George Gagan & members of the Citizens Advisory Committee
Attn: Jack Tavares
Department of Planning & Development
JFK Civic Center
Lowell, MA 01852

Dear Mr. Tavares:

The Indochinese Refugees Foundation, Inc. of Lowell is a tax exempt, non-profit organization providing services to refugees living in Greater Lowell. At present, these services include English as a Second Language instruction, Employment Services and limited interpreter/translator services. Over the past four years, the Indochinese Refugees Foundation has consistently provided services to many more refugees than required by our funding source due to the many needs of our large refugee population. At the end of our 1983 contract year, we had successfully placed 121 refugees into full time, unsubsidized employment.

A major concern to us, and to many others, is the deplorable housing conditions which refugees are forced to contend with. The reasons for this are many. First, there is a shortage of low income housing in this city. Secondly, the agencies that are responsible for providing initial resettlement to refugees in Lowell are located in Boston and are without the time and resources to secure adequate housing. And thirdly, refugees lack the skills that are necessary to find and/or maintain decent apartments. The result is that the refugees provide the city's major "landlords" with bodies to occupy their substandard units and there is no...

A non-profit organization founded on January 27, 1977, under the Commonwealth of Mass., G.L., Ch. 180, Sec. 26A
vehicle for them to improve their condition.

Refugees from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam that have come to this city have come humbly, looking to their new city with hope for a new life. I feel that it is an injustice to treat these newcomers with anything but respect for having endured their recent holocaust.

I have visited many refugee residences in this city, and as a native born, "Lowellian", I am ashamed that our housing conditions are as they are. Personally and professionally, I feel that the Indochinese Refugees Foundation must take a step toward improving the condition by educating and assisting the refugee population with their housing needs. The program we are proposing for this purpose is as follows:

The Indochinese Refugees Foundation Inc will hire 3 part-time (one Cambodian, one Laotian and one Vietnamese) bilingual housing counselors. Their hours will be the equivalent of one full-time position and will be divided proportionately according to the population.

- Cambodian (55% of population) = 22 hrs./wk.
- Laos (30% of population) = 12 hrs./wk.
- Vietnamese (15% of population) = 6 hrs./wk.
- 40 hrs./wk.

The duties of the housing counselors will be as follows:

- To attend in-service training as to housing counseling, laws and advocacy
- To assist refugees and teach procedures in finding housing
- To provide communication between tenants and landlords
- Maintain periodic listings of available housing
- To do ongoing home visits to:
  1) Educate refugees, as to maintaining their homes
  2) Check for code violations
- To document and maintain records of activities
To translate a Housing handbook (see below)

The Indochinese Refugees Foundation Inc. has recruited a Lowell University intern to provide:

- Research as to housing laws, codes, tenant rights, etc.
- A handbook to be used by the housing counselors to include the above mentioned as well as information on finding an apartment, maintaining and apartment, utilities etc.
- Provide in-service training to housing counselors at the on-set of their employment

As reflected in the attached budget, the Ethnic Covenant Project, located on Corham Street, will provide the Foundation with the needed space and supervision of the counselors. Due to the growth of the Indochinese Refugees Foundation Inc., we are unable to house this program at 79 High St. The Ethnic Covenant is centrally located and has offered ample space for the program.

We look forward to your response to our request and in anticipation of your consideration, we thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol J. Keirstead
Project Director
BUDGET

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

FOR

INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

I. Administration
   a. Bookkeeper, 2 hrs./wk, 52 weeks @ $6.50/hr. $ 676.00

II. Personnel
   a. 1 Cambodian Housing Counselor
      22 hrs./wk, 52 weeks, @ $6./hr. 6,864.00
   b. 1 Laotian Housing Counselor
      12 hrs./wk., 52 weeks, @ $6./hr. 3,744.00
   c. 1 Vietnamese Housing Counselor
      6 hrs./wk., 52 weeks, @ $6./hr. 1,872.00

III. Travel
      3,000 miles x $.20/mile 600.00

IV Supplies
      Office and xerox supplies 400.00

V. Overhead
      Telephone and Rent (to Ethnic Covenant) 900.00

TOTAL BUDGET $15,056.00

VI In-Kind Contributions
   a. Administration/IRF
      Project Director 2 hrs./wk, 52 weeks, @ $9.50/hr. $ 988.00
   b. Supervision/Ethnic Covenant
      Project Director 5 hrs./wk, 52 weeks, @ $10./hr 2,600.00
   c. Training/IRF
      Project Director 20 hrs. @ $9.50/hr. 190.00

TOTAL IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS $3,778.00