



**Community Meals** - Installation of a commercial-grade kitchen will make it possible to prepare and serve free, nutritious meals to the community on a regular basis, increasing the availability of prepared meals in the area. Currently the Old North End has limited free meals available Monday through Friday with the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf offering breakfasts. Being able to offer other meals, such as lunches and weekday dinners, will not only assist in meeting the basic needs of LMI individuals in the area, but will also provide a welcoming, non-stigmatizing and trauma-informed environment in which this essential service can be accessed.

**Nutritional Wellness & Life Skills Courses** - In addition to improving access to prepared meals, installation of a commercial-grade kitchen will improve access to kitchen facilities and workshops for individuals interested in preparing their own food. In particular, the project will create opportunities for the community to learn and share information around nutrition and food preparation, especially as related to holistic health and budget cooking. It is our plan to collaborate with other organizations in the area currently providing similar resources to ensure as many individuals as possible have access to this beneficial service.

**Job Training** - Installation of the Community Kitchen would also expand TWC's capacity to provide in-house workforce development opportunities. In addition to supportive employment services, TWC currently offers workforce development programming in the area of peer support. Installation of commercial-grade kitchen would make it possible for TWC to offer job skills training and workforce development in the food service industry.

**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 Wellness Co-op aims to reduce barriers to the services and resources it offers. As such, TWC does not require a referral or official intake in order to access its programming. By using a peer support approach to service delivery, TWC cultivates a comfortable environment where lasting connections can develop among service recipients and between service recipients and peer support staff. Programming and resources have been designed to align with those identified by the targeted population as being most needed in the Burlington community, namely: a place to go during the day, social connection, wellness-related workshops and employment support. The only major requests not currently filled are community meals and cooking events, neither of which is a possibility with our current kitchen space, as our configuration and equipment do not meet the standards for food preparation.

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

The Community Kitchen Project directly contributes to the City's 2013 anti-poverty strategy by developing resources that support its primary goal of ensuring the basic needs of all Burlington residents are met. The three largest expenses American households face are housing, transportation and food costs. Scarcity of affordable housing for Burlington residents leaves LMI individuals at increased risk of food insecurity. According to the 2014 "State of the Nation's Housing Report" by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, low-income, rent-burdened households spend 39% less on food and 65% less on health care, seriously impacting the well-being of these households. The 2012 American Community Survey documents the Old North End as having the lowest median income and highest concentration of renters in Burlington, meaning residents of this area are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. The Community Kitchen would contribute to the city's anti-poverty efforts by expanding services that meet the basic needs of this population, specifically healthy prepared meals and support to prepare healthy meals on a budget.

TWC additionally contributes to the City's anti-poverty strategy by increasing social and recreational opportunities for all individuals, thereby contributing to the City's objective of decreasing social isolation among at-risk, homeless and LMI Burlington residents.

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

All Pathways programming is client-driven, meaning service recipient feedback is an important part of quality improvement activities and program planning. For the past 5 years the Housing First program has had a Tenant Advisory Board to facilitate regular client feedback on program performance and potential changes. In December 2014 Pathways launched a Standing Committee composed of service recipients which formalizes client feedback to the organization's board of directors and primary funding source.

The Wellness Co-op regularly asks for, and receives, participant input in program design. This is facilitated via semiweekly community meetings where participants are invited to give feedback on program policies, discuss community issues and suggest new programming. TWC reaches out to other community groups and organizations through the statewide advisory committee to the Mental Health Transformation Grant as well as through connections with other service providers in Burlington to receive input on all aspects of programming.

The Wellness Co-op has made significant strides in outreaching to its target population and developing regular programming in FY'14. In this time period, TWC had the following community impact:

- 3,240 individual visits to the center
- Peer Support Specialists provided 2,195 instances of peer support
- Employment Specialist assisted 32 individuals in their job search
- Employment Specialist supported 16 individuals to find employment in area businesses
- Staff provided 9 regular (weekly or monthly) support groups
- Staff and volunteers hosted 12 one-time or ongoing wellness activities
- Staff and volunteers hosted 8 creative workshops or workshop series

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

This data reflects increasing participation and engagement in the Wellness Co-op and its programming. This indicates that there is strong community interest in/need for the programming and resources offered by TWC. In the coming year we hope to continue to increase our community presence and ensure our programming is responsive to the community's needs and interests. The Community Kitchen project has evolved directly out of repeated expressed interest in having access to such resources at TWC.

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

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

Pathways Vermont's mission is to transform the lives of people experiencing mental health and other life challenges by supporting self-directed roads to recovery and wellness in an atmosphere of dignity, respect, choice and hope. We advocate for the rights of people to live without stigma and discrimination and promote civil rights, community integration, health care, affordable housing and employment for all.

We aspire to minimize barriers that prevent individuals from meeting their essential needs by (a) supporting individuals to overcome these barriers and (b) creating low-barrier options where they don't exist. The TWC Community Kitchen project is in line with Pathways' mission in that it creates low-barrier access to community meals, kitchen facilities and self-improvement activities that do not currently exist elsewhere in the community.

**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 Wellness Co-op adheres to best practice in the developing field of peer support services. All TWC staff are required to be trained in Intentional Peer Support (IPS). IPS is an internationally recognized training that prepares individuals with lived experience of mental health crisis, trauma and other life challenges to enter supportive relationships with individuals going through similar experiences. IPS is considered the gold standard for peer support delivery. Fidelity to the IPS model requires regular co-reflection meetings which TWC staff attend on a weekly basis, meaning training is continuous throughout the course of employment. Peer Support Specialist staff are also trained in Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP). WRAP is an evidenced-based practice developed by the Copeland Center to support individuals in recovery from mental illness or addiction. In addition to IPS and WRAP, TWC's employment staff is receiving training in Individual Placement and Support, an evidence-based practice for supporting individuals with psychiatric disabilities access and maintain employment. The ongoing training, plus lived experience, help TWC staff to develop a unique brand of expertise that is not found in other service settings.

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

Cultural awareness is a key component of Pathways Vermont's core competencies for staff. These trainings are an ongoing priority for the organization, as awareness of and sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds and experiences our service recipients is essential to building effective relationships. Pathways provides in-house trainings that support staff to effectively work with a diverse population. In addition to general cultural awareness trainings, we host the following trainings in specific domains: Bridges out of Poverty, Gender and Sexual Identity, Domestic Violence training (H.O.P.E Works and WHBW) and Trauma-Informed care.

**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:**

**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]**

CDBG funds would be used to finance the conversion of TWC's existing kitchen facilities into commercial-grade kitchen facilities, making it permissible to engage in food preparation and service activities.

**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.**

N/A

**3. Program/Project Budget**

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
Kitchen Renovation	\$ 41,424.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 45,924.00
Supplies (food, cleaning supplies)	\$ 0	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
Staffing	\$ 0	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
	\$ 41,424.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 65,424.00

**4. Funding Sources**

	Project		Agency*	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$ 0.00	\$ 41,424.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 41,424.00
State (specify) <b>Department of Mental Health Department of Correction</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 9,750.00 (DMH)	\$ 1,550,440.00 (DMH) \$ 830,936.00 (DOC)	\$ 2,239,390.00 (DMH) \$830,936.00 (DOC)
Federal (specify) <b>Substance Abuse &amp; Mental Health Services Administration</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 188,950.00 (SAMHSA)	\$ 0.00
United Way	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 15,000.00
Private (specify) <b>Foundations, Businesses, Individuals</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 3,750.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 95,000.00
Program Income <b>Vermont Medicaid FFS</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 600,000.00	\$ 600,000.00
Other (specify) <b>Merchants Bank Loan for Building Purchase Vermont Veteran Services SSVF Sub grant</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 4,500.00 (Building Loan)	\$ 655,292.00 (SSVF)	\$ 171,840.00 (building purchase) \$ 655,292.00 (SSVF)
<b>Total</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 65,424.00	\$ 3,865,618.00	\$ 4,648,882.00

\*Agency budget is reflective of the entire organizational budget. The Wellness Co-op Annual Program Budget is currently \$276,000, expected to increase to \$499,764 next year with building purchase.

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

The Wellness Co-op invites other organizations to participate in our community by co-hosting activities, for example a RU12 staff hosted a LGBTQ Disability group at the center which ran for 2 years. We have also co-hosted a monthly lunch event with Mercy Connections to facilitate connecting TWC participants with their resources. Our supported employment service partners with VocRehab to support program participants in pursuing employment and vocational opportunities. TWC has collaborated directly with local vegetable farm, Diggers Mirth Collective Farm, to provide work for food opportunities for the past 2 years.

The Community Kitchen project will enhance TWC's collaboration efforts, as the kitchen would be available to other organizations in the area to utilize as a resource. A number of groups, such as the Vermont Worker's Center, have expressed interest in this possibility. TWC would make a concerted effort to coordinate programming with organizations offering similar services in order to avoid duplication and improve access to these resources. This might be accomplished by making created resources available at alternative times of day or other days of week.

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

Pathways Vermont is a data-driven organization, relying on regular service recipient feedback and outcomes reporting to evaluate program performance and inform decision-making. In December 2014 Pathways began converting evaluation efforts to a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) format. RBA is a management tool which streamlines an organization's evaluation efforts by identifying performance measures that capture real progress towards agency goals. Implementation of RBA will set clear benchmarks for program success, demand consistent reporting on program quality indicators and attenuate understanding of the scope of community impact. The RBA framework will also enhance our existing continuous quality improvement efforts by making it easier to identify areas in need of improvement and to do so earlier.

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

There are three other programs currently operating in Burlington that provide similar programming and resources, HowardCenter's Westview House, COTS Daystation and Spectrum Youth & Family Service's Drop In Center. However, while these programs also offer community meals, wellness activities, peer support, employment support and life skills training, these resources are not available to the majority of LMI Burlington residents. Spectrum's service is only available to individuals under the age of 22. COTS Daystation is available only to individuals currently experiencing homelessness. Westview is only available to individuals enrolled in Howard's Community Support Program. TWC is the only community center offering this unique blend of services that is available to all adult members of the community, regardless of insurance coverage, participation in clinical services, housing status or age

## ***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?**

One-time investment in the installation of a commercial kitchen at TWC will have a long-lasting impact on the diversity of services available to low-moderate income, at-risk and homeless individuals in Burlington. LMI households are more likely to spend a disproportionate percent of income on housing costs, as a result spending 39% less on food and 65% less on health care having significant impact on well-being. Thus creation of another site at which prepared meals are available for LMI residents (a) makes this essential service more available to food-insecure residents and (b) supports this population to preserve funds currently spent on food for other expenses.

The Community Kitchen Project also aims to support the long-term health of participants by providing nutrition education via meal offerings and workshops. LMI individuals are more likely to make unhealthy food choices out of necessity. Supporting the nutritional goals of this population can prevent the development of chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, which carry long-term costs to affected individuals and the general public. The creation of a Community Kitchen at TWC would support the long-term financial and general well-being of LMI Burlington residents. These benefits would continue indefinitely once installation was completed.

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

Yes, the Wellness Co-op is only seeking CDBG funding to support installation of a commercial-grade kitchen. If the project is funded and installation is completed, TWC will be able to sustain the ongoing operations of the community kitchen using existing staffing and resources. In addition, TWC will be able to continue operating in its current capacity without the installation of the community kitchen. If CDBG funding is not made available for this project, we will pursue other funding sources such as private contributions and corporate support to finance this essential resource. However, as these forms of funding are less predictable it is likely the timeline of the project would be greatly delayed, prolonging the amount of time LMI Burlington residents are without access to the essential resources the community kitchen would make available.