

**CITY OF BURLINGTON**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT - 2024 APPLICATION**

*Application must be no more than 12 total pages (including cover page) with 12-point font.  
Refer to NOFA for required information for each question.*

Project Name: The Programs of Burlington Dismas House

Project Location / Address: 96 Buell Street, Burlington, VT 05404

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Applicant Organization / Agency: Dismas of Vermont

Mailing Address: 96 Buell Street, Burlington, VT 05404

Physical Address: 96 Buell Street, Burlington, VT 05404

Contact: Kim Parsons Title: House Director Phone #: [REDACTED]

Web Address: [www.dismasofvt.org](http://www.dismasofvt.org) E-mail: [REDACTED]

EIN #: [REDACTED] DUNS #: [REDACTED]

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**CDBG Funding Request: \$16,000**

**Total Estimated Program/Project Cost: \$344,378**

*Choose one category from Development OR one category from Public Service:*

**Development:** (choose one) \_\_\_ Economic Development \_\_\_ Affordable Housing  
\_\_\_ Public Facilities/Improvements

**OR**

**Public Service:** (choose one) \_\_\_ Early Childhood Ed/Childcare \_\_\_ Youth Services \_\_\_ Health  
\_\_\_ Economic Opportunity \_\_\_  Housing and Homelessness

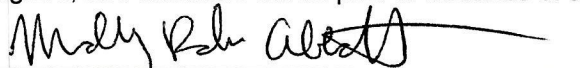
**1. Type of Organization**

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

**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.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Official

Molly Robin - Abbott  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Authorized Official

Philanthropy Associate

1/12/2024

Title

Date

## ***I. Demonstrated Need***

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

Burlington Dismas House (BDH) contributes to CDBG's national objectives by providing affordable housing, a suitable living environment, and access to job opportunities to low-income individuals leaving the corrections system. As recognized in the City of Burlington's Consolidated Plan, former prisoners are among individuals most at risk of homelessness, due to limited resources and difficulty in finding employment and housing with a criminal record. Former prisoners with no financial resources are unable find stable housing and often end up on the street or in hotels, where they reoffend at a higher rate.

## ***II. Program/Project Design***

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

Burlington Dismas House provides housing in a therapeutic community for individuals who have served their minimum prison sentence but lack affordable housing in the community. Residents can move into Dismas directly from prison; with support from the Dismas program, they are able to address physical and mental health issues, find employment, and work towards financial independence.

### **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)**

Burlington Dismas House is a grassroots organization that started when a group of Vermonters recognized a need for community-supported transitional housing in Chittenden County. The program has grown and adapted over the years to meet the needs of current residents. Burlington Dismas House has a proven track record, with hundreds of former prisoners successfully transitioning to independent housing and living honestly in the community. The majority of Dismas residents come to the house ready for a second chance. They truly appreciate the opportunity to rebuild their lives in a safe and affordable home. Former prisoners released without housing and support are more likely to end up in unsafe living situations, homeless, or back in prison. At Dismas, program staff provide former prisoners the support they need to address mental and physical health issues, find and keep employment, and set and achieve goals for the future.

### **3. How will this program/project contribute to the City's anti-poverty strategy? If this activity is to respond to COVID-19, please also describe how this activity prepares or responds to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Burlington Dismas House contributes to the City's anti-poverty strategy by providing safe, stable, and affordable housing to extremely low-income residents. The location in downtown Burlington provides access to public transportation, educational resources, and employment opportunities. Daily interactions with volunteers and staff provide positive social interactions and a social network. During their time at Dismas

House, residents can rebuild connections, maintain employment, and build savings. Upon successful completion of the Dismas program, individuals move into their own independent housing and live as contributing community members.

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

Community members sit on the Board of Directors and are involved in all aspects of the organization, including identifying program needs, design and/or evaluation. Burlington Dismas House residents give input and have two seats on the local Council. Resident participation on the board and in the house is fundamental to the organization's principles. 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***

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

We expect that former prisoners who successfully complete the Dismas program will have increased success in rejoining the community, maintaining employment, avoiding criminal activities, and finding independent housing. Moreover, the Burlington Dismas House program aims to help families reunite with greater functionality, thus reducing the generational cycle of incarceration and poverty.

The Buell Street Dismas house program provides transitional housing and a supportive community for approximately 20 extremely low-income individuals each year and will contribute to CDBG's national objectives as well as the city of Burlington's anti-poverty strategy.

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

The goals of the Burlington Dismas House Program are:

- 1) To provide meals and transitional housing to former prisoners.
- 2) To create a supportive community of staff, residents, and volunteers within each house.
- 3) To provide social and volunteer opportunities so that residents can engage with and contribute to the community.
- 4) To provide an opportunity to address physical, mental health, and substance-use issues.
- 5) To help residents set and attain personal, financial, employment, and housing goals.
- 6) To help former prisoners reconcile with and rejoin their communities.

We will work to attain these goals through program support provided by Burlington Dismas House staff, including case management by the House Director. We expect to serve about 20 individuals each year in our Buell Street House.

## IV. Impact / Evaluation

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- 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.**

Burlington Dismas House uses Results Based Accountability (RBA) to evaluate our programs annually. We track the number of people served, how many beds were utilized, how many meals we shared with volunteer cooks, resident participation in social and volunteer activities, employment, transitions to independent housing, and other factors to answer the questions 1) how much did we do; 2) how well did we do it; and 3) is anyone better off? In answering these questions we are able to assess the success of our programs in providing former prisoners support, community building activities, and opportunities for reconciliation.

In addition to these quantifiable results, we also use a survey developed with UVM professors to assess how residents feel in relation to the community. Residents complete the survey upon arrival and every three months throughout their stay at the house. These surveys provide residents' perceived level of reconciliation with themselves, friends, family, and the community.

- 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 2023 (or June 2022). For non-CDBG participants – report on your achievements from the previous year.**

This past year Burlington Dismas House provided supportive housing to 18 individuals. We worked to build a supportive community and make sure that residents had access to tools they needed to be successful. We provided 70% of residents with support finding employment, 60% with support for health care issues, and 20% with support finding permanent housing. Volunteer cooks shared dinners with residents 232 nights over the past year at Buell Street Dismas (BSD). Due to Covid and housing shortages, many residents were successful participating in the program but had longer stays, which means that fewer people moved to independent housing. Numbers in the "Is anyone better off?" section reflect only those who transitioned out during the previous fiscal year.

<b>How much did we do?</b>	<b>BSD</b>
	<b>9 beds</b>
Number of Unique Individuals	18
Average Daily Census	7.8
Approximate Number of Bed Nights	2,823
Number of Evening Meals w/Volunteer Cooks	232
Approximate Total Number of Meals Provided	8,469
Number of House Social Activities	48
Total Community Volunteer Hours	1,135

[Text Wrapping Break]

<b>How well did we do it?</b>	<b>BSD</b>
Bed Utilization Rate	84%
% of Evening Meals w/ Volunteer Cooks	88%
% of residents provided support establishing a means of financial support	70%
% of residents assisted with healthcare issues	60%
% of residents provided assistance finding permanent housing	20%
% of residents provided assistance accessing education/training opportunities	20%
% of residents provided assistance managing their finances	20%

<b>Is anyone better off?</b>	<b>BSD</b>
% Who Were Not Arrested for a New Offense*	90%
Number Who Made a Successful Transition (stayed > 3 mo.)*	2
Number who made a Successful Transition (all residents)*	3
Number of Residents Who Were Employed*	5

\* Reflects only those who transitioned out of Dismas during the fiscal year

## ***V. Experience / Organizational Capacity***

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

The mission of Burlington Dismas House is to reconcile former prisoners with society and society with former prisoners. Residents who participate in the Burlington Dismas House program are working, addressing physical and mental health issues, rebuilding relationships, and becoming contributing community members. Burlington Dismas House helps restore the relationship between the person who has committed a crime and their community. In reconciliation, wholeness is restored to the former prisoner and to society.

### **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.)**

Burlington Dismas House Director Kimberly Parsons has worked providing support and transitional housing to former prisoners for 32 years, and has supervised eight previous projects completed using CDBG funds. Program staff have the qualifications and experience necessary to provide transitional housing and a supportive community to Burlington Dismas House residents.

3. **What steps has your organization/board taken in the past year to address racial equity, inclusion, and belonging internally? What new commitments have been made to address racial equity, inclusion, and belonging internally in the year ahead?**

BDH staff have attended Fair Housing and Vermont Department of Corrections trainings and have over 30 years of experience working with diverse populations. In April of 2023, Dia Draper, Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, provided training at the organization wide Dismas of Vermont retreat. Dismas is committed to providing a home-like environment that is inclusive and non-discriminatory.

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**

1. **Will the program solely serve a specific 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

**If this activity/project is designed to serve the population experiencing homelessness through housing or supportive services, is your organization or entity partnered with the Chittenden County Continuum of Care and participating in the Coordinated Entry system for the project:**

- Yes                       No                       Not applicable to activity/project

2. 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/2023-HUD-Income-Limits>**

Service / Activity	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington HH / Persons to be Served	# Extremely Low-Income (30% median)	# Very Low-Income (50% median)	# Low-Income (80% median)	# Above Income Limits (above 80% median)
Transitional Housing, supportive programming, and case management	20	20			

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, 2024?

Yes       NO       Not Serving Limited Clientele

## ***VII. Commitment to Equity, Inclusion and Belonging***

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

The Burlington Dismas House program is designed to benefit men who are leaving Vermont Correctional facilities and who do not have financial resources or safe housing options in the community. Many have grown up in abusive homes and have been in some form of state custody as juveniles, and struggle with mental health issues and/or substance use disorders. 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 Burlington Dismas House to prisoners who will soon be released and facilitate the applicant interviewing process. Most residents come directly from the correctional centers. Applicants are interviewed three times before being accepted into the Dismas program.

**2. Describe the steps you take to ensure the project/program is accessible, inclusive, addressing racially equity, and culturally appropriate for the target population.**

The Dismas of Vermont Board has ratified a non – discrimination policy. Dismas does not select, show preference or impose limitations on any applicants based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, religious creed, color, national origin, or disability of a person. Burlington Dismas House staff have attended Fair Housing and Vermont Department of Corrections trainings and have over 30 years of experience working with diverse populations. Our Winooski location is completely accessible for any resident who might be challenged with mobility issues. When individual Dismas residents have unique needs, Dismas has always been able to accommodate them.

## ***VIII. Budget / Financial Feasibility***

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**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.**

This grant would support case management work performed by the House Director at Buell Street Dismas House. Burlington Dismas House welcomes approximately 20 low-income former prisoners annually into the Buell Street Dismas House in Burlington. House residents and staff share weekday meals with volunteer cooks from the community, participate in weekly house meetings, practice consensus decision-making and a restorative approach to problem solving, and take part in volunteer and social activities together. Program staff meet with residents weekly to identify and discuss goals, wellness, and stress management techniques

and to ensure that residents have access to the services they need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Staff help residents find job opportunities if they need assistance and work with them to create individualized plans for moving into and maintaining permanent and sustainable housing.

House Directors oversee and manage all aspects of the Dismas program. They are responsible for interviewing and accepting applicants, for providing direct support to individual residents, for providing and maintaining the facilities, for managing the day to day creation of community in the house, for recruiting and managing all the volunteers and students involved with Dismas, for supervising other Dismas support staff, for managing program data and performance measures, and for managing relationships with partner agencies. In addition, Burlington Dismas House Directors have training and experience with addiction, and now spend approximately 10 hours per week each on direct substance use case management.

**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 Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity	% of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity to be paid with CDBG
Case management	House Director		10	5

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 hours worked on CDBG-funded programs, hours worked on non-CDBG funded programs and the corresponding program name/funding source(s). Timecards must include a narrative for all CDBG and non-CDBG funded activities, and 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, 2024?  Yes  No  Not funding salaries

**3. Program/Project Budget**

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
Salaries (includes all program staff)	\$16,000	\$153,822	\$169,822
Other payroll expenses and benefits	\$	\$42,610	\$42,610
Facilities	\$	\$19,550	\$19,550
Program Expenses	\$	\$22,306	\$22,306
Fundraising/Outreach		\$14,440	\$14,440
Operations		\$10,400	\$10,400
Program Indirect		\$28,161	\$28,161
Administrative Allocation		\$37,089	\$37,089



<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>	<b>\$328,378</b>	<b>\$344,378</b>
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This is the projected budget for the next fiscal year

**4. Funding Sources**

	Program/Project		Agency	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$ 0	\$ 16,000	\$ 0	\$ 16,000
State: DOC	123,529	123,529	700,000	700,000
Federal: OD2A Grant			20,000	20,000
United Way			2,500	
Private: individuals, businesses, foundation grants	134,523	130,623	907,393	944,893
Program Income	26,500	26,500	110,900	110,900
Interest			22,500	22,500
Other ( <u>specify</u> ) Annuity	47,826	47,726	48,286	48,286
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 332,378</b>	<b>\$ 344,378</b>	<b>\$ 1,811,579</b>	<b>\$ 1,862,579</b>

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

$$\frac{\$16,000}{\$344,378} = 4.6\%$$

CDBG Funding    Total Program/Project Costs    Percentage

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

$$\frac{\$344,378}{20} = \$17,219$$

Total Program/Project Cost    # Total Proposed Beneficiaries    Cost Per Person

$$\frac{\$16,000}{20} = \$800$$

Total Amount of CDBG Funding    # Total Proposed CDBG Beneficiaries    Cost Per Person CDBG Investment

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

Burlington Dismas House relies on funding from the community to provide a supportive community and transitional housing to former prisoners. Our programs benefit individuals as well as the greater community. We are requesting funding from CDBG in addition to funding from private individuals, businesses, church and civic organizations, and foundations.

**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?**

Burlington Dismas House is a grassroots, local, community supported organization. Local donors are a significant source of funding. In addition to financial support, community members volunteer thousands of hours of time annually. Volunteers cook dinner and spend time at the house five days a week; make thousands of Phonathon calls, and support the annual Community Celebration preparations. Volunteers for Peace live in the house as colleague residents and as part of a social support network.

CDBG funding will complement other resources.

***IX. Collaboration/Efficiency***

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**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.**

Dismas House collaborates with the Vermont Department of Corrections to provide beds for prisoners who have served their minimum sentence but do not have an approved housing situation in the community. Staff meet quarterly with representatives from the Vermont Department of Corrections state office and have developed protocol that we follow to communicate effectively and to collaborate on residents' progress. We also meet monthly with residents' parole officers to work together to address obstacles residents are facing. Staff attend several trainings a year offered by the Vermont Department of Corrections. We also collaborate with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Burlington Housing Authority, and the City of Burlington.

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

There are currently no other programs in the Burlington area that provide congregate transitional housing and structured therapeutic community support to former prisoners. Pathways provides independent housing for people experiencing homelessness, including former prisoners, but does not provide a congregate transitional housing option. Dismas is unique in providing a home-like, community supported option for individuals who are leaving prison. Although some individuals leaving the correctional system are ready to live independently, many have mental and physical health issues, as well as substance use disorders. They have fractured their relationship with friends, relatives, and their community. In addition to meeting the physical

needs of housing and food, Dismas provides an opportunity to rebuild relationships and become contributing members of the community.

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

In the past few years we have increased the amount of case management and program support, as the majority of residents struggle with substance use disorder and mental health issues. Systems for managing resident files were developed piecemeal over the years. We recently used a consultant to design a database that contains all resident files, including applications, interview notes, and weekly case notes. This system has streamlined data entry and made it easier to access information on residents, produce data reports and cut down on paper waste.

## ***X. Sustainability***

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**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?**

Burlington does not have sufficient stock of affordable housing; many renters pay more than 30% of their income towards rent. This lack of affordable housing, combined with several other factors, including the ending of Covid-era rental assistance programs and increasing substance misuse, has contributed to an increase in homeless people in and around Burlington. People released from incarceration without safe housing options are at high risk of becoming homeless and/or returning to prison.

Burlington Dismas House is one of the longest running providers of post-prison housing in Burlington. This program benefits the city of Burlington by ensuring that former prisoners have continued access to safe and supportive housing upon release. Individuals are given an opportunity to become contributing members of the community and escape the cycle of crime and incarceration. Public safety is increased when former offenders are reconciled with their community.

If this program were to end, the benefit to the many individuals who have already been through the programs of Burlington Dismas House would continue.

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

The ongoing programs of Burlington Dismas House will continue in the near term if CDBG funding ends. However, CDBG funding has been vital in providing additional support to Burlington Dismas House, including allowing us to complete large and necessary periodic maintenance projects. Burlington Dismas House has a wide base of support in the community and has been successful in raising the funding needed to continue operating.

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

If we do not receive the full amount requested, we will continue to provide supportive transitional housing to former prisoners. We hope to provide the same level of complex case management as we currently provide. House Director workloads and salaries reflect the wide range of skills and experience necessary for managing the house.