

City of Burlington / CDBG 2011 Application Form

Eligibility _____ National Objective _____ NRSA _____
 (Office Use)

Project # **PS1**
 (Office Use)

<i>Project Name: Affordable Housing Preservation and Resident Organizing Project</i>		
<i>Project Location/Address: Burlington, Vermont</i>		
<i>Organization: Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition</i>		
<i>Mailing Address: 275 Northgate Road, Burlington, Vermont 05408</i>		
<i>Contact: Erhard Mahnke</i>	<i>Title: Coordinator</i>	<i>Phone #: (802) 660-9484</i>
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I. CDBG Funding Request: \$ 8,000

II. Project Summary: Briefly describe the project or program to be funded with CDBG. (Please use a one or two sentence description – there is room in Section IV for more detail.)

The Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition requests funding for our expanding resident organizing work in Burlington’s federally assisted affordable housing that is at high risk of losing its affordability. The project seeks to preserve existing affordable housing stock while also promoting greater involvement of residents in their housing and its preservation.

III. Description of Organization: Describe the capacity of your organization to successfully carry out the program activities. What is your mission, and how do the proposed activities fit with your mission?

The Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition (VAHC) is Vermont’s only statewide membership organization dedicated solely to ensuring that all Vermonters have decent, safe and affordable housing, particularly the state’s low and moderate-income residents and people with special needs. The Coalition’s 80-plus members represent most of Vermont’s non-profit affordable housing developers, community land trusts, housing and homeless advocacy groups, public housing authorities, regional planners, funders, state agencies, and other organizations and individuals with an interest in affordable housing. Together, VAHC’s members provide housing and services to tens of thousands of Vermonters.

The mission of the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition is to:

- Ensure that all Vermonters, particularly low and moderate income persons, people with disabilities, homeless people, elders, families and others, have safe, adequate, physically accessible and affordable housing;
- **Encourage resident participation and control in their housing;**
- **Advocate for the preservation of existing housing**, protection of renters, and the development of new, perpetually affordable low and moderate income housing;
- Promote the recognition of housing as a basic right through education of the public and elected officials;
- **Act as a catalyst in the exploration and development of innovative means to preserve and increase Vermont’s affordable housing stock.**

As emphasized in our mission statement, both resident involvement and the preservation of existing affordable housing, the two major components of this project, are at the core of our mission. Throughout our 25-year history, the Coalition and its members, including our partners in this project, have been centrally involved in successful resident organizing efforts, forming resident associations, housing cooperatives and other leadership structures, and leading efforts to preserve and rehabilitate existing affordable housing like Northgate in Burlington, Westgate in Brattleboro, Applegate in Bennington and Highgate in Barre, as well as numerous several co-ops in and around Burlington and many mobile home park residents’ associations.

Our partners in the project include Northgate Resident Ownership Corporation (NROC), Vermont Tenants (VTI), and the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL), all VAHC members who have high levels of experience and expertise in working with residents. Led by a 70% resident board, NROC owns and governs Northgate Apartments, a 336-unit affordable housing development in Burlington. The organizing efforts of resident leaders, working in partnership with many area Coalition members, helped preserve Northgate as assisted low-income housing, making building rehabilitation decisions, reviewing budgets, and creating

policies. Vermont Tenants, in addition to providing free tenant services on landlord-tenant issues, also has been closely involved in resident organizing, and has agreed to commit a portion of its staff time to this project. VCIL is the primary organization in the state providing advocacy and assistance to people with disabilities. All three have recently played instrumental roles in informing residents and supporting the formation of a resident association at Wharf Lane apartments in Burlington, which continues to be at high risk of losing its affordability. In the midst of its uncertain future, residents have been well-informed of what is going on with the project and of their rights as tenants, and have come together through their newly formed residents' association to raise community awareness and support.

While NROC, VTI and VCIL will be close partners in this project, all three groups have limited available staff time and resources. Furthermore, with more of Burlington's existing affordable housing soon to be at-risk, it has become clear that there is a need for additional capacity to be committed to resident involvement. For these reasons, VAHC plans to hire one ¾ time resident organizer position to work directly with residents, as well as one full-time AmeriCorps VISTA member, who will build project capacity in the areas of partner outreach, network-building, communications, training, and fundraising. The overall project is statewide, but this application is just to fund a portion of project activities in Burlington.

We are also collaborating closely with other key project partners, including the Burlington Housing Authority (BHA) and the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA), both of which fully support our efforts, as well as CEDO. Both BHA and VHFA are the lead agencies in negotiating with the current owners of Wharf Lane and Bobbin Mill to purchase those properties and preserve them as affordable housing.

IV. Project Description:

- a. Describe the specific activities to be carried out by your project with CDBG dollars and the accomplishments you plan to achieve. Please distinguish the total number to be served from the number of Burlington clients to be served. Be specific about the tasks / work that CDBG will pay for. Use the table below, adding rows if necessary. You may add narrative below the table if needed for further description.**

Specific Service / Activity:	CDBG will pay for:	Unduplicated Total # of Households / Persons to be Served in this Service / Activity:	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington Households / Persons to be Served:	Outcome(s) to be Achieved:
Community outreach, networking and partnership building	Co-pay for AmeriCorps VISTA member	275 households	275 households	Resident organizing and housing preservation effort will be well coordinated and supported by multiple partners.
Identify resident leaders and promote leadership development opportunities, including scholarship-funded conferences and workshops	Co-pay for AmeriCorps VISTA member	275 households	275 households	Residents will become more effective leaders through training and leadership development opportunities. 2-4 resident leaders will attend National Low Income Housing Coalition conference.
Support development of resident associations in at-risk housing by providing accurate and accessible information and providing additional support and guidance	Co-pay for AmeriCorps VISTA member	275 households	275 households	3-4 resident associations will be established in at-risk housing. Resident associations will take larger role in representing resident needs, complaints and wishes, especially during future rehabilitation decisions.
Organize resident informational meetings about building decisions and updates, tenant rights, and ways residents can become involved in future decisions, such as building rehabilitation	Co-pay for AmeriCorps VISTA member	275 household	275 households	All residents will have access to quality information. Interested residents will be well-informed of what is going on with the project, have a way to participate in and contribute to decisions, and be aware of their rights and responsibilities

Assist in facilitating meetings between nonprofits, property owners/managers, and residents	Co-pay for AmeriCorps VISTA member	275 households	275 households	At least one meeting a month will be held in each development. Through effective communication, residents and property owners/managers will be better able to prevent and resolve conflicts and share ideas.
Create online and written resources for residents and resident leaders	Co-pay for VISTA member	275 households	275 households	1-2 online sources and unlimited printed resources will be created. Understandable and applicable information will be accessible to residents, community organizers, and others in multiple formats.
Research and pursue sustainable funding mechanisms	Co-pay for VISTA member	275 households	275 households	VISTA member will raise at least \$25,000 in project funding. Project will become financially sustainable for the long-term.

As part of the city and broader community's effort to preserve existing affordable housing, VAHC will be expanding its work with residents in at-risk housing to ensure that residents are well-informed and at the table in matters that impact their lives. As properties go up for sale and negotiations take place, residents need to be aware of decisions that are taking place and how they will be affected. In addition, as ownership changes hands and rehabilitation decisions are being made, residents need to be involved, ideally through organized resident groups that represent general resident interests in an effective way.

VAHC will provide added capacity, primarily through additional staff, to work with residents in the growing number of high risk expiring-use properties. While the project will be a statewide effort, its focus in the first few years will be primarily in the highest-risk properties, located almost exclusively in Burlington, including Wharf Lane Apartments, Bobbin Mill, McKenzie House and South Meadow. These properties, home to some of Burlington's most vulnerable residents, are located in prime areas close to jobs, services, transportation and the waterfront, and are at highest risk of being sold and losing their affordability.

VAHC is requesting funding to cover the co-pay for one full-time AmeriCorps VISTA member to assist in coordinating the project, planning trainings and resident meetings, supporting the formation of resident associations, providing communications and outreach support, and building the project's general capacity.

b. If you plan to pay for staff with CDBG funding, describe what they do in relation to the specific service(s) / activity(ies) described above. All staff that appear in the salary / benefits line items in your budget (Section XV) must be described below. Add rows if necessary.

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
Project Capacity-building	AmeriCorps VISTA	Assist in coordinating the project, plan trainings & resident meetings, support formation of resident associations, provide communications and outreach support, and build project's general capacity.	40	100%

V. Beneficiary Information

a. For each service / activity you identified in Section IV, please project how the Burlington residents will break out into the following income categories. Use the Income Table at http://www.cedoburlington.org/cdbq/income_limits.htm.

Service / Activity:	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington Households / Persons to be Served:	# Extremely Low-Income	# Low-Income	# Moderate-Income	# Above Moderate-Income
All above activities	275 households	95 households	116 households	35 households	29 households

b. Please provide a single unduplicated total beneficiary count below:

Unduplicated Total # of Burlington Households / Persons to be Served:	# Extremely Low-Income	# Low-Income	# Moderate-Income	# Above Moderate-Income
275 households	95 households	116 households	35 households	29 households

c. How will/do you document beneficiary income levels?

The Burlington Housing Authority and the Vermont Housing Finance Agency keeps records of the income levels of all HUD-assisted housing in Burlington. We will rely on their documentation.

VI. Problem Statement

a. What particular problem or need will this project address?

As affordability restrictions expire for hundreds of units of affordable housing in the next few years, more than 129 units of housing are at high risk of being lost, potentially displacing hundreds of Burlington’s low-income residents. Another 148 at South Meadow are at lower risk, but will require full resident engagement to make sure that protections the City put in place twenty years ago can be realized. VAHC works diligently with community partners to support efforts to preserve the affordability of this much-needed housing. Through this work, it has become clear that there is an increasing need for resident involvement in at-risk projects. While much attention and quality work is underway in terms of preserving housing affordability and in regards to general matters of “bricks and mortar,” less attention and resources have been committed to working with the residents of these at-risk properties. It is critical, as properties become at risk of losing affordability, changing ownership, and undergoing major renovations, to ensure that residents are fully informed about important changes and decisions, empowered and at the table and involved as much as possible.

This project will contribute to affordable housing preservation efforts specifically in the area of resident organizing and empowerment. The AmeriCorps VISTA member specifically will be committed to building the project’s overall capacity, working with a resident organizer staff member and project partners in planning and facilitating meetings, fundraising, creating online and printed resources, and strengthening project partnerships.

b. How was this need identified?

The need to preserve at-risk assisted housing in Burlington has been identified as a high priority through the City’s HUD Consolidated Plan. CEDO’s housing staff has already devoted considerable time and resources to the effort to preserve these at-risk homes. Various community groups, including NROC, VCIL and VTI, have generously contributed time and resources to resident organizing in expiring use properties, such as Wharf Lane Apartments. At Wharf Lane, staff from these organizations planned and facilitated meetings with residents, provided information and thoroughly explained what was going on with the project, and supported residents’ mobilization efforts, including a community-wide petition, awareness raising activities, and the formation of a resident association. These groups generously donated limited staff time and resources to this work, but in order to carry out the work successfully, several of the staff also contributed significant amounts of volunteer time outside of work hours. With several more properties nearing expiration, the need for time committed to working with residents will more than double. Through frequent communications with partners regarding how to meet this growing need, it was decided that additional staff, dedicated full-time to resident organizing in expiring use projects, is imperative and of immediate need. Furthermore, it is essential to have one individual dedicated to project coordination and capacity building, especially in the first one to two years.

c. Why is this a funding priority for Burlington?

This is a funding priority for Burlington because it is essential to help preserve 275 units of existing affordable housing in the City and is therefore directly connected and integral to the city’s affordable housing preservation efforts. With some of Burlington’s critical affordable housing properties at high risk of losing their

affordability, it is essential that residents are well-informed about decisions that impact their homes and lives, and have meaningful ways to become involved in the effort to preserve their homes.

VII. Program Goals: How will this project reduce the number of people living in poverty? Will it help people move out of poverty? Prevent people from entering poverty? Address basic needs of people living in poverty?

This project is one piece of a larger endeavor to preserve affordable housing for low-income residents, not just in Burlington, but statewide. The need for affordable housing in Burlington continues to be extremely high. Losing high risk properties such as Wharf Lane, Bobbin Mill, and McKenzie House could mean displacing hundreds of low-income people, including large numbers of people with disabilities, elders, and others with special needs. With a tight rental vacancy rate that has hovered around one percent for a number of years, and even few housing units affordable to extremely low income people, or accessible to people with disabilities, this displacement would almost certainly force residents into further poverty and potential homelessness. HUD Fair Market Rents are \$954 for a one-bedroom apartment, \$1,197 for a two-bedroom and \$1,532 for a three-bedroom. Low and very low-income Burlington residents cannot afford these prices without rental assistance. Even with vouchers, if residents are displaced from these developments, they will be hard pressed to find anything in our tight market that fits within HUD guidelines. Many residents would have no choice but to settle for substandard or unaffordable housing, making sacrifices on other essential needs. Others would be forced to leave Burlington in search of isolated, but more affordable options, and others would find themselves homeless, possibly for the first time.

This project would strengthen the work of many agencies to preserve these units as affordable housing. Housing stability is the foundation of success in all areas of residents' lives, including job security and advancement, mental and physical wellbeing, educational success, and community building and civic engagement.

Our project specifically helps people move out of poverty and addresses the basic needs of people living in poverty by engaging and empowering them to be better informed and more actively involved in matters that affect their housing and overall quality of life. With more control over their own lives, residents will be better able to ensure that their needs are met and their housing maintained. More immediately, during changes in ownership, management, and potential rehabilitation, it is more important than ever that residents are well informed and involved to ensure as little disruption as possible and achieve an overall smooth transition.

a. Are you targeting any specific disadvantaged population/group of people? If so, who are they? (i.e., people with disabilities, minorities, women with children living in poverty, people with limited English proficiency, at-risk youth, etc.)

The project, because of its focus on at-risk affordable housing projects, targets low-income and extremely low-income residents, many of whom are also people with disabilities, single parents, minorities, and elderly.

VIII. Equal Opportunity/Accessibility: How do you make sure your programs are accessible to all and culturally appropriate? What equal opportunity efforts do you make in hiring and, if applicable, Board recruitment?

All staff, including the AmeriCorps VISTA member, will complete a cultural competency training, as well as continuous training in fair housing issues and policies. In hiring, VAHC will work actively to recruit women, people of color and people with disabilities and others from traditionally disadvantaged populations. In carrying-out their work, project staff will do so in a culturally appropriate and accessible way. Reasonable accommodations will be made for people with disabilities, and when working with residents with Limited English Proficiency, a qualified interpreter will be used and documents translated.

IX. Impact and Evaluation:

a. How do you define success? How do you measure it? How many of your beneficiaries achieve it?

We define and measure success by the:

- Number of meetings/trainings held, levels of resident participation
- Number of resident associations formed, number of active members, and how often they meet
- Number of meetings held between residents and property owners/managers
- Number of informational resources created
- Number of residents that participate in training events and conferences
- Amount of funding achieved for project sustainability
- Number of project partnerships created and meetings held

For each, the number of beneficiaries varies between those who benefit directly (i.e. members of residents association, meeting attendees, resources created, etc.) and those who benefit indirectly (i.e. those whose interests are represented by resident associations, those who receive second-hand information from meetings, those who access resources, etc.). Those who benefit directly in many cases may be smaller proportion of the total resident community, but the indirect benefit is significantly broader.

b. If this is an existing project:

1. What were your projected accomplishments for your most recent completed funding period or fiscal year?

Though we are building on past resident organizing work completed by our members and project partners, as well as our own involvement with Wharf Lane, this project is new.

2. What were your actual accomplishments for that period? If you did not meet projections, please explain (i) why and (ii) how you will overcome that issue in the future.

N/A

X. Community Participation & Partners

a. How are the community and/or program participants involved in decision-making and in identifying the program need, design and/or evaluation?

As the project gets underway, we will form a resident project advisory committee made up of resident leaders from successful resident associations, such as NROC members, as well as community representatives from nonprofit project partners. This advisory committee will act as the decision-making structure guiding the project.

b. What other agencies or sectors (i.e., government, private) do you work with on this project/program?

Our project partners consist of the aforementioned nonprofit housing partners with an interest and experience in resident organizing, affordable housing preservation, or both (BHA, VHFA, VTI, NROC & VCIL). However, throughout the project, we will also be coordinating with local government entities, most prominently CEDO.

XI. Sustainability

a. How will this project have a long-term benefit to the City of Burlington?

Preserving existing affordable housing and engaging residents in their housing is of long-term benefit to the City of Burlington. With an already overwhelming need for more affordable housing units, it is essential to preserve those that already exist. Once they are lost, they are almost impossible to replace. It is also essential, beyond immediate preservation, to ensure that those living in affordable housing are aware of and involved in matters that affect their housing. Residents will better be able to take leadership, effectively communicate problems and maintain vibrant, healthy communities. Furthermore, as they begin to gain control and involvement in their immediate communities, they will also be more apt to contribute to the broader community as well.

b. If the project ends, will that benefit continue?

The goal of the project is to form active, self-sustaining resident associations in each of the affected properties, and to have each play an active role in the preservation of their homes. If successful, the City will benefit for many years from the preservation of these affordable housing resources and the active engagement of the residents.

c. If CDBG funding ends, will the project be sustainable (i.e., able to continue)?

Yes. This project relies on multiple funding sources. While heavily grant-funded in the initial year, great efforts will be made to further diversify funding sources and incorporate longer-term sources into the overall project funding strategy.

XII. Consistency

a. What Consolidated Plan objective does this project support?

This project supports the following Consolidated Plan objectives:

Objective DH-3.1: Preserve 427 units of affordable housing over the next five years

Objective DH-3.2: Rehab 74 units of rental housing over the next five years

Objective DH-3.4: Help 3,585 residents each year over the next five years to remain housed and living independently

- b. **What other City plans, if any, does this project support or complement?**
- The City of Burlington's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice
 - Moving Towards Home: Strategies for Ending Homelessness in Ten Years
 - Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force Report & Recommendations

XIII. Readiness to Proceed

- a. **Is the project ready to begin July 1, 2011 and be completed by June 30, 2012?**
Yes
- b. **If not, what are the expected start and completion dates?**
N/A
- c. **Are there any other conditions that may affect your ability to begin or complete this project?**
No

XIV. Financial Narrative

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

This project is an essential part of Burlington's focus on preserving high risk housing, as described as a priority in the City's Consolidated Plan. While the project will eventually be statewide in scope, the highest concentration of high risk housing is in Burlington, and these properties will be our greatest priority in the next one to three years. We are applying to multiple sources to fund this project; CDBG is a relatively small part of the mix (circa 10%).

- b. **Describe your use of community resources. For example, will your project be matched or leveraged with other funding sources or resources (such as volunteers) that don't appear in the budget summary below?**

We will rely on the resources that our partner agencies will contribute to the project, as well as the A*VISTA member for whose co-pay we are applying. We will also rely on the residents of the targeted housing developments themselves to become actively engaged in the efforts to preserve their housing. Our office space and numerous basic office expenses are donated on an in-kind basis by Northgate. Our members donate thousands of hours of staff time to the Coalition annually and will likely contribute many hours to this project as well.

- c. **Has your organization had any significant changes in funding levels over the last year? If so, please describe.**

No

- d. **What percent of Agency funds are used for administration vs. program costs?**

Under 5%. We rely heavily on in-kind donations from our members.

XV. Budget

a. Summary

	Project		Agency	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$ 0	\$ 8,000	\$ 0	\$ 8,000
State	0	0	0	0
Federal	0	0	20,000	20,000
United Way	0	0	0	0
Private	0	70,674	22,200	93,374
Program Income	0	0	0	0
Other (membership)	0	0	19,000	19,000
Total	\$ 0	\$ 78,674	\$ 61,200	\$ 140,374

* Must match your CDBG request amount on Page 1.

** Must match in all three boxes on Pages 7 and 8.

b. Proposed Project Budget Sources

CDBG	\$ 8000
Other Federal – please specify funder and program (i.e., HUD – Emergency Shelter Grant, etc.)	
	\$ 0
State – please specify funder and program (i.e., Department of Health – AIDS Prevention, etc.)	
	\$ 0
United Way of Chittenden County	\$ 0
Private – please specify (i.e., individual donations, foundations, faith-based organizations, etc.)	
Haymarket People’s Fund	\$ 12,000
Ben and Jerry’s Foundation	\$ 8,000
Needmor Foundation	\$ 25,000
CTAC	\$ 10,000
Abelard Foundation	\$ 10,000
People’s United Bank Foundation	\$ 2,000
Key Bank Foundation	\$ 2,000
Citizen’s Bank Foundation	\$ 1,674
Other – please specify (i.e., fee-for-service, etc.)	
Membership dues	\$ 0
TOTAL	\$ 78,674

c. Proposed Budget Uses

<u>Line Item</u>	CDBG	Other	<u>Total</u>
Resident Organizer (and ancillary expenses)	\$ 0	\$ 32,674	\$ 32,674
Americorps VISTA (and mileage)	\$ 8000	\$ 1,700	\$ 9,700
Project Partnerships	\$ 0	\$ 17,233	\$ 17,233
General Supervision	\$ 0	\$ 6,240	\$ 6,240
Project Share of General Administration	\$ 0	\$ 1,997	\$ 1,997
Office Supplies	\$ 0	\$ 1,830	\$ 1,830
Resident Meeting Expenses	\$ 0	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400
Scholarship Fund for Resident Leadership Training	\$ 0	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Staff Training	\$ 0	\$ 2,600	\$ 2,600
TOTAL	\$ 0	\$70,674.00	\$78,674.00

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