

CUMBERLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

STAFF REPORT

From: Kristin Styles, Community Development Director

Date: May 8, 2023

Subject: 2023 Annual Action Plan Including the CDBG & HOME Funding Budgets

Two public hearings will be held on the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for 2023: April 10th and May 8th. A final vote by the Commissioners endorsing the 2023 Annual Action Plan is scheduled for the May 8th meeting. The Annual Action Plan will be submitted to HUD on May 15th.

The purpose of this report in is to:

- 1. Identify CDBG and HOME grant funds for 2023
- 2. Review the application process for selecting CDBG projects
- 3. Familiarize you with the projects and programs recommended for funding

Available Grant Funds for 2023

CDBG Allocation: Cumberland County will receive \$1,547,514

The total allocation is divided into four components:

1.	<u>Total Administrative Costs</u> :	\$273,156
	County Administration	\$ 180,000
	South Portland Administration	\$ 55,000
	Bridgton Administration	\$ 38,156
2.	County Community & Regional Grants:	\$752,807
	a. Reprogrammed funds	\$180,000
3.	Town of Bridgton Activities:	\$152,617
4.	City of South Portland Activities:	\$368,936
	a. Reprogrammed funds:	\$169,964

I. Accepting and Selecting Applications

The process for selecting the "County" (not South Portland or Bridgton) applications for 2023:

- Applications distributed November 2, 2022
- Application workshop November 30, 2022
- Pre-applications submitted by December 14, 2022
- Final applications submitted January 19, 2023



Following submission, applications were distributed to the Application Review Team. Team members were: Scott LaFlamme - Chair (Yarmouth); Courtney Kemp (South Portland & Cumberland County); Brian Sites (North Yarmouth); Zach Mosher (Standish); Anthony Ward (Casco); Daniel Stevenson (Westbrook).

Team members reviewed the applications and assigned scores based upon established criteria. Applicants met with the review team on February 8th to briefly present their projects and answer questions.

General Program Applications	Planning Program Applications	
Project description – 10 points	Description of problem – 35 points	
Project management – 10 points	Strategy to complete planning project – 30 points	
Implementation schedule – 5 points	Readiness to proceed – 30 points	
Readiness to proceed – 20 points	Multi-jurisdictional bonus – 5 points	
Need for the project – 20 points		
Need for CDBG funds – 15 points		
Budget – 5 points		
Distress score – 0-10 points		

Raw scores were totaled and converted to group ordinal rankings. The results of the collective rank order of applications became the basis for the allocation of funds.

II. Projects, Programs & Activities Recommended for Funding

The Municipal Oversight Committee (MOC) recommends 11 grants for funding to the County Commissioners. Of these, five are region-wide activities and six are community-based projects.

\$ 15,000

Regional vs. community projects:

Multi-jurisdictional bonus – 5 points

Regional projects:	\$ 563,807	
Community projects:	\$ 369,000	
Funding by project type:		
Public Services	\$ 135,000	
Public Facilities & Infrastructure	\$ 548,807	
Housing	\$ 234,000	

Planning **County Administration** \$ 180,000



Project & Funding Recommendations

Public Services

County-wide Through These Doors- DV Outreach Advocacy Services \$ 25,000

Through These Doors (TTD), the local domestic violence resource center serving Cumberland County is requesting funding for the Domestic Violence Outreach Advocacy Services program. The funds would support a .5FTE advocate position to provide advocacy and support services to individuals and their families who are experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sex trafficking, and/or stalking within their intimate partner relationships. This program would extend support services to all communities in Cumberland County (except for Bridgton, Brunswick, Portland, and South Portland).

As communities begin to open more to individuals since Covid, TTD has seen a dramatic increase in the need for court advocacy, in-person advocacy, and support services for individuals residing in the Greater Portland area. TTD has made the decision to increase their Greater Portland Outreach site from two advocates to three to meet the demands of this increase.

Through These Doors would offer free and confidential advocacy and support services such as access to support groups (online and in-person), 24-hr helpline, residential services, assistance navigating the civil and criminal justice system including helping filing protection from abuse orders, safety planning, and warm referrals to other community resources. An additional priority would be to assist survivors and their children stay safely housed by working with other community resources, housing assistance programs, and other grant/foundation resources. All these services provided by advocates would help individuals build the supportive resources needed in creating a safe, suitable livable environment.

County-wide The Opportunity Alliance Homeless Prevention Program \$ 55,000

TOA requests \$135,000 of funding to service the needs of Cumberland County residents. Cumberland County Homeless Prevention Program (CCHPP) operates as a secondary prevention program addressing the urgent needs of the growing homeless population by providing comprehensive and adaptive supports to those at risk of housing instability or homelessness. CCHPP assists families in finding, securing and/or maintaining housing by providing connections with other resources in the community. CCHPP works collaboratively in a proactive approach supporting families by reducing barriers that impact their ability to maintain stable housing.

The program goals are accomplished through several strategies; (1) access to client funds addressing an immediate crisis putting clients at risk for homelessness; (2) short-term housing case management services coordinating necessary resources, supports and networks required to obtain permanent housing; and (3) financial counseling and educational supports which provide the necessary tools and skills needed to promote ongoing economic self-sufficiency.

County-wide SMAA Meals on Wheels Program

\$55,000

The Meals on Wheels program of the Southern Maine Agency on Aging provides nutritious meals for homebound seniors. All meals provided through our Meals on Wheels program are approved by a Maine registered dietitian. The food is prepared in USDA inspected kitchens through a local Maine company and each meal is designed to meet one-third Federal Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) for a healthy and balanced diet. Meals come in options that address



several different dietary and medical needs as well as culturally-sensitive meals.

All Cumberland County residents 60 and older who live without access to regular meals, or the ability to prepare adequate meals, are eligible to participate in the program. SMAA has operated in this region for 50 years and relies on our strong staff and corps of 200+ Meals on Wheels volunteers to provide the service efficiently and consistently across all of southern Maine.

During the Cumberland County Community Development Block Grant Program funding year of July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024, SMAA anticipates serving 119,600 home-delivered meals to 940 Cumberland County senior residents.

Housing

County-Wide Alpha One Critical Access Ramp Program

\$84,000

AlphaOne in entering their 14 year of operating this program. The program installs critical ADA access ramps at the homes of handicapped or elderly Cumberland County residents who otherwise would be severely hindered from, or unable to, leave their homes.

County-Wide Habitat for Humanity- Home Repair Program

\$150,000

Habitat offers health and safety repairs to local homeowners (all of whom make less than 80% of AMI) who wouldn't be able to afford said repairs on their own. With an extremely tight housing market in Cumberland County, these repairs that allow low/moderate income homeowners to remain in their homes is more critical than ever. They are expecting to repair 50-60 homes next year. At minimal to no cost for the homeowner.

Public Facilities & Infrastructure

Harpswell- Holbrook Community Wharf Replacement

\$12,800

The Holbrook Community Foundation (HCF) requests \$12,800 to replace two damaged floats at Holbrook's Wharf that allow access to two local businesses (the store and snack bar) run by residents of Cundy's Harbor. The repairs are needed as the wood structure and underlying floatation material of the existing floats are deteriorating. (see photos)

Holbrook's Wharf provides public access to members of the Cundy's Harbor community who arrive by boat at the dock to enjoy the snack bar and buy provisions in the local store. Local fishermen sell their catch and enjoy snacks at the store. The new floats also provide public access to HCF's community events in the summer. The HCF Board will hire a local contractor through a competitive bidding process to build two floats to replace the old ones.

Long Island - School/Library Heat Pump Project

\$60,900

The Long Island School Department is seeking to have a heat pump system installed in our town owned school/library building that also houses a multipurpose room for community use. We also have a wellness center, library annex and an archive space for our historical society, located in the basement of the building. This project will not only serve the Long Island School & Library but also many community organizations. Our multipurpose room hosts the following groups but is not limited to: Long Island Recreation Department, Long Island Fire and Rescue, AA meetings, knitters group



and book clubs. The library also hosts numerous programs during the summer months for the community such as visiting authors and weekly storytimes for young children. The building serves as our only emergency shelter.

Heat pumps will need to be installed into five different zones (2 classrooms, office, multipurpose room & library), along with two fresh air requirement units for each classroom. Heat pump units, equipment and labor are included in the proposal attached from Casco Bay Heat Pump. The school department has been able to secure\$6,000 in funding from private donors and are requesting \$60,900 from the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Standish- Mill Street Park Improvements

\$85,000

The Town of Standish is requesting \$85,000 to fund upgrades to the Mill Street Park located in the Steep Falls Village of Standish. The upgrades would include replacement of damaged picnic tables and benches, the addition of new shade elements (there is no shade during peak hours in the summer), inclusive and age-appropriate playground equipment (especially for toddlers) to enhance the existing playground that was designed for ages 5-12, updating the paved court by installing new basketball hoops and painted court lines for team play, a safety fence, tree work, reclaiming an existing walking path, and improving the outdoor skating rink by installing a new liner.

This park is centrally located in the Steep Falls Village at 6 Mill St and is a town-owned 1.96 acre parcel near the town library, an elementary school, gazebo (which is home to various events throughout the year), and a new public trail on a large parcel that was donated to the Presumpscot Land Trust. The additional amenities and upgrades to Mill Street Park will increase use of the park and help meet the critical need for recreational space and facilities in this economically distressed area.

Westbrook – Presumpscot River Boardwalk Accessibility Enhancements \$195,000

The City of Westbrook constructed the existing steel-framed, pressure-treated decking, Boardwalk along the southern riverbank of the Presumpscot River in 2003. The Boardwalk, roughly 8-ft wide from Vallee Square to Ash Street, provides pedestrian connectivity to downtown businesses, public agencies + services (like the US Post Office, Walker Memorial Library, public parking lots - including the "snow ban lot"), open spaces + recreational opportunities, senior housing, and more. Although the City's Public Services Department has conducted limited deck replacement to maintain this pedestrian thoroughfare for all residents + businesses to use, the wooden superstructure (i.e., decking) has exceeded its useful design life. Although the steel-framed substructure remains structurally sound, the wooden superstructure must be replaced to ensure ADA accessibility + pedestrian connectivity in this LMI community. When the old decking is removed, the metal handrails will be removed, which will allow them to be powder-coated thus extending the life of the Boardwalk superstructure.

The City of Westbrook has collected preliminary estimates from multiple vendors to provide a basis for a project budget to replace the wooden superstructure. However, as part of this project, the City will: (1) prepare a scope of work for superstructure replacement using existing drawings + specifications from the 2003 design; (2) solicit bids via a competitive RFP or RFQ process; and (3) complete this Boardwalk accessibility enhancement project, which will address uneven surfaces (e.g., replace rotten wooden decking+ members, address ADA tipdown areas, etc.) that pedestrians must currently navigate.



Windham- South Windham Village Sidewalk Construction

\$ 195,107

A section of street re-design to improve pedestrian connectivity including new sidewalks, signage, lighting, and ADA features, to connect the heart of the South Windham Village with existing underutilized parking and the Mountain Division Rail Trail on the periphery of the village. The parking, located at the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, has been recently improved, with the assistance of Cumberland County CDBG funding, to provide first of its kind public parking in the South Windham Village. The newly completed parking and visible pedestrian access infrastructure enhancements combined, will improve local traffic safety, and invite drivers-by to park nearby and enter the heart of the village through the new pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. The Mountain Division Trail lies approximately 500 feet beyond the new parking lot and a sidewalk to the trail will enable much easier and safer access to this 10-ft wide walking and bicycling path, whose southern section runs approximately 5 miles up to Standish and Sebago Lake.

The improvements will serve the local LMI community, especially the elderly, young, and young families, commuters passing through, and all residents who may utilize the new amenities and benefit from a safer, more vibrant, pedestrian-scale connected village.

Planning

Scarborough -Understanding Homelessness in Scarborough

\$ 15,000

This planning grant will assist the Town of Scarborough with understanding the nature of homelessness in our community and assist in developing appropriate strategies targeted to unhoused individuals.

The Grant expenditures will be divided between two main tasks. First, we will use social workers in the field to assess the number, location and level of need for unhoused individuals in Scarborough. Next, we will use an expert in the industry to assist a local committee of stakeholders to develop appropriate strategies. Strategies may include identification of local and regional resources available to those experiencing homelessness as well as potential local policy or program development.



Bridgton & South Portland Programs

The program and activities conducted in the two set-aside communities of Bridgton and South Portland are integral components of the Cumberland County Community Development program. While not participants in the County application competition, their projects, activities, funds, planning, administration and regulatory compliance are integrated with the County's program.

Town of Bridgton:

2023 Set-Aside Allocation

\$190,771

The Bridgton Board of Selectman held a public hearing on March 14th on the following funding recommendations from Bridgton's Community Development Advisory Committee. Once all public comment was received, the Bridgton Board of Selectmen approved the budget as recommended.

Public Facilities/Infrastructure	\$124,000
Church Street Sidewalk Enhancement	\$ 124,000
<u>Public Services</u>	\$ 28,615
Community Center Navigator Program	\$ 13,615
Bridgton Food Pantry	\$ 15,000
Admin and Planning	\$ 38,154
Program Administration	\$ 38,156

City of South Portland:

2023 Set-Aside Allocation	\$423,936
Prior Year Unallocated Funds	\$169,964

The City of South Portland continues to operate their CDBG program much as they did prior to relinquishing HUD Entitlement status in 2007. Coordination between South Portland and the County, particularly on administrative matters occurs on a regular and on-going basis. Courtney Kemp serves as the Community Development Coordinator in both Cumberland County and South Portland. South Portland finalized its selection of CDBG funded programs, projects and activities at their City Council meeting on March 7, 2023.

Public Facilities/Infrastructure	\$457,330
Redbank Community Center Improvements	\$ 65,000
Westbrook St. Shared Use Path	\$ 374,330
Preble Street Food Hub	\$ 36,000



<u>Public Services</u>	\$63,570
TTD- Domestic Violence Outreach Support Services	\$ 9,595
TOA - Redbank Hub	\$ 17,595
SMAA -Meals on Wheels	\$ 7,095
GPFP- Housing Stabilization Program	\$ 15,095
Middle School Ski Equipment	\$ 7,095
Rec Dept. Camp Scholarships	\$ 7,095
Admin and Planning \$	
Program Administration	\$ 55,000

HOME Program Consortium

All the communities of Cumberland County including Portland, Brunswick and the 25 members of our Community Development program have formed the City of Portland/Cumberland County HOME Consortium. Portland serves as the lead entity for the Consortium. All administrative and program delivery services are conducted by the City

Unlike CDBG, HOME funds can only be used for four types housing activities: housing rehabilitation, home ownership assistance, tenant based rental assistance and new construction of rental or ownership housing. Cumberland County uses 100% of our portion of the allocation for affordable housing development, our funds are used a leverage when affordable housing developers seek LIHTC and other funding sources. This year the County has \$110,371 in program income to add to the 2023 formula allocation of HOME funds.

2023 funds	\$ 511,781
2023 Annual Allocation	\$ 401,411
Program Income	\$ 110,371