I'd been trying to save and fix things that I wanted to fix, and this gave me the ability to do that."
- "Just the safety features with my grandchildren being at my house all the time. And the feeling as a landlord, too, that I want to make sure I'm providing a safe home for people that would rent from me."

What problems, if any, did you have in working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?

Participants’ responses to this question varied widely and depended mostly on the quality of the contractors’ workmanship and effectiveness of their communication. Of the 10 participants, three reported having no problems whatsoever, three had issues that they considered to be only minorly disruptive, two had problems that required additional attention or repair, and two participants had rather significant problems with the process and outcomes of the work completed on their homes.
Examples of problems experienced by those who reported having minor to moderate issues included a lack of timely completion of the project, work not adequately performed or left unfinished, unreliable or inexperienced workers, the use of cheap supplies, and contractors leaving debris and leftover materials on site.

The first of two participants that had a negative overall experience was an elderly woman with limited mobility who expressed disappointment about the fact that the stairs leading out of her basement were sealed off, something that she felt could have been avoided. The second participant, a tenant with a young family, reported experiencing a host of challenges that ultimately resulted in them leaving the home and moving away from Dubuque.

**Rating individual elements of the program**

Participants were also asked to rate parts of the program on a 1-5 scale (where 5 was most the most positive and 1 was the least positive). Most strongly agreed that the application was easy to complete and that the Home Advocate was helpful during the process. However, responses regarding the ease of working with contractors was somewhat mixed, with a slightly positive average. Finally, eight out of ten participants said they would strongly recommend the program to friends and neighbors.

**In what ways will participating in the BBHH have an impact on your life?**

All interviewees reported that participating in the BBHH program had an impact on their lives in some way, with eight providing strongly positive descriptions of the benefits they experienced. The three main ways the program impacted their lives were financial, personal, and safety and stress reduction. In the words of the participants, they shared the following:

**Financial:**
- “Financially it helped greatly, because at the time I wasn’t working. I don’t know how we would have done it without them.”
- “They took care of the stuff we couldn’t fix on our own. You know, we couldn’t do any of that.”
- “Well, it made my home worth more money than what it was.”
- “It makes it a more desirable property in the neighborhood.”
- “When I go to sell the house, it’ll help because the basement isn’t leaking anymore.”

**Personal:**
- “It gave me the ability to make my home safer... I have children and grandchildren over all the time. So that was something that really made me feel a lot safer.”
- “It makes it a healthier environment to live in.”
- In reference to the detection and mitigation of radon completed on his home, a participant stated, “You don’t know what adverse effects this could have possibly had on our health... They’re just, outstanding. They find these things that I wasn’t even aware of.”

**Safety and stress reduction:**
- “I have less worry right now, which is huge, you know, stress is a big part of people’s lives.”
- "It took a lot of work, away that I didn’t know how I was going to do."

**Final Remarks**
Participants were asked to share any closing thoughts or comments that they felt would be pertinent to the program personnel. For the most part, they were very appreciative for the outcomes, as well as the individuals that offered genuine assistance. For example, one participant said, “Just keep it going, because everybody down here loves it!”
Appendix Y- BBHH Resiliency Team Interviews Summary

Introduction and Methods

The following is a summary of six interviews with Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHH) team members. The purpose of the interviews was to document the processes of the BBHH and inform program improvements. Interview protocols were designed during Year 1 in collaboration with Sharon Gaul, Resiliency Project Coordinator for the City of Dubuque and were minimally modified for Year 2 and 3 interviews. All six interviews were conducted via telephone by Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) staff members during July 2019. BBHH staff provided the CEA with contact information to invite eight BBHH team members to take part in an interview and six agreed to be interviewed. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and then coded and analyzed by one CEA staff member.

The same general interview protocol was used for all interviews. As in the Year 2 evaluation report, when possible in this report, responses are aggregated to provide anonymity for the respondents. All interviewees were advised, however, that their anonymity could not be guaranteed because of the small number of respondents and potentially unique responses based on their varied roles in the program. The two home advocates (HAs) are the only two people who serve the same role in the program, and in all cases their input is recorded as either “both of the HAs” or “one HA” to provide them with some level of anonymity. A few questions were asked only of sub-groups, as indicated in the interview protocol (see Attachment A).

Interviewees were invited to review this summary and make corrections or additions before the summary was considered final and submitted to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Role with the BBHH

All six interviewees were previously interviewed by the CEA (see Annual Reports for Years 1 and 2). In the first year, the interviewer asked BBHH staff to describe their roles in the program, and in subsequent years, they were asked to describe any changes in their roles. All six indicated that, while their roles were very similar to last year, there were a few slight changes. The bulk of their descriptions are summarized here to provide reference for this report as a stand-alone document.

Home Advocates

The HAs said their role has largely been unchanged from the first two years of the project. One HA said that in the first year they did more outreach simply to let people know about the BBHH program and their role in it. The two HAs described their role in similar ways, saying they go to the applicants’ homes with the inspectors to meet the families and see the property. One HA said, “I always explain what my role is, what kind of things I can help them with, and then I go through the assessment.

Both HAs said they believe the participants generally understand the role of the HA in the BBHH program, but often not until they visit the participants’ homes in-person. One HA said she tries to describe her role over the phone “to let them know who I am and what I’ll be doing when I come..."
with the inspector, so they’re not caught off guard or surprised.” One HA said, “There are a lot of people in the program; that might confuse them a little bit.” Both HAs said that once they are in the homes, they think it’s clear that they are there to be helpful and that, in addition to the folder of information they give the participants, “We encourage them to call us with any questions, concerns, and we want to be that person they feel comfortable calling.”

The HAs described their main role as listening to the participants’ needs. During a typical visit, they want the participants to talk about their needs in terms of property concerns, like “what’s been happening as far as the water coming in” and other “healthy home type” things, but also to talk about other potential needs like “employment and education, if they’re able to meet their basic needs, if they have financial concerns, transportation.” Once they have talked through these areas, the HAs provide the families with a broad range of information about available resources to help them meet their needs including “community resources, information about fire safety, carbon monoxide, radon.” They said some of what they do depends on the season of the year when they are meeting with the participants. In spring and summer, the focus may be on whether they have summer plans for their children. In the fall and winter, they might focus on making sure that participants have resources for weatherization and know how to apply for heating assistance.

**Rehabilitation Specialist/Inspector**

The rehabilitation specialist/inspector for BBHH said that the job has stayed pretty much the same in the last year. She said that she inspects the properties and develops a scope of work aimed at mitigating damage during heavy rain events. She also oversees construction, answers questions from participants, program personnel, and contractors. She described her role as, “I’m the person on the ground, on the job site, and usually the first person of contact between the property owner and the program.”

She described a typical interaction with participants as going to their homes and talking with them about what their concerns are regarding water intrusion. For example, she would ask about “where they think [the water is] coming from, where they’ve had problems…. Is it every rain event even if it’s just a small light rain, or is it only the heavy deluges that we get? What do they do or how do they clean it up?” She said she walks through the property with them and explains what the goals of the project are. She emphasized that she must make it clear that the goal may be to reduce the amount of water coming in rather than completely eliminate it, with the goal being that they will find ways to minimize property damage, as well as any structural and mechanical harms from water that may still find its way in. She said they sometimes have trouble distinguishing the BBHH program, which is related only to water/flood issues, from the general “Healthy Homes” projects where someone may be looking to get insulation to keep out the cold, or to install a handrail for their stairway.

**Grant Administrator**

The Grant Administrator also indicated that his responsibilities have been very similar to the prior year, but that he has also taken on some of the project coordinator's duties since she has assumed another role for the City of Dubuque and reportedly spends less time on BBHH. He said that in addition to his financial duties as grant administrator, he now goes out to the projects, helps with inspections, and follows the process through to the completion of the work.

He described a typical interaction with a participant as going out with the inspector to view the property to see what the project will entail. Next, they put the project up for bid, then do a bid tour
with contractors and property owners to clear up any questions that arise. Once the contracts are awarded, he sits down with the homeowner and/or tenant to make sure they understand the whole process. He said, “We talk to them about exactly what we’re going to do, when we’re going to start, and hopefully, when we’re going to finish. A lot depends on the weather. It gives the person the opportunity to ask questions. We make sure they understand... the five-year forgiveness loan.”

He said once construction has started, he tries to get to each property once or twice to make sure everything is going okay, and he makes sure the participants know how to contact him with any concerns. When the projects are complete, he goes out again, checks to see that everything has been done according to plan and that the participants don’t have any remaining issues or questions. Finally, he tells them, “Thanks for being a part of our program.”

**Project Coordinator**

As mentioned above, the person who formerly was the full-time Project Coordinator has taken on another role at the City of Dubuque, and she now works only 25% time with the BBHH. The City wanted her to still be involved with the BBHH to provide continuity since she has experience and history with the project. Because of her institutional knowledge of the project, she said she does a lot of different things depending on what is needed. She said she is very involved with the “data and advocacy side,” but said she still goes out to the project sites, adding, “If we have a tough project out in the field, I get the invite out to see if we can all put our heads together and figure out a solution.”

When asked for typical participant interactions this year, she said, “It runs the gamut.” She went on to describe taking phone calls from people with general interest in the program to getting involved with “someone that might be a little bit unhappy and we’ve got to explain the process and go back to ground zero.” As mentioned by others, the project coordinator said that they need to manage expectation of the participants. She said they work to constantly do a better job of setting accurate expectations with the participants about how the work will go, what it will accomplish, and what they can and cannot do as part of the BBHH.

**Intake Specialist**

The intake specialist serves many varied roles for BBHH. She said her first responsibility continues to be working with new project applicants, doing income verification, and then “following them through the process from beginning to end, and being there if they have questions or complaints.” She said that although she is not the advocate, she sometimes takes on an advocate role because she is the first person that most of the people talk to and “they're used to coming back to me.” She also gets all the paperwork together from both the participants and the contractors. She sets up meetings, takes notes, and works with Iowa Grants to do the drawdowns of funds and all the “inside paperwork” for the governmental side of the project. She also works with the grant administrator to prepare the paperwork for the forgivable loans.

Like several other BBHH staff, she talked about the need to make expectations clear on this project. She said one of her favorite parts of this project is when the work is done and “I get to talk to [the participants] and they're so happy.” However, she added that sometimes, “Some of them aren’t happy just because things aren’t fixed and water is still getting in, because we just haven’t got to the part getting fixed all the way... We’ve discovered through this whole process that we may fix where we think the water’s getting in, and just as you fix that problem, guess what, the water decides to come in a different way.” She said since much of her work with participants is done by telephone, it can be fun to go out in person and meet the people when she goes to take pictures of the completed projects. She mentioned, however, that she was regretfully going to be leaving the program soon.
Difficult Interactions

Although BBHH staff in general reported that they had very few difficult interactions with participants, there was some agreement between multiple staff members about situations that arose that could make client interactions challenging. For most of the staff, these situations were ones in which participants felt their expectations had not been met by the work done on their homes as part of the project. The root problem identified by staff was that expectations were not properly managed. Misunderstandings or miscommunications most often centered around work not being finished within the 60 days specified by the contracts, work that could not be done as part of the BBHH project, and projects that did not make homes completely dry.

Several staff members mentioned the difficulty they experienced related to the 60-day length of the contract. Although this has been a standard part of their process since the inception of the project, the relatively wet spring in Year 3 caused several unexpected delays in the projects that extended beyond the specified contract end-date. To that effect, one staff member said, “Weather plays such a big role in what we’re doing, because that’s what we’re working against. We’re trying to keep the rain out, so everything that we do depends on the weather a lot.” This staff member continued by discussing the need for both the staff and contractors to manage client expectations. For example, she explained that they need two days to pour concrete, and if there is a 40% chance of rain on one day, they can’t start the process because if they pour it and it rains, the concrete will be ruined. The same staff member said they all need to understand that the 60-day completion is just not going to happen if they have weather delays. Other issues also have interfered with their ability to complete jobs within the 60-day time period, including needing to special order windows for the 100-year old homes that are common in this project.

Another staff member said that occasionally people have been unhappy with the perceived quality of a project, even when the project meets the standards of practice or the materials used were appropriate for the job. Another staff member said that people want things done that are not eligible for BBHH funding. The staff member described having to say, “I have rules that I have to go by. There’s eligible activities and ineligible activities. This is not an eligible activity.” In this situation, the staff member reported explaining to the participants that they can have additional work done on their homes, but that they need to arrange a separate contract and pay for that work on their own.

One staff member described a difficult situation that began with a family member of the participant engaging with the contractor in a negative way. To resolve the issue, the project lead had to step in to clarify who could be on the job site during work and who had the authority to work with both the project and the contractor.

The staff members made it clear, however, that these situations were among the minority, with one describing it as “one in six or maybe ten… that puts us in the challenging or unhappy category.”

The two HAs also said they had very few difficult situations, but one of them also mentioned dealing with participants who were unhappy with the work in progress. The other HA said that she had one challenging situation where the participant did not follow through with the initial interview and assessment. She said that for the most part that was okay, except that it was a “lost opportunity” to provide the client with important resources for improving their home and life situation.
Improvements Due to BBHH

Structural Improvements

The four interviewees who worked with property improvements were asked to describe the most common resources that were going into the project homes this year. The following items were mentioned, presented here in order of frequency.

- Sump pumps (4): All four mentioned sump pumps with one specifying that they include battery backups for the pumps.
- Dehumidifying fans (3): Three of the four mentioned basement dehumidifying fans.
- Drain tiles, gutters, and down spouts (3): Three staff members mentioned work being done to make sure water drains away from the home, including both interior and exterior drainage and tiling. Two people also mentioned doing landscaping and soil modification as part of this effort to keep water away from the home.
- Tuckpointing (2): Two people described projects that involved tuckpointing the limestone foundations of the older homes.
- Replacing or raising furnaces and water heaters (1): One person said they commonly replace or raise water heaters or furnaces to prevent them from future water intrusions.
- Replacing roofs (1): One person mentioned replacing leaky roofs that were causing water damage inside the home.

Other Benefits

The home advocates were asked to describe the extent to which participants have followed up on or utilized the various resources they discussed. At least one of the HAs mentioned the following list of resources (with 2 in parentheses if mentioned by both HAs):

- Weatherization (2)
- Medical and dental insurance and referrals (2)
- Food assistance (2) Food pantry referrals, especially for tenants in rental properties.
- Budgeting booklets (through Iowa State Extension office)
- Employment assistance (Iowa Works and Career Pathways)
- Legal assistance (Legal Aid)
- Mental health services (Hillcrest)
- Energy assistance

The HAs said that they generally provide participants (homeowners and tenants) with information “they didn’t know was out there or they forget the dates they can apply.” One of the HAs said that when they have done one-year follow-ups with participants, they hear that participants are “getting less water in their basement and... people seem to be really pleased with the program and they’re not having the difficulties that they were having before with the water coming into their basements. We've had a lot of rain this year, and so I had a couple people that I talked to that said it was just amazing how different it was. And that they didn’t have to worry about it.”

Additional Resources

When asked what additional resources they believed could be offered in Dubuque, most BBHH staff members indicated that Dubuque does a great job and already has much of what is needed to serve their residents. One BBHH staff member said, “Dubuque’s in a good position,” and went on to name
some of the “really good resources that are available,” including a new lead grant, the rehab
program (“still very strong”), Operation New View for weatherization, the Visiting Nurses
Association (VNA), and United Resources for help on an emergency basis.

Another staff member said Dubuque is “doing a pretty good job” of providing resources for its
residents, although she named a need for increased access to mental health counseling. The staff
member went on to say that mental health seems to be at the root of a lot of other problems like
depression, anxiety, and an “inability to hold down a job that allows them to earn enough to
maintain their property, so they need a lot of other assistance, too.” She went on to describe how
this instability may lead people to overreact in situations where they only have small amounts of
water in their house.

Two staff members said that there are ongoing and unmet needs related to pest control. One staff
member said that bedbugs can be a huge problem for residents. She elaborated by saying that pest
control is “very expensive and a lot of people can’t afford it.” Another staff member said, “There’s no
one that helps with that funding.”

Two staff members described ongoing needs related to transportation. One BBHH staff member
said that there have been improvements in the availability of public transportation, including
“service to Peosta,” where a lot of people work in factories, but that there are still shortages. The
other staff member described that people who have broken-down cars often lack the resources to
get them fixed.

In addition to the resource needs mentioned above, individual staff members cited the following
needs:

- Dental care – especially for orthodontia and dentures
- Rental assistance
- Weatherization – programs exist, but there are waiting lists where priority depends on
  energy costs, “so it’s very difficult to get into that.”

Finally, one BBHH staffer wished for a program that could help residents with “curb appeal.” The
staff member said various programs go inside homes and make repairs, “But no one can really see
those.” She went on to describe that homeowners don’t have the money to do exterior things like
siding, painting, or landscaping to make their homes look as good as they can. Even though “it’s just
aesthetics, sometimes that makes your life a little happier, more joyful. Everyone wants their place
to look nice.”

**Impact on Participants’ Lives**

**Effectiveness of Structural Improvements**

All six BBHH staff members said the BBHH improvements have had a great impact on participants’
lives. While they highlighted the actual physical improvements in keeping water from entering the
homes, especially during the past year when there have been numerous heavy rainfall events, they
also emphasized the power of the improvements to decrease stress among the families, lighten the
burden of financial difficulties, and improve the health of the residents. Their strongly affirmative
responses included the following:

- One staff member said, “I think we’ve really changed positively the lives of the people that
  live in these properties because they’re not necessarily stressing about every rain event as
to how much work they're going to have and what's going to get ruined, and they're not
taking days off work trying to clean out, dry basements. They're to a manageable state, and
so it has lifted the burden off many people's shoulders.”

- After saying that some of the residents' sentiments have been captured in interviews and
videos, including people saying that they’re not up in the night pumping water out of their
basement, one BBHH staff member said that participants say they, “...wish they could have
had that sooner ...[because] 'Now I can do other improvements at my house'... Do folks sit
there and say, 'This totally changed my life?' I doubt it, ...[but] they are like, 'Sweet, I don’t
have to worry about this anymore.'” This staff member went on to say that in homes where
furnaces and/or water heaters were replaced, the new ones have been Energy Star rated
and therefore participants are also saving money on their energy bills.

- Another staff member said, “Oh, think about it, just taking away the worry of wondering if
your basement’s going to flood every time it rains. We put in new roofs, we’ve put in new
windows for people. This is just stuff they can’t do, they can’t afford to do. So, it takes the
weight and the burden off their shoulders and I think it does give them some kind of relief.”

- The two HAs pointed out that the program has helped with a host of problems including
stress relief, having mold and mildew removed (and the accompanying asthma and allergy
issues), and solving some safety issues through replacing broken windows that were a
security risk. One of the HAs also highlighted the critical nature of roof repairs, because they
not only provide mitigation for water getting into the homes, but they prevent rodents from
entering the home and posing additional safety and health risks.

- One staff member declared that property improvements have improved participants’ lives
“100%.” He followed this up by saying, “We certainly are not 100% able to keep all the
water out of every home, but what we’ve been able to do is... keep most of the water out, if
not all of it. But then, improve their home by putting in new windows or that tuckpointing
or the roof, and which was probably not going to happen without us coming in and helping
there. And so, each and every one of these homes that we’ve worked on, it’s certainly been
just a positive for the individuals that live there.” The same staff member lauded the BHHH’s
forgivable loans in relieving participants of the worry of how to pay for improvements. He
suggested that the program has changed attitudes throughout the community. He said
participants are now able to say, “'Maybe I can do this and help my property or help the
neighbor, because I can get some of the water running a different way from my house.' So,
yeah, I think it's been a huge positive effect throughout town.”

**Effectiveness of Home Advocacy**

All six interviewees also mentioned the positive influence that the home advocacy aspect of the
BBHH project has been having on participants’ lives. The two HAs each described that a lot of the
impact of home advocacy has been related to providing participants with information about
programs that they did not know existed. One of the HAs said participants often “live day by day
and never really asked or didn’t even know how to go about trying to find resources for different
issues.” The other staff members affirmed the role and impact of the HAs in various ways. Speaking
about the HAs, one said, “they're not only helping the resiliency program, they’re giving out contact
and the help that’s needed. Whether it’s education, maybe it’s financial, maybe it's even health. They
can direct them to the right resource or the right place for that help.” Another indicated that a while
back they thought they might need to “rebrand” the BBHH project to emphasize the community
resources that they are offering to the participants. Th staff member continued, “We want them to
see it as a relationship and not as a handout,” adding that they are “really dialing in on measuring
outcomes on that advocacy side.” This staff member said that they perceive participants’ needs as falling into “five buckets: health, education, economic, environment, and social.” She said the property improvement portion covers the environmental needs and it is up to the advocacy side to address the other needs.

Both HAs said that at one-year follow-up visits with participants, some participants have successfully accessed the resources offered and others have not. Meanwhile, some (especially tenants) have moved on and were not able to be located for follow-up. However, one HA said, “Some of them definitely follow through, and it’s so nice being able to see that they’ve met their goals, because we ask them want they wanted to have completed within a year and what changes they would like to have made. It’s so neat seeing what they’ve accomplished in that time.”

One BBHH staff member said that the advocates were effective, but expressed concern that the participants do not fully access the resources available to them, sometimes thinking that they don’t need additional help.

Another BBHH staff member said the impact of the home advocacy component of the project “runs the gamut” and described some of the unexpected ways that home advocates have sought out new ways to be resources for people, particularly new sub-groups of the participant population. She said that Dubuque has a large Pacific Islander Marshallese population, and often these families did not have health care providers. She said the BBHH HAs’ presence in their homes has allowed the program to provide information to these families despite the language barrier. She also described HAs’ work within the Bee Branch in properties that cater to men who are “transitioning from incarceration.” She said while they do have some rental assistance during their transition, the HAs have been able to help direct participants to other necessary services, including helping a man who required a wheelchair, but had bad tires on his chair and was not able to get himself to the grocery store.

One BBHH staff member said that, although a few participants have not been too interested in talking with the HAs, most have been very appreciative of their assistance. When the HAs come in and sit down with the participants, and they listen to what they have to say and what they can do for them, “I think it has been incredible.” He went on to say that, it’s not just about the physical work on the property, “it can be health, it can be education, it can be financial... [there’s just] a wealth of information there and resources.” He also said the follow-up that HAs do is also important to let participants know, “it doesn’t end when the job ends.”

Finally, one BBHH staff member described changes in people’s lives as a result of the BBHH in this way:

The home advocates add to [the physical improvements] – they can help them with anything that they need. Even just the simple things, such as helping them to get some extra food or to get some medical supplies or something. I just think it makes people feel better, it makes the community feel better. Every little trickle makes the creek larger. We help one person, and it just kind of pays it forward. I think it makes a huge difference. You know, if we can fix their little things like leakage, and the advocates can fix some of their other things I think it goes a long way. Yeah, it gives them a better life. No matter what, it gives them a better life. And that’s something we have to keep in our head all the time.
Overall Effectiveness

The overwhelming consensus from among staff members was that the BBHH program was having a significantly positive impact on the lives of participants. However, they also identified and described certain areas in which they could aspire to improve. Each of the sections below point toward specific opportunities for improvement or areas for growth.

Internal Communication

There was a range of opinions about how well the BBHH team communicates. In general, the staff who work for the City of Dubuque and the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) were pleased with team communication; meanwhile, the VNA staff were less satisfied. At the positive end, two people described communication as “really good” or “very good,” and a third said, “I think that is what has made this program so successful.” Somewhere in the middle, one staffer said that communication among the team “ebbs and flows, where we have good communication on some portions and probably poor on others.” At the other end of the spectrum, the two VNA team members expressed disappointment in the communication among the team, with one team member saying, “If the communication was better, I think that would be wonderful. I feel like that’s the only issue that we’ve ever had is the communication part of it.” Another staffer said, “Sometimes there is kind of a disconnect between us and the staff at ECIA.”

These differing views were echoed in some of their descriptions of how often they met and how often they communicated about project status. Two staff members said they had regular meetings, variously described as “monthly” or “at least monthly” (although one staff member indicated that meetings were frequently cancelled). One staff member also said that they would be lost without email because it is difficult to get together, adding that with three major organizations (the City, ECIA, and VNA), “just not having everybody under one roof is a challenge. We knew that from the beginning, but it was how things were set up and it is what it is – we just do the best we can.” The two HAs (VNA) said they would like to be in better communication with the rest of the team, through both in-person and electronic communications. One HA said, “They’re dealing with the construction part, and so I think they have a different outlook on things than what we do.” The other HA said, “We don’t have regular meetings to discuss the different houses or the different projects that are in progress that we’re included in. We’ve asked about that in the past, but nothing ever really came out of it.”

In addition to wanting more in-person meetings, the HAs expressed wanting to be kept up to date on the progress being made on the various projects. In the past, they had reportedly received lists of projects with specific updates, which they found to be quite helpful. They shared that they would like to be kept informed about the communications with the participants to be more aware of what is going on with construction. The HAs indicated that it puts them at a disadvantage when they contact participants and don’t know whether or not the construction is finished or if the participant may have experienced problems with the construction process. One HA said, “It would be nice to have a heads-up, like ‘Yeah, they’re not happy with it.’ Even if they would call us and say, ‘Would you call and talk to them?’ I would love to do that to be the middleman to maybe help them out and maybe calm them down a little bit.” Both HAs also said they often write emails to the BBHH staff about things they learned during their conversations with participants and, while they are often acknowledged with an “okay, thanks” by the staff, there is seldom follow-up to let the VNA know that the concerns were addressed.
In sum, the HAs indicated that more frequent communication from the rest of the staff would improve their ability to more effectively work with the BBHH participants.

**Challenges**

**Lack of contractors**
The four City of Dubuque and ECIA staff members all shared that the small number of contractors who have been available or interested in doing BBHH construction has been one of the biggest challenges they have faced in the last year. One staff member said, “We do not have enough contractors to do the amount of work we have in a timely fashion.” Another stated, “I think our biggest challenge has been not enough contractors. Work could be done faster, we could help more people quicker; however, it’s been taking us a long time because we only have four contractors working.” A third staff member echoed the same type of sentiment, offering that, “if we did have more contractors we could be working on more houses on any given day.” This staff member, however, went on to say that the contractors they do have are very excited about the program and their familiarity with the BBHH parameters make some parts of the process much simpler. For example, he said, “Even their teams – we see them a lot. We’re at bid tours, we’re at the homes while they’re worked on, we’re at the contract signings... So, I think in a way, maybe that’s been a really good thing rather than having 40 contractors. They know ahead of time, before we even put the bid specs together, that they know what the houses are going to need, so that has really worked out to be a beneficial part of it – where nothing is really surprising these guys now.”

One of the staff members speculated that there are several reasons why the number of contractors has been limited, including the amount of insurance they’re required to carry, as well as a shortage of skilled labor willing to do the “physical work. Not everybody wants to be in a basement and dig up the flood and put in a sump jar.” The same participant described that the contractors typically need to hire licensed subcontractors to do plumbing and HVAC work, and they don’t all have ready access to good subcontractors.

One staff member also mentioned that the small number of contractors has been even more challenging due to the wet weather that backed up everyone’s schedules during the past year. She continued by describing how difficult it has been for many of the contractors that are running smaller operations to manage their time and projects appropriately. She said, “We’re finding ourselves having to actually sit down with the contractors and help them learn how to project manage.” Thus, while the program as a whole is perceived as being good for the community because it provides an opportunity to grow their businesses, “with that comes growing pains” in the form of an additional burden on the BBHH staff.

**Communication and Scheduling**

As a byproduct of the internal communication challenges described above, one of the HAs described that scheduling had also been a challenge during the last year. She said that the HAs had asked the other staff members to try to schedule appointments two weeks in advance to make sure that one of them would be available, however, this was not always the case. With short notice for these appointments, it was difficult for the HAs to always make it work.

**Resources for participants**

One of the HAs also said that finding the right resources to meet participant’s needs has also been a challenge. She said that they continue to learn about new resources, which has improved their capacity to help clients.
Staffing issues
Several participants (from all organizations) cited staffing changes and illness as playing roles in the workings of the team over the last year. The additional workload required of their colleagues appeared to pose some challenges. When others were filling in to cover for those that left or were away from work, this resulted in a lack of consistency. One of the HAs acknowledged that this was understandable and that sometimes it was just the fact that, “someone would do [things] differently than the next person.”

Understanding and responding to residents’ needs
One staff member said that one of her biggest challenges is to find “the time to really dedicate to the data.” She said that they collect data to help understand the needs of the people of Dubuque, which they have categorized into five main areas: health, educational, economic, environmental, and social. She said they typically see the most needs in the “built environment” area and they can help with some of those needs through this program. Health care is reportedly the second greatest need, and although the BBHH also addresses some aspects of that, there are still gaps and they must decide “which ones are important to us and what we are going to do about it.” She said they really want to establish a baseline and then be able to talk about goals and the changes the program makes over time. She said, “I always want it to be better. I always want to have the answer. I think time has just been my biggest challenge. You know, you’re trying to stay in compliance and regulatory, keep the production going, tell the story, do the outreach, do all the things, make all the meetings... and sometimes start feeling, ‘Wow, I’m not doing any of these great.’ But we’re going to spend the money, which is the important part, and I know we’re making a difference.”

Recommendations for Program Improvement
As with the challenges described by the BBHH staff, their recommendations appeared to be closely linked to the interviewees’ roles or perspectives in the program. While the two HAs obviously recommended improving communication, two of the other staff said they need more contractors. Finally, the other two staff had more overarching thoughts when asked about how they could improve the program.

Engage more contractors (2): Two BBHH staff said they need to find ways to alleviate the contractor shortage they are experiencing. One expressed this as a problem without proposing a solution, but said that even getting one or two more contractors involved would help. The other staff member described how the current requirement to take the lowest bid is a problem, because small numbers of contractors tend to get all the bids and the others “fall off” and don’t bid. This also results in those contractors being overworked, thereby reducing their capacity to get the work done. This staff member suggested that they revise the bid process so that they could get a pool of contractors who will do the type of work needed, and then rotate the contracts among the contractor groups based on when it is feasible for them to complete the work.

Improve internal communications (2): The two HAs both focused on improving communication within the project team. One HA said communication should be “a little bit more open,” perhaps involving more phone calls, emails, or meetings. She said there is a need to ensure that their input to the other staff regarding participants’ needs is heard, and then followed up on. She provided an example in which the HAs reported a participant’s problems with pests in the walls. She said that if they could learn, “Yes we took care of this,” or “No, that’s not covered” for a particular reason, they would better know how to help participants and meet their needs. The other HA gave another example of what the source of some miscommunication or misunderstanding may be. She described
that is not always clear to participants how to decide what problems are indeed “flood-related”, and therefore eligible for program funding under Healthy Homes.

The final two responses regarding program recommendations were more all-encompassing and philosophical. One said that they hope that Dubuque and other communities have the chance to do more work like this. He said, “I certainly hope that other communities get the opportunity to do some of what we’ve done because it is all 100% positive.” He pointed out the value of having their own communications people, local media, and the IWA program evaluation to tell the story of the project so that others can learn about it and how it “helps people and the whole city benefits.”

Finally, one BBHH staff member said:

I think we’ve all got to give ourselves a little bit of a break. We all feel like some days there’s more work than what we can handle. Realizing that we have come a long way and we’re doing a program and a number of units that I think a lot of people thought that we couldn’t do. So, I guess I don’t really have any big takeaways at this point other than, we have made a difference. We’ve got five or ten percent of the participants that might not be happy, but I think all in all that’s a pretty normal percentage. There’s certainly far more that are happy. And even if they’re unhappy, I guarantee that structure is better off than it was when we showed up. We’ve never run across a unit that we couldn’t find something that we couldn’t improve or make healthier or safer for that occupant… I know that we have made a difference and we’ve done a program that HUD’s been interested in that we know is good… I think that's about my roll up to this point. We've made a difference and we've just got to remember that.
Attachment A – Bee Brach Healthy Homes Team Member Interview Protocol

As part of the evaluation of the Iowa Watershed Approach Project, the Center for Evaluation and Assessment is conducting interviews with key personnel from Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resilience Program. The purpose of the interviews is to document the processes of the Healthy Homes Program and inform program improvements.

Your responses will not be reported by name. However, because there are only a small number of team members your anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may decline to be interviewed, you may decline to answer particular questions, and you may ask that the interview not be used even after we have completed the interview.

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You may end the interview at any time. Please let me know if you need to leave or if you’d like to take a break and finish the interview later.

Findings from all interviews will be combined into one summary, and you will be given the opportunity to review the summary and make comments, corrections, or additions before the summary is considered final. When it is finalized, it will be given to the Healthy Homes Program staff for their use in planning and to the project funding institution, HUD, at which point it becomes part of the public record for the project.

In order to make this process smoother and make sure we capture your feedback accurately, we would like to tape record the interview. Is that okay with you?

Role

1. [All] How would you describe your role with the Healthy Homes Resiliency Program? [If this person has been interviewed in the past, ask “Since we last spoke, how would you say your role is different now than it was a year ago?”]
2. [All] Do you have direct contact with the Healthy Homes participants? [If no, skip to item #7]
3. [If yes to #2] Describe for me what a typical interaction with participants might be like for you.
4. [If yes to #2] Generally, do you think BBHH participants understand your role in the program? (Follow-up prompt if needed) Describe to me why you feel this way.
5. [If yes to #2] Tell me about a participant contact that you would consider particularly difficult.
   a. How did you handle this situation?
   b. Is there anything you would have done differently if you could do it over?
6. [Home Advocate] Would you say that home visits are different now than they were a year ago? [if yes] Describe for me the process of a typical home visit.
Recommended Resources

7. [All] What are the most common things that the program is doing right now for participants?
8. [Home Advocate] During the home visits, as the home advocate, you make referrals for participants to address their needs. Can you tell me which resources participants have been most interested in?
9. [All] What resources or home improvements (if any) are there that participants need or could benefit from, that are not currently available in Dubuque?

Improvement of Life for Participants

10. [All] How effective do you think the property improvements aspect of the BBHH is in improving the lives of participants?
11. [All] How effective do you think the home advocacy aspect of the BBHH is in improving the lives of participants?

BBHH Logistical Considerations

Now we are going to switch gears and talk more about your experiences working with the program team, challenges, and any recommendations you might have to improve the program.

12. [All] First, how effective would you consider the communication between yourself and other team members? Your team and contractors?
13. [All] Thinking about the whole BBHH in general. What would you say are the biggest challenges, if any, you have encountered in your role in the project?
14. [All] My final question is about improving the program. What recommendations, if any, do you have that would help improve the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?
15. [All] Do you have other comments about the program, the process – anything else at all?
Appendix Z- BBHH Project Contractor Survey Findings

The Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) collaborated with a Bee Branch Healthy Homes Project (BBHH) staff member to create a survey for contractors doing the construction work for the BBHH. The CEA is conducting the program evaluation of the Iowa Watershed Approach, a project funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, of which the BBHH is a component. The purpose of the survey was to learn about the contractors’ experiences in working with the BBHH and what project staff could do to improve that experience and attract additional contractors’ interest in bidding on BBHH projects.

On September 11, 2018, the CEA sent an email with an anonymous link to the survey to the 14 contractors or sub-contractors who had bid on and carried out construction for the BBHH as of September 1, 2018. Reminders to complete the survey were sent to everyone on the list on September 20 and September 28, 2018. Of the 14 representatives for construction companies who received the survey link, seven completed the survey for a response rate of 50%. Six respondents indicated that they were sub-contractors for the BBHH and one said they were a general contractor.

Respondents were asked how many projects they had worked on already or had a contract for with the BBHH. Figure 1 reports the results.

![Figure 1. Number of projects worked on for BBHH](image)

More than half of the respondents had worked on five or more BBHH projects.

Contractors were asked a series of questions related to the BBHH bid process. Table 1 reports the results.
Table 1. Contractors’ satisfaction with and preferences related to BHHH bidding process (N=7, except where indicated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the current bidding process.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer that multiple projects be bid together.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer that trade work bid on its own.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently, there are requirements of the contractor bid specifications that deter me from working on some of the BHHH projects.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to bid on future BHHH projects. (N=6)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contractors’ opinions about the current bidding process were mixed with about half of the respondents indicating that they were satisfied with the current bidding process and half were not, and also about half preferring that trade work bid separately and half not. Contractors were also split as to whether they preferred multiple projects be package together for bidding with most (5) preferring they be bid together. All respondents said that current requirements are not a deterrent for bidding on future projects. Five of the seven said they plan to bid on future BHHH projects.

Respondents were also asked four open-ended items about their experiences working on BHHH projects.

What challenges have you experienced working on BHHH projects?

Five contractors or sub-contractors responded to this item. Two respondents said they had not experienced any unforeseen challenges. Two respondents (who were sub-contractors) said they had not received or had received late payments from the general contractors. Individual respondents said they had issues with “unorganized structure – mostly from the contracting side” and with “price sharing,” and one person said there was a “lack of good general contractors.”

What could the BHHH staff do to make your work with the project easier?

There were five respondents to this item. Two respondents indicated that things did not need to change with one saying that it had been “All good so far” and the other saying, “Nothing. It is very easy.” The other three respondents all said that either the BHHH should act as the general contractor (2) or that there should be no general contractor (1). One respondent commented, “Be the general. You would save tons of time by bidding this out with subs and having BHHH act as general. Seems easy and it would be without the 10 thousand miles of typical … government red tape.”

What could BHHH do to make it more attractive for contractors to bid on the BHHH projects?

Two of the three people who responded to this item repeated their perspective that BHHH should act as the general contractor for the construction, or in one case, find better general contractors. One of these respondents said, “Most things that are being bid on are very separate from other trades. Again, have better generals or bid the work out to the sub with no general. A true general contractor is not needed.” One respondent said that they should allow more time to schedule bid tours.
What other comments do you have about working with the Bee Branch Health Homes Project, the HUD funding, this survey, or anything else you may want to comment on?

Four people responded to item. However, one person said they had no additional comments and another said they had, “Too many comments to type.” One person commented that they did not think that BBHH should be soliciting bids from out-of-state companies adding, “They should try to keep the work local.” The other person reiterated the idea that the BBHH projects do not require general contractors, commenting:

You need to get this project restructured. There should be an in-house or third-party GC for all projects. You are already putting the project together, then you have to babysit the GC’s, who hire the subs, who usually are left in the blind until the last minute. We would also like to get paid in the future. Wouldn’t have that problem if payment came directly from you. Hire me... I’ll do it.
Iowa Watershed Approach: Year 4 Dubuque Evaluation Activities Report

September 28, 2020

As submitted to:
John Tharp, Grant Administrator for the Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes Program, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Authors listed in alphabetical order
Asih Asikin-Garmager, PhD, Associate Director
Valerie R.M. Decker, MA, Assistant Director
Hacer Karamese, MA, Research Assistant
Huan Liu, MA, Research Assistant
Reuben Vyn, PhD, Evaluation Research Specialist

Center for Evaluation and Assessment
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
valerie-decker@uiowa.edu
asih-asikin@uiowa.edu

The Iowa Watershed Approach is supported by a contract to the State of Iowa (Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) as fiscal agent) from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Disaster Resilience Competition. Under the auspices of a sub-contract between the IEDA and the University of Iowa, The University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment is conducting the program evaluation supported by funds from the Community Development Block Grant- National Disaster Resilience Contract # 13-NDRP-013. This report covers IWA work conducted from August 15, 2019 to August 15, 2020.

COPYRIGHT: Center for Evaluation and Assessment, 2020

Copyright CEA 2020
Executive Summary

The Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA) activities for Dubuque, IA are designed to address specific flooding issues within a community using forgivable loans for individual home improvements and community resource consultations for families as well as infrastructure projects along Bee Branch Creek. This executive summary highlights successes and major takeaways for the IWA work from the City of Dubuque in Year 4 of the grant.

Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program

The Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) resiliency program in Dubuque, IA helps LMI home and property owners increase the flood resilience and safety of their homes by providing forgivable loans and community resource consultations. BBHH is implemented by team members with the City of Dubuque, East Central Intergovernmental Association, and the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA), and primarily supports individuals through the two program components: structural improvements and home advocacy.

Structural improvements: Structural improvements were made to participants’ homes to mitigate or prevent the damaging effects of water infiltration. As a result of the work done on Dubuque residents’ homes, BBHH team members and participants alike observed a reduction in water inundating homes, as well as improvements in physical health and financial well-being.

Home advocacy: Complementary to the home improvements, social workers from the VNA serve as home advocates, providing support to community members and matching them with other community resources based on their family’s needs. The VNA home advocates provide personalized support to participants, tailoring their resource recommendations to the individual needs of each individual or family. BBHH team members and participants agreed that the home advocates provided useful information about resources in their area.

The City of Dubuque Bee Branch Creek Restoration Project

As described in the IWA proposal to HUD, “IWA includes projects to address significant unmet infrastructure needs in Coralville, Dubuque, and Storm Lake.” Each urban infrastructure project was selected to reduce flooding impacts in low- or moderate-income (LMI) communities in Iowa. The City of Dubuque Bee Branch Creek Restoration Project was funded to improve sewer capacity and complete the restoration of the Bee Branch Creek. The City of Dubuque demonstrated progress for this collection of projects so that funds from three of the rural watersheds were reallocated to allow for additional work. In an interview, a team member from the City of Dubuque attributed the reduction in water intrusion in houses in the Bee Branch neighborhood to improvements made to the homes and the infrastructure projects completed along Bee Branch Creek. This project is still in progress.
Introduction

The Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA) activities for Dubuque, IA are designed to address specific flooding issues within a community using forgivable loans for individual home improvements and community resource consultations for families as well as infrastructure projects along Bee Branch Creek. This report includes the findings from the Center for Evaluation and Assessment program evaluation efforts directly related to the IWA work from the City of Dubuque. This report is complementary to the Iowa Watershed Approach: Year 4 Evaluation Activities Report submitted to Larry Weber, IWA principal investigator, the Iowa Economic Development Authority, and US Housing and Urban Development.

Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program

The Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) resiliency program in Dubuque, IA helps low- or moderate-income (LMI) home and property owners increase the flood resilience and safety of their homes by providing forgivable loans. BBHH is implemented by team members with the City of Dubuque, East Central Intergovernmental Association, and the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA), and primarily supports individuals through the two program components: structural improvements and home advocacy. Structural improvements were made to participants’ homes to mitigate or prevent the damaging effects of water infiltration. Complementary to the home improvements, social workers from the VNA serve as home advocates, providing support to community members and matching them with other community resources based on their family’s needs. In addressing the ways that the BBHH program has provided support to LMI individuals, this section integrates interview data from program participants (Appendix A) and BBHH team members (Appendix B), as well as information gathered from a meeting between CEA, FRT, and City of Dubuque officials (Appendix C).

Structural Improvements

As a result of the work done on Dubuque residents’ homes, BBHH team members and participants alike observed a reduction in water inundating homes, as well as improvements in physical health and financial well-being.

Improved safety and health benefits: When considering the impacts of the structural improvements on LMI individuals, the most common response across participants and BBHH team members was the reduction in water infiltration. Team members, for example, reported that fewer participants were having water enter their homes, people were able to use their basements more, participants’ health was improving (specifically for those with asthma or allergies), and that the program was able to find ways to make several houses safer (i.e., adding stair rails or replacing unsafe basement stairs). Echoing these comments, participants also described that their homes were safer because of the construction work, and that they anticipated a positive impact on their health. At the city level, one team member cited a weather event where Dubuque had 2.5 inches of rain. He explained that he was anticipating his voicemail would be full of messages from residents with complaints of water in their basements, but instead he said, “I had zero.” He attributed the reduction in water intrusion to the improvements made to homes and the infrastructure projects completed along the Bee Branch Creek.

Financial benefits: Participants also described the financial benefits of participating in the program. Participants reported increased property values, decreased utility bills, and the ability to complete projects that otherwise would have taken much longer to finish with a limited income. One team member reiterated this benefit, pointing out that home rehabilitation was provided at no cost to the LMI participants.

Home Advocacy Benefits

The VNA home advocates provide personalized support to participants, tailoring their resource
recommendations to the individual needs of each individual or family. BBHH team members and participants agreed that the home advocates provided useful information about resources in their area. Specifically, one participant shared that the home advocate helped them get Medicaid for their children, while another proudly announced that they quit smoking with the help of the resources provided by the home advocate. Advocates also provided specific examples of resource referrals that benefitted participants, including childcare at the Northeast Iowa Community College, dental care through the Donated Dental Program, and financial management courses through Iowa State University Extension. Additionally, several participants reported that their home advocate helped them solve other home-related problems.

Reflecting on what the BBHH team provides holistically, one team member said, “Not only are they talking to the residents about the program, but then they’re expanding it to any and everything that the homeowner or tenants might need—which could be education, could be transportation, could be a job, could be getting medicine or medical help.”

**Participant Experience**

Whereas most participants reported having a positive overall experience with the BBHH program, others described issues or challenges they encountered in the process. Some participants, for example, reported having unsatisfactory experiences with their contractor and issues with the work done on their home. Problems ranged from a lack of communication and timeliness of the projects to poor quality of workmanship and incomplete projects. Some participants even reported that the contractors asked them for additional money above and beyond the contract.

**The City of Dubuque Bee Branch Creek Restoration Project**

As described in the IWA proposal to HUD, “IWA includes projects to address significant unmet infrastructure needs in Coralville, Dubuque, and Storm Lake.” Each urban infrastructure project was selected to reduce flooding impacts in LMI communities in Iowa. To describe the progress of infrastructure projects, this section integrates progress reports from the named entities and other online resources (cited below).

**City of Dubuque Bee Branch Creek Restoration Project**

**Infrastructure funds** Total budget increased to $24.8M during Year 4  
**Status:** In progress

The Dubuque Bee Branch Creek watershed project includes infrastructure projects to improve sewer capacity and “complete the restoration of the Bee Branch Creek.” On March 31, 2020, Jeff Geerts (IEDA) notified the IWA partners that a portion of IWA grant funds for three rural watersheds would be reallocated for “additional stormwater practices in the Bee Branch watershed of Dubuque where practices have already been engineered and completed environmental review.” This amendment reflects a budget increase of $1,768,295 for this restoration project. In a May 2020 email update of Year 4 progress, the City of Dubuque reported that one of their three outstanding projects had been completed (17th Street Storm Sewer Improvements Project), with a second in progress (Upper Bee Branch Railroad Culverts Project) and the third in the bidding process (Kaufmann Avenue Storm Sewer Improvements Project). This third project was made possible with the additional funds from the IWA budget reallocation.

---

1 https://iowawatershedapproach.org/resources/ghost/dubuquebee-branch-creek/

Copyright CEA 2020
Appendices

Appendix A- BBHH Program Participant Interviews: Year 4

Introduction
This is a summary of interviews with participants in the Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) program carried out by the Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) during the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020. This was the fourth and fifth of a series of interviews to be conducted every six months with BBHH participants whose home improvement projects were completed at least six months prior to the interview. For a full description of the program, the role of the CEA in evaluating the program, and development of the interview protocol and process, consult the Summary of Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program Participant Interviews submitted to BBHH Resiliency Coordinator, Sharon Gaul, in May 2018.

Methods
The BBHH home advocates contacted the six program participants in November 2019 and 45 additional program participants in April 2020 for whom construction had been completed in the previous six to 12 months to provide them with information about the opportunity to participate in an interview. A list of interested participants was shared with the CEA including their contact information and availability. The CEA was able to connect with and interview three participants in the second half of November 2019 and 10 participants in the second half of April 2020. Among these 13 participants, nine of them were individual homeowners, three of them were tenants, and one was a landlord.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to ensure accurate representation of the feedback provided by participants. One CEA team member analyzed each of the interview transcripts and wrote the summary below. Because the interviews were conversational and relatively brief, the report summarizes participants’ responses by question, but also honors their words by including direct quotes throughout. Additionally, they has been used as a singular pronoun in the summary below to improve readability and ensure anonymity of the participants.

Findings
Similar to past reports summarizing the feedback from BBHH program participants, most clients were generally satisfied with the work that was done on their homes and would recommend the program to others. These respondents expressed sincere appreciation for the work that was done on their homes and indicated that the construction projects improved their quality of life, increased their sense of safety, and even provided them with health benefits. However, several participants also described experiencing problems with their contractors, which ranged from a lack of communication and timeliness of the projects to poor quality of workmanship and projects that were left incomplete. A small handful of participants also highlighted the helpfulness of the home advocates and shared individual success stories in response to the resources they provided.

What was the best part of working with the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?
In reflecting on the "best part" of participating in the BBHH program, participants primarily
described the impact of the various home improvements that were done and the quality and attentiveness of the project staff. Note that some participants gave multiple answers to this question; therefore, the sum of responses is greater than 13.

**Home improvements:** A large majority of respondents (n=9) indicated that physical improvements to their home were the best part of the program. These participants named various projects that were done such as installing new furnaces, windows, driveways, sidewalks, and roofs, as well as other repair work like tuckpointing. Clients described a range of impacts from these improvements. Some noted the financial benefit of the work completed, while others commented on the improved safety of their home. For example, one participant explained that their home was “becoming dilapidated over time [and] becoming a health hazard, not just to me but to the neighbors.” This person went on to describe how the home improvements provided them healthier and safer quality of life.

**Project staff:** Seven participants spoke highly of the staff that worked with them during the project. The participants explained in different ways that the staff members were easy to work with and friendly. For example, one participant said, “I think the best part was the people.” They continued by describing the staff as helpful, cooperative, and that they had the participants’ best interest in mind. To that effect, they stated, “They really watched out for what was being done. They listened.” Two other participants further emphasized the quality of the staff’s communication skills. One of them stated, “They were very good at communicating, I would say upfront. Anytime we had questions, they followed up quickly. Even if I had questions about different programs, they were always very helpful.”

**Other:** One participant did not report anything particularly positivity about their involvement, even though they indicated that the program itself is “good.” They explained that they did not have positive experience with the contractors who did not finish their jobs.

**What problems if any have you encountered working with the BBHH project?**

Similar to feedback from participants in previous interview series, the most frequently cited problems by participants were related to the contractors that were assigned to work on their homes. While the number, type, and severity of the problems they experienced varied, most participants (n=10) did report issues with the contractors and/or the work they performed. Meanwhile, two respondents reported having no problems whatsoever with the program, and one participant did not respond to this question because the construction work was only done on the apartment building in which they live, but not specifically inside their unit. The following themes emerged based on the responses from the 10 participants who reported encountering specific challenges.

**Quality of work:** Six participants indicated that they were not satisfied with the quality of work that was done by the contractors. Two of them said the construction crew actually caused additional problems while doing the work. For example, one explained that the crew “screwed up my bathroom. They had to tear my whole bathtub out and redo my whole bathroom because they screwed up, and they weren’t friendly about it. The Bee Branch had to step in and take over.” Another respondent reported that the crew in charge of repairing the sidewalk did not do it “officially,” and added that they appeared to be fine with making errors because they were still being “paid for” their “mistakes.” Another participant summarized their thoughts about the quality of work completed by stating, “some jobs were done properly, some jobs weren’t.” Even after the project was complete, one participant indicated that they still had water in the basement.
Communication: Four participants reported some sort of communication issues with their contractors. Two of them indicated that the contractors did not inform them on time about when they would arrive and what kind of preparation needed to take place in advance of beginning construction. Another participant mentioned that the contractor did not “clarify” the contract. When the participant wanted to take time to read the contract, they “felt like [they were] being pressured all the time,” as if the contractor were rushing them to “just sign it and get rid of – let’s get it done.” Another participant reported a similar issue with their contractor when they wanted to learn more about what kind of work they were going to do. Still another commented about how the contractor’s workload appeared to negatively affect their ability to get the job done. They said, “the contractor had too many jobs going on all at once that he didn’t know [who] was getting what done and to whom.” For one participant, instead of communication issues with their contractor, they experienced a lack of communication from their landlord who was not at all engaged in the process.

Timeliness of the work: Four participants indicated that it took more than 6 months to complete the construction, which was supposed to have been finished in 60 days or less. For example, one participant said, “they started something, and they wouldn’t come back and finish it for a long time.” In fact, three participants mentioned that there was still outstanding work that needed to be finished by the contractors. Two of them said they reached out their contractor multiple times and were still waiting for them to complete the work.

Financial concerns: Two participants described that the contractors asked them for additional money above and beyond the contract. In one case, the participant said that the construction team asked them for money to cover the expenses of the extra work they had to do, which was the result of their own mistakes. The participant indicated that the BBHH program staff resolved the issue and they did not have to pay out of pocket. Another participant indicated that they had issues with borrowing money from the credit union because “Bee Branch put a lien on [their house].”

Other: Some participants had challenges or problems that were unique to their experience. For example, while one participant was reportedly satisfied with the quality of the work done, they were upset that the contractor wanted use “cheaper quality” materials instead of what they wanted. Another participant, who lived in an apartment complex, shared that the construction process was not convenient because they had to share their limited parking space with the construction team. Finally, one participant described at length the issues they had with one sub-contractor, who allegedly stole a box of electrical wiring they had in their home. The participant explained that they confronted the individual who claimed that it was his. Regarding this individual and the situation in general, they said, “it made me very uncomfortable.”

In summary, most issues experienced with respect to the BBHH program centered around the contractors. Two participants specifically suggested that the program would likely have be much better if they, as clients, were able to choose the contractors.

In what ways were your interactions with the home advocate helpful?
While not all participants recalled having interactions with a home advocate, those that did described receiving a variety of assistance. For example, five of them indicated that their home advocate provided useful information about the resources available in their area. Four participants reported that their home advocate helped them in solving home-related problems. One participant shared that the home advocate helped them to get Medicaid for their children, while another proudly announced that they had quit smoking with the help of the resources provided by the home advocate.
Ratings of Program Components

The participants were asked to use a five-point scale (where five was the most positive and one was the most negative) to indicate how they felt about four different aspects of the program. As seen in Table 1, which is presented in descending order of average rating, participants rated most aspects of the program very positively, apart from the ease of working with contractors.

Table 1. Ratings of program components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How helpful was it to work with Home Advocates?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it to complete the application?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely would you be to recommend this program to friends or neighbors?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it to work with contractors on construction work?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One respondent rated 4.5. This was classified as 4 for this table and 4.5 used for mean and SD calculations.

**One respondent rated 2.5. This was classified as 2 for this table and 2.5 used for mean and SD calculations.

In several instances, participants elaborated on their rating by offering examples or additional clarification. For example, one participant commented that, even though the application process was not hard, it took some time to complete it. Another participant suggested that the application process might be easier if it was online and added that paperwork “just takes [an] extra step.”

Regarding the ease of working with contractors, one participant who rated this item negatively explained that “trying to get him to do the work was the biggest problem.” They added that, because of this, they would not have worked with them if they were given the option. In contrast, another participant who rated working the contractors as “very easy” said, “he even did extra work for us in the basement and didn't charge for it. So, we were just thrilled with him.”

As indicated above, the participants’ experiences with the contractors varied greatly, which also influenced the extent to which they would recommend this program to others. For example, four of them indicated that they would recommend the program itself, but they would not recommend the contractors that they had. Two participants offered words of caution for those that might consider participating in the program. One said, “I would recommend it to secure their home and waterproof their home but be prepared that nothing goes fast.” Meanwhile, the other suggested that future participants fully understand their rights and options as participants in the program in order to get the most out of it. Finally, two participants shared that they already recommended the program to their friends or neighbors, and that they have since applied to the program.

In what ways do you think participating in the BBHH project will have an impact on your life?

The two most significant impacts that participants reported were an increase in their sense of safety and quality of life, as well as the financial benefit of having the work completed on their homes.

Safety and quality of life: Four participants indicated that the project improved their overall quality of life by removing the water in their basement. Five participants also noted that the work done to their homes made them feel much safer. For example, one participant explained the different safety hazards prior to the work being done: “Our chimney was falling down, and the bricks were falling...
around our house. And, that was a huge concern for me with the kids.” They also described being concerned about the squirrels that were “running up and down the attic floor” and “chewing into the wires.” Since the completion of the project they described how their family has felt much safer and comfortable in their home.

Four participants particularly mentioned that the project will positively impact their health. For example, one of them indicated that “the whole thing has really brought a lot of peace of mind for me, knowing that it’s healthy for us to live in.” Another participant said the program “is just totally asset to the human life that’s living here.”

Financial: Three participants indicated that the project increased the property value. While one of them said that they will be able to keep the property rented, another said, “if I ever decide to go sell my house, what they have done has definitely increased the value of my home.” Two participants anticipated experiencing the financial benefit in the form of decreased utility bills because of the new windows or furnace. Finally, two participants indicated that participating in this program allowed them to accomplish projects that would have otherwise taken them much longer to finish because of their limited income.

The lone participant who did not report any positive impact of the program instead said that the construction work caused “a lot of stress.” As noted earlier, they still had water in the basement, which they had to pay out of pocket to fix.

Do you have any other thoughts about the BBHH you would like to share?

In closing, nine participants took the opportunity to offer positive comments about the program. One participant said, “I think it’s a great program. I just wish that more people would take more advantage of it.” Similarly, participant stated, “I just highly recommend it. We’ve recommended it to other landlords, homeowners, we’re big advocates of it.” Even one of the participants who reported having several issues during the process said, “I’d personally like to thank the city of Dubuque and the taxpayers for this.” In contrast, one participant reiterated that the program itself good, but that the issue lies with the contractors who are “ripping people off.”

Three participants made specific recommendations to the program staff. One of them said, “I wish they could have told all 10 tenants in my building what was going to be going on as they went along. [...] We did hear banging or something, so we’d go look and see they’d be working on the side or working on the roof. That’s all we knew.” Another participant suggested that the work being done be recorded somehow. To that end, they stated, “I don’t know if that’s a privacy issue, but I think this should be on camera. At some point I think somebody needs to make [the contractors] own just what they’re [responsible] for.” Still another participant suggested that the program be advertised more since “not a lot of people know about it.” Finally, one participant reiterated the fact that there was still outstanding work that hasn’t been done.
Appendix B- BBHH Program Team Interviews: Year 4

Introduction and Methods

The following is a summary of eight interviews with Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program (BBHH) team members. The purpose of the interviews was to document the processes of the BBHH and inform program improvements. Interview protocols were designed during Year 1 in collaboration with Sharon Gaul, Resiliency Project Coordinator for the City of Dubuque and were minimally modified subsequent rounds of interviews. All eight interviews were conducted via Zoom videoconferencing by Center for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) team members during July-August 2020. BBHH staff provided the CEA with contact information to invite eight BBHH team members to take part in an interview and all eight agreed to be interviewed. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and then coded and analyzed by members of the CEA team.

The same general interview protocol was used for all interviews. As in the Year 3 evaluation report, when possible in this report, responses are aggregated to provide anonymity for the respondents. All interviewees were advised, however, that their anonymity could not be guaranteed because of the small number of respondents and potentially unique responses based on their varied roles in the program. The two Home Advocates (HAs) are the only two people who serve the same role in the program, and in all cases their input is recorded as either “both of the HAs” or “one HA” to provide them with some level of anonymity. A few questions were asked only of sub-groups, as indicated in the interview protocol (see Appendix B.I).

Interviewees were invited to review this summary and make corrections or additions before the summary was considered final and submitted to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Role with the BBHH

Team members for BBHH span three organizations and five roles. In each section below, CEA describes roles and experiences in participant interactions. Role descriptions are described based on participant responses.

Intake Specialist

Intake specialists are primarily responsible for administrative duties, such as income verification and processing applications. After approving applications, intake specialists help set up inspections and prepare bids and contracts. As one intake specialist reported, “An average day for me would be verifying applications, just processing applications, making sure they’re eligible for the program. Reaching out to people who may be interested in the program, that kind of thing.” The role of the intake specialist has stayed similar to previous years, however, one intake specialist reported taking on more responsibilities and roles from the previous year due to staff changes, “We’ve had some like staff changes, so with that new responsibilities came and yeah my role has changed a little bit over time. More responsibility, stuff like that.” When asked for more details on what responsibilities were added, she reported, “She [previous staff] did like environmental and change orders. Yeah just little jobs that I didn’t do before, I now have.” The other intake specialist who recently started last summer reported that, “most of everything’s been in place, they had all the kinks worked out. So, it’s been pretty easy.”

Both intake specialists reported that program participants generally understand their role in the program. For example, one intake specialist said, “Yeah we explain it right from the beginning so they know what to expect. And a lot of times these people have applied over a year ago, so they’ll be
calling in between every few months or whatever just to see where they’re at in the list and we do a little more chit chatting. A lot of times their neighbors already have had this done so they’re kind of familiar with how the process works.”

Intake specialists mainly interact with participants over the phone gathering their information and answering any questions about the program. Participants also come into the office with their paperwork to get copies made and drop off qualifying information, however, COVID-19 has dramatically limited these face to face interactions with participants.

When asked to describe any difficult interactions with participants, one intake specialist described occasional reluctance to provide social security information. They also said, “But there hasn’t really been any issues or anything. Nothing that we can’t overcome.” The other intake specialist described a tenant that was being difficult because they didn’t like the contractors, but in the end, “All she ever wanted was for someone to sit and listen to her.”

**Inspector Rehab Specialist**

The role of the inspector rehab specialist has stayed the same from the last year. She said she does primarily all of the initial inspections, writes the scope of work, puts them out for bid, meets with contractors for bid tours, and does contractor clearance and Tier II environmentals. She is the person contractors call if they have questions during construction and confirms when the work is completed. She also meets with property owners and answers any questions they might have. As she described herself, “I’m very hands on.”

Her typical interactions with participants involve discussing their needs during the inspection process, such as, “Where do they experience the most water coming in, what is affected when it does come in, and walk through the property and talk with them as to what they feel they want addressed or what they’re anticipating for us to address.” She reported that participants understand her role in the program, “Maybe not at first but by the time we meet a couple of times and the work is underway, I think they have a good understanding of what I’m doing yeah.”

The main difficulty with participants she has encountered is discomfort with contractors, “Well we have had a couple of participants who, because we have to take the low bidder, they’re maybe being assigned not their first choice of contractor which always makes the jobs more difficult because they’re uncomfortable for whatever reason with the contractor who’s going to be spending a lot of time at their property and doing work for them.” This often means that she needs to be more present during the work and in some cases, it has meant switching out personnel. But for the most part, she reported they can work through it and finish the work.

**Staff Supervisor**

The administrative staff supervisor role has not changed over the years and he is mostly involved when there are issues going on and attends progress meetings. He doesn't have direct contact with participants, unless there have been issues. For example, one issue came up when a participant complained that the work wasn’t being appropriately done. He met with the owner and contractor to resolve the issue and they moved it forward to complete the work.

**Grant Administrator/Project Manager**

This position has changed slightly from the previous year, as the role was primarily grant administrator but now encompasses project management as well due to staff changes. This role involves working with the rehab inspector on scheduling, bid tours, inspections, and throughout the
construction. On the grant administrator side, he still works with the intake specialists, handles expenses, and does the draws for housing and infrastructure.

He has direct contact with participants mainly through contract signing, "I typically do the contract signing and I try to get out there either to a bid tour or to an inspection and meet them at that time as well. And then certainly when the project is over and the completion, try to reach out and be part of the final walk through.”

He reported that participants get an introduction to his role if he meets them, but, “probably after that, I think they forget who I am and they work a lot closer with obviously the contractor and the inspector and I’m kind of just in the background.”

When asked about difficult interactions, he reported that the difficulty mainly comes after the project is closed and something wasn’t done exactly how the participants wanted. However this isn’t a major issue, “I think for the most part, once we approve their application and we get the program rolling and we get out there and we do some work and we’re on site and that for the most part we don’t have those problems.” Other issues involved the length of time it can take to complete a project due to the weather and more recently, COVID-19. He described how difficult COVID has been on their work due to being shut down for eight to ten weeks doing no construction. He reported, “There were quite a few projects that were kind of delayed and we were right in the middle of them, which was unfortunate.”

**Home Advocates**

The HAs said their role has largely been unchanged from last year, however COVID has affected their ability to do in-person home visits. One HA described the challenges that come with not being in the home, such as making it more difficult to actually see any issues with the home to bring up, “From there, I can visually see it, I can bring it up with them, but when I don’t see it, it’s hard for me to do that.” Another HA said, “It was pretty steady up until COVID happened, and then things really slowed down with new clients because, of course, we couldn’t do the inspections and all of that for a while, so it was basically touching bases with the other active clients that I had.”

Now allowed to conduct home visits if the participant is comfortable, HAs reported wearing PPE, masks, social distancing, and asking health screening questions. They also pass along new information and resources related to COVID to families, “Because the resources just all pretty much changed as far as what their needs were, and some of the families had lost their jobs or they were on a temporary type of layoff and they just needed some guidance as far as what they needed to do and there were all new resources popping up in the community as well. So, it was just helping them get connected to those kinds of things.”

Participants generally understand their role in the program, especially after an introductory phone call or a brief explanation. Sometimes participants get confused with the HA association with the Visiting Nurses Association and not the city, but HAs just explain and overall participants seem to have a good understanding.

Difficulties come up when participants have negative experiences with the program or the work isn’t done up to their expectations. But for the most part, HAs report mostly positive interactions with participants, “As far as the clients themselves, I really haven’t had issues. They’ve all been very good about meeting with me.”
Improvements and Resources

Team members reported how the program was supporting individuals through the two components of the program: structural improvements and home advocacy. As could be expected given the purpose of the grant, structural improvements were fairly consistent in using strategies inside and outside of the home to prevent the accumulation of moisture. On the other hand, there was a breadth of ways that HAs were able to support community members based on their family's needs. In addition, team members identified opportunities for Dubuque to expand services.

Structural Improvements

All interviewees were asked to describe the most common resources that were going into the project homes this year. The following items were mentioned, presented here in order of frequency.

- **Sump pumps in the basement (5)**
- **Gutters, downspouts, and landscaping to move water away from the structure (3):** In their responses, team members specifically mentioned using landscaping, gutters, downspouts, a “French drain system,” and sloping sidewalks to move water away from the house. Specifically, they work to move water to the street or an alleyway since houses are built so close together.
- **Drain tile work and drainage systems (3):** Respondents described interior tile work in basements to address water issues.
- **Tuckpointing (2):** One respondent said, “We have a lot of limestone foundations that haven’t been maintained in 75 years or more, so a lot of tuckpointing.”
- **New roof (2)**
- **Exhaust fans (1):** This respondent described that the exhaust fans remove moisture and only operate when needed because of built in sensors.
- **Water heaters and furnace (1)**
- **Radon testing and mitigation (1)**

Three respondents described flood prevention measures collectively. Additionally, as the grant budget and parameters allow, two team members described that the team would help to address other outstanding electrical and plumbing issues. One team member characterized the latter saying, “Just basically fixing up things that’s been a bit broken for many years with the area they’d live in.”

Social Resources

The home advocates were asked to describe what resources participants have been most interested in or need the most. At least one of the HAs mentioned the following list of resources (with 2 in parentheses if mentioned by both HAs):

- **COVID-19 education and resources (2):** Both HAs described that COVID-19 increased clients’ needs for resources (COVID-19 education, rent support, food resources) and opened doors for resources that might not be available otherwise (rent support).
- **Food resources (2):** Both HAs described an increased need for food resources. Specifically, one advocate said that there has been an increased need for these resources with kids being home from school. Also, she said that there have been some programs to distribute food, but “not nearly what it usually is in the summer.”
- **Process for filing for unemployment:** One HA described the importance of understanding “what’s going on in the community.” She described knowing the changes in the process in filing for unemployment due to COVID-19 restrictions so that she can support clients that experience challenges.
• **Dental care:** One HA described helping people find affordable dental care locally.

• **Heating assistance and weatherization:** While one HA said, “We do a lot of heating assistance.” She went on to describe the need for and barriers to getting weatherization. This will be discussed more in the Additional Needed Resources section.

• **Assistance for paying bills:** One HA described finding resources to help people pay their bills.

**Healthy Homes Workshop**
In addition to their usual duties as home advocates, the HA team worked with the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children to facilitate a Healthy Homes Workshop. One advocate described a full-day workshop for 40-50 people who to home visits (i.e., Parents as Teachers, city staff, ECIA). Presentations centered around safety in home visits and HUD Healthy Homes Principles\(^1\). She said the workshop was “well received” and “people really wanted us to have another one.”

**Additional Needed Resources**
When reflecting on resources that clients seemed to need which are not currently available in Dubuque, five of participants described repairs to the home that did not qualify for the program because they were not directly related to flooding. One HA said that she’ll be sure to share any outstanding need with the home inspector so that any qualifying issues can be addressed. The inspector also agreed that they “take on some of those things” but that certain items are not within the scope of the grant. Items that often do not qualify were siding, windows (unless they had lead paint on them), doors, and furnaces (unless they had been damaged by flood water). The HAs both described that there is a conflict with the name of the program and the fact that they cannot address Healthy Homes safety issues with the grant funds.

Both HAs described limitations this winter with accessing AmeriCorp Green Iowa weatherization services. One advocate described that the person assigned to Dubuque for this program was reassigned to Des Moines in November 2019 and never replaced. She described that there is a program through the Community Action Agency, but that group has a long waiting list and stricter requirements to participate.

Two team members described that clients are interested in big landscaping projects like retaining walls or berms to address water issues. However, one team member said that projects like that are “hard to maybe sometimes justify because it sits too far away from the house.” Additionally, individual team members described an interest or need for additional funding to support home repairs, securing local dental services, tree trimming, and opportunities to work with neighbors that are outside of the program since the houses are so close together.

**Impact on Participants’ Lives**
These complementary projects are designed to help make clients’ structures and community connections more resilient. Across components, team members have observed a reduction in water inundating homes, improved health, and greater community connections. With respect to both components of the program, one team member emphasized the balance between celebrating the improvements they’ve made with a drive to “do better and continue to figure out more resources ...for everybody.”

**Effectiveness of Structural Improvements**
When considering how the structural component of the program has impacted participants’ lives,
all eight team members characterized the value of this work with seven providing specific examples. The most common response focused on the reduction of water intrusion. Four team members specifically focused on the fact that there was no water or less water in peoples’ homes. At the city level, one of these team members cited a rain event the previous week where Dubuque had 2.5 inches of rain. He explained that he was expecting his voicemail to be full of messages with people reporting water in their basements, but he said, “I had zero.” He attributed the reduction in water intrusion to the improvements made to individual homes and the infrastructure projects completed along the Bee Branch Creek. Complementary, another team member described that people are using their basement since it is no longer being inundated.

Both HAs described health benefits for clients with the reduction of moisture in their homes. Specifically, one advocate said there were improvements for clients with asthma or allergies. One HA said, “[The clients] noticed a difference overall in their health...I think overall, it has helped.” Individual team members described additional benefits. One team member described that there have been improvements to the structure which make the structure safer. She described replaced stairs and added handrails. One team member emphasized the increased resilience of the structures. She said, “All of these things need continuous improvement, but I would say the majority of people enjoy the improvements in their home....” One described that this program is an opportunity for the city to “reengage our community and connect with actual people ... An opportunity to create trust.” She said that’s important given that there is a disconnect between people and the government at this point in time across the country. In addition to these other benefits, one team member highlighted that “it’s all free [to the client], so they didn’t have to pay for it because a lot of these people are very low income.”

A couple of team members specifically described that participants are “pleased with the work being done” or “very appreciative.”

**Effectiveness of Home Advocacy**

When considering how the home advocacy component of the program impacted participants’ lives, all eight team members characterized this work as important with five providing specific examples. In the most common response, half of the team members described that this is an opportunity to connect clients with resources they may not have previously known about. Specifically, the HAs described providing resources that people can use in the future, and one HA described the benefit of connecting them with people in the community “so that they know who to call” when an issue arises. In terms of impact, one team member said, “From the ones that I have heard from, it’s been a great positive impact. They’ve taken advantage of services that are available.” One team member specifically mentioned that the HAs “can be reached throughout the entire construction process ... [and] up to a year after that.” He said, “The contact availability for them is really special, and I know that it’s helped a tremendous amount of people that are in the program.”

The HAs provided some specific examples highlighting the way clients have used resources.

- Childcare that is available for some programs at the Northeast Iowa Community College
- Dental care through the Donated Dental Program
- Money management courses through Iowa State University Extension

Two team members considered the implications of BBHH at the community level. One team member described the benefit of “gathering all those community challenges that the participants might be having” which will allow the community to provide more effective resources. Another said that the HAs were being recognized as a way for the community to support community equity. He said, “Not only are they talking to the residents about the program, but then they’re expanding it to
any and everything that the homeowner or tenants might need—which could be education, could be transportation, could be a job, could be getting medicine or medical help.”

**BBHH Logistical Considerations**

In order to provide formative feedback, CEA asked team members to reflect on communication, challenges, and recommendations from the program from each person’s perspective. Challenges centered on a difference in perception with respect to communication, insufficient numbers of contractors for the work, and delays (both consistent and related to COVID-19).

**Internal communication**

As in years past, there was a disconnect between perceptions of communication between the HAs and other team members. All six team members from ECIA and the City of Dubuque characterized positive communication among all team members, and two team members reflected that communication has gotten better with time. On the other hand, the HAs described moderate success with communication but also described some ongoing issues. Related to success, one advocate said that they had resolved previous issues with coordinating scheduling with home visits. However, both advocates expressed a continued desire to connect with other team members about the status or ongoing issues with projects. One advocate said that knowing which clients are having difficulties with the program could help her follow-up or know why someone may not be returning her calls. After the last report/interview there was one meeting held to discuss communication issues which improved communication with scheduling the inspections, but the other communication issues remain.

Five team members (across the city and HAs) reported how staff member changes and COVID-19 have disrupted communication in the past and currently. Three team members described that staff changes have created situations where the team has had to redefine communication. Additionally, in the midst of the interviews, Sharon Gaul, Resilience Coordinator, resigned her position. In an interview after Gaul gave notice, one of the advocates noted that Gaul was the person with the best understanding of the home advocacy role. Additionally, two team members described that COVID-19 has changed the character of communication from in-person to remote forms of communication since the teams have been working from home. Despite this, one team member said, “We’re making the best of it, and we’ve come through [barriers related to COVID-19], and hopefully we’ll finish strong here in the last little over a year.”

**Communication with contractors**

Five team members were mostly positive about communication with contractors over the past year. Four team members described that communication with contractors has been effective. Team members described having consistent communication with this group. However, individual respondents also identified two challenges related to contractors for the project. One team member described that often contractors are not reachable, so team members need to follow up to check-in about projects. Another team member said that communication between the team and contractors has been good but that communication between clients and contractors can be difficult. This person described that often clients get frustrated when they do not get a prompt response from the contractor about their project.

**Challenges and Recommendations for Program Improvement**

When reflecting on challenges with the program and recommendations for improvement, five team members reiterated (sometimes multiple times) the need for more contractors to facilitate this process. When describing this challenge, one team member said, “If we could figure out a way to get
more contractors so that we can have more people working at one time, getting more units done.” She said that only having four contractors working on this project makes the process take longer. Another described that they had an event at the beginning to introduce contractors to the project. He said that there were 130 contractors there that night. However, when it comes down to it, very few actually bid. He described several reasons why contractors have chosen not to participate including not liking rehab work, not wanting to work directly with landowners or tenants, issues getting bonded, and busyness given the fact that Dubuque has a lot of work to choose from.

Three team members emphasized challenges related to the timeline of this project. Two cited how the work slowed down because of the COVID-19 restrictions and clients having the virus. Both of these team members described how precarious; one said, “I don’t know where we’re going to be doing down the road here, if we’re going to shut down again or what…” The third team member said that moving projects through the pipeline was time consuming even before the virus. This team member described that they’ve made the process more efficient through the years, but the amount of work and the weather during construction seasons have made progress slow. One team member wishfully reflected, “…and if we could ever extend the length of the grant….”

Both HAs reiterated communication with the other team members as their primary challenge. In addition to the comments described in the section above related to team changes, one advocate said that other team members may not fully understand their role in the project “because they have a whole different agenda than what we do.” One HA recommended having smaller meetings with other team members including the inspector to share updates, perspectives, and ideas. One advocate offered to serve as a liaison for challenging clients.

Two team members expressed recommendations to expand the eligibility area. Both team members described that there are homes that experience flooding that could benefit from the program, but “they’re just in the wrong end of the town or just outside of the area that was designated to be in the program.”

Individual respondents described challenges or recommendations worth noting. These included clients misunderstanding the role of the program (“This isn’t a rehab program where we’ve come to make the house pretty”), securing additional funding to address Healthy Homes Principles, more flexible income guidelines (“We’ve had some people come that are just outside the guidelines, and you know, they could use the help”), and maintaining a connection with community members after their property rehabilitation is finished.

Other comments
When asked if they had any other comments about the program, three team members made positive comments about the program. These are provided in full below.

I mean I always say it’s been a great program and a great opportunity for the city of Dubuque and the residents. Something that just has never been available for ever and anything like this and happy to see those taken advantage of it.

I think it’s done a lot of good. I think there’s a lot of benefit in keeping these properties dry and the improvements so that we can keep the properties occupied, you know, some of them were really to the point where if the basements got too much more damp they really probably should not have been occupied.

I’m really happy to be part of it. It’s been really exciting, we have roughly fifteen months left maybe fourteen and we’ll see how we finish out, but I really think that the City of Dubuque is so much better off with this grant and we’ve helped a lot of people and we really want to finish strong.

One team member reiterated how COVID-19 has impacted the operations for the program. This
person said, "It’s impacted things somewhat, but I don’t think we’ve ever stopped because of it. It certainly has impacted progress."
Appendix B.I – Bee Brach Healthy Homes Team Member Interview Protocol

As part of the evaluation of the Iowa Watershed Approach Project, the Center for Evaluation and Assessment is conducting interviews with key personnel from Bee Branch and Healthy Homes Resilience Program. The purpose of the interviews is to document the processes of the Healthy Homes Program and inform program improvements.

Your responses will not be reported by name. However, because there are only a small number of team members your anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may decline to be interviewed, you may decline to answer particular questions, and you may ask that the interview not be used even after we have completed the interview.

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You may end the interview at any time. Please let me know if you need to leave or if you’d like to take a break and finish the interview later.

Findings from all interviews will be combined into one summary, and you will be given the opportunity to review the summary and make comments, corrections, or additions before the summary is considered final. When it is finalized, it will be given to the Healthy Homes Program staff for their use in planning and to the project funding institution, HUD, at which point it becomes part of the public record for the project.

In order to make this process smoother and make sure we capture your feedback accurately, we would like to tape record the interview. Is that okay with you?

Role
1. [All] How would you describe your role with the Healthy Homes Resiliency Program? [If this person has been interviewed in the past, ask “Since we last spoke, how would you say your role is different now than it was a year ago?”]
2. [All] Do you have direct contact with the Healthy Homes participants? [If no, skip to item #7]
3. [If yes to #2] Describe for me what a typical interaction with participants might be like for you.
4. [If yes to #2] Generally, do you think BBHH participants understand your role in the program? (Follow-up prompt if needed) Describe to me why you feel this way.
5. [If yes to #2] Tell me about a participant contact that you would consider particularly difficult.
   a. How did you handle this situation?
   b. Is there anything you would have done differently if you could do it over?
6. [Home Advocate] Would you say that home visits are different now than they were a year ago? [If yes] Describe for me the process of a typical home visit.
Recommended Resources
7. [All] What are the most common things that the program is doing right now for participants?
8. [Home Advocate] During the home visits, as the home advocate, you make referrals for participants to address their needs. Can you tell me which resources participants have been most interested in?
9. [All] What resources or home improvements (if any) are there that participants need or could benefit from, that are not currently available in Dubuque?

Improvement of Life for Participants
10. [All] How effective do you think the property improvements aspect of the BBHH is in improving the lives of participants?
11. [All] How effective do you think the home advocacy aspect of the BBHH is in improving the lives of participants?

BBHH Logistical Considerations
Now we are going to switch gears and talk more about your experiences working with the program, challenges, and any recommendations you might have to improve the program.
12. [All] First, how effective would you consider the communication between yourself and other team members? Your team and contractors?
13. [All] Thinking about the whole BBHH in general. What would you say are the biggest challenges, if any, you have encountered in your role in the project?
14. [All] My final question is about improving the program. What recommendations, if any, do you have that would help improve the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program?
15. [All] Do you have other comments about the program, the process – anything else at all?
Appendix C- Dubuque Meeting Summary: Year 4

Dubuque Bee Branch Healthy Homes and Flood Resilience Team Check in
11/4/19

On November 4, 2019 the Dubuque, Flood Resilience, and Center for Evaluation and Assessment teams got together to share updates and coordinate efforts.

- Teri Goodman emphasized that the social resiliency in Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA) started with Dubuque and their efforts. She said that the “innovation and intellectual property” of this work needs to stay with Dubuque. With that being said, Goodman was still interested in partnering with the University of Iowa (UI) to get additional evaluation and research about Dubuque. Craig Just, Eric Tate, and Goodman spoke with enthusiasm about the possibilities of new studies. And Just emphasized that in applied research, Dubuque needs to be an active partner in defining what the research explores. Sharon Gaul volunteered to be the point person for coordinating between UI and Dubuque for future research endeavors. Goodman said the city attorney could help provide guidance for using Dubuque’s data.

- Social dimension of resilience discussion: Tate said that social dimensions of flood resilience are new in the flood mitigation world. He described that Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is interested in learning more about this and provided an overview of the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Cost Effectiveness project and distinction from IWA. Tate said that in this case, HUD is trying to learn from the bottom up, what does resilience mean in these communities?

- Internally, the team sees the value of the home advocates in Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) project. However, participants do not report on their experiences with the advocates during interviews. Sharon Gaul provided some examples of how the advocates have supported individuals with personal issues or the Marshallese community with more systemic challenges in finding dental care.

- Craig Just floated the community connectivity platform, Signify Community, and the group discussed possibilities for Dubuque if Flood Resilience Team (FRT) of Dubuque could secure funding. He also described that FRT is interested in supporting case manager self-care training to keep case managers in the game. Just said that if these key people are not functioning well, that can really influence the process of recovery.

- Hoping that a graduate student funded on IWA can do some survey analysis: Tate asked the Dubuque team to describe the data they have for each household and define success within what they have. Cori Burbach said this could be an opportunity to explore the data to consider how they could operationalize success. Tate said the data, local testimony, and research literature could inform the research and analysis.