

Cover Sheet – Social Service Activity

RECEIVED DEC 30 2015

AGENCY NAME: Amherst Community Connections
AGENCY ADDRESS: 121 North Pleasant Street, PO Box 141, Amherst, MA 01004
AGENCY PHONE NO: (413) 345 - 0737 CONTACT PERSON: Hwei-Ling Greeney
CONTACT PERSON EMAIL: greeneyh@juno.com
CDBG FUNDING REQUEST: \$38,000

1. Project Name: One-Stop Resource Center Project
2. Project Description: The One-Stop Resource Center Project will help chronically homeless and / or struggling individuals identify and address challenges that prevent them from leading stable lives. Our goal is to intensively work with individuals on an ongoing basis to help them create lasting changes that transform into positive and healthy lives.
3. Project Location: 121 North Pleasant Street, Amherst
4. Budget Request: \$38,000
5. Type of Activity (check one):

XX Family and individual stabilization
 - Youth development
 - Economic self-sufficiency (adult education)
 - Food and nutrition
 - Health services
 - Emergency & preventive services: rental assistance, fuel assistance, and shelter services.
6. National Objective: Objective #1, benefiting extremely low income/low income individuals.

Total number of beneficiaries (individuals served): 250 individuals, each of whom will receive an average of 4-6 hourly sessions per year.

Total Low/Mod beneficiaries (individuals served): 250 individuals, each of whom will receive an average of 4-6 hourly sessions per year.

A. National Objective Description

The Amherst Community Connections (ACC) One-Stop Resource Center meets the first priority in the national objectives: to benefit low/moderate income individuals and families. ACC works with Amherst populations, such as:

- Homeless individuals, who, on average, have 0% to 20% Area Median Income (AMI).
- Elderly and/or disabled individuals in public and subsidized housing, < 30% AMI.
- Low-income and/or disabled individuals who qualify for public assistance, <30% AMI
- Recently released inmates, 0% to 20% AMI

Participants will complete a self-declaration form regarding their level of income and household size.

B. Demonstrate Consistency with Community Development Strategy

ACC's One-Stop Resource Center is consistent with the 2016 Community Development Strategy priorities of individual stabilization, self-sufficiency and preventive services.

At the One-Stop Resource Center, homeless and low income participants work with case managers, caseworkers and trained and supervised volunteers to receive coordinated, daily support services. Case managers will identify each participant's critical needs such as housing, employment, substance abuse treatment, mental health and urgent services, and establish supportive relationships through which participants' individual needs and goals can be achieved. The purpose of the One-Stop Resource Center is to provide consistent, year-round services and support to homeless and low income individuals to create opportunities for the positive change they seek in their lives. A consistently staffed, year-round facility serves as the arena in which participants are encouraged to connect with others and contribute to the community in a positive and productive manner.

C. Agency Information

The mission of Amherst Community Connections is to empower and support homeless and struggling low-income individuals to achieve long-term stability.

ACC regularly collaborates with other service providers and has compiled an extensive database of local and regional resources for homeless and low-income individuals. ACC has provided case management, information/referral and advocacy services for over six years and recently received a grant from Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts to support its work.

In addition to its mobile case management services, ACC has established other programs based on Amherst community needs, which include:

- The People's Fund, a community-wide emergency fund that helps at least one household move in or become stabilized in housing per week
- Supplemental Meal Assistance Program, a program that meets the meal gaps in the Amherst community and provides meals on days when other soup kitchens are closed due to holidays or inclement weather. This Program serves 40 to 50 individuals per meal.
- Incubator Peer Group, a weekly meeting in which low-income participants come up with bold proposals and implement them with support from each other and from ACC staff (e.g. one participant started her own Uber driving business). On average, there are 10 to 15 participants at each meeting.

- Helping Hands workshops, workshops that orient concerned citizens, members of faith community, and local institutions to community resources to better serve those in need. At least one workshop occurs per month.

Vulnerable homeless, mentally ill, or extremely low-income individuals often lack critical resources, such as housing and sufficient income, and do not know how to access them. To help them address their needs at their convenience, ACC brings its rich and diverse services to its participants in locations such as public libraries, local soup kitchens, homeless shelter or house of correction. ACC constantly refines its supportive services in response to emerging community needs and has created other programs for financial assistance, peer support, supplemental meals, and community awareness.

In the course of operating its various programs, ACC consistently serves an average of 35 to 40 individuals each week. Each year, ACC works with over 300 individuals in Amherst area. However, current funding prevents ACC from expanding its case management, referral services and outreach to meet the existing demands of its primary constituency. The addition of CDBG funds is thus critical to ACC's ability to meet this urgent need and fill a critical gap in local social services.

ACC's short-term goals:

- Obtain and coordinate resources to meet the increasing housing and social services needs of the homeless and low income community in Amherst.
- Train local institutions and other human service agencies to better serve the homeless and extremely low income Amherst residents to access available local resources.

Long-term goals:

- Provide supportive permanent housing to house chronically homeless individuals in Amherst.
- Construct safe and affordable housing for homeless and extremely low income individuals in the Town of Amherst.

D. Project Budget Information

In consultation with accounting and grant development experts, with more than 20 years of experience, ACC staff members have established a lean and efficient budget to fund its case manager/services coordinator, volunteer training, outreach and facilities to successfully meet the goals of establishing its year-round One-Stop Resource Center.

To meet additional financial obligations outside of the CDBG grant request, ACC is committed to and has obtained nearly one fifth of the total funds needed.

E. Project Description

With the support of CDBG funds, the One-Stop Resource Center will be the only drop-in, daily case management and social service facility available to homeless and low income individuals year-round in the Amherst community. Currently, similar facilities and services can only be accessed at the Hampshire Resource Center in Northampton or alternative facilities in Greenfield.

Because of the limited hours of its daily operations, the emergency homeless shelter, currently operated by Craig's Doors, can offer very limited social services to shelter guests. During its six months of operation, the shelter closes at 8:00 a.m. each morning and shelter guests must travel to social service facilities scattered in various locations in Amherst and surrounding communities. A year-round One-Stop Resource Center, easily accessible in the center of Amherst, would provide locally coordinated and intensive case management to shelter guests during the shelter season as well as sustained support and case management throughout the year. While a seasonal emergency homeless shelter serves those who are most vulnerable during the coldest months of the year, ACC's One-Stop Resource Center will meet the daily needs of homeless individuals for services and support to achieve stable, productive lives and transition out of homelessness.

The One-Stop Resource Center opened as a pilot program with existing staff and volunteers in early November 2015. Since its opening, the Center has provided an accessible, well-equipped and comfortable space in downtown Amherst five days a week for an average of 10-15 homeless and low income participants each day. With CDBG funds to establish the One-Stop Resource Center, an experienced social service program coordinator and case manager will train and supervise three to four caseworkers, all of whom will work with participants on an individual and daily basis to create and implement integrated action plans, establish personal growth goals and engage in community based activities. The Resource Center will also provide a range of resources and amenities to facilitate participants' success, such as laptops, printer, copy machine, telephone, applications, and food nourishment.

For those who are new to the Resource Center, caseworkers will first conduct a needs assessment and then work with them to create an action plan that maps out specific steps to accomplish their goals in a reasonable timeline. For example, a man in his late 30's recently described to his caseworker that he needed a bus pass to travel to Springfield to borrow money from a friend. He had just found a room that he could afford and needed help with the move-in costs. Because the caseworker has experience working with participants who have limited knowledge of local resources, she inquired about his housing history and monthly income, helped him create a budget for his needs, and subsequently access Amherst emergency funds. The man was amazed that his caseworker not only introduced him to available resources but helped him weave them into his goal to become stably housed.

This example and others at ACC's pilot program of the One-Stop Resource Center in its first eight weeks of operation, demonstrate that CDBG funds would have a long term, sustained impact on the health, safety and well-being of members of the Amherst community who are currently homeless, experiencing housing, economic and/or medical vulnerability.

F. Project Need

Since ACC's One-Stop Resource Center pilot program began in early November 2015, the majority of shelter guests (15-20) have attended the resource center at least once per week. Amherst residents who are housed but struggle with unstable living situations have also sought services at the Resource Center. The strong regular attendance at the One-Stop Resource Center from 8:00 a.m. - noon really illustrates

the need and desirability for such a Center in Amherst. ACC anticipates that the proposed Center will meet the needs of between 40 - 50 participants a week once we publicize it at our multiple outreach sites and through outreach with local social service providers.

For over three years, ACC has provided case management, information/referral and advocacy services at the Jones Library two afternoons a week. We conduct, on average, about 800-1,000 visits per year. However, ACC has recognized that its visible booth in the library is more appropriate for information/referral rather than case management services due to its lack of privacy and limited access to specialized resources, such as housing, income and benefits applications.

During its outreach at Hampshire County Jail and House of Correction, ACC works with inmates with ties to the Amherst area to create and follow through with concrete release plans that specify housing and income sources, because many of these individuals return to homelessness or unstable housing upon their departure. It is critical that ACC caseworkers follow up with inmates in a private and accessible setting as they return to the community to ensure that they are in stable situations.

As a natural extension of ACC's services, the One-Stop Resource Center would provide the accessibility, privacy and continuity of services that participants need to make steady progress in their efforts to achieve measurable, sustainable goals as contributing members of our community.

G. Community Involvement and Support

During the CDBG public hearing on November 17, 2015, members of the public described the difficulty of accessing resources when they were homeless while others described how case management services can help individuals navigate housing, employment and other processes. ACC's One-Stop Resource Center pilot program has confirmed that such a center fills an existing gap in the delivery of social services and has successfully engaged local volunteers and community supporters to join us in achieving the program's goals of positive change in the lives of Center's participants.

ACC caseworkers maintain contact with homeless and struggling low-income individuals by going to the public sites they frequent, following up with them and providing basic resources, such as bus passes, information/referral and winter gear in the short term, and on-going support throughout the year. ACC receives participant feedback through case management sessions, peer group meetings, and participant surveys.

Community volunteers play a critical role at the One Stop Resource Center. ACC provides training to its volunteers who currently include student interns from the Five Colleges and full time Amherst residents. Interns share their knowledge of online strategies with resource-poor participants while they experience working in a social service setting. Our volunteers, who are Amherst residents, employ their specialized skills in law, social work, and professional writing, and experiential knowledge of Amherst to help their struggling neighbors access greater opportunities in their lives. In turn, participants who have achieved stability in their own lives have become volunteers, working with others to overcome similar challenges.

H. Project Feasibility

ACC has established a strong track record of outreach, case management and referral services to homeless and low income individuals over the course of the past six and a half years. By focusing on its core constituency of extremely low income, predominately homeless and thus, especially vulnerable population, ACC's staff and volunteers have developed long-term relationships with its current and prospective participants.

Timeline:**July – August 2016:**

- The One-Stop Resource Center will begin full operations. Interns and community volunteers will have completed their training and be prepared to provide assistance in advocacy and referral.
- Outreach to other social service programs in Amherst. Presentations will be done to acquaint local social service providers with the operation and purposes of the One-Stop Resource Center. Referrals from other agencies will be accepted.

Each day: Caseworkers will assess participants, create action plans with them, and keep an updated record of participant progress.

Each month: Participants will create a newsletter that acknowledges individuals who have become housed, employed or reached personal milestones and features participants' art and writing.

Every three months: ACC case manager will conduct program evaluations with participant, staff and volunteer surveys.

I. Project Impact

Each person who comes to ACC's Resource Center will receive one-on-one case management sessions with a case manager and trained caseworkers.

Direct Outcomes:

- Participants will work with caseworkers in a safe and warm space to create and coordinate short and long-term goals into an action plan and focus on small, achievable steps throughout the process.
- Participants will secure housing, housing subsidies, access to rehabilitation services, healthcare, employment, qualified benefits, emergency funds, etc. as their action plans are implemented.
- Participants will explore, develop and apply their talents and share their perspectives as members of a compassionate and engaged community (i.e. monthly newsletter and creative writing publications, exhibitions of visual art, community outreach, etc.)

Indirect Outcomes:

- Improved community health: Participants will share experiences with others and help others become stabilized. Studies show that their own health improves through volunteering.
- Establishing positive routines: Participants' active, sustained involvement in regular activities of the Resource Center will facilitate their transition back into employment, housing, social networks.
- Conserving Town and public resources: Participants will address their challenges through supportive and productive engagement in sustained case management services with measurable outcomes. Town and public emergency resources will be less burdened.

ACC will measure the impact of the resource center by recording the number of participants served and the type and number of goals reached and surveying participants, staff and volunteers. Through the operation of a year-round facility, ACC will be able to track participants' progress over time as goals are met. ACC staff will continue to engage with participants at off-site locations and other public venues. ACC will coordinate services with Eliot Homeless Services, Healthcare for the Homeless, Craig's Doors, and Amherst Survival Center to meet participants' needs. ACC will also continue its close collaboration with the Jones Library and Hampshire Sheriff's Office.

**AMHERST COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
FY 17 ONE-STOP RESOURCE CENTER BUDGET**

PERSONNEL		Notes
Service coordinator/caseworker (.625 FTE)	23,400	
Program director (.125 FTE)	6,500	
Subtotal salaries	29,900	
Payroll taxes and benefits 20%	5,980	
TOTAL PERSONNEL COSTS	35,880	
DIRECT PROGRAM COST		
Office laptops & supplies	1,500	
Food supplies	600	
Bus passes	1,000	
Printing/coping	600	
Postage	200	
Staff transportation & parking	300	
Training & development	400	
Insurance professional	1,000	
Miscellaneous	300	
Office rent	1,200	
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	7,100	
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS 12% (\$42,980)	5,157.6	
TOTAL EXPENSES	48,137.6	
SOURCES OF FUNDING		
Town of Amherst	38,000.0	Pending
Individual contributions	9,137.6	Confirmed
Faith community contributions	1,000.0	Confirmed
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	48,137.6	

JONES LIBRARY

NORTH AMHERST LIBRARY • MUNSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

December 11, 2015

Dear Sir or Madam,

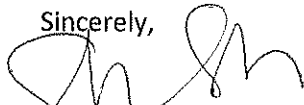
On behalf of Jones Library, I am pleased to support Amherst Community Connections' efforts at homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing. In the past five years, the Jones Library has partnered with Amherst Community Connections to address the basic needs of homeless patrons and other vulnerable, low-income members of the public. Amherst Community Connections staff have provided critical case management, information/referral and advocacy services to these community members, helping them access housing, employment and other resources.

The Jones Library is one of the most utilized resources for homeless and low-income individuals in Amherst. Due to generous funders and good leadership, the Jones Library is open seven days per week during the school year, for a total of 59 hours per week. During the Library's open hours, patrons who struggle with homelessness or other unstable housing situations find a refuge, where they belong just as much as anyone else. All are welcome at the public library and receive respectful and helpful service from librarians and other Library workers. While at the Library, patrons can also access Amherst Community Connections' services and other free services and events that the Jones Library hosts, including the award-winning ESL program, book clubs and events. The Library has become much more than an escape from the outside elements.

At the same time, we recognize that Library and other resources cannot replace the need for stable housing. In fact, people need to be in stable living situations before they can take full advantage of the trove of resources that the Jones Library has for them. We, therefore, support Amherst Community Connections' work to help homeless and low-income individuals undergo the process of housing stabilization.

Please let me know if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Sharon Sharry,
Library Director

LEARN • DISCOVER • CONNECT

joneslibrary.org



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Hampshire Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 7000
NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01061-7000

Sheriff

ROBERT J. GARVEY

Deputy Superintendent

PATRICK J. CAHILLANE

December 11, 2015

CDBG Committee
Town of Amherst
4 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002

TELEPHONE

(413) 584-5911

FAX

(413) 584-2695

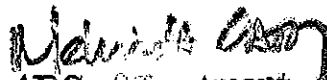
Dear CDBG Committee Members,

The mission of the Hampshire Sheriff's Office and House of Correction is to promote public safety by providing opportunities for successful reintegration to each individual sentenced to this facility. In order to succeed in our mission to help each participant make a healthy, pro-social transition back to the community, we regularly collaborate with volunteer and community-based organizations such as Amherst Community Connections.

This letter of support is to state that Hampshire Sheriff's Office and House of Correction has collaborated with Amherst Community Connections since 2012 to provide information and referral services to inmates who intend to move to the Amherst area upon their release. Because a significant number of inmates will be homeless upon their departure from the jail, it is very helpful when local service agencies begin to engage with inmates during their sentences and continue to provide specific guidance and support to inmates regarding housing-related issues as they prepare to return to the community. Amherst Community Connections plays such a role as it helps inmates to establish concrete release and re-entry plans and execute each step of their plan. Hampshire Sheriff's Office supports Amherst Community Connections' work with inmates and provides staff members to support the visits that the Amherst Community Connections staff conducts with inmates.

Through its regular visits, Amherst Community Connections has helped many inmates find housing and employment upon their return to the Amherst area. The Hampshire Sheriff's Office looks forward to more years of fruitful collaboration with Amherst Community Connections. Please contact me at (413) 582-7720 or melinda.cady@hsd.state.ma.us if you have further questions.

Sincerely,


ADS of Treatment
MEd, LADC-I

Melinda Cady

Assistant Deputy Superintendent & Director of Treatment

ACC FY 2015 Revenue and Expenditure Report

1. INCOME	FY 2015 – ACTUAL (\$)
a) Contributions, gifts, grants	26,908.50
b) Revenues	0
	22,177
TOTAL INCOME	49,085.5
2. EXPENSES	
a) Client financial assistance	1,405.62
b) Community relations	263.88
c) Fundraising expenses	2,286.92
d) Food/Household/Office Expenses	2,320.56
e) Phone & Internet	445.07
f) Postage	227.47
g) Printing	95.92
h) Professional fees	1,672.72
i) Director and office insurance	1,050
j) Liability Insurance	0
k) Rent	17,625.00
l) Transportation	383.93
m) Utilities and heat	3,432.91
n) Wages	7,267.12
TOTAL EXPENSES	38,477.12
3. Fund balances at beginning of FY 2015	22,459.49
4. Fund balances at end of FY 2015	33,067.87

ACC FY 2016 Current Budget

1. INCOME	FY 2016 – PROJECTED (\$)
a) Contributions, gifts, grants	32,000
b) Revenues	18,000
	0
TOTAL INCOME	50,000
2. EXPENSES	
a) Client financial assistance	5,000
b) Community relations	300
c) Fundraising expenses	3,000
d) Food/Household/Office Expenses	2,000
e) Phone & Internet	400
f) Postage	300
g) Printing	400
h) Professional fees	1,500
i) Director and office insurance	1,200
j) Liability Insurance	500
k) Rent	2,400
l) Transportation	400
m) Utilities and heat	
n) Wages	32,600
TOTAL EXPENSES	50,000
3. Fund balances at beginning of FY 2015	33,067.87
4. Fund balances at end of FY 2015	