

**Cumberland County Community Development Program
2016 CDBG General Program Application
Regional Cover Page**

Project Title Critical Access

Regional Applicant Cumberland County Commissioners

Non-Profit Entity Alpha One

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Program Category

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

Housing X Economic Development N/A

CDBG "National Objective"

Low/Moderate Income: Area-Wide _____ Limited Clientele X

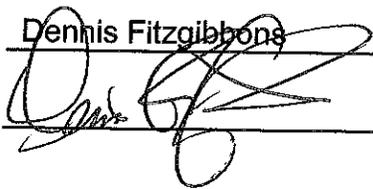
Direct Benefit: Presumed Group People with Disabilities and the Elderly (Identify Group)

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

Amount of CDBG Funds Requested 50,000.00

Total Estimated Project Cost 50,000.00

Name of Authorized Official Dennis Fitzgibbons

Signature of Authorized Official 

1. Summary

If a person loses the basic liberty of being able to move freely in and out of their home, they are effectively barred from basic activities of life such as working, pursuing an education, community involvement, shopping, joining family and social functions, or just getting outside.

For those individuals with a disability who are unable to navigate steps, this can become an insurmountable barrier keeping them trapped in their homes. An entrance ramp then becomes critical to sustaining an ordinary, meaningful life. For those who can't afford one, the Critical Access program provides a durable, high quality ramp that meets applicable construction guidelines and requirements. Alpha One, Maine's Center for independent Living (CIL) for people with disabilities for the past 36 years, has been conducting the Critical Access program in Cumberland County and throughout Maine since creating it in 2005.

2016 grant funds would be used to provide ramps to approximately 8-10 Cumberland County households that have a family member who cannot use steps. Wooden ramp components are pre-fabricated with pressure treated wood and stockpiled for immediate availability and fast installation. To ensure top quality, safety, and reliability, all fabrication and installation is done by professional builders who have specialized experience with this ramp design and process.

Alpha One Independent Living Specialists (ILS) conduct an initial phone assessment followed by a home/site visit. During the visit the ILS assists households with designing the most effective ramp configuration for their home, application forms are completed, and other disability needs are addressed. The ILS then coordinates clearances from local building officials as well as Maine's Historical Preservation Commission. Once clearances are obtained, the ILS places an order with the builders who install the ramp at the home site quickly and efficiently. After the installation is completed, the ILS verifies proper installation and level of consumer satisfaction. Finally, the ILS processes and transmits payment information to Cumberland County DECD.

This program would be available throughout the Cumberland County entitlement area and would serve qualified low-to-moderate income households that have members who cannot safely and effectively use steps to enter and leave their home. Those served would be people with a disability, as well as elderly residents unable to use steps effectively.

2A. Magnitude & Severity

The personal severity of the problem is difficult to overstate. What if you couldn't leave your home? Medical appointments, shopping, attending church or school, community involvement, social, family, and recreational activities, and simply going outside to enjoy a nice day would all become extremely difficult or not doable.

The steps to a home entrance become a barrier that denies freedom for the growing number of individuals who have disabilities that impact their ability to walk. The number of people with disabilities, especially among the elderly, is significant today and will continue to grow at

increasing rates. With the occurrence of a disability that impacts someone's mobility, a ramp is one of the most immediate and primary needs.

Affordability for a ramp among people with a disability is commonly a substantial issue. Unemployment rates for the disabled are far above national averages – exceeding 30%, and many more don't earn a livable wage. Very high unemployment rates in the disability community lead to ongoing low, fixed incomes for many.

The onset of a disability commonly results in the loss of a job and income while medical and other costs increase dramatically. Loans are often beyond reach due to low fixed incomes, along with subsequent damage to credit scores that typically occur from the unexpected loss of job and income. Paying for a ramp, or borrowing money for one, are commonly not viable options. Consequently, it is not uncommon for people to remain isolated in their homes because they can't get a ramp.

In 2014 six ramps were installed in Cumberland County and five were installed in 2015. In January 2016 three more are scheduled for installation with the remaining grant funds, while an additional five people are on the wait list as of 1/15/2016.

2B. Number of People Affected

Based on data from the U.S. Census and the University of California Disability Statistics Center, the Cumberland County entitlement area has approximately 5600 people who have the types of disabilities that would make entering and leaving their home difficult or impossible without a ramp.

People with disabilities have one of the highest rates of low-to-moderate incomes nationwide. This situation is primarily due to poor employment opportunities, along with substantial underemployment. Additionally, the incidence of disability is high among elderly people who typically have fixed, low incomes. Consequently, a high number of the 5600 Cumberland County residents with mobility issues are likely to fall within HUD LMI parameters.

2C. Long-term Economic & Social Effects

Obtaining accessible housing is one of the 3 primary obstacles for those with a disability – accessible homes and apartments are in very short supply all over the country. This is an issue that promises to grow much larger as medical advances and our aging population continues to dramatically increase the need for accessible housing.

Through 2015 Critical Access has already added approximately 30 accessible homes in Cumberland County communities and could create 8 to 10 more over the next two years with funds from this grant. Residents who would otherwise be confined to their home or who would be prematurely or unnecessarily placed in a nursing home could continue to live at home and be involved in community activities and services such as employment, education, and shopping, as well as participate in social and recreational pursuits. Finally, ramps enhance a home's visit-

ability for those friends, family members, and neighbors who can't enter a home because they can't use steps.

2D. Construction Project Long-range Planning & Capital Improvement

The Critical Access program is an effective, dynamic way to continue to increase the accessible housing stock throughout Cumberland County. It has created approximately 30 accessible homes to date and could create 8 to 10 more over the next 2 years with the funds from this grant.

Because move-ability is an integral part of the design, the ramps can effectively be reused and relocated to another residence if a recipient moves, or placed with another person if a ramp is no longer needed. Movability effectively extends and diversifies their use and impact.

3A. Management

Alpha One, Maine's CIL for people with disabilities for over 37 years, will manage the project. Alpha One has its central office in South Portland with branch offices in Bangor and Presque Isle. The staff of 29 includes many dedicated professionals such as registered nurses, occupational therapists, licensed counselors and social workers, and independent living specialists, along with a team of finance professionals. Alpha One created the Critical Access program with a pilot project in 2005 in partnership with Maine's DECD. Under Alpha One's management that program has been growing through the past 10 years and has installed over 300 ramps throughout Maine. Critical Access has also been a Cumberland County DECD program for the past eight years and has provided approximately 30 ramps for Cumberland County residents. The critical Access program has been audited several times by both Cumberland County and Maine's DECD and has consistently received superior management reviews by both. In 2008 the Critical Access received the Governor's Award for CDBG's Project of the Year.

3B. Experience with Other Projects

Throughout the past 37 years Alpha One has successfully created and conducted many programs for Maine's disabled citizens including:

- Home Retro (MSHA,
- Title 7b
- Independent Living Grant Program (RSA)
- Home & Community Benefits for the Physically Disabled Waiver (MaineCare)

Additionally, Alpha One has created and conducted many demonstration grant projects with the U.S. Department of Education (Rink Link), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Home To The Community), and the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (Homeward Bound) among others.

3C. Ongoing Commitment

Alpha One has vigorously pursued its mission of enhancing the independence of Maine citizens with disabilities for over 37 years. Alpha One understands that a ramp that provides fundamental independent access into and out of a home is critically important for pursuing a meaningful life and sustaining a person's general well-being. This program is unique; no viable alternative exists. Since creating the program eight years ago, Alpha One has kept Critical Access operating well and growing yearly and is determined to help continue to make this crucial program available to those who need it.

The process for evaluating applicants, site evaluations, ordering and installing ramps, final inspections and approvals, and submitting requests and appropriate documentation to the funder have been consistently ongoing for the past 10 years. An experienced crew of professional builders, as well as an experienced office and field staff, are all involved in administering and delivering the program successfully.

4. Ready to Proceed

All administrative, consumer delivery, and construction functions of the program are currently operating and have been continuously active since 2005. The builders have been trained and have been building components and installing them under the past Cumberland County grant as well as under the State DECD Critical Access grant.

They are currently installing ramps in Cumberland County as well as throughout Southern Maine and have the facilities, personnel, tools, and experience to continue producing and installing modular ramp components in Cumberland County. Experienced consumer services staff, as well as finance and administration staff are also currently conducting the Critical Access programs for Cumberland County, Maine's DECD, and the City of Portland. Alpha One will be able to efficiently and seamlessly implement a renewed program for Cumberland County immediately upon availability of funds.

The ramp was carefully designed through a grant in Minnesota in a joint effort between a Minnesota engineering company, the Minneapolis Center for Independent Living, and Minnesota's Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. ADA as well as other national and Maine State and local building codes and guidelines have been met. All administrative, office and field, and construction services and processes have been tested, cleared, and implemented. All general requirements have been addressed. Effective processes have been developed and implemented to manage individual job/site requirements such as building permits and historical commission clearances. The Cumberland County program can be efficiently integrated immediately into the ongoing Critical Access services. No impediments are anticipated.

Appendix IV: Budget

Construction Projects				
Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds	Total
Design/Engineering				
Land Costs				
Materials/Supplies	42,918			42,918
Construction Costs				
Project Management	7,082			7,082
Other				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
Total Costs	50,000			50,000
<p>Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:</p> <p>History of successfully managing program with 16.5% administrative fees.</p>				

7A. Need for CDBG Funds

Most all other grant or special loan programs that might be used to obtain a ramp exclude people who rent because they require that the applicant own the home. CDBG funds are one of the rare sources that can provide home improvement and repair funds to renters as well as homeowners. Because of typically high unemployment and dramatic reductions in income, many or most people with disabilities can't afford to own their own home and accessible rental housing stock continues to fall far behind the need. Furthermore, because of prevalent low incomes, people with disabilities typically can't qualify for loans that would provide the money for a ramp. The onset of a disability commonly results in loss of job and income, but not forgiveness of debt. This, combined with high medical bills, leads to dramatically lowered credit scores, putting access to loan sources even further out of reach.

Without CDBG funding most low-to-moderate income families with an elderly or disabled member would have little hope of obtaining a ramp.

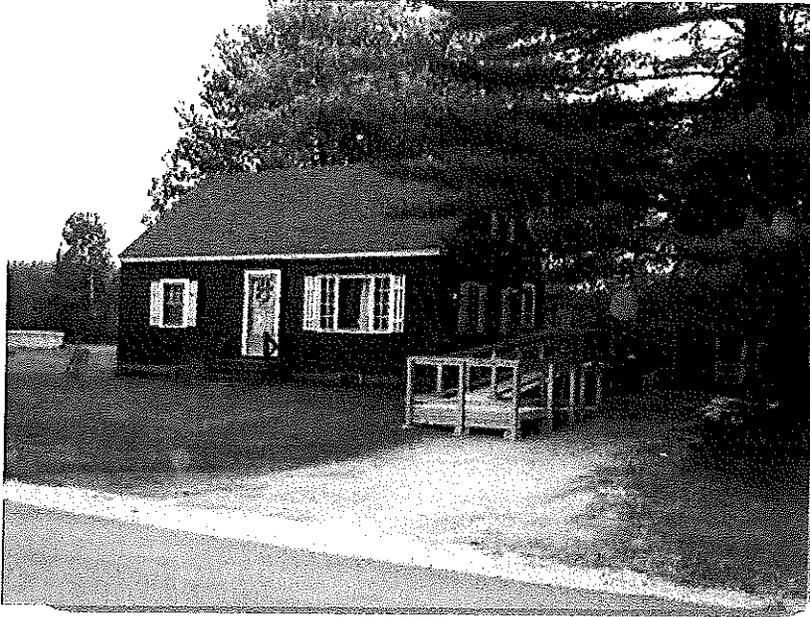
7B. Other Funding Sources

CDBG would be the primary source of funds for Critical Access. Occasionally there is an opportunity to combine funds with a program managed by Elder Independence of Maine with which the costs of a ramp can be shared. While consulting with families regarding Critical Access, other needs are commonly uncovered. Alpha One assists with connecting people with other programs such as Home Retro, Title 7b grants, as well as some Rural Development and CAP programs to help meet other disability related needs.

7C. Impact if not Funded or Partially Funded

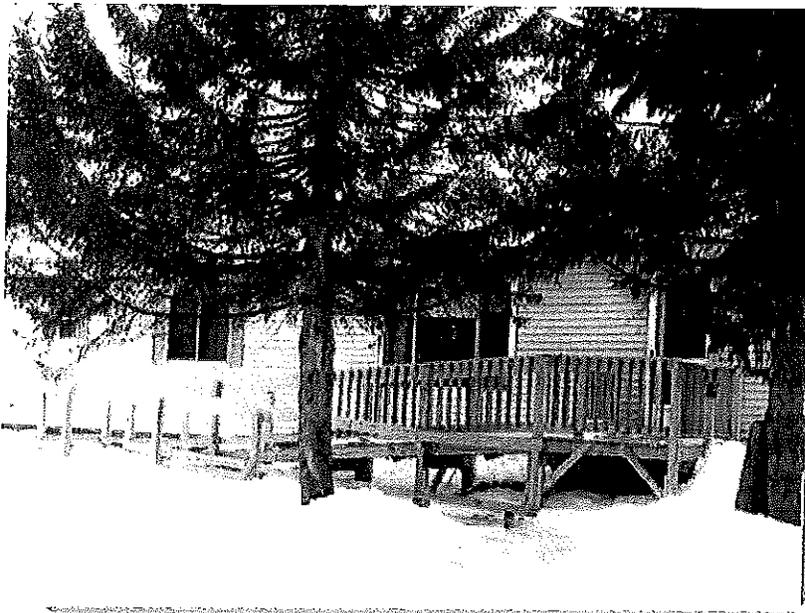
If fewer funds are received the project could be scaled back to build fewer ramps over the next 2 years. However, funds less than \$40,000 would not provide for enough resources to make the program worthwhile. It would not be possible to provide Critical Access ramps in Cumberland County if there were no funds, and there are no similar alternatives for those who can't afford a ramp, especially for those who do not own their homes.

Alpha One's Critical Access Program in Cumberland County, Maine



Yarmouth Ramp

Consumer was referred by Visiting Nurses of Southern Maine. She is middle aged and suffers from multiple physical and mental impairments. Installation of ramp allows her to reside at home while receiving medical treatment.



Windham Ramp

Consumer was elderly and lived with middle aged children who provided personal care. She had low blood pressure and was not able to use stairs safely to leave home for necessary medical appointments. She later died while living at home.



Harrison Ramp

Consumer is a young single mother of two sons disabled by cerebral palsy. The ramp allows the boys to leave the house independently and gives them access to their yard.

Standish Ramp

Consumer is disabled by obesity, uncontrolled diabetes, and ruptured discs in her back. She is prone to falling and can walk only with assistance. Prior to installation of the ramp, her fear of falling kept her inside for 2 months. Now she can leave home for medical appointments and self care.

