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Cumberland County Community Development Program
2015 CDBG General Program Application
Regional Cover Page

Project Title The Cumberland County Homeless Prevention Program

Regional Applicant Cumberland County Commissioners

Non-Profit Entity The Opportunity Alliance

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Program Category

Public Service X

CDBG "National Objective"

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

Direct Benefit: Presumed Group Homeless Adults (Identify Group)

Amount of CDBG Funds Requested $37,600.00

Total Estimated Project Cost $82,645.00

Name of Authorized Official Dawn Ouellette, Chief Financial Officer

Signature of Authorized Official

2014 Public Service Application Questions

Respond to the narrative questions in a maximum of six pages. Multi-jurisdictional applications complete a seventh page.

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 are the services to be provided? Where will they happen? Who's in charge? Who will be served?

The Opportunity Alliance (TOA) is requesting $37,600 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 by paying for a security deposit, 1st 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.

We currently 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. Our homeless prevention case manager works on multiple levels with client's exploring their budgets and will help establish affordable payment plans with utility companies. 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. We are experienced at looking at available community resources. Our interventions focus on stopping the emergency and work with families on a short-term basis by providing solution focused interventions. TOA will provide 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 on cases. Additionally, we will continue to provide education to towns about how we can best serve clients with their imminently homeless or homeless status.

The Opportunity Alliance has served several hundred people in Cumberland County at risk of homelessness. This project will continue to build on this experience by continuing to help consumers navigate a complex system, educate about housing options, assist with budgeting, help with filling out applications, and assist with landlord negotiation, etc. Every persons story is unique as are the resources in their community. With this grant funding we will continue to work with local resources, collaborate with General Assistance and Town offices in towns and meet clients in their communities.

Provide a response to the questions below defining and justifying the **need for the activity**. **- 20 points**

Convey the magnitude and severity of the issue to be addressed. Identify the total number of people affected by the issue.

Housing issues and the need for affordable housing continue to plague many low income people in Cumberland County. Along with Utilities Assistance, Housing and shelter was sited from Maine 211 in the "Top Call" category. Below is the 211 data for Cumberland County:

Housing/Shelter	1250
Financial Assistance - Rent	363
Financial Assistance - Utilities	1039
Homeless Services	319

Many people are making decisions between rent, food, and utilities. We often see people evicted due to an inability to pay for utility costs. 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 2014 "Point in Time Survey,"497 people were homeless in Portland. However, the 497-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 497 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 lose track academically. With these funds we can, often times, prevent the crisis from occurring. Support has historically been provided one time and has been enough to get a family stable.

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.
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 or 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.

How many people or households will be served by the project? We anticipate working with between 65 -70 individuals and families with this funding. We will also continue to provide supportive case management to those who don't need this funding or during times we are able to access other resources.

Provide a response to the three questions concerning **management of the proposed activity - 10 points**

Define who will manage the grant funded project and how they will manage it. The Director of Access and Intake will provide supervision to our Homeless Prevention case manager. They will meet weekly to oversee progress on meeting program objectives

Explain the experience of the applicant in undertaking projects of similar complexity. 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.

Describe efforts to obtain non-CDBG funds
In 2014, we applied for funding through United Way but at that time they did not have any funding available. Our agency is always reviewing grants that may be appropriate for this work. Additionally, this year we intend to identify a Homeless Prevention Committee that will have community involvement from people who are invested in prevention and who could help TOA work on attaining grants. This year our agency will provide the funds to support the agency and staffing costs.
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 there will not be many steps needed to initiate the project. We will shift the funding so that we are using all CDBG for direct client assistance. 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
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.

Appendix IV: Budget

Public Service Programs				
Cost Category	**CDBG Funds**	**Municipal Funds**	**Other Funds**	**Total**
Equipment				
Materials/Supplies				
Operations				
Salaries			$25,776	$25,776
Fringe			$115,20	$115,20
Transportation				
Consultants				
Space/Rent				
Project Management				
Other – 1) Client Assistance	35,00.00			$35,000
Other –2) Insurance, IT to support Staff, payroll expense			$2,400	$2,400
Other –3) Admin (13.50)	$2600		$5,349	$7,949
Total Costs	$37,600		$45,045	$82,645

Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:

TOA will match this grant with funds to support the staffing and other costs associated with this position. We have determined that we will average $500-1000.00 per client in assistance and anticipate working with between 60-70 clients.

Project Implementation Schedule

Activity	Q #1 J – S 2015	Q #2 O – D 2015	Q #3 J – M 2016	Q #4 A – J 2016	Q #5 J – S 2016	Q #6 O – D 2016	Q #7 J – M 2017	Q #8 A – J 2017
Contract/ Environmental Review	X							
Reporting		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reporting		x	x	x				
Outreach to Municipalities	x	x	x	x				
Track numbers of clients/families served	x	x	x	x				
Provide housing focused case management to clients Including assistance if needed	x	x	x	x				
Provide information and referral to clients and providers	x	x	x	x				
Project Completed:								