

Cover Sheet – Social Service Activity

AGENCY NAME: Town of Amherst
AGENCY ADDRESS: 4 Boltwood Avenue Amherst
AGENCY PHONE NO: 413 259-3040 CONTACT PERSON: Nate Malloy
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2012 CDBG REQUEST: \$7,500

1. Project Name: Flexible Emergency Funds
2. Project Description (1-2 sentences)
Funds will be used to provide low- and moderate-income households and individuals with emergency funds to be used for fuel, transportation and or medical prescriptions.
3. Project Location:
Town-wide
4. Budget Request
\$7,500
5. Type of Activity (check one):
 - Homelessness and sheltering
 - Youth development and afterschool care
 - Adult education and job training
 - Emergency & preventive services: emergency rental assistance, emergency fuel assistance, emergency food and emergency shelter services that can include case management and coordination.
 - Other – please explain

6. Demonstrate Consistency with Community Development Strategy

The Town’s Community Development Strategy specifically discusses the need for social service, including the need for emergency assistance.

7. Describe how you will ensure that participants meet low/moderate income requirements

Agencies will certify, complying with DHCD regulations, all incomes insuring that their incomes are below 80% of the area median income. This documentation will be reviewed by Planning Administration to ensure compliance.

8. National Objective

Benefit to low- and moderate-income persons
Estimate

the number of low- and moderate-income persons to benefit from the Project:

All individuals and households will meet income requirements.

Total Low/Mod individuals served - approximately 25 as the maximum amount for each request will be \$500.00

Please submit responses to the following questions:

A. Please describe in full the project for which you are requesting funding:

Include information on the number of individuals or families to be served and who they are, i.e. disabled, low-income, homeless, etc.

The Town will provide emergency fuel, transportation passes or gas cards (equivalent to value of bus pass) and medical prescription vouchers to low- and moderate households residing in the Town of Amherst. Payments are made directly to utility companies or other service providers on behalf of the client. Households and individuals will be required to provide documentation that confirms their household income meets the state definition of low income. Homeless individuals do not need to provide income documentation, however all applicants must fill out an intake form.

Planning staff will certify household income to ensure that they meet DHCD and CDBG requirements, that is that their incomes are below 80% of the area median income. Senior Planning Staff will review income certification to ensure compliance with regulations. Staff will also be required to justify each request based on the following policies:

Documentation for emergency assistance will require households or individuals to submit shut off notice from fuel company, statement from applicant describing need for transportation assistance or copy of prescription receipt indicating interval of medication and cost. Funding will be provided as a last resort with the assurance that these funds will help stabilize the household's financial hardships.

Each household would be eligible for a maximum of \$500.00.

Planning staff will be responsible for screening households that will include collecting client information, documenting need and household income and will utilize Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) virtual screening service to provide information regarding additional services clients may be eligible for. This may help families receive services necessary to prevent the household from facing similar crisis.

The homelessness outreach worker(s) will be responsible for screening individuals who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and follow the same procedure as described in 3.

Local Support:

B. What is the community's need for the proposed project/program?

Define the need or problem to be addressed by the proposed project. Explain why the project is important. Provide evidence of the severity of the need or problem. Who the affected population and why is this population presently underserved or not served?

The need for emergency assistance continues to increase, as does poverty in the United States and Amherst. The latest U.S. census shows that in the past year there has been an increase of five thousand children living in poverty in Massachusetts. This increase in poverty is reflected in the increase in calls received by various social service agencies from new families seeking help with basic needs such as food and clothing and the numerous calls each week received by Family Outreach of Amherst from families who have fallen behind on their rent and are in danger of losing their homes. This large need is reflected in the Amherst demographics. The population of Amherst, according to the 2000 census is relatively diverse, with 78% of individuals being white, 6.5% black, 9.0% are Asian and 6% of the population is of Latino decent. Highlighting this diversity, 20.1% or 6,844 individuals speak a language other than English, at home. This is due in part to a large influx of refugees, since the 1990's, of both families and individuals from Cambodia, Central America, Puerto Rico, Cape Verde and Russia. Amherst also has a substantial number of low-income individuals and families; according to the 2,000 Federal Census, 20% of all individuals and (329) of all families have incomes below the poverty level. Over 45% of all households earn incomes below \$30,000.00. 15% of all families (705) are female single parent families with children under 18 years of age and 199 families receive public assistance from the Department of Transitional Assistance. 480 families receive some of subsidized housing. All of these households, due to the financial crisis facing our country are at risk of becoming homeless of having to make difficult choices between paying rent, eating or heating their homes.

Over the past year the Town provided assistance for over 30 clients using other funds. These funds, however, have been fully expended. During this fiscal year the Town will use 2011 CDBG funds for this purpose.

C. Community Involvement

What process was used to select this particular project? How was the process responsive to expressed community need?

Define the process that will be used to maintain involvement of the project beneficiaries in the implementation of the project.

Amherst uses CDBG funds to support a variety of social service agencies that will provide a continuum of services for the most vulnerable individuals and families residing in Amherst and the surrounding area. The Town is currently providing space at the Bangs Center, at low cost, for Big Brother Big Sister of Hampshire County and the Center for New Americans. The Town provides space at no cost for meetings of the Amherst Human Services Network, a coalition of agencies providing services for Amherst residents. The Town provides space, at low cost, for the Community Action's Head Start and childcare programs.

The Town has and will continue to provide financial support for the Amherst Survival Center, which provides emergency food and clothing for low- and moderate-income Amherst residents and Family Outreach of Amherst which provides case management support for low-income families at-risk for homelessness, women at-risk for domestic violence and families at-risk for substance abuse and other social issues.

The Community Development Strategy specifically discusses the support Amherst provides for social service agencies and programs and specifically identifies the need continued need for social services programs that address issues of relating to poverty, youth development health care, family planning, financial stress and others as the needs arise. The Community Development Strategy identifies the need for emergency rental assistance, emergency fuel assistance and provide financial assistance to help pay medical prescriptions.

As part of the application process for 2012, the Community Development Committee held a public hearing at which the Community Development Strategy as well a social service priorities were discussed and commented on by the public. The Community Development strategy continues to support the need for social service support and has identified the need for providing emergency assistance as a priority

After hearing from the public, the Community Development Committee voted the following social service priorities:

Homelessness and sheltering

Education: outreach and advocacy

Mental health services

Emergency & preventive services: rental, food, fuel, shelter and transitional assistance

The Town then requested proposals from social service agencies, identifying priorities as voted by the Committee. Proposals were advertised on the Town's website and emailed to a large number of social service agencies that provide services to Amherst residents. The announcement was also sent to the Daily Hampshire Gazette and the Springfield Union. The Committee received responses and at a second public hearing agencies were encouraged to make short

presentations of their proposed activities. At a public meeting, after closing the public hearing, the Community Development Committee voted to recommend the inclusion of funding for emergency assistance in the Town's 2011 application for funding.

D. Project Feasibility

The project impact will be evaluated upon the extent to which the response meets the following criteria:

1. Describe what evidence exists to show that the community at large or project beneficiaries will use the project. Include documentation of demand for the activity through summary descriptions of surveys, inquiries, waiting lists or past participation.

The Town continues to receive requests for emergency assistance from low- and moderate-income households and very little other funds exist for this purpose. Over the past year the Town provided over 30 low- and moderate-income households and individuals with emergency assistance funds.

2. If applicable, describe and document the availability and source of matching or other funds needed to complete the project.

No other funds exist

3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of all personnel involved in the project as well as internal controls.

Town staff will assume responsibility for this program. Ruth Taylor will be the initial contact for disbursing funds. She will review income certifications and in consultation with Nate Malloy will make final decisions as to eligibility.

4. Citing past accomplishments, document that the agency has the necessary past expertise to conduct the activity and has successfully completed past activities in a timely manner.

The Town has been administering emergency assistance for over 15 years and has managed CDBG projects for over 6 years.

5. Please submit a program budget that includes all sources of revenue and all expenses.

\$7,500

E. Impact

Describe the impact the activity will have on the specifically identified needs. What measurable improvements will result from the activity? How much of the need will be

addressed? Define the direct and indirect outcomes that will result from the project. Identify quantitative and qualitative measures determine that the outcomes are achieved.

The short-term impact of this activity will be to prevent homelessness for those most at-risk. Based on the funding request it is projected that this activity could potentially prevent homelessness and or heating emergencies for up to 30 families. The long-term impact will occur as agency staff work with families to create plans for long-term stability to ensure these families do not face such emergencies in the future.

F. Evaluation

Goals & Assessments: Please explain your short-term goals and long-term goals. Describe the changes in the target population that indicate the program's success. How will these changes be measured? Will anticipated changes affect the municipality's responsibility to this target population? How will the impact of this service on individual clients be tracked over time? Will there be additional beneficiaries? Will this service enable clients to become self-sufficient? How is this service linked to other human/social service programs in the community?

The goals of this activity are to prevent homelessness, ensure that families and individuals do not go without fuel or electricity and to also help families continue to work by providing transportation passes and or assist with medical prescription expenses.

The Town will provide a narrative describing some of the more difficult situations and how funds have helped these families. In addition, the Town will keep statistics on the number of families receiving help based on their incomes and ethnic origin and the type of help they have received. The Town will request agencies making referrals to keep statistics on how additional funding has been leveraged to help these families and request follow-up information from agencies regarding additional support provided.