

**Cumberland County Community Development Program  
2019 Pre-Application  
Due December 12, 2018**

Application Type:     General     Public Service     Planning

Project Name: Multi-Use Community Center Planning

Lead Community: Town of Standish

Additional Communities: N/A

Subrecipient Organization: Parks & Recreation Department

Project Location (Address): Standish, Maine

Contact Information: Name: Bill Giroux Email: bgiroux@standish.org

Phone: 207-642-4659 Title: Town Manager

**Project Summary:**

To provide a land survey, engineering, environmental and permitting analysis, and site plan for the purpose of constructing an indoor multi-use, multi-generational facility in the Town of Standish. We have contracted with the University of NH to conduct a Community Center Needs Assessment and Planning Report which will be finalized at the end of February 2019. To date, we have conducted 11 focus groups with 70 participants and will launch a community-wide survey next week. There is available land in Standish and we are pursuing all options for a centrally located facility to fulfill a growing list of needs for both Standish and surrounding towns.

HUD National Objective:  Benefit Low/Mod Clientele     Low/Mod Area Benefit     Spot Slum and Blight

HUD Program Objective:  Suitable Living Environment     Decent Housing     Economic Opportunity

Project Goal:     Affordable Housing     Public Facility Improvements     Public Infrastructure Improvements  
 Public Services     Economic Development     Community Planning

Total Clients Served (unduplicated): 10,200 population    Percentage LMI: 48.09%

Funding: CDBG Request: \$ 25,000    Total Project Cost: \$ 70,000

**Leveraged Funds:**

\$	Federal	\$	Other grants
\$	State	\$	Endowment
\$	County (not CDBG)	\$	Private Funds
\$45,000	City Standish	\$	Gifts in kind

Name of Authorized Official: William Giroux



Signature of Authorized Official: \_\_\_\_\_

**1a.** The Town of Standish is requesting CDBG funds for planning the development of an indoor, multi-use community center. Standish has seen a decades-long need for an indoor facility to serve the physical, social, educational, economic, cultural, and general well-being needs of the community. As one of the largest towns in Maine, by area, Standish has limited recreational facilities, consisting of a few outdoor parks. At this time, no designated indoor facility exists within town where residents may gather for large community events, socialization, sports or recreation- the lack of which is especially felt during Maine's coldest and hottest months.

Standish operates numerous programs throughout the town, ranging from WIC and food pantry services to after-school enrichment programming, fitness classes and senior programs, all of which require a regular meeting space. As local schools are not regularly available to be used for these purposes, these meetings are currently confined to a small community room within the town's municipal building. This room is inadequate in size, scope and availability for the number of programs Standish currently offers and is prepared to offer. In addition to town use, the room serves as the regular meeting space for numerous local organizations and clubs, such as Little League, Scouts, Bridge Club, Homeowners, ATV Club and Quilters/Artisans, to name just a few. It is also used for after school programs, Volunteer In Police Services training, as well as being regularly reserved for birthday and private parties. Due to this demand, the moderately sized room is consistently booked and over-scheduled on a nightly basis, resulting in programs being forced to compete for space. Furthermore, this room lacks the size, configuration and parking availability to house larger community events.

This lack of adequate indoor facilities has limited the town's ability to offer programs and events throughout all age brackets. For example, Standish offers several annual events, such as a Halloween Party, Tree Lighting, and Easter Egg Hunt, for which public attendance consistently surpasses current accommodations. As a result, the town has been forced to limit its outreach efforts and ability to attract new participants from within the community. There are many programs that Standish has been unable to offer despite demonstrated need, strong public interest and available staffing, such as adult and senior exercise and wellness programs, simply for lack of available space. Similarly, plans for various adult education programs, community dinners and family movie nights, have been put on hold until viable space can be secured. Standish is fortunate to employ a dynamic, motivated and visionary Parks & Recreation staff, whose goals have been halted or restricted by this lack of facilities.

The creation of a multi-use, multi-generational community center in Standish would address these needs with far-reaching effects for the social and economic health of the community. With an aging population in a rural, cold weather climate, having a thriving center for social and cultural activities in central Standish would both address the problem of social isolation among seniors as well as provide a draw for younger families to locate here. The community center would benefit the local economy through providing educational opportunities, job fairs, volunteer opportunities and space for business groups, meetings, trainings and seminars. The facility would also provide enough space for police and fire to expand their training activities, as well as serve as an emergency shelter and warming/cooling center for residents during the cold and hot months of the year (a critical need in the town/region). In bringing residents, social groups and businesses together, Standish aims to work with residents most in need of support to improve social and economic engagement, promote an active and healthy lifestyle and improve overall quality of life in the region.

**1b.** Between 2004 and 2008, the Town of Standish spent significant time, resources and money to plan and design a community center for its residents. A committee was formed to gauge

public interest and input, which yielded much support for the project. Visits were made to area community centers, where valuable information was obtained. Following these visits, a compilation of “Uses and Users” of the proposed facility was created, as well as a list of “Do’s and Don’ts” and a Statement of Needs, in order to assist in the planning process. Many potential sites were explored, and an eight acre parcel in central Standish received voter approval for purchase. In the final stages of preparation, the property survey revealed endangered species concerns on site. Ultimately, despite overwhelming public support for the project, the Town Council in place at that time voted down the project and plans were shelved until a suitable site could be identified.

The current Town Council fully understands the need for a robust and engaged Parks & Recreation presence in creating healthy, desirable, and productive communities, both locally and regionally. They voted unanimously to move forward with this project and have voiced their full support at many public meetings.

The current climate, new management, a strong desire to support economic development and improve quality of life for Standish residents of all ages, makes the timing of this application a crucial catalyst for the process. With the community residents and Town Council united in their support for the project, as well as recent property availability in an ideal location adjacent to the Standish Municipal Center, the town has plans to initiate a feasibility study and has already begun the consultant selection process.

**1c.** This is an area of need. According to the American Communities Survey, 8.6% of the Standish population is below the poverty level. Standish is designated on the 2017 Exception Rule List as a Block Group 1, LMI P, Population of 1005, a Total Population of 2,090, and a total LMI Percentage of 48.09%.

Lack of a community center has had particularly detrimental effects on low/moderate income, senior and elderly residents of Standish. The lack of space for senior health, wellness and exercise programs has led to an increasingly isolated elder community, many of whom are left isolated, homebound or extremely limited in their ability to access community programs. These programs are crucial to helping seniors remain connected, healthy and independent.

Standish has extremely limited exercise facilities available to the public. Residents typically drive to other towns in order to make use of such facilities, often at considerable driving distances due to Standish’s comparatively large geographical area. For many elderly and low/moderate income households, lack of transportation, driving distances, and/or gym membership fees present significant barriers to accessing these facilities. As a result, these residents lack opportunities for exercise, recreation and social connection, particularly during the long winter season.

One of the missions of this proposed community center is affordability and access. A central location will provide direct access for residents from all parts of the town, and fitness and wellness programs will be available to everyone, at either a nominal, reduced, or no cost. Planned health and wellness services include opportunities for free blood pressure and other health screenings, and flu shots. Adult education classes, trainings and job fairs will also be designed to assist low/moderate income residents, as well as benefitting local and regional businesses.

**1d.** Standish is not a wealthy community. The few homes on Sebago Lake somewhat mask the fact that many of the town’s residents are low to moderate income and/or are seniors on modest, fixed incomes. Additionally,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the town’s tax revenue is mandated toward the regional school district. Standish struggles to find the means and indoor space to meet the

needs of its current residents, attract young families to locate here, and provide seniors with much needed opportunities to socialize. The selected site for this project will require a survey, engineering, and environmental/permitting analysis before making a substantial investment to pursue this endeavor. The town has already invested time and funding to this planning effort, but simply does not have the fiscal means to undertake the planning tasks necessary to get this project up and running on town budget and donations alone.

**2a.** Standish is currently in the process of conducting a Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment with the University of New Hampshire. Focus groups with nearly 70 participants took place in December of 2018 followed by a Town-wide survey in January of 2019. Results will be made available to the public in February, when a full report will be presented to the council. The preliminary results have identified a significant need for indoor recreation facilities.

The next step will be to conduct a feasibility study to further assess specific needs, help determine an appropriate scope of project and select a site. After the planning analysis/study is complete, Standish will have a much greater idea of specific current and future needs of the proposed facility, as well as the steps needed to get there. While the town has a great deal of documentation from past research into a community center, the new updated survey results and renewed interest will help to move along the process.

**2b.** This is expected to be a multi-phased project. Phase 1 will include project scoping, planning and site selection. During Phase 2, site preparation and construction will begin. The selected consultant may add additional phases to the project, if a longer rollout better meets the town's needs. Should the town receive CDBG funding, the planning phase will begin immediately. Planning will ideally be completed in time for the start of FY21 budget season, so that the town can include further project resources in its capital improvement plan.

**2c.** A community center centrally located in Standish will fulfill a growing list of needs for both Standish and surrounding towns. Standish has a proven history of collaborating regionally with neighboring towns for fire/rescue, schools, recreation programs and more. As such, a recreation facility in Standish would service the entire region.

The Parks & Recreation Department is working hand in hand with all town departments, the Town Council, outside organizations, and community members to complete the steps necessary to help a community center in Standish become a reality. Discussions concerning several partnerships with local entities are currently in progress, the final shape of which will be further known as progress continues. Reception to the project has been overwhelmingly positive.

**3a.** Information sessions, surveys, official postings, council workshops, and focus groups have all been conducted, and results to date have shown a strong desire to move forward with the project amongst the citizenry of Standish. Furthermore, a comprehensive survey was conducted by the University of New Hampshire with nearly 400 residents to determine their interest in a center, the types of services they envisioned, and whether they would financially support it. This also demonstrated strong support for the project and collected useful information about community needs and preferences regarding the specific types of facilities, programs and services to be offered.

**3b.** Yes. These funds are already included in the FY20 budget.

**3c.** Jen DeRice, Director of Parks and Recreation, will be overseeing the project. Town Manager Bill Giroux has an extensive background in municipal management and has been involved in similar projects over multiple sectors. A consulting organization, with a long and positive track record of similar municipal planning projects, has also been identified.

## Appendix II: Budget

<b>Planning Grant – Program Budget</b>				
<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>CDBG Funds</b>	<b>Municipal Funds</b>	<b>Other Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Needs Assessment</b>		<b>\$7500</b>		<b>\$7500</b>
<b>Site Survey/Wetlands Delineation</b>		<b>\$5500</b>		<b>\$5500</b>
<b>Business Plan</b>		<b>\$3500</b>		<b>\$3500</b>
<b>Conceptual Design</b>	<b>\$20000</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$20000</b>
<b>Site Plan</b>		<b>\$7500</b>		<b>\$7500</b>
<b>Total Project Cost Estimate</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$5000</b>
<b>Project Collaterals</b>		<b>\$15000</b>		<b>\$15000</b>
1) Site plan, floor plans, model, elevations, drawings, computer animation of interior, web site images				
<b>Final Report</b>		<b>\$6000</b>		<b>\$6000</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$25000</b>	<b>\$45000</b>		<b>\$70000</b>
<b>Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:</b>				
<p>Budget amounts are determined through comparative research in the greater region, information provided by consultant groups, and town staff expertise.</p>				

ORDER

STANDISH TOWN COUNCIL

DATE: January 22, 2019  
ORDER NUMBER: 7-19

SUBMITTED BY: Sirpis

TITLE: AUTHORIZE SUBMISSION OF CDBG GRANT APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY CENTER PLANNING

WHEREAS the Standish Parks & Recreation Department would like to pursue a site selection process for a multi-use, multi-generational community recreation facility, and

WHEREAS grant assistance is available to support this endeavor, now be it

ORDERED that the Town Manager is authorized to submit a grant application to Cumberland County for a CDBG grant to assist in the community center planning.

APPROVED 1/22/19 DISAPPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

ROLL CALL	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN
DELCOURT	✓		
LECLERC	✓		
LIBBY	✓		
NESBITT	Excused		
POMERLEAU	✓		
SIRPIS	✓		
STAROSTECKI	✓		

CLERK/SECRETARY M Cheper for Bill Giroux