

**Cumberland County Community Development Program
2013 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

Public Service Housing x Economic Development N/A

CDBG "National Objective"

Low/Moderate Income: Area-Wide Limited Clientele x

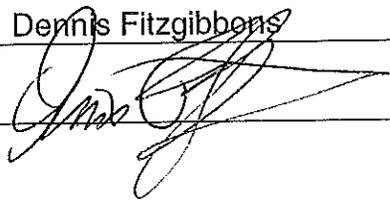
Direct Benefit: Presumed Group People with Disabilities and the Elderly (Identify Group)

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 

RESPONSES TO NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. Summary

For those with a disability who can no longer use the steps leading to their front door, the steps become an insurmountable barrier that keeps them trapped, in or out of their home. A ramp then becomes crucial. If a person lacks the basic ability to simply enter and exit their home independently, that individual is barred from most of the activities of life including work, education, community involvement, shopping, joining family and social functions, getting out into the neighborhood to do some errands, or just enjoy a nice day outdoors.

The Critical Access program is a fast, reliable means of providing a durable, quality ramp that meets ADA standards as well as other local, state, and national requirements and recommendations. Alpha One has been Maine's Center for Independent Living (CIL) for people with disabilities for the past 34 years. We have been administering the Critical Access program in Cumberland County and throughout Maine since its inception 8 years ago.

Modular components for approximately 8 to 10 moveable wooden ramps would be pre-fabricated with treated lumber, stockpiled, and installed as needed for approximately 8 to 10 Cumberland County households with a resident who could not use steps. Wooden ramp components are pre-fabricated and then inventoried for fast, efficient 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 a phone assessment first, followed by a home/site visit. During the visit an ILS assists households with designing the most effective ramp configuration for their home, an application is completed, and other disability needs are addressed. The ILS then coordinates clearances from local building officials, as well as from Maine's Historical Preservation Commission. Once clearances are obtained, the ILS places an order with a builder who loads the necessary components and installs them at the home site – quickly and efficiently. After the installation is completed, the ILS returns to the home to inspect the quality and functionality of the ramp and to determine the consumer's level of satisfaction. Finally, the ILS would coordinate program funds and payments with Cumberland County DECD.

This program would be available throughout the Cumberland County entitlement area and would serve qualified low to moderate income households with residents who could not safely and effectively use steps to enter and leave the home. Those served would be people with a disability as well as elderly people.

2a. Magnitude & Severity

The personal severity of the problem is difficult to overstate. What if you couldn't leave or enter your own home? Getting to medical appointments, going shopping or to church, attending school, community involvement, social, family, and recreational activities, taking care of your yard, and simply going outside to enjoy a nice day would all become extremely difficult, if not unattainable. We so freely and unconsciously go in and out of our homes dozens of times each day. It's something most of us take for granted and never have occasion to consider what life would be like if we couldn't.

The number of people with disabilities, especially among the elderly, is significant today and will continue to grow at increasing rates. With the onset of a mobility disability, a ramp is one of the most immediate and primary needs a person faces.

Affordability for a ramp among people with a disability is typically a substantial issue. Unemployment rates for the disabled are far above the average. The onset of a disability often results in the loss of a job and income, while medical and other costs increase dramatically.

Typically, loans are beyond reach due to low, fixed incomes. Along with ensuing damage to credit scores that usually occur, borrowing money for a ramp is not always a viable option. Consequently, it is not uncommon for people to remain trapped in their homes because they can't get a ramp.

2b. Number of People Affected

Using 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 accessing their home difficult or impossible without a ramp.

The group of people with disabilities is considered to have one of the highest rates of low to moderate incomes nationwide. This situation is primarily due to the lack of employment opportunities and subsequent high unemployment rates. Additionally, the incidence of disability is also high among elderly people with fixed, low incomes. Consequently, the great majority of the 5600 people would fall within HUD LMI parameters.

2c. Long-term Economic & Social Affects

Obtaining accessible housing is one of the 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.

Critical Access has already added 19 accessible homes in Cumberland County communities and could create 8 to 10 more over the next 2 years with 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 be involved in community activities and services. Finally, ramps enhance a home's visit-ability for friends, family, and neighbors who can't use steps safely or effectively.

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 19 accessible homes 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 or when they are no longer needed by an individual, thereby greatly extending and diversifying their use and impact.

3a. Management

Alpha One, Maine's CIL, has been providing services for people with disabilities for over 30 years and will manage the project. With its central office in South Portland, Alpha One has a staff of 34 that includes dedicated professionals such as registered nurses, occupational therapists, independent living specialists, and rehabilitation specialists, as well as a staff 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 this program has been running continuously for the past 8 years and has installed 212 ramps throughout Maine. It has been included once again for FY 2013. Additionally, Critical Access has also been a Cumberland County DECD program during the past several years and has installed 19 ramps in the county. The Critical Access program has been audited several times by Cumberland County and Maine's DECD and has consistently received superior management reviews by both.

3b. Experience with Other Projects

Alpha One has successfully created and conducted many other programs for Maine's disability community including Home Retro (MSHA), Title 7b, Independent Living Grant Program (RSA), the Home & Community Benefits for the Physically Disabled Waiver (MaineCare), and has created and conducted many demonstration grant projects with the U.S. Department of Education and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation among others.

3C. Ongoing Commitment

Alpha One has vigorously pursued its mission of enhancing the independence of Maine citizens with disabilities for over 30 years, and has understood that a ramp that provides fundamental independent access in to and out of a home is critical for a meaningful life and a person's well-being. This program is unique; no viable alternatives exist. Since creating the program eight years ago, Alpha One has successfully kept Critical Access viable 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 are all currently successfully operating. A crew of professional builders, as well as a professional office and field staff of over 30, are all experienced with the program and are currently active with it.

4. Ready to Proceed

Alpha One is ready to proceed with the program immediately. 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 and throughout Southern Maine and have the facilities, personnel, tools, and experience to immediately begin producing and installing modular ramp components for a new program. Experienced Independent Living Specialists, 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 immediately be able to efficiently and seamlessly implement a renewed program for Cumberland County 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. All ADA, as well as other national and Maine state and local building codes and guidelines, have been met or surpassed. All administrative, office and field, 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.

5. Budget table for project. Form attached.

6. Implementation schedule. Form attached.

7a. Need for CDBG Funds

Almost all other grant or special loan programs for home repairs require that the applicant own the home. CDBG funds are one of the very few sources, if not the only one, that can provide home improvement and repair funds to renters. 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. Combined with high medical bills, the onset of a disability 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 resident 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 and Alpha One assists in connecting people with other programs such as Home Retro or 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 two years. However, funds less than \$40,000 would not provide for enough resources to make the program worthwhile. Without proper funding it would not be possible to provide Critical Access ramps in Cumberland County. There are no similar alternatives for those who can't afford a ramp, especially for those who do not own their homes.

Project Implementation Schedule

<u>Activity</u>	Q #1 J – S 2013	Q #2 O – D 2013	Q #3 J – M 2014	Q #4 A – J 2014	Q #5 J – S 2014	Q #6 O – D 2014	Q #7 J – M 2015	Q #8 A – J 2015
Contract/ Environmental Review	X							
Reporting		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fabricate Ramp Components	X							
4-5 Ramps Installed		X	X	X				
4-5 Ramps Installed, year 2					X	X	X	X
Project Completed:								

Appendix IV: Budget

<u>Construction Projects</u>				
Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds	Total
Design/Engineering				
Land Costs				
Materials/Supplies	43,478			43,478
Construction Costs				
Project Management	6,522			6,522
Other				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
Total Costs	50,000			50,000
<p>Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:</p> <p>Applicant has successful history of providing ramps with 15% administrative costs.</p>				

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



Ramp was installed June 7, 2011 in Yarmouth.

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.



Ramp was installed January 26, 2011 in Windham.

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.



Ramp was installed April 11, 2012 at Harrison.

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.



Ramp was installed February 15, 2011 at Standish.

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.