

CITY OF BURLINGTON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT - 2018 APPLICATION

Organization/Agency: HomeShare Vermont

Project Name: Expanding Homesharing in Burlington

I. Demonstrated Need

- 1. What is the need/opportunity being addressed by this program/project and how does that contribute to CDBG's national objectives? ***

Affordable housing continues to be Burlington's highest overall priority under the City's Consolidated Plan. The Plan has a goal stating, "all Burlington residents have a range of housing options that offer them safe, decent, appropriate, secure and affordable housing" with a strategy of "protecting the vulnerable by helping residents remain housed and living independently." According to HUD, the 2018 Fair Market Rent in Burlington is \$1,121/month for a one-bedroom apartment. Even if one could afford that rent, it could cost \$2,242 upfront to move in (including security deposit). For most low-income people this is prohibitive. The average rent in our program last year was **only \$254/month** with no security deposit.

HomeShare Vermont contributes to CDBG's national objective of low and moderate-income benefit by maintaining affordable housing through homesharing. We enable seniors, persons with disabilities and others to remain at home and improve their quality of life with help from a Homeshare Guest. By increasing homesharing opportunities, we are providing other Burlington residents with an option for safe, decent, appropriate, secure and affordable housing.

II. Program/Project Design

- 1. Give us a short summary (2 sentences) that describe the program/project.**

We provide a comprehensive screening and matching service for those who need a little help staying at home safely and comfortably while also helping others looking for an affordable, safe place to live. Homesharing matches can include rent, help around the home and/or sharing of utility expenses.

- 2. Explain why the program activities are the right strategies to use to achieve the intended outcomes. Why is the program designed the way it is? (cite evidence, best practices, or community input)***

As a community we cannot afford to solve the affordable housing crisis nor meet the needs of an aging population simply by building more housing. Homesharing is a cost-effective housing option and creates opportunities for people to help each other. A 2010 national report by Affordable Living for the Aging entitled "Shared Housing: Best Practices, Challenges and Recommendations" defined 10 critical program components for successful homesharing programs. HomeShare Vermont's program incorporates all 10 program components. The report notes that the most important element for success is an intensive screening process. The HomeShare Vermont screening process and our focus on quality customer service gives our "Homeshare Hosts" the confidence they need to consider sharing their home with a stranger.

3. How will this program/project contribute to the City’s anti-poverty strategy?

A key component of the City’s anti-poverty strategy is “meeting basic needs and stabilizing living situations including access to and retention of affordable housing.” This project will contribute to the City’s anti-poverty strategy by helping low and moderate-income residents stabilize current housing situations while creating access to very affordable housing opportunities for others. By sharing housing both Homeshare Hosts and Guests benefit financially and socially. Homeshare Hosts get some income, shared expenses and/or some help around the home; the Homeshare Guest gets a very affordable place to live. The average length of a homeshare match is **536 days or 1 ½ years.**

4. How do you use community and/or participant input in planning the program design and activities?*

Our homesharing program is client driven and it is up to the individuals themselves to decide who they want to live with and what the parameters of that arrangement will be – the ultimate participant input. Also, when a match ends we conduct exit interviews with both parties to solicit client input about how we could improve our service delivery. From these feedback loops we are constantly evaluating and improving our materials and our processes. Changes we have made recently in response to participant input include more frequent match checks, especially with our Hosts, and making changes to our application and reference check processes. We also recently added short phone interviews for potential Homeshare Guests to make sure our program was a good fit before we do the background and reference checks and the in-depth, in-person interview.

III. Proposed Outcomes

1. What are the intended outcomes for this project/program? How are people meant to be better off as a result of participating?

The intended outcomes for this project include:

- 50 Burlington residents remain at home with help from homesharers.
- 50 Burlington residents find affordable housing.
- 100% of matched participants benefit from increased financial security and/or an improved quality of life by feeling safer, reducing loneliness, eating better, sleeping better or feeling healthier.

2. List your goals/objectives, activities to implement and expected outcomes.

Goal/Objective	Activity Funded	Outcomes
Affordable housing provided for low-income people	Case management including screening, matching and on-going support	50 people find housing at well below market rents
Seniors and others are able to remain in their homes	Case management including screening, matching and on-going support	50 people stay at home with improved quality of life

IV. Impact / Evaluation

1. How do you assess whether/how program participants are better off? Describe how you assess project/program outcomes; your description should include: what type of data, the method/tool for collecting the data, from whom you collect data, and when it is collected. *

Annually we survey our matched participants to determine their outcomes and satisfaction with our services. We have done these surveys for 17 years. Our most recent survey in May/June 2017 had an 88% response rate. This process includes two separate survey instruments developed with the expertise of a UVM Professor of Sociology and includes ratings scales and open-ended questions. Our board members and volunteers help conduct the in-person interviews and some participants complete mailed or online surveys. Data from the surveys and from client files is tabulated and reviewed by our staff and board of directors.

2. How successful has the project/program been during the most recent reporting year for your CDBG project? Report the number of beneficiaries you intended to serve with which activities (as noted in your last Attachment A) and your final outcomes (as noted on your Attachment C) from June 2017 (or June 2016). For non-CDBG participants – report on your achievements from the previous year.

For our Fiscal Year ending June 2017 (yr.1 of 2 yr. grant) we assisted 147 Burlington residents. Of the 147 persons, 50% were extremely low income, 22% very low income and 21% low income. Our goal for the grant was to serve 150 persons in 2 years so we will exceed our goal.

Program-wide we had the following outcomes for matched participants in FY 17:

HOMESHARE HOSTS OUTCOMES		
Ability of Seniors & Others to Stay Safely at Home	Over 51% of those sharing their home reported they would not be able to live safely and comfortably at home without a homesharer.	
Improved Quality of Life: Those having someone live with them report they.....	Feel Less Lonely	84%
	Feel Happier	78%
	Feel Safer in their Home	68%
	Eat Better	62%
	Feel Healthier	49%
	Hosts received over \$146,000 in rental income to help them make ends meet.	
	Hosts received nearly 25,000 hours of help from their Guest in everything from yardwork to dog walking to preparing meals, etc.	
HOMESHARE GUESTS OUTCOMES		
Affordability of Housing	Average Rent	\$254
	Using the difference between market rents and homeshare actual rents, it is estimated that Guests saved over \$500,000 in rental expenses this year.	

V. Experience / Organizational Capacity

1. What is your agency's mission, and how do the proposed activities fit with your mission?

HomeShare Vermont's mission is: "improving lives and communities by bringing Vermonters together to share homes." As a small organization with 35 years of experience, we are laser focused on the activities described in program/project design which are specifically implemented to help us achieve our mission.

2. Explain how your agency has the capacity to carry out the proposed activity (i.e. staff qualifications, years of experience related to this type of activity, etc.) *

HomeShare Vermont has a highly qualified staff. Our Executive Director has over 25 years of experience managing housing programs in Vermont and sits on the boards of HomeShare International and the National Shared Housing Resource Center. Our Office Manager of 8 years is a former Director of the Volunteer Center at United Way and has substantial experience in managing federal grants. Our Homesharing Program Director of 10 years, an experienced social worker, has exceptional people skills and our Case Manager came to us as a RN from the VNA. Our newest employee, focused on intake and outreach, is a former news reporter and editor. Our staff is supplemented by 14 Staff Volunteers who come with a wealth of knowledge and life experience and include retired teachers, social workers and guidance counselors.

3. What steps has your organization/board taken in the past year to become more culturally competent internally?

Staff attended a training on "hidden disabilities" which explored how social services providers can better serve individuals with experiences such as chronic pain, psychiatric or intellectual disabilities that can be invisible to others.

4. Have you received Federal or State grant funds in the past three years? X Yes

5. Were the activities funded by these sources successfully completed? X Yes

VI. Proposed Low & Moderate-Income Beneficiaries / Commitment to Diversity

1. a. For your proposed project, please estimate how the Burlington residents will break out into the following income categories during the total grant period. Use the Income Table at <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/2017-HUD-Income-Limits>

Service / Activity	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington HH / Persons to be Served	# Extremely Low-Income	# Low-Income	# Moderate-Income	# Above Moderate-Income
Case Management	190	95	70	15	10

b. All CDBG grantees serving limited clientele will be required to use CEDO's *CDBG Beneficiary Self-Certification* form to collect beneficiary data including race, ethnicity, annual income, and family size. Is your organization willing and prepared to add this documentation to the intake process for your CDBG funded program by July 1, 2018?

X Yes ___ NO ___ Not Serving Limited Clientele (public facilities only)

- 2. Who is the project/program designed to benefit? Describe the project/program’s target population, citing (if relevant) specific age, gender, income, community/location or other characteristic of the people this program is intended to serve. How do you select and reach your target population?**

Although the homeshare model is very flexible and we are available to assist many different types of people, our target population is serving elders or people with disabilities who could benefit from homesharing as described in our outcomes. In FY 17, Homeshare Hosts ranged in age from 28-100 with an average age of 67. Our additional focus is Homeshare Guests who need affordable housing. They might be people new to the area because of work or school or in a life transition such as a recent divorce or loss of a job, or simply can’t afford market rents. In FY 17, Homeshare Guests ranged in age from 22-82 with an average age of 45 and two-thirds were women.

All Homeshare Hosts offer a private bedroom, in a safe and clean home, and are willing to accept an affordable rent or service in lieu of rent. Homeshare Guests must be willing to offer some help and/or companionship. It is up to people in the program to decide who they want to live with. We constantly work on outreach which includes networking and referrals, flyers, classified ads, display ads, community talks, news coverage, display tables and much more. Because our outcomes surveys show that 84% of those sharing their home are less lonely and studies show that reducing loneliness has important health benefits, this year we will reach out to doctors’ offices to focus on referrals of seniors living alone who could benefit from homesharing.

- 3. Describe the steps you take to make the project/program accessible, inclusive and culturally appropriate for the target population. ***

Our program has a depth of experience and success working with and matching people of different generations, abilities and cultures. This year we have focused our efforts on issues related to gender identity. Because of an increased number of transgender and gender non-binary clients, we are working with volunteers on reviewing the language we use as well as specifically asking clients how they would like to be identified and what information they would like us to share with potential matches. In addition, we have recently changed our applications from male/female to an open field where applicants can identify a gender identity of their choosing.

VII. Budget / Financial Feasibility

- 1. Budget Narrative: Provide a clear description of what you will do with CDBG’s investment in the project/program. How will you spend the money? Give specific details.**

The CDBG funding will be used to pay approximately 8 hours per week of the Homesharing Coordinator’s salary.

- 2. If you plan to pay for staff with CDBG funding, describe what they do in relation to the specific service(s) / activity(ies) in your Project/Program Design.**

a.

Specific Service / Activity	Position/Title	Work Related to CDBG-Funded Activity	# of Hrs./ Week spent on this Specific Service	% of Hrs./Week spent on this Specific Service to be paid with CDBG
Case management/ helping people find housing & helping others stay safely in their housing	Program Coordinator & Case Manager	Recruiting, screening, matching, staying involved & problem solving if needed	72	CDBG will cover 11% of hours/week

b. All CDBG grantees that use CDBG funds for salaries must submit timesheets that capture total time and effort of staff members funded with CDBG. These timesheets must record CDBG hours worked, other hours worked and funding sources, and a narrative for all CDBG and non-CDBG funded activities, and they must be signed by the employee and supervisor. Does your organization have the ability to implement a timekeeping system for CDBG funded staff that meets these requirements by July 1, 2018? Yes No Not funding salaries

3. Program/Project Expense Budget (FY 19 & 20)

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
Salaries	\$ 20,000	\$ 191,200	\$ 211,200
Other	\$ 0	\$ 50,000	\$50,000
TOTAL	\$ 20,000	\$ 241,200	\$261,200

4. Funding Sources

	Project (2 yrs.)		Agency (2 yrs.)	
	Current N/A	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$	\$ 20,000	\$ 13,000	\$ 20,000
State (specify) VT Dept. of Disabilities Aging & Independent Living		118,760	359,880	359,880
Federal (specify)		0	0	0
United Way		18,235	55,260	54,000
Private (specify) Donations, fundraising		61,705	202,855	185,120
Foundations, grants, municipalities		7,500	175,900	166,000
Other (specify) Match fees, investments, in-kind		35,000	84,865	105,000
Total	\$	\$ 261,200	\$ 891,760	\$ 890,000

5. Of the total project cost, what percentage will be financed with CDBG?

$$\frac{\$ \underline{20,000}}{\text{CDBG Funding}} \div \frac{\$ \underline{261,200}}{\text{Total Program/Project Costs}} = \underline{8\%} \text{ Percentage}$$

6. Of the total project cost, what would be the total cost per person?

$$\frac{\$ \underline{261,200}}{\text{Total Program/Project Cost}} \div \frac{\underline{150}}{\# \text{ Total Proposed Beneficiaries}} = \underline{\$ 1,741} \text{ Cost Per Person}$$

$$\frac{\$ \underline{20,000}}{\text{Total Amount of CDBG Funding}} \div \frac{\underline{150}}{\# \text{ Total Proposed Beneficiaries}} = \underline{\$ 133} \text{ Cost Per Person CDBG Investment}$$

7. Why should CDBG resources, as opposed to other sources of funding, be used for this project?

Homesharing is a difficult program to fund because it is not just about housing, seniors or people with disabilities. Many funders are interested in single issues or want to only fund new initiatives. We have done a good job of securing funding from multiple sources over the years and we raise nearly one third of our income from individual donations and fundraising. We need CDBG funding to provide and expand our services to Burlington residents.

8. Describe your use of community resources, including volunteers. Include any resources not listed in your budget. Will CDBG be used to leverage other resources?*

A key piece of our program's design is the use of Staff Volunteers. No other program uses volunteers to staff their program as we do. We currently have 14 Staff Volunteers who each provide an average of 6 hours/week of our service delivery under supervision of our full-time Homesharing Coordinator. They are typically retired professionals including nurses, social workers, teachers and others. Each volunteer has their own caseload of clients. Staff Volunteers have been a cornerstone of our program for over 35 years and are one of the reasons we are able to develop high quality matches in a very cost-effective way.

To serve Burlington residents each dollar from CDBG will leverage \$13 from other sources.

VIII. Collaboration/Efficiency

1. Give 1 or 2 examples of key successful collaboration(s) between your program/project and another agency/program/group to address the needs of the people you serve.

An example of a successful collaboration is with the Burlington Housing Authority. Some of their residents, who are seniors or younger adults with intellectual, developmental, physical or mental health challenges, need a roommate to make it safe for them to continue living in the community and reduce their isolation. We have developed a process with BHA that does not duplicate screening efforts and works speedily so we don't lose potential Guests, giving BHA confidence that these matches will be successful and saving them time and money in the long run.

An example of a BHA match: This past year, we helped a Burlington man with an intellectual disability. He had a history of finding "unsavory" housemates who had taken advantage of him, including stealing, breaking his belongings, moving in without permission and refusing to leave. He needed a trustworthy housemate to provide guidance, social mentorship, cooking support, transportation and budgeting help. He was matched with a woman who needed low-cost housing to pay off student loan debt. She helps him to cook and eat more healthfully to manage his diabetes and drives him to appointments. She models positive communication and appropriate social interactions and is a completely reliable support in his life. He now has the help he needs to live in his own apartment and she has begun climbing out of her mountain of debt.

2. Do identical or similar community programs exist? How does this program compliment or collaborate rather than duplicate services? What makes this program unique?

Homesharing is a unique program in this community and we are experts at a very specific service: recruiting, screening, matching and providing ongoing support to help people live together well which can be complex. If during this process, other client needs are identified, we collaborate and or refer to other agencies such as SASH, Age Well, VNA, etc. so as not to duplicate services. We are constantly networking and explaining our services to other organizations to get the best referrals possible.

3. **Provide 1 example of how your agency has become more efficient in achieving your outcomes or managing your project/program.**

We collaborated with Cathedral Square, SASH and AARP-VT to complete a survey of Chittenden County residents age 50+. This saved us time and money and allowed us to gather data about what people knew of homesharing and what concerns people had about sharing their home to inform our outreach efforts. We learned that people were not aware of how we address safety, compatibility and privacy issues. Now we more directly discuss these issues with each applicant and are working on new outreach materials with these issues in mind. We hope to roll them out this summer with the goal of increasing our pool of Homeshare Hosts and enabling us to make more Burlington matches.

IX. Sustainability

1. **How will this project have a long-term benefit to the City of Burlington? If this program/project ends, how will that benefit continue?**

With the dramatic aging of the population and affordable housing crisis, the need for our program will only grow. Helping elders and people with disabilities live in the community benefits all of us by making our community more inclusive instead of segregating and isolating these populations. Few areas elsewhere in the country have a comprehensive homesharing service. If our program ends, homesharing may not be an option for people in Burlington in the future.

2. **CDBG funding is intended for new or expanded services. If CDBG funding ends, will the project be able to continue?**

CDBG funding will allow us to serve more people. With CDBG funding we plan to increase our efforts to serve more Burlington residents and focus our outreach to potential Burlington Homeshare Hosts. Homesharing will continue in Burlington if we don't receive CDBG, however our ability to grow the program will be affected.

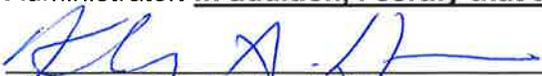
3. **How will you prioritize the proposed project activities if you do not receive the full amount requested?**

If we receive less funding than requested, more staff time will have to be spent on fundraising which will ultimately reduce staff time to work directly with clients.

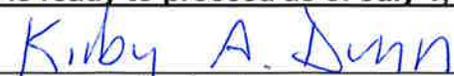
X. Certification

To the best of my knowledge and belief, data in this proposal are true and correct. I have been duly authorized to apply for this funding on behalf of this agency. I understand that this grant funding is conditioned upon compliance with federal CDBG regulations.

I further certify that no contracts have been awarded, funds committed or construction begun on the proposed program, and that none will be prior to issuance of a Release of Funds by the Program Administrator. **In addition, I certify that this project is ready to proceed as of July 1, 2018.**



Signature of Authorized Official



Name of Authorized Official



Title



Date