

City of Burlington / 2014 CDBG Application Form

Project Name: "Project Integration"

Project Location / Address: 20 Allen Street, 3rd Floor, Burlington, Vermont 05401

Applicant Organization / Agency: Association of Africans Living in Vermont, Inc.

Mailing Address: 20 Allen Street, 3rd Floor, Burlington, Vermont 05401

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EIN #: 30371003 DUNS #: 151293938

CDBG Funding Request: \$10,000

Check ONE: X 1 year 2 years
(Equal Access, Health) (Housing, Homeless, Hunger)

1. Type of Organization

 Local Government

 For-Profit Organization

 Faith-Based Organization

 X Non-Profit Organization (please provide copy of your
IRS 501(c)(3) tax exemption letter)

 Institution of Higher Education

2. Conflict of Interest: X Please complete and sign attached form.

3. List of Board of Directors: X Please attach.

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, this project is ready to proceed as of July 1, 2014.



Signature of Authorized Official

 YACOUBA BOGRE
Name of Authorized Official

 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Title

 11 JANUARY 2014
Date

(Refer to NOFA for required information for each question.)

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?

Vermont's refugee and immigrant communities number more 7,500 individuals and overwhelmingly reside in Chittenden County. Chittenden County's refugee and immigrant households face multiple barriers to economic self-sufficiency and long-term integration, including: initial poverty resulting from an absence of pre-arrival resources, limited pre-arrival work experience, limited literacy and English language proficiency, limited access to childcare and transportation resources, discrimination, and sometimes pronounced cross-cultural differences in the workplace environments and supervisor expectations between those in one's home country and the United States. Greater Burlington's high cost of living exacerbates these challenges.

Although the overall unemployment rate in Vermont is 4.4%, the 2012 Vermont refugee job placement rate for the 330 refugee adult caseload was 54%. The 2-bedroom fair market rent for the greater Burlington stands at an expensive \$1,276. Refugee and immigrant households are typically impoverished. The household income of 80% AALV clients is below the federal poverty level; this is directly in keeping with the national guidelines of the federal CDBG program. The poverty of refugee and immigrant households underscores their urgent need for a wide variety of social services: from TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid/Medicare, to subsidized housing, to Head Start, to affordable healthcare programs, and, perhaps most critically, job skills training and placement programs (including English language training). Accessing and then maintaining these services can prove confounding for refugees and immigrants, however.

Just as refugee and immigrant households struggle to meaningfully access and utilize a broad array of social services, mainstream social service providers face significant challenges to serve populations which struggle to understand and remain compliant with their services. For example, the AALV often receives phone calls from the Department of Children and Families to request that we assist refugee and immigrant households with their SNAP and Medicaid benefits income-eligibility paperwork. Similarly, employers will contact AALV if their refugee or immigrant workers are not understanding a workplace principle that requires either stronger English language comprehension or greater cross-cultural nuance.

Project Integration employs bilingual/bicultural Outreach Workers to help refugees access and navigate the services, resources, and regulatory frameworks related to their social and economic integration in Vermont. Project Integration does not replace existing services providers in any specific discipline. Instead, AALV staff act as bridges between their ethnic / national communities and the range of mainstream experts in these disciplines.

II. Program/Project Design

1. Describe the program/project activities. [UWCC]

Project Integration follows a basic direct service process, broken into four (4) activities. This process is used for referral case management and for job placement activities.

1. Assessment of concerns / problems / barriers presented by clients in their own languages
2. Creation of a service plan, with the client, to address the concerns / problems / barriers, with specific actions, and service objectives to be accomplished within an explicit, jointly agreed upon timeframe
3. Referral and accompaniment to employers and mainstream providers, and advocacy for the client's wishes with those employers and providers
4. Monitor the referral relationship and provide support to ensure the service objective is achieved

This process is modified in specific ways to address a client's particular basic need or employment objective. For example, when a client arrives at AALV for help finding a job, the following activities would take place. (1) Assess KSAs and experience, and barriers; (2) Research open job opportunities; (3)

Complete and submit job applications; (4) Enroll in workplace orientation training; (5) Assist with interview; (6) Confirm hire details; (7) Resolve any transitional problems (e.g. transport, childcare); (8) Confirm 30-day retention; (9) Confirm 90-day retention. If the client needed help resolving a problem with public benefits, the activities would take place: (1) Determine and document the benefits where there are problems; (2) Communicate by phone with the mainstream case worker who manages the relevant public benefit (e.g. DCF); (3) Meet in person with the client and the public benefits case worker as necessary; (4) Monitor and follow up with client and case worker within 10 days to ensure that benefits problem has been resolved.

In both examples above, the (1) assessment, (2) creation of service plan, (3) referral and accompaniment, and (4) monitoring of outcomes phases are present. Documentation by AALV staff ensures that Project Integration activities result in verifiable outcomes. Funding from CDBG will pay for .25FTE time of a Bhutanese Outreach Worker. This Outreach Worker will assist Burlington's most recently arrived refugee community with job placement and referral case management.

2. Why is the program/project designed the way it is? Explain why the program activities are the right strategies to use to achieve the intended outcomes. [UWCC]

Project Integration helps Burlington's refugees and immigrants address their basic needs and pursue financial stability. Refugee and immigrant households meet their basic needs and pursue economic independence through (1) participation in the local workforce and (2) use of supportive public benefits and social services. As noted earlier, refugee and immigrant communities face linguistically and culturally specific barriers, which often marginalize them from both the workforce and mainstream supportive services. Project Integration, then, is the service which removes these barriers in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner, reduces marginalization, and enables refugee and immigrant households to access and utilize the workforce and basic need services at parity with the rest of Burlington. Without the CDBG Program's support for Project Integration, this segment of Burlington's population would experience less opportunity than American-born residents to address their basic needs and would be less financially secure.

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

Project Integration is highly compatible with the goals of the City's CDBG Program. November 2013's Strategic Plan identifies "growing race-based disparities in income, access to resources, home ownership, and even in homelessness" as a barrier to improvement in Burlington's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area. This area – Census Tracts 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 – is substantially comprised of recently arrived refugees and immigrants who live in poverty. This is particularly true of Census Tract 5, where more than half of households live in poverty. Notably, the Strategic Plan's Priority Need #6 identifies the reduction of barriers to economic opportunity as a "high" priority for the City. This Priority Need notes that "referral case management for recently arrived refugees" is a central activity of this priority.

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

AALV conducts an annual program satisfaction survey with a sample of its served population. The surveys have variously resulted in: hiring new staff with specific linguistic capacities; recalibrating programs to focus greater effort on areas of acute need (e.g. securing work); and pursuing funding for specific programming that is deemed by the community of being particularly valuable (e.g. the home health aid workforce training).

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? [UWCC]

Funding from CDBG will pay for .25FTE time of a Bhutanese Outreach Worker. This Outreach Worker will assist Burlington's most recently arrived refugee community with job placement and referral case management to help as many refugees as possible achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency. The following goals, activities, and SMART outcomes are to be completed by the end of the one-year

period, from 1 July 2014 until 30 June 2015. All deliverables listed below will be completed during the .25FTE of the Bhutanese Outreach Worker's time paid for by CDBG funding.

2. List your goals/objectives, activities to implement and expected outcomes (# of units, # of individuals, etc.)

Goals (from CDBG Program Goals)	Activity Funded	Outcomes
Move people out of poverty	1. Assess 10 households' barriers and assets for moving out of poverty 2. Create a service plan for securing gainful employment for 10 households 3. Refer and accompany 10 refugees seeking employment to skills training opportunities and open, durable jobs 4. Monitor 10 households' success on the job and coordinate supportive services that promote 80% job retention	10 refugees secure a job at an average wage of \$10.00 per hour. 90% of jobs will be full time 8 (80%) of jobs will be retained for at least 90 days 4 refugees will have the employment supportive services coordinated by AALV staff
Address the basic needs of people living in poverty	1. Assess 75 households' need and eligibility for basic needs supports 2. Create a service plan for securing supports from mainstream resources for 75 households 3. Refer and accompany 50 refugees to mainstream agencies for basic needs supports 4. Monitor 60 households' successful utilization of services and troubleshoot challenges faced	60 refugees will receive new basic needs supports 10 refugees access DCF for Medicaid, food stamps, and TANF for first time 10 refugees access public housing assistance 5 refugees access affordable private housing 5 refugees receive support for transportation 30 refugees will have their existing basic needs supports repaired (i.e., addressing recertification and processing problems)

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. [UWCC]

AALV tracks outcomes through a client management database system. Built on an Access platform, the database tracks client service through four basic forms: (1) an intake form, which is completed once and captures demographic and contact information; (2) service plans, which document and assess clients' specific challenges, actions planned to address those challenges, and the anticipated outcomes from those actions; (3) contact forms, which are essentially case notes for each action taken with or on behalf of a client; and (4) service plan outcomes forms, which document what outcomes were achieved and when. Forms are completed by outreach workers through secure online portals.

AALV tracks the household income, composition, and address information of its clients, which allows the CDBG program to classify clients served by income threshold. AALV routinely reports out its client outcomes to federal and state funders.

- 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 2013. For non-CDBG participants – just report on your achievements from the previous year.**

The AALV largely accomplished its stated goals. The organization served 83 refugees and other immigrants from 8 countries. AALV assisted clients with securing a job on 37 different occasions, while 18 were assisted with DCF-related matters. 16 were assisted with housing and 39 were helped with immigration related issues. It is worth noting that AALV has secured funding as of September 2013 from the State Refugee Coordinator to assist clients with immigration legal issues. As such, CDBG funds will likely not be needed to address this specific issue.

- 3. How does this data reflect beneficial outcomes of this project/program? Has this impacted your program planning at all? [UWCC]**

Program outcomes data helps AALV staff understand whether or not the actions that the organization employs to solve client problems are actually effective. If strategies are found to be ineffective, other activities are planned. In general, AALV has found program outcomes data to be most useful for identifying the types of concerns that our clients experience at any given time. Take for example the issue of immigration legal assistance. This type of assistance is a lagging effect of any resettlement surge. One year following arrival, refugees may adjust their status to lawful permanent residency, while at 5 years, refugees may apply for naturalization. Because Bhutanese arrivals were so concentrated from 2010 until 2012, these naturalizations are 'coming due' now.

V. Experience / Organizational Capacity

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

The AALV maintains a mission to promote the equal opportunity, dignity, and self-sufficiency of refugee and immigrant individuals and families in Vermont, regardless of race, ethnic group, religious or political affiliation, or sexual orientation. Project Integration, as AALV's flagship direct service program, enables refugees and immigrants in Vermont to fully access and utilize the services, resources, and opportunities that are afforded to them by law, and in a manner which respects their language and culture. Outreach workers (1) identify refugees and immigrants with specific needs; (2) cooperatively design tailored service strategies which address their needs in a timely manner; and (3) connect these refugees and immigrants to the providers, resources, and opportunities which fulfill these strategies.

- 2. Please describe any indications of program quality, such as staff qualifications and/or training, adherence to best practices or standards, feedback from other programs or organizations you partner with, etc.**

The State Refugee Coordinator conducted a site review of AALV during the fall of 2013. While AALV has received positive oral response from this review the official written response has not yet been issued. It is likely that this report will be issued during the next 30 days and can be requested directly from the State Refugee Coordinator.

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

Cultural competence is a primary characteristic of AALV's programming, and AALV's unwavering attention to cultural competence has not changed during the past year. This starts with linguistic proficiency of staff but also includes staff's personal backgrounds / life experiences (e.g. being a prior refugee), and ability to listen and incorporate clients' perspectives into assistance strategies. As previously noted, Project Integration outreach workers represent the largest recently arrived refugee communities: Bhutan (2), Burma, Burundi, and Somali Bantu, and they speak the languages of these communities. The project supervisor is an African woman with an advanced degree and program-specific training.

4. Have you received Federal or State grant funds in the past three years? Yes No
5. Were the activities funded by these sources successfully completed? Yes No N/A
If No, please explain:

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

1. Will the program target a specific (solely) group of people? If so, check ONE below:

- Abused Children Elderly (62 years +) People with AIDS
 Battered Spouses Homeless Persons Illiterate Adults
 People with Severe Disabilities

2. 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 <http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/CDBG/2013-HUD-Income-Limits/>.

Service / Activity	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington HH / Persons to be Served	# Extremely Low-Income	# Low-Income	# Moderate-Income	# Above Moderate-Income
Move people out of employment by delivering job preparedness, placement, and retention services	10 households / 10 persons	8 households / 8 persons	2 households / 2 persons	nil	nil
Address the needs of people living in poverty through referral case management services	25 households / 75 persons	20 households / 62 persons	4 households / 10 persons	1households / 3 persons	nil

3. a. 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. [UWCC]

The project will assist recently arrived Bhutanese refugees, 80% of whom are at or below the federal poverty level. The target client for this project are employable adults, both men and women, and living in Burlington. As noted previously, the target population faces multiple barriers to self-sufficiency and integration, including limited English proficiency, limited familiarity with American cultural norms, broken or incongruent work experience, post-traumatic behavioral and cognitive challenges, and poverty.

- b. How do you select and reach your target population?

AALV uses bilingual/bicultural outreach workers from the target communities to reach the target community and meaningfully deliver direct services. Outreach workers are respected members of their communities, who are fluent in English and their own languages, and are knowledgeable about the range of services and resources available within greater Burlington. Outreach workers typically have served their communities in a professional or volunteer capacity for years, including during displacement.

AALV outreach workers provide services in the field at clients’ homes, at mainstream social service providers, and at AALV’s storefront office space at the former St. Joseph’s Catholic school. Formal office appointments are not necessary. Homebound and socially isolated community members reach outreach workers on their work cell phones.

4. Describe the steps you take to make the project/program accessible, inclusive and culturally appropriate for the target population. [UWCC]

AALV utilizes members of the target communities to deliver services to their community members. These outreach workers deliver services in the same languages as their clients and, critically, within cultural frames that clients relate to. For example, if a client needs to access the legal system, it is extremely important that the outreach worker not only understand how legal services are delivered in Vermont but also how that system was structured in the home country and country of first asylum. This important for explaining similarities and differences, and ensuring awareness and comfort with process.

AALV also locates its services in Burlington’s Old North End, where a significant percentage of the target community resides. AALV maintains ‘storefront’ office space, which means that clients do not have to conform to rigid appointment times. Additionally, AALV often accompanies its clients to services throughout the community, due to their linguistic, social/cross-cultural, and transportation barriers.

VII. Budget / Financial Feasibility

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

The project will fund .25FTE Outreach Worker from the Bhutanese community who speaks fluent Nepali and English. The full-time wage for this staff member is \$32,000. The budget includes a proportionate level of benefits: 22%, which includes FICA, SUTA, Workers’ Comp, and health. Finally, the project includes 1.2% of the project’s rental cost (\$20,124), or \$240. Added together, these amount to \$10,000.

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.

Specific Service / Activity	Position/Title	Work Related to CDBG-Funded Activity	# of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity	% of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity to be paid with CDBG
Move people out of employment by delivering job preparedness, placement, and retention services	Outreach Worker	(1) assessment. (2) creation of service plan, (3) referral and accompaniment, and (4) monitoring of outcomes	5 hours per week	100%
Address the needs of people living in poverty through referral case management services	Outreach Worker	(1) assessment. (2) creation of service plan, (3) referral and accompaniment, and (4) monitoring of outcomes	5 hours per week	100%

3. Program/Project Budget

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
.25FTE Bhutanese Outreach Worker – Salary	\$ 8,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 32,000
.25FTE Bhutanese Outreach Worker – Fringe (22%)	\$ 1,760	\$ 5,280	\$ 7,040
Rent 1.2% of project rent cost	\$ 240	\$ 19,884	\$ 20,124
TOTAL	\$ 10,000	\$ 49,164	\$ 59,164

4. Funding Sources

	Project		Agency	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$ 4,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 10,000
State (specify)	80,000	80,000	332,000	300,000
Federal (specify)	125,000	125,000	338,799	323,799
United Way	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Private (specify)	0	0	37,500	5,000
Program Income	20,000	20,000	450,000	450,000
Other (specify)	0	0	0	0
Total	\$ 249,000	\$ 255,000	\$ 1,182,299	\$ 1,108,799

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

$$\frac{\$ \underline{10000}}{\text{CDBG Funding}} \div \frac{\$ \underline{255000}}{\text{Total Project Cost}} = \underline{3.9} \% \text{ Percentage}$$

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

$$\frac{\$ \underline{10,000}}{\text{Total Project Cost}} \div \frac{\underline{85}}{\# \text{ Proposed Beneficiaries}} = \underline{\$ 117.65} \text{ Cost Per Person}$$

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

CDBG resources should be used to demonstrate the city's support for its ethnic and national minority communities that comprise an increasing percentage of the city's population. The project will transition this impoverished segment of the community from net tax burden to net tax contributor through job placements and increased wages. Moreover, a relatively modest amount of CDBG funding for this program will have impressive value, at a cost per beneficiary of \$119.05. Furthermore, the project is highly consistent with the key components of Burlington's published anti-poverty strategy

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?

The AALV depends greatly on the support of Burlington community members, employers, and social service agencies that are patient and understanding of refugees and other immigrants' complex barriers to self-sufficiency. Project Integration would not be successful if it were not for the assistance of these groups. CDBG will be paired with other resources but will not leverage additional outside funds.

9. If your organization has experienced any significant changes in funding levels during the past year, please explain.

The AALV has not experienced significant changes in its funding during the past year.

10. What cost-cutting measures has your organization implemented?

AALV operates on a very tight budget. Constraints on federal and state budgets impact all organizations serving specific sub-segments of the population - like refugees and other immigrants. AALV experiences the added challenge of not specializing in any one specific discipline, but instead connecting its population to the variety of mainstream providers in greater Burlington. AALV has, during the past year, transitioned its Direct Services Manager away from providing direct services herself and solely focusing her attention on managing staff. AALV then hired additional staff to manage AALV's health promotion programs, further constraining the organization's budget. AALV continues to cut staff mileage and office supplies to streamline funds for staff salaries.

VIII. Collaboration/Efficiency

- 1. Please describe other organizations/programs you work with to achieve outcomes for your program participants. How does your program collaborate with other programs, organizations, or services to address the needs of the people you serve? [UWCC]**

AALV partners with nearly every basic needs program / organization in greater Burlington. These partnerships are enormously valuable to AALV, and AALV outreach workers work diligently to maintain these referral relationships. As noted previously, AALV often accompanies clients to mainstream organizations and then works with those organizations to ensure full access and use of services. Among the most notable lines of referral are: Vermont Department of Children and Families, Economic Services Division; employers; Vermont Department of Health; Burlington Housing Authority; the food shelf; JUMP Program; the courts; Community Health Center of Burlington; Opportunities Credit Union; HOPE; Vermont Adult Learning; UVM Behavior Therapy and Psychotherapy Center.

- 2. Describe your agency's efforts at becoming more efficient in achieving your outcomes or managing your project/program.**

As of this writing, AALV is launching an online case form portal through which its outreach workers can directly enter case management data. This data then automatically populates AALV's client database, saving the direct services manager time from entering written case notes manually into the database. While this required some investment by AALV it will enable outreach workers more time to spend with clients. This is important because (1) demand for services appears to be increasing and (2) AALV anticipates a new wave of Congolese refugees arriving through the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program by the summer of 2014.

- 3. What other agencies provide similar services or programs? [UWCC]**

The AALV is most typically compared with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP); indeed, the two organizations work collaboratively with the same population. However, there are notable differences in services. Whereas VRRP provides immediate transitional assistance to newly arrived refugees, with job search and placement assistance and cash benefits, AALV helps refugees who have 'graduated' from this initial 8-month period. Because many refugees struggle to secure jobs and pay their bills during their first 8 months, AALV services are very much in demand. AALV also partners with mainstream providers to jointly deliver, rather than duplicate, services. A great example is the partnership with Vermont Adult Learning to ensure ongoing access to ESL and ESL-infused job skills training programs for refugees and immigrants.

IX. Sustainability

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

Funding from the CDBG grant provides ¼ of the salary of a Bhutanese Outreach Worker. This position is essential to ensuring that recently arrived Bhutanese refugees do not (1) descend further into poverty following their federally-financed assistance during the first 8 months after date of arrival and (2) equally access and utilize the services and job opportunities they are entitled to. At least 25 of the 35 households assisted by this funding will experience an increase in their household income and social cohesion. As this population has swelled to approximately 1,500 individuals during the past 2 years, recently arrived Bhutanese refugees represent a substantial portion of Burlington's extremely and very low income community. Bhutanese arrivals are anticipated to remain at currently high levels for the next 6 months.

- 2. If CDBG funding ends, will the project be able to continue?**

The AALV has no intention of discontinuing Project Integration, and the program remains the core of the organization. However, reductions in funding will result in fewer people in need being served. That means more refugees living in poverty, facing homelessness, and an increased likelihood that poverty will be entrenched in these households for generations.