

**Cumberland County Community Development Program**  
**2013 CDBG General Program Application**  
*Regional Cover Page*

**Project Title**      Cumberland County Homeless Prevention

**Regional Applicant**      Cumberland County Commissioners

**Non-Profit Entity**      The Opportunity Alliance

**Contact Information**      Name      Robin Oxenhorn

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**Program Category**

Public Infrastructure/Facility      N/A      Downtown Revitalization      N/A

Public Service      X      Housing                Economic Development      N/A

**CDBG "National Objective"**

Low/Moderate Income:      Area-Wide      X      Limited Clientele          

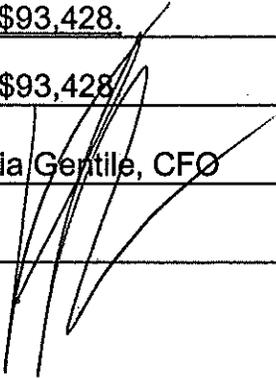
Direct Benefit:      Presumed Group      People at risk of homelessness      (Identify Group)

Slum/Blight:      Area-Wide      N/A      Spot Basis      N/A

**Amount of CDBG Funds Requested**      \$93,428.

**Total Estimated Project Cost**      \$93,428

**Name of Authorized Official**      Virginia Gentile, CFO

**Signature of Authorized Official**      

## 2013 General Application Questions

### 1. **Brief summary:**

The Opportunity Alliance (formerly PROP) has provided homeless prevention services for approximately 6 years. In that time we have served hundreds of Cumberland County residents with housing focused case management, support and resources. As we look to the future the need continues to be great. Shelters are almost always full in Portland and there are no shelter options and few emergency housing options in most of the rest of the county. The current homeless prevention program works with residents outside of Portland throughout the county with short term housing focused case management so that residents can remain stably housed in their community.

In the past 6 months we have served several hundred people in Cumberland County at risk of homelessness. We help consumers navigate the system, educate about housing options, assist with budgeting, help with filling out applications, assist with landlord negotiation, etc.

Continuing to learn how best to use resources we are proposing a shift in focus by working more directly with municipalities that have residents who are at risk of homelessness. We would build capacity by offering education and training to municipalities so that there is a more sustainable approach to the housing issues and homeless prevention work. We believe that the impact and long lasting effect of the work can be increased by working closely with specific Cumberland County General Assistance administrators. We would provide education and support to them about the housing process and how to help residents remain stably housed. We will have a regular presence in towns to work with GA administrators and town residents who need assistance with this process. We will continue to work with landlords to provide safe, affordable housing in communities.

The housing arena can be complicated and overwhelming for GA administrators and residents. Our work would help with navigation and education and help GA administrators stay current with changes to the landscape, as well as to increase their knowledge and comfort with assisting clients.

### 2. **Need for the activity:**

- a. Convey the magnitude and severity of the issue to be addressed.

Just in the last 6 months we have talked or met with at least once 178 individuals in Cumberland County about their potential or imminent homelessness and provided short term housing focused case management to 60 individuals and families. We have provided information and resources for housing options, assisted in navigating the housing system, helped advocate with landlords, General Assistance offices and housing authorities. We have provided case management to clients from Westbrook, South Portland, Gorham, Bridgton, Windham, Harrison, Falmouth, North Yarmouth, Casco, Gray, New Gloucester, Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, Sebago and Harrison.

Many people are overwhelmed by their circumstances of little or no income, difficulty finding work and the scarcity of affordable housing options. Helping people prioritize their goals, set reasonable expectations and navigate the system is critical in securing or maintaining housing in their community.

Every persons story is unique as are the resources in their community. With this grant funding we will dig deeper into all the local resources, collaborate with General Assistance and Town offices in towns and meet clients in their communities. Transportation is often a challenge for many of the consumers that we work with so meeting with clients in their home community will a big support.

- b. Identify the total number of people affected by the issue.
  - i. Out of the total number of people affected, identify the number of people from low/moderate income households.

We anticipate working with between 350 and 400 people this year based on our half year statistics.

Of all the people we have worked with in our current homelessness prevention program from July through December 2012 all of them except one was in the lowest income category. The one person who was not was in the very low category.

- c. Describe to what extent the project makes in the long-term measurable difference in the economic and social health of the region.

When housing, one of the most basic needs for people, is stable and secure individuals and families are more able to be healthy productive members in their community. Jobs are easier to secure, children are able to attend school more regularly, and overall health is better attended to. Couch surfing, living on the streets or migrating to cities with shelters does not promote healthy stability. If individuals and families are able to stay stably housed in their home communities their natural supports are available to them. All of these factors help people contribute in a more healthy and productive way to their community.

### 3. Management of the proposed activity:

- a. Define *who* will manage the grant funded project and *how* they will manage it.

The Community Services Director of The Opportunity Alliance will manage the grant funded project. The Director will oversee a full time homeless prevention case manager . The physical location of the Director is 73 Deering Street, Portland. The case manager will spend a significant portion of his/her time in Cumberland County towns working with General Assistance Administrators and town administrators and well as clients. The Director will oversee the budget, day to day operation of the program and supervision of the case manager.

- b. Explain the experience of the applicant in undertaking projects of similar complexity.

Since 2007 PROP (now The Opportunity Alliance) has managed housing focused case management programs in Cumberland County. From 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 we managed a \$600,000 ARRA funded homelessness prevention grant. In that grant cycle we had two full time case managers supporting county residents who were at risk of homelessness or were already homeless.

In 2012/2013 we received funding for a part time homeless prevention case manager from CDBG. The data management, record keeping, releases, forms and tracking has been established for this area of work.

We also have relationships with many General Assistance offices in the rest of the community services work we do with clients.

- c. Demonstrate that an ongoing commitment exists to continue the maintenance and operation of the activity or facility.

The Opportunity Alliance is very committed to this work. Every day we see the huge need for support and guidance in the people who call us, walk through our doors or are referred to us. The housing system can be overwhelming, complicated and ever changing. Having people who specialize in this area is critical to successfully helping constituents. The Opportunity Alliance is a Community Action Agency committed to its mission to help those in greatest need. Homeless prevention work is in full alignment with this mission.

TOA is also applying for a planning grant to collect outcome data of this project and our previous homeless prevention work.

#### For non-construction related projects:

- Describe the steps that have been completed or must be completed to initiate the project. These may include: community support, staffing, securing an appropriate location, marketing and networking.

Because we currently have a Homeless Prevention Program there will not be many steps to complete to initiate the project. The focus of the work will shift from office based to more community based work. We will need to reach out to municipalities in Cumberland County to further establish partnership with them. We will need to provide further education to towns about how we can best serve clients with their imminently homeless or homeless status. We will need to establish a schedule for staff to be in the town working with GA administrators and clients. We currently have a staff member who is providing homeless prevention case management and information and resources to clients. She already works closely with many GA administrators and internal and external programs.

- Describe any existing and/or potential impediments to project initiation.

Some municipalities may be more open to working with us in this capacity. Since it will be a relatively new initiative and a new way of supporting clients



Project Completed:				X			

<b>Public Service Programs</b>				
<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>CDBG Funds</b>	<b>Municipal Funds</b>	<b>Other Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Equipment</b>				
<b>Materials/Supplies</b>	\$200.			
<b>Operations</b>	\$13,711.			
<b>Salaries</b>	\$48,873.			
<b>Fringe</b>	\$19,002.			
<b>Transportation</b>	\$4,000.			
<b>Consultants</b>	\$250.			
<b>Space/Rent</b>	\$6,421.			
<b>Project Management</b>				
<b>Other – 1) insurance, telephone, staff development</b>	\$971.			
<b>Other – 2)</b>				
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$93,428.</b>			

**Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:** The budget is based on one full time housing case manager and 4 hours a week of supervision and program oversight by the Program Director. Office space for the case manager, phone and IT costs are factored in. Some travel is allowed for the case manager to do provide the work in the community at town offices and in client's homes. A small allowance for interpreters is included under consultants should the need arise.

**5. 7A) NON-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ONLY**  
Need for CDBG program funds - 15 points

- a. Why are CDBG funds critical for the commencement and ultimate success of the project?

TOA's experience of the need for support for individuals and families at risk of homelessness or who are already homeless in Cumberland County outside of Portland is great. We have provided support, information, resources and case management to people who are experiencing imminent homelessness or homelessness for the past 6 years. We see first hand every day the need. We talk with and meet with hundreds of people who are unemployed, under employed, disabled, elderly, single parents or new to this country who are struggling to be stably housed. Funding availability has been difficult to find.

- b. Have you, or will you, seek funds from other sources? If so, what are those funding sources?

We continue to seek out other funding sources but have identified few possibilities at this time. We had hoped that there would be some Federal grant opportunities for this work but have yet to see any this fiscal year.

- c. What is the impact on the project if CDBG funds are not received or if only partial CDBG funds are received?

If we do not receive CDBG funds for this project we may need to discontinue providing in depth work in homeless prevention.