

Some displaced persons will require almost no advisory services while others will seem to need almost constant attention. A project in an area with a large concentration of the latter will require more of our resources than one without such problems. There is no substitute for knowing the area the project is impacting and for knowing the people who are to be displaced. Sometimes this knowledge must go beneath the surface to special problems or needs of the displacee and sometimes gaining such knowledge may require skilled interviewing and repeated contacts.

When working with the displacee, the relocation advisor should:

- Develop a rapport with them in order to gain their confidence. This will undoubtedly improve the chances for a successful relocation.
- Determine those special items that help the displacee in their daily routine. These may include ramps, wider doorways, main floor laundry, lifts, grab rails, special sanitary facilities, etc.
- Determine any family or friends who the displacee may want to be involved in the relocation activities.
- Determine if the displacee needs any special materials from the Iowa Department of Transportation or other agency. This may include braille, signing, translating, audio version of the brochure, etc.

The relocation process can be very stressful for everyone, but perhaps more so for the elderly and the relocation advisor needs to be emotionally prepared to work with them. The advisor must be willing and able to do whatever is necessary to assist in the relocation, but also recognize there are times that the answer must be “no” when the request is unreasonable. The relocation advisor needs to remain objective and empathetic, but not become sympathetic.

Doing what is necessary may include spending a great deal of time listening to the displacee and thus learning what their needs are. The advisor may spend a good amount of time coordinating with other agencies, family, friend or even medical specialists to ensure the displacee’s needs are met.

## **PREVENTING SUBSEQUENT OCCUPANCY**

Many times the displaced tenant will have moved prior to the Iowa Department of Transportation receiving possession from the owner of the property. In these instances, it is desirable to acquire the owner’s right to rent the property in order to prevent having to relocate a subsequent tenant. This will ensure that the owner will not suffer a loss in rental income before giving up possession of the property.

Tenants are ordinarily encouraged to remain in occupancy of the property until possession is given by the owner. However, when there is a scarcity of available rentals, it is best to get the tenant moved so that they can get on with their lives and the vacant displacement property can be sold or demolished in a timely manner upon receipt of possession.

The relocation advisor will bring these situations to the attention of the Relocation Supervisor and will discuss current rental terms and conditions in order to arrive at a fair amount to offer to the owner. Generally this amount is the current rental amount plus a reasonable allowance for utilities. It is reasonable to assume that utility costs on a vacant property will be less than when occupied (lower temperature, water and electricity usage, etc.) The agreement should stipulate that the owner pay utilities to ensure that the integrity of the property remains intact prior to giving possession.

If the tenant has been given a "Notice of Intent to Acquire" and vacates the property prior to the initiation of negotiations, the Relocation Advisor should contact the landlord and execute the agreement.