



Respond to the narrative questions in a maximum of six pages (economic development & non-economic development project applications) or seven pages (multi-jurisdictional project applications.)

1. Provide a **brief summary** (400 words maximum) of the proposed project.  
- **10 points.** Focus your answer on issues such as, but not limited to: What will be built? What will happen? Where will it happen? Who's in charge? Who will be served?

*The Opportunity Alliance (TOA) is requesting \$40,005 to prevent families in Cumberland County from becoming homeless. These funds would be used as one-time assistance to support clients who are at risk of homelessness or are currently experiencing homelessness. The funds would be used to stop homelessness or the threat of homelessness by paying for a security deposit, 1<sup>st</sup> month's rent, or utilities that are in arrears.*

*The Director of Access and Intake at The Opportunity Alliance will manage this grant funded project. The Director will oversee the position that will be providing case management and one-time support to clients who are in need of emergency housing options.*

*We have in-house expertise in the field of homeless prevention and have been this service to the people of Cumberland County since 2007. With last year's funding we are still providing services and 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. During the 2015 CDBG funding cycle, The Opportunity Alliance (TOA) requested \$37,600 in funding for direct client support for those homeless or about to be homeless. This funding **stabilized 121 individuals and 43 households in Cumberland County.** Our work focused on short term housing and case management for residents who were experiencing a housing crisis such as eviction. TOA **matched \$45,045.00** to support staffing costs and **leveraged another \$22,000.00** in donations from the community for direct client support.*

*This year, our homeless prevention case manager has been working closely with TOA's Work Life Advisor who is successfully partnering clients referred from CCHP to help triage barriers to employment. We referred individuals to our Work Life Advisor who helped them gain employment or manage transportation issues that were impacting their ability to maintain employment. Several individuals found jobs as a result of their work with our Work Life Advisor. Many more found the necessary support to overcome barriers to employment.*

*Our homeless prevention case manager will continue to work on multiple levels with client's exploring employment, personal budgets and to help establish affordable*

*payment plans with utility companies, landlords and other debtors. Additionally, renting education and payment assistance will be provided at the same time assessments are completed to offer other leveling resources and supports as eligible, in order to help sustain housing once the crisis has been alleviated. We maintain a strict General Assistance philosophy and we ensure that all of the client's resources have been explored including family prior to providing financial support. We are experienced at looking at available community resources. Our interventions focus on stopping the emergency and we work with families on a short-term basis by providing solution focused interventions to avoid going into crisis again.*

*Additionally, TOA works with constituents across the county by providing Homeless Prevention case management to clients in Westbrook, South Portland, Gorham, Bridgton, Windham, Harrison, Falmouth, Freeport, Naples, North Yarmouth, Raymond, Pownal, Casco, Gray, New Gloucester, Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, Sebago, Standish, Harpswell, Yarmouth. We will continue to provide outreach to municipalities in Cumberland County and continue to partner with them to resolve individual and family cases. It is our goal to pass our knowledge on to general assistance administrators and others providers, we will also continue to provide education to towns, schools, and providers about how we can best serve clients when they are facing homelessness.*

2. Provide a response to the four questions below defining and justifying the **need for the activity**. - 20 points
  - a. Convey the magnitude and severity of the issue to be addressed.

*In Cumberland County nearly one in four families are in poverty, 22% with young children, are poor. Senior citizens are also among the highest percentage of the populations who are poor. We see both of these groups struggle everyday with housing, energy costs and food. Additionally, economic recovery in Cumberland County continues to be slow and lags behind the rest of New England. According to the 2014 Maine Economic Outlook report, Maine has recovered less than 10% of the jobs it has lost.*

*Housing issues and the need for affordable housing continue to plague many low income people in Cumberland County. Cumberland County has one of the lowest homeownership rates in the state at 68.3%. Those who rent however, struggle to secure affordable rents and once they identify an apartment can have a significant wait for a housing voucher. Maine Housing data states that the average length of time a family may be on a waiting list for a housing subsidy voucher is now over 2 years. According to the 2015 "Point in Time Survey," 472 people were homeless in Portland. However, the 472-person estimate is viewed as conservative. These numbers are only representative of homelessness in the city of Portland. Many more residents of Cumberland County do not have secure or stable housing, are living temporarily with acquaintances, living in cars or tents, and, as a result, are not included in the data reported above.*

*The long term impact of becoming homeless is profound. 156 of the 472 in the point in time survey were families. These are families who have lost the connection to their communities, often their job, and whose children will lag academically and developmentally. With these funds we can, often times, prevent the crisis from occurring. Financial support has historically been provided one time and has been enough to return families to stability along with other social and community supports as a result of family engagement in the case management component of this project.*

*69% of the population over the age of 16 is in the labor force in Cumberland County. However, the majority of these jobs are minimum wage jobs and tend to be jobs without benefits, without earned time or without a livable wage- this makes financial stability challenging. Many of the individuals we work with have situational challenges that are difficult to navigate without resources. They are individuals with a short term medical issue that puts them out of work briefly, their car breaks down, but because they are living pay check to pay check, a small problem can have long term negative outcomes. Due to our capacity to track every dollar leveraged against this contract, these costs, among other resources, are not counted as part of the amount indicated as funds donated or matched.*

*Last year we were able to serve 121 low-income residents in Cumberland County and anticipate serving 125 individuals and 43 Households. It is important to note that not only were we successful in stabilizing 121 individuals with housing needs but in most cases our work resulted in better outcomes across different domains such as food, employment, income, etc. This reflects people not going into the shelter.*

**Out of the total number of people affected, identify the number of people from low/moderate income households. We can anticipate that 90 percent (90%) of people will fall in the lowest income category.**

**Describe to what extent the project makes in the long-term measurable difference.**

*Many of these people have few to no resources and would normally end up transient or stuck in the shelter system. With the support of our services we are able to provide education to residents about the housing process, and knowledge of those resource which help residents remain stably housed. 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 stability. If individuals and families are able to stay stably housed in their home communities their natural supports are available to them. Housing also plays a role in risk factors for DHHS case removal and involvement with the family. According to a 2011 report from The Opportunity Alliance's Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC), lack of stable housing was a contributing factor in child removal cases in the Portland, South Portland and Westbrook areas.*

**Difference in the economic and social health of the region.**

*The cost of homelessness can be quite high and have significant impact on the overall health of communities and certainly the economic health of municipalities. As mentioned before, there is long term impact to children who move from school to school. Additionally, data around people who are homeless suggests that they tend to access additional services; more costly medical services, have more calls to police departments, and are more prone to addiction. Housing instability places great stress on families and, as previously mentioned, in very bleak situations, can lead to the removal of children.*

**3. Provide a response to the three questions concerning management of the proposed activity – 10 points**

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

**b.**

*The Director of Access and Intake will provide oversight of the program deliverables, reporting, and budget. Our agency has managed this project with success in the past and has demonstrated its effectiveness.*

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

*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 were all established for this project at this time.*

*2013/2014 – TOA completed an evaluation of our years of Homeless Prevention Data which indicated our strategies were effective and cost effective. Currently, we have streamlined the work and allocated all CDBG dollars to go direct to client assistance and TOA has paid all staffing costs including occupancy and travel.*

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

*The Opportunity Alliance has demonstrated its commitment by providing all staffing costs to the project for the last year and is in agreement that this will continue into the next fiscal year by paying for the entire salary for the projects employee and supervision.*

2. Demonstrate that the project is **ready to proceed** – 20 points

**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.

Describe any existing and/or potential impediments to project initiation

***Describe efforts to obtain non-CDBG funds***

***Demonstrate that the project is ready to proceed – 20 points***

***Describe the steps that have been completed or must be completed to initiate the project.***

*Because we have been providing Homeless Prevention since 2007 there will be no steps needed to initiate the project. We will continue to provide direct client assistance in a seamless fashion. We will follow HUD's definition of homeless and determine eligibility based on this definition, the town of the client, and overall assessment.*

**Budget for project. Fill in the attached budget form and provide the basis for determination of budget amounts (Appendix IV). - 5 points**

Included below

**Implementation schedule for project: Fill in the attached schedule form (Appendix III). - 5 points**

Included below

**Provide a response to the three questions demonstrating the need for CDBG program funds - 15 points**

*In the past year the Portland Family shelter has changed its policy and no longer admits families from other cities and towns in Cumberland County. They now refer those families back to their town of origin for services or to TOA which can be limited in smaller rural communities. This has dramatically reduced the resources available to families who have encountered a short term obstacle to their housing stability in Cumberland County. CDBG funding is a critical bridge to help those families remain housed in their communities and not deepen their short term crisis into a long term condition of homelessness. CDBG funds are critical for our project as there are few housing supports in the county. Once someone is in the shelter the costs are both psychologically and financially devastating. CDBG will help prevent the emergency from occurring. Funds are important as it helps to access more immediate sustainability, and may be the difference between securing housing, sustaining current housing or remaining*

*homeless. Often clients come to us with unforeseeable deadlines and often the deadline can't be met; if the crisis can be stopped we can then work on other supports (LIHEAP, Referral to Work Advisor, Case Management Services, and access to other supports).*

*This project has benefited from past support of the Cumberland County CDBG funds and this infrastructure has stayed intact. All systems are fully in place to renew the program as soon as the new funding cycle begins. We will use other agency funds to support the position.*

*The project has successfully engaged General Assistance officers and has established this critically important relationship. We have successfully met our goal to be a recognized, accessible, and valued resource to individuals and families needing services, and to the municipalities needing a referral source. This integration has resulted in a system for dispatchers, 211, and towns to have 24-hour response to homelessness. We would like to continue our work with municipalities to support families in need.*







Type of Funding	Match Amount		Source of Match	How is the match calculated?	Is the match secured? Please circle yes or no.	If yes, please attach relevant documentation. <sup>1</sup>	If no, please outline and attach future steps to secure match. <sup>2</sup>
Cash	Municipal Cash	\$			Yes / No		
	Other Cash	\$45,045	The Opportunity Alliance		Yes	Staffing costs approved in FY17 Agency Budget	
	Other Cash	\$			Yes / No		
	Other Cash	\$			Yes / No		
In-Kind/ Donation	Municipal In-Kind & Donation				Yes / No		
	Other In-Kind & Donation	\$20,000	Private Donations		No		We work with faith based and other donors to secure funds
	Other In-Kind & Donation	\$			Yes / No		
	Other In-Kind & Donation	\$			Yes / No		
<b>TOTAL MATCH</b>		\$					

<sup>1</sup> Please feel free to attach up to 1 page of additional documentation demonstrating secured match.

<sup>2</sup> Please feel free to attach up to 1 page explaining the future steps that will be taken to secure matches.

## Appendix IV: Budget

<b>Construction Projects</b>				
<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>CDBG Funds</b>	<b>Municipal Funds</b>	<b>Other Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Design/Engineering</b>				
<b>Land Costs</b>				
<b>Materials/Supplies</b>				
<b>Construction Costs</b>				
<b>Project Management</b>				
<b>Other</b>				
<b>1. Salaries</b>			\$25,776	\$25,776
<b>2. Fringe</b>			\$11,520	\$11,520
<b>3. Client Assistance</b>	\$35,000			\$35,000
<b>4. Insurance, IT, Payroll, expense</b>			\$2,400	\$2,400
<b>5. Other-Admin</b>	\$5,005		\$5,349	\$10,354
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$40,005</b>		<b>\$45,045</b>	<b>\$85,050</b>
<b>Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:</b>				

