

**Cumberland County Community Development Program
2014 CDBG Planning Program Application
Community Cover Page**

Project Title Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Delivery Model

Lead Community Town of Harpswell

Additional Communities _____

Contact Information Name Carol Eyerman, Town Planner

Address PO Box 39 Harpswell, ME 04079

Email ceyerman@town.harpswell.me.us Tel (207) 833-5771 x
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Amount of CDBG Funds Requested \$3,500

Total Estimated Project Cost \$6,000

Name of Authorized Official Elinor Multer, Chair, Board of Selectman

Signature of Authorized Official 

2014 Planning Application Questions

1. **Describe the community problem or needs you wish to address with Community Planning funds. - 35 Points.**

a. **Describe the scope, magnitude, and severity of the problem.**

The Town of Harpswell is seeing its number of volunteers who provide emergency medical services (EMS) dwindle to such levels that it is seriously impacting service in the Town. Currently, there are three independent rescue squads (not Town departments), each of which is a subdivision of one of the three fire companies serving three distinct areas or districts in the Town. Because so many first responders are working out of Town during the week, the Town has been providing dedicated paramedic coverage through a contract with Mid Coast Hospital since April of 2012.

The squads' providers are generally first responders with basic level training. One of the three squads informed the Town in mid-2013 that it might not have any trained responders in its district for the first-half of 2014. Recognizing the severity of the problem, the Town called a Special Town Meeting to expand its contract for services with Mid Coast Hospital. This contract was amended to extend coverage from 6am to 6pm on the weekdays to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, increasing in cost from \$123,000 to \$278,000 annually. In addition, the Town purchases all ambulances which are leased to the three independent entities. The Town has growing concerns about the costs it is taking on and the ability of the three volunteer organizations to provide and sustain a corps of trained volunteers. As the Town takes on these additional costs to provide EMS, it needs to look at options for delivering a cost-effective service which could result in a more coordinated system, overseen by the Town.

According to the 2010 Census, the Town has an aging population with almost 37% of the population over the age of 60. In 1990, the year-round population 65 years and older was only 16%, as reported in its Comprehensive Plan. The aging population has created greater demand for EMS.

The Town wants to review current EMS operations and structure, and develop recommendations for changing the service delivery model to one that meets future needs. While most of the review and work will be done by Town staff and will begin immediately, the Town is interested in having funding to assist the staff with consulting- related services, such as facilitation, education and implementation or transition costs, particularly in the latter stages of the planning process and particularly for conducting a public forum.

b. **Describe past efforts, if any, to address the problem.**

Recognizing the issue of fewer volunteer EMS responders being available in Harpswell, particularly during daytime hours, the Town undertook a planning process in 2011. The result of that planning process was a recommendation to implement the paramedic coverage

contract with Mid Coast Hospital. During that planning process, the Town engaged the services of a consultant who facilitated discussions that led to consensus building and the ultimate recommendation for dedicated paramedic coverage. In two years, the Town has moved from 12 hours a day/5 days a week professional paramedic coverage to 24 hours a day/7 days a week coverage. At this time, the Town has trained paramedic level responders available to respond to all EMS calls in Harpswell. Is this the most cost-effective system and structure? As the Town takes on more costs, should it also take on a greater role of coordination and supervision of services? These are two of the many questions that need to be asked and answered in this review and planning process.

c. Does the problem have specific impacts on low/moderate income households or low/moderate income neighborhoods?

A review of the current system of EMS delivery will benefit all the residents of the Town. According to the 2010 census, the Town of Harpswell has a per capita income of \$32,444. Ten percent (10%) of the families in Harpswell make \$10,000 or less with fourteen percent (14%) of Harpswell's families below the poverty level.

d. Why are CDBG funds critical to the planning activity's success?

Given budget constraints, CDBG funds are an important potential funding source. Primarily, it will be the staff that undertakes much of the review and develops the recommendations; however, the availability of grant funding will further strengthen the Town's ability to have assistance with facilitation, education of the public and possible transition or implementation aspects.

2. What is the strategy to complete the planning project? - 30 points

a. Describe the planning tasks to be undertaken

A thorough review will be done by the town staff of the existing operations of the rescue services. The review will include personnel, facilities, vehicles and equipment and will make recommendations, including the possibility of implementing a new service model.

b. Outline the project's schedule

The outlined components of a work plan are envisioned to unfold in a fairly intensive manner over the course of about six to eight months, after receipt of the grant funding.

A thorough review by Town staff will include:

- January and February 2014: Review background materials
- February 2014: Develop and analyze cost data

- March – April 2014: Meet with selected individuals and selected groups, particularly those providing the service to the Town - if a grant has been awarded, then we will use a facilitator/consultant
- May 2014: Define all options that meet Town objective(s) and analyze options - Utilize consultant
- June/July 2014: Determine which option would be optimal to deliver EMS in the future -utilize consultant
- August/October 2014: Facilitation and Public Education components, Public Forum - Utilize consultant

c. Are community partnerships established and engaged in the project?

The Town has informed and will involve officials of the rescue squads and their fire companies in this process. The Town has developed important relationships with each of the three squads providing rescue service to the Town and it will work with these squads in its effort to develop recommendations for determining the optimal new service delivery model. In addition, the Town will work closely with the squads on any future phased-in implementation of the recommendation(s).

3. Convey your community's readiness to proceed. – 30 points

a. How has the project been conveyed to community residents?

The Selectmen have been discussing the issue at Selectmen's Meetings, all of which are broadcast and widely viewed on local TV and the staff was specifically tasked with this review and analysis at a meeting in late 2013.

b. Are matching funds available for the project?

The Town staff time will be considerable and is expected to generate an in-kind match of at least \$2,500.

c. Are staff and/or consultants available to complete the project?

The Town staff has started the review process. Town staff is available to work with professional consultants.

4. Budget for project.

Planning Grant – Program Budget				
Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds	Total
Consultant Services	\$3,500			\$3,500
Advertising				
Public Meetings				
Printing				
Mailings				
Other (in-kind)		\$2,500		\$2,500
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
Total Costs	\$3,500	\$2,500		\$6,000
Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:				
<p>We anticipate up to 28 hours of professional consulting/planning services. The total amount shown above is based on a current contract the Town has for planning services billed at \$125 per hour. One public forum would cost about \$750 in total. Additional consultant time is anticipated.</p>				