

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

Project Title Assessment of Cumberland County Homeless Prevention Case Management

Regional Applicant Cumberland County Commissioners

Sub-Applicant The Opportunity Alliance

Contact Information Name Tara Kosma

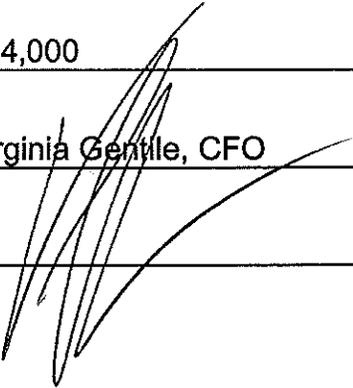
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Amount of CDBG Funds Requested \$14,000

Total Estimated Project Cost \$14,000

Name of Authorized Official Virginia Gentile, CFO

Signature of Authorized Official 

2013 Planning Application Questions

Respond to the narrative questions in a maximum of three pages.

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

Much like the rest of the United States, Cumberland County has seen an increase in the number of people who are homeless. Most disturbing about these numbers is the number of people who are reporting being homeless for the first time. Data from the Cumberland County Emergency Shelter Committee suggests nearly 35 percent of individuals who present at the shelter are first time homeless. For families, the number is even higher with 53 percent reporting first time homelessness. Prevention programs such as the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing program-(HPRP) provided a much needed circuit breaker for individuals and families who were at risk of being homeless. As the lead agency in Cumberland County, TOA's efforts to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless were notable. TOA's work focused on providing a limited amount of financial support to families matched with case management allowing families to remain in housing and diverted them away from the homeless shelter system. While the HPRP program provided a portion of the funding for this project, TOA's work in this area has been notable. During the past 6 years, TOA has used similar strategies for working with people who are at risk of being homeless. Matching these people with community resources as well as providing some support, suggests a stronger community connection and thus less reliance on other systems, including the emergency shelter system in Portland.

Through its work in the communities outside of Portland, TOA has developed an extensive network of community service providers and other indigenous services such as local food pantries, churches and other civic organizations which are available to support individuals and families in their communities. TOA estimates it has served 189 individuals during the past twelve months through its targeted services that address the issues and causes of homelessness. In all of these cases, clients came from low income homes.

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

This planning grant has two foci. First, is a focus on assessing the impact on community supportive efforts on keeping people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in their home communities. Research clearly suggests that people who are at risk of homelessness can recover more quickly with appropriate community supports and connections to indigenous community resources. Through a process of stabilization within the community, limited resources with appropriate case management services can change the trajectory.

of people's lives and keep them in their home community. Currently the work which the Opportunity Alliance did with County HPRP funding suggests that with a concerted effort and focused programming, people who are at risk of homelessness can stabilize and remain in their communities. Antidotal data suggested that 95 percent of families who received HPRP funds did not return to the shelter system.

For the second focus, we will develop an evaluation method to assess the impact of providing a new level of services to General Assistance offices in Cumberland County which focuses on providing housing assistance and support to people who are at risk of being homeless. It is also envisioned that a coordinated approach between General Assistance Administrators and case management for individuals who are in crisis will result in lower long term costs to other County systems such as jail admissions, emergency housing and the emergency shelter stays and continual reliance on general assistance.

This project will evaluate five questions within these two foci.

1. Based on previous program interventions, what are the key individual attributes which help people who are at risk of homelessness stabilize?
2. Does providing case management and targeted financial assistance (through General Assistance) reduce the length of time a person is at risk of being homeless?
3. Does the connection to indigenous local community resources help to stabilize someone who is at risk of being homeless?
4. Does the enhancement of case management services in local communities reduce the number of clients who travel to Portland and stay at the Emergency Shelter?
5. Does the enhancement of case management services, coupled with limited financial support create a cost savings to the emergency service system in Cumberland County, reduce the incidents of police contacts, jail nights and ambulance services and emergency room visits?

We will evaluate these questions in two ways. First, we will analyze existing data from the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing initiative. Detailed data on service delivery, type of service, financial assistance and follow up case management sessions from nearly 4 years of HPRP operations has been archived in a database. Using statistical software and modeling processes, we will analyze the data and specifically assess individual attributes of clients served by the HPRP program in Cumberland County. We will compare data from successful cases where individuals who were at risk of imminent homelessness were able to quickly stabilize with those cases where individuals were not quite as successful. From this analysis, we will develop both best practice models as well as a profile of the types of service interventions and supports needed to help families at risk of homelessness to stabilize.

Secondly, we will work with the TOA case manager, local general assistance offices and individuals who present at general assistance for help. We will provide surveys and incentives for follow up to each of these groups over the course of 12 months.

To address this issue, we are proposing to work in collaboration with identified General Assistance offices to assess the impact of providing case management and financial assistance has on stabilizing families in their community and reducing reliance on the emergency services. We will survey general assistance office workers and clients whom the case manager works with.

We are proposing to begin the data analysis component of this project in July 2013 with data modeling and profiling completed by August. Data tools, tracking and follow up data collection instruments for the second foci will be developed July-August with data collection and tracking to begin in September 2013. Data collection will continue for 12 months with the interim reports completed in February 2014 and September 2014. The final report with conclusions and recommendations will be completed by December 2014.

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

The project will be managed by Tara Kosma, Vice President for community initiatives at TOA. As a senior level administrator, Tara is familiar with the case management services as well as TOA's deep commitment and previous work in many of the target area towns. Tara has also worked closely with the Cumberland County government and understands the reporting and oversight requirements associated with block grant funding. The evaluation will be conducted by Thomas Chalmers McLaughlin, the codirector of the University of New England's school of social work's center for research and evaluation. Dr. Chalmers McLaughlin is a nationally recognized expert in the area of homelessness and homelessness prevention research. Dr. Chalmers McLaughlin has conducted evaluations of the HPRP program for Maine Housing and the City of Portland as well as other evaluative projects relating to service delivery systems and homeless prevention. As such, Dr. Chalmers McLaughlin has the expertise and ability to conduct an evaluation of this size and scope.

Tara and Dr. Chalmers McLaughlin have worked together on other evaluative projects including the Cumberland County Needs assessment project in 2012.

As a planning project, it is envisioned that the evaluation will provide insight into best practice interventions which can be employed by case managers, general assistance office staff and other community service providers which will strengthen a system which allows people who are at risk of homelessness to remain in their communities. Strategies for intervention and support and the identification of gaps in service can also serve as the foundation from which the implementation of best practice methodologies can be employed.

Through its work with the target communities and other case management type project, TOA has developed the community relationships, connections and community partnerships which will ensure the quick implementation of this project. Additionally, TOA and Dr. Chalmers McLaughlin have begun developing the evaluation protocol, assessment tools and client follow up materials. Because TOA and Dr. Chalmers McLaughlin worked together on the HPRP evaluation, we have been able to reconstitute many of the evaluation tools which were previously used. Additionally, to assess client stabilization in their community and the diversion away from emergency systems, the team will use tools and mechanisms which were employed in the Cost of Homelessness study conducted in 2010, which TOA was a data contributor. This project will not require matching funding for HPRP data analysis, profiling and recommendations; development of the tracking protocols and survey instrumentation; data analysis, reporting-(2 interim reports); and final data analysis and completion of the final report.

4. **Budget for project.** Fill in the attached budget form *and provide the basis for determination of budget amounts (Appendix II).*

Although the project budget is not scored, the application will not be accepted without a completed budget.

Appendix II: Budget

Planning Grant – Program Budget				
Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds	Total
Consultant Services	7,500			
Advertising				
Public Meetings				
Printing				
Mailings				
Other	1,500			
1. Tara Kosma's time	5,000			
2.				
3.				
4.				
Total Costs	14,000			
Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:				
<p>The budget is calculated based on the following costs associated with this project. Tara Kosma's time and costs over the 12 months of the project is calculated at \$5,000 This includes staff time \$2,109.00 Technology costs \$1,369.00, Admin 12.2 % 1,522.00. Tara Kosma's time will entail project oversight, working on data collection and editing of 2 interim reports and the final report and working with the case manager and other staff on project implementation. Dr. Chalmers McLaughlin's time is estimated at \$7,500 over the 18 month project period. This includes his work on HPRP data analysis, profiling and recommendations; development of the tracking protocols and survey instrumentation; data analysis, reporting-(2 interim reports); and final data analysis and completion of the final report. We are also calculating \$1,500 for materials and supplies.</p>				