

City of Burlington / 2014 CDBG Application Form

Project Name: Burlington Dismas House

Project Location / Address: 96 Buell Street, Burlington

Applicant Organization / Agency: Burlington Dismas House

Mailing Address: 96 Buell Street, Burlington, VT 05401

Physical Address: 96 Buell Street, Burlington

Contact: Mr. Jay Ladd Title: Development Director Phone #: 658 0381

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EIN #: 03-0369442 DUNS #: N/A

CDBG Funding Request: \$ 22,385

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

1. Type of Organization

- Local Government Non-Profit Organization (please provide copy of your
 For-Profit Organization IRS 501(c)(3) tax exemption letter)
 Faith-Based Organization Institution of Higher Education

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

3. List of Board of Directors: Please attach.

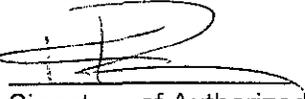
Certification

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

Kimberly Parsons
Name of Authorized Official

Director
Title

1.13.2014
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?

The Burlington Dismas House (BDH) Program addresses the need for supportive housing for people who have left prison and are seeking to positively reintegrate into society. The Program contributes to the CDBG national objectives by serving very low income people, promoting employment, and by reducing homelessness. Dismas House addresses an urgent need where other financial and physical resources are not available to meet such needs.

The Project for which Burlington Dismas House is submitting this application entails energy –efficiency upgrades and extensive revitalization of the interior paint of the house, at 96 Buell Street. The Project contributes to the CDBG national objective by providing economical, safe, sanitary, and decent housing for very low income people who would otherwise be homeless.

II. Program/Project Design

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

The Program: Burlington Dismas House (BDH) is the largest provider of post-prison housing in Chittenden County. BDH has been in existence for 28 years and has housed more than 645 former prisoners. The organization has a solid track record in the community and has gained the support of local and state officials including Burlington Police Chief Michael Schirling and the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC), Andy Pallito who recently said, “We partner with them a lot. It’s been a very successful program. In fact, it’s a gold standard program. I can’t say enough good about Dismas House.”

Former prisoners are one of the most challenged populations when it comes to obtaining housing because they are often dealing with major addiction and mental health issues. When men and women are released from prison in Vermont they often have no job or money, and lack supportive housing. Without basic shelter it is difficult to find employment or address addiction issues. As a result, many end up homeless or back in prison within weeks or months. Furthermore, many landlords will not rent to this population if they are being supervised by Department of Corrections (DOC) even if they have money.

BDH provides supportive structured housing for men and women being released from jail who have no savings or income and would otherwise be living in a shelter or on the street. Applicants are able to move into BDH with no job or money and given time to find a job before having to pay a minimal program fee of \$75 per week. This program fee includes food, utilities, laundry and housing. The program fee is modest enough that residents are able to save money to transition to independent housing.

Dismas residents are still under the supervision of DOC while they are living at the house and most have a program for counseling and substance abuse treatment set up in addition to weekly meetings with their parole officer.

In addition to addressing the basic needs of food and shelter, Dismas House also utilizes several community building activities that foster a sense of belonging and ownership in the Dismas community which ultimately help residents successfully transition to the greater community. Residents of Dismas have an opportunity to gain strength in their recovery from addictions, obtain and maintain gainful employment, become financially independent, practice making responsible decisions, develop social skills and make new "clean and sober" friends. Many experience for the first time the success, self-confidence and improved self-image of a healthy and productive life-style, as opposed to the addictive and criminal behavior they have known in the past.

The Dismas Program deliberately provides a structured supportive program with day to day activities and interaction with community volunteers. Volunteer involvement is the foundation of the Dismas community. Community members participate in the reconciliation process at Burlington Dismas House by preparing and sharing dinner with residents and staff. Volunteer groups and individuals share this activity at

Dismas Monday through Friday, and come from all walks of life: church and civic groups, college students, families, judges and youth groups. Approximately 60 volunteers serve and share the evening meal each month at the Buell Street Dismas House. Sharing dinner is a vital community building activity at Burlington Dismas House, where residents, staff and volunteers from the community come together as equals.

Other Program activities include weekly house meetings, evening gatherings to play board games and watch films, and two annual whole –house weekend retreats, during which staff, volunteers, and residents go camping in the summer, and snow-shoeing or cross-country skiing in the winter. For many ex-prisoners, these are their first experiences with such activities.

The Project: The house at 96 Buell is home for an average of 30 people per year. Despite such continuous heavy use, the house is in good condition because it is well-maintained. Nonetheless, we are at a point where there are issues which exceed everyday maintenance. The proposed Project will address costly energy inefficiencies, minor structural defects, and overall interior wall and ceiling repair and painting.

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]

The BDH Program has been developed over decades of experience. Opened in 1986, Burlington Dismas House is the result of the grassroots planning and fundraising efforts of dedicated prison volunteers who saw the need for after-prison transitional support. With a mission of reconciliation, the program is based on activities that provide interactions with community members. In particular, community volunteers cook and share meals and talk with Dismas residents. The community –building activities at Dismas House have proven to be effective in supporting reconciliation and engendering social and personal lifestyles changes. Data and experience tells us that it is critical that people leaving prison receive a myriad of support and that they feel valued and supported, to make the profound changes needed to re-enter society.

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

The Program and the Project contribute to the City’s anti-poverty strategy by providing safe, sanitary, and decent housing for projected 28 people in 2014, who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness and re-incarceration. The supportive housing of Dismas helps ex-prisoners become employed and financially self –sufficient. There is good evidence that the impact extends to the children of ex-prisoners, in terms of reduced generational poverty.

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

Community members sit on the Board of Directors and are involved in all aspects of the organization including identifying the program need, design and/or evaluation. Program participants (residents) have two seats on the board with full voting privileges. Resident participation on the board as well as in the house is fundamental to the principles of the organization. We use consensus decision -making on the board and in the house so every voice is valued and heard. Policy -related rules are made at the board level. Residents make decisions at weekly house meetings about how the house is run and what activities they will undertake.

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]

The intended outcomes of the Burlington Dismas House program are: 1) to reduce the number of people in the “revolving door” of being released from and promptly returning to prison; 2) to reduce homelessness, and 3) to reduce the number of people living in poverty. Moreover, the BDH program aims to help families reunite with greater functionality, thus reducing the generational cycle of incarceration and poverty.

The intended physical outcome of the proposed project is to assure that the residents and volunteers at the Buell Street house are in a home that is safe, respectable, fully sound and functional, sanitary, and energy – efficient.

- Approximately 28 individual residents will benefit annually;
- Approximately 230 community volunteers who come to Buell Street will benefit annually;
- Energy –efficiency will improve by approximately 30%.

The intended social outcome of the proposed project is aligned with the programmatic goals in that undeniably, people who feel supported, valued, respected, and part of a community succeed far more than those who do not. By providing a functional, respectable residence in which ex-prisoners see and feel physical evidence of being valued, and are expected to be part of a functional community, Dismas achieves the social outcome of reducing the cycles of incarceration, homelessness, and poverty.

People are meant to be better off as a result of the project because they are:

- 1) Not returning to prison;
- 2) Living in decent conditions that are conducive to building self-responsibility and self-respect;
- 3) Beginning to lead positive lives with gainful employment as members of our Burlington community.

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

Objective	Activity	Outcome
Deep maintenance of house / fix defects	Repair of stair treads, handrails, landings	28 Residents are safe
	Repairs to walls & ceilings	Residence is:
	Paint:	Respectable
	Kitchen	Sound and functional
	Dining room	Sanitary
	Living room	Residents:
	Upstairs hallway	Feel respected / encouraged
	Downstairs hallway and stairs	Build self –respect /meaning
	1 st and 2 nd floor bathroom ceilings	Employed/ out of poverty
	Front and back porch, steps and deck	Stay out of prison
Improve energy efficiency of residence	Insulate attic floor	Residence is:
	Foam around windows	Energy -efficient
	Cellulose -approx 200 sq. feet at 6	Financially sustainable
	Install 4 programmable thermostats	
	Install heavy -duty door closer	Dismas House carries on
	Install high –efficiency bathroom fan	
	Install fire dampered vent	
	Replace 4 attic windows	

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]

Dismas House has a Resident Questionnaire which informs a custom resident data base. It is designed to track the outcomes of our program. We measure three major, fundamental outcomes:

- A) Transitions- do residents make successful transitions back to the community?
- B) Reconciliation- do residents experience a renewal of relationships, on both levels of community, with family, at the smallest level and with the greater community, at the widest level?
- C) Restoration- do residents become contributing members of society and develop a sense of belonging?

Each of these outcomes has several measurable outcome indicators that are measured on a periodic basis; at the beginning of their stay, which creates a baseline, and then again every three months thereafter.

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.** (Dismas House did not apply for CDBG funding in 2013.)

We define success as transition to independent life in the community. A successful transition is when a resident has lived at Dismas House, has moved on to an independent living situation or to the Dismas Satellite Program, and has demonstrated responsibility by supporting themselves. Our 2013 data shows that **64% of residents who lived at Dismas House** for at least 90 days (which is the minimum length of stay we recommend) **successfully transitioned to independent and responsible living.**

In very significant contrast, according to a recent study by the DOC, 100% of the men and women released into the community with housing funds who went to hotels or housing with no support were back in prison within a year. Of those who went to live with family or to supportive transitional housing, 46% were still successfully in the community one year later.

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

It is a tremendous struggle for men and women who are leaving incarceration to successfully reintegrate into the community. Staying at Dismas House for at least the initial three month commitment greatly improves chances of success. The data contrast of people who attempt to re-enter society without supportive housing and the success of Dismas House residents is stark. Unsupported ex-prisoners return to prison at a rate close to 100%. Our most recent evaluation indicates that of those who stayed less than three months, only 5% made a successful transition, but of those who stayed three months or longer, 64% made a successful transition. This data has caused BDH to plan its program with the expectation that someone coming to live at Dismas house will stay for a minimum of three months.

V. Experience / Organizational Capacity

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

The mission of Dismas House is to reconcile former prisoners with society and society with former prisoners. The program is designed to address the need for supportive housing so that former prisoners will be reintegrated into the community and have a greater chance to successfully transition to an independent and productive life. 'Supportive housing' involves more than a place to live. It includes a sense of participation, belonging, being respected and valued. These subtler supports are powerful and essential in the process of successful reintegration. The proposed project, of revitalizing basic features of the Buell Street house, are directly corollary with the mission because the house is a home where people have an opportunity to live in basic dignity. Much more than a basic maintenance issue, it is vital to keep the house at a level of cleanliness, safety, and respectability that is both welcoming to community volunteers and sends the message to residents that they are respected, and must be respectful.

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 staff at Buell Street Dismas has been extremely stable, ensuring program quality. House Director Kimberly Parsons has worked for the organization for 23 years. Recently, staff has participated in trainings on Fair Housing Law and has updated all applications and written materials with legal counsel to ensure that Dismas practices and policies are in compliance with Fair Housing laws.

Staff has ongoing discussions about safety and best practices with Vermont Department of Corrections and has instituted changes to deal with safety concerns as well as streamlining the application process for inmates.

Dismas House Directors attend staff retreats twice a year to discuss best practices, reporting outcomes, and issues that may be impacting residents' chances for success.

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

The residents of the Dismas House on Buell Street are particularly diverse. This has occurred incrementally and has been a learning opportunity and cultural enrichment for residents, staff, volunteers, and Board members. Informal conversations about race and religion are common.

BDH hosts two Volunteers for Peace from foreign countries annually who are asked to give a talk about their culture.

The Board has ratified a non-discrimination policy.

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:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abused Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly (62 years +) | <input type="checkbox"/> People with AIDS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battered Spouses | <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless Persons | <input type="checkbox"/> Illiterate Adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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
Dismas House deep maintenance and energy-savings measures	28	28	0	0	0

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]

BDH serves a disadvantaged adult population of former prisoners (men and women) being released from prison who have no financial resources or housing options. The majority of the population we serve (95% in a recent survey) have addiction issues. Many have grown up in abusive homes and have been in some form of state custody as juveniles, and struggle with major mental health issues.

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

Burlington Dismas House works closely with caseworkers and parole officers from the Vermont Department of Corrections at the various correctional facilities throughout the state. They recommend BDH to prisoners who will soon be released and facilitate the applicant interviewing process. The majority of residents come directly from the correctional centers. Inmates may also apply on their own. Applicants are interviewed three times before being accepted into the Dismas program.

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

BDH does not discriminate against program applicants on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or age. We attempt to build diversity on the board of directors and our clients have at least two seats on the board. BDH does not discriminate in employment or volunteer

positions or on the Board of Directors on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, place of birth, disabilities, or any other characteristic.

Hiring announcements are shared widely through posting in area newspapers, collaborating agencies, Craigslist, etc. We post Board openings with the United Way Board Match search bulletin board.

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 CDBG funds will be used to:

- Improve energy efficiency with extensive attic insulation, targeted wall insulation; replacement of 4 windows, installation of 4 programmable thermostats; installation of a fire-dampened vent for heat recovery; installation of a heavy –duty door closer; and installation of a high –efficiency bathroom fan. These energy efficiency improvements were recommended by VT Gas in their recent audit.
 - Replace 4 treads in the attic stairwell and repair an interior handrail;
 - Make repairs to the front and back porches' floors, steps, and handrails;
 - Repaint almost the entire interior of the house, particularly the bedrooms, living and dining rooms and the front and back porches decks and steps.
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
No staff payment will be made with CDBG funds				

1. Program/Project Budget

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
Energy –saving measures	\$ 8,960	\$ 1,300	\$10,260
Plaster repair/ painting	\$ 10,625	\$ 0	\$ 10,625
Carpentry repairs	\$ 2,800	\$ 0	\$ 2,800
	\$ 22,385	\$	\$ 23,685

4. Funding Sources

	Project		Agency (Buell Street Dismas)	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$ 0	\$ 22,385	\$ 0	\$ 22,385
State (specify)	0		42,500	42,500
Federal (specify)	0		0	0
United Way	0		34,711	37,500
Private (specify)	0		120,319	142,820
Program Income	0		22,000	22,000
Other (specify) VT Gas Incentive	0	1,300	0	1,300
Total	\$ 0	\$ 23,685	\$ 219,530	\$ 268,505

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

$$\frac{\$ 22,385}{\text{CDBG Funding}} \div \frac{\$ 23,685}{\text{Total Project Cost}} = \frac{95}{\text{Percentage}}\%$$

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

$$\frac{\$ 23,685}{\text{Total Project Cost}} \div \frac{28}{\text{\# Proposed Beneficiaries}} = \frac{\$ 846}{\text{Cost Per Person}}$$

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

The proposed project meets **Objective SL-1.1 Protect the Vulnerable** – by providing homeless residents with shelter and services. This project supports the City’s 10 yr plan to end homelessness. It also supports social well -being which is emphasized in recent City plans. With or without community support, former prisoners are returning to their communities after they serve their sentences. It is in the City’s interest to make a place for them in the community so that they have an opportunity to become contributing members rather than a drain on society.

Very few private foundations are willing to fund capital needs. We call on the efforts of volunteers and donations from the community to carry out our mission and for day to day operations of a 24/7, 365 day/year residential program. The project repairs are beyond the scope of volunteer skills and require professional skills. We need support from the greater Burlington community, in the form of CDBG funding to address these capital repair issues.

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 strength of Dismas House is that is community –based and community –supported. Local donors are a significant source of funding. Donors include private individuals, businesses, church and civic organizations, and foundations. Businesses discount goods for us. The United Way supports BDH annually.

More than financial support, community members volunteer their time and attention by the thousands of hours annually. Volunteers cook dinner and spend time at the house five days a week; make thousands of Phonathon calls; organize a springtime plant sale; support the annual Dinner Auction preparations; and address and stuff envelopes for the two annual newsletters and the annual appeal.

BDH welcomes an AmeriCorps member each year and two Volunteers for Peace who live in the house as colleague residents.

The CDBG funding will allow us to undertake energy conservation measure that will leverage an incentive from Vermont Gas.

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

The Dismas House at Buell Street is financed by grants, donations, and program fees. As such, our funding fluctuates according to the economy and the capacity of supporters. It is a testament to the respect that our supporters have for Dismas House that during the past year our funding has remained nearly level.

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

BDH is an unusually lean organization. For example, its office, for 3 staff, is in the renovated basement of the house. Cost –cutting measures are not feasible or practicable. However, and significantly, BDH has effectively cut operating costs by not having raised its program fee to residents for several years, while the costs of operating have increased at a rate of approximately 2% annually over the past five years.

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]

Staff meets quarterly with representatives from Vermont Department of Corrections and has developed protocol that we follow in an effort to communicate effectively and to collaborate on residents' progress. We maintain relationships and attend meetings with other transitional housing providers across the state.

It should be mentioned here that Dismas House's collaboration in the densely –populated Buell Street neighborhood is exemplary. The house and the residents are unobtrusive, positive contributors to the neighborhood environment. Our data shows that we have not had any complaints from neighbors.

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

BDH consciously strives for efficiency. Staff works as a team with frequent check –ins, weekly discussions, weekly reports and monthly summaries. Dismas House Directors also attend staff retreats twice a year to discuss best practices, reporting outcomes, and issues that may be impacting resident's chances for success. With a resident population that has so many challenges, it is vital that staff maintain flexibility while requiring adherence to basic rules. This capacity has been critical to achieving positive outcomes.

BDH initiated a Satellite Apartment Program in Burlington in 2005. The program is a next step for residents of who have lived at Dismas House for a minimum of 3 months and who have demonstrated their capacity to live in an independent apartment. This program has increased the success rate of Dismas House 'graduates' because it provides ongoing community contact and support, which has proven to be so effective.

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

In Burlington, the other agencies that provide similar services are the COTS WayStation, Northern Lights, and Phoenix House. Burlington Dismas House differs from them in that we provide long –term transitional housing for men and women who have left prison and BDH is not specific to people in addiction recovery.

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?

The proposed project will have a long –term benefit to Burlington because it will:

1. Reduce the energy operating costs of a provider of critical services;
2. Provide long –term, durable structural and functional repairs to a neighborhood house;
3. Provide a safe, sanitary, and respectable home for 28 Burlington residents annually who would otherwise be homeless.

If the project were to end/ not be undertaken, the Buell Street House will continue to leak heat and the structural and cosmetic deficiencies will worsen. The Dismas House program will suffer in that program funds will have to be diverted to infrastructure.

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

CDBG funding is crucial to making these repairs. BDH operates on a very modest budget and without CDBG funding for the targeted project, we would have to defer it and eventually undertake it piecemeal, using funds that are targeted for the vital Dismas Program.