

City of Burlington / CDBG 2012 Application Form

Eligibility _____ National Objective _____ NRSA _____
(Office Use)

Project # _____
(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 Rd. Burlington, Vermont, 05408</i>		
<i>Contact: Joshua Wronski</i>	<i>Title: Resident Organizer</i>	<i>Phone #: (802) 660-9484</i>
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I. **CDBG Funding Request:**

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 is requesting funding to expand its resident organizing work in affordable housing properties which are at risk of losing their affordability. The goals of the project are to preserve existing affordable housing, and to insure that residents of affordable housing properties have a say in decisions affecting their homes.

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; and
- 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 above, 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, Coalition members, including our partners in this project, have been centrally involved in successful resident organizing efforts, forming resident associations and other leadership structures, and leading efforts to preserve and rehabilitate existing affordable housing.

Our partners in the project include Vermont Tenants (VTI), both 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. Resident leaders' organizing efforts accomplished organizing the buy-out of Northgate, 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. Both VTI and NROC 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 to raise community awareness and support.

While NROC and VTI will be close partners in this project, both groups have limited available staff time and resources. Furthermore, with more and more 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.

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	284 families	284 families	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	284 households	284 households	Residents will become more effective leaders through training and leadership development opportunities. 3-4 resident leaders will participate in at least one leadership development training conducted by the VAHC and/or collaborating organizations.
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	284 households	284 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	Co-pay for AmeriCorps VISTA member	284 households	284 households	100% of residents will have access to quality information. Interested residents will be well-informed of what is going on with the project, have

involved in future decisions, such as building rehabilitation				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	284 households	284 households	6-8 meetings will be held. 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	284 households	284 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	284+ households	284+ 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.

As mentioned above, VAHC plans to provide added capacity, primarily through continued and expanded funding of our AmeriCorps* VISTA position, to work with residents in the growing number of high risk expiring-use properties and with residents associations in recently preserved properties. While the project will be a statewide effort, its focus in the first few years will be primarily in the highest-risk, and recently preserved properties, located almost exclusively in Burlington. These properties include Wharf Lane Bobbin Mill, Monroe St., and McKenzie House. These properties are home to some of Burlington's most vulnerable residents, and are located in prime areas close to jobs, services, transportation and the waterfront. As these affordable housing projects undergo major changes including renovations, and potential sale, it is essential that residents have the support necessary to be as engaged in the process as possible.

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-	AmeriCorps	Assist in coordinating the	40	100%

building	VISTA	project, plan trainings & resident meetings, support formation of resident associations, provide communications and outreach support, and build project's general capacity.		
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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/cdbg/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	284 households	95 households	123 households	38 households	28 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
284 households	95 households	123 households	38 households	28 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.

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 50 units of housing are currently at risk of being lost, potentially displacing some of Burlington's most vulnerable and low-income residents. An additional 364 units have been recently preserved, but will soon undergo major renovations or changes in ownership. Over the past year the VAHC has been working diligently with community partners to support and organize residents of at-risk affordable housing properties, and engage in other efforts to preserve the affordability of this much-needed housing. While the VAHC has been working to organize residents of at-risk properties, it has become clear that additional resources are needed to create the capacity necessary to fully engage residents. While much attention and quality work is underway in terms of preserving housing affordability, little attention and resources have been committed to working with the residents of these at-risk properties. It is critical, that as properties risk losing affordability, change of ownership, or undergo drastic renovations, we work to ensure that residents are fully informed about important changes and decisions, and have the support necessary to be at the decision making table, to advocate on their behalf.

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 by supporting existing residents associations in recently preserved properties, organizing residents in expiring-use properties, and working with project partners in planning and facilitating meetings, fundraising, creating online and printed resources, and strengthening project partnerships.

- b. How was this need identified?

Various community groups, including NROC and VTI, have generously contributed time and resources to resident organizing in expiring use properties, such as Wharf Lane Apartments and others. 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, and several properties undergoing major renovations, 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?

In the Burlington area, the US Census estimates that 46.3 percent of Burlington residents spend over thirty percent of their annual income on housing. As the housing stock is rapidly becoming un-affordable to an increasing number of residents, the city of Burlington has made it a priority to preserve the existing affordable housing resources that are available to the cities low-income residents. In 2011, Burlington residents made clear they support the preservation of existing affordable housing units by voting 70 percent in favor of supporting the preservation of Wharf Lane. The model of the Wharf lane save our homes campaign; organized by the VAHC, VTI, and other community partners, demonstrates that one of the greatest and best tools to preserve at risk affordable housing properties in Burlington is through the creation of strong, democratic, and participatory residents associations.

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?

Housing stability is the foundation of success in other areas of residents' lives, including job security and advancement, mental and physical wellbeing, educational success, and community building and civic engagement. This project is one piece of a larger endeavor to preserve existing affordable housing for low-income Burlington residents. The need for affordable housing in Burlington is extremely high, and losing at risk properties such as McKenzie House and Monroe St. Apartments could mean displacing some of the most vulnerable and low-income residents of Burlington, including people with disabilities, elders, and others with special needs. With a tight rental vacancy rate, and even fewer housing units affordable to extremely low-income people or accessible to people with disabilities, this displacement would almost certainly force residents into further poverty. 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 work to preserve these units as affordable housing.

Our project specifically helps people move out of poverty and addresses the basic needs of people living in poverty by engaging and empowering people 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 rehabilitation, it is more important than ever that residents are well informed and involved to ensure as little disruption as possible and 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:

a. How do you make sure your programs are accessible to all, inclusive and culturally appropriate?

As the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalitions Resident Organizer undergoes the process of organizing residents, they will work to insure that all programs are accessible and inclusive to all residents of the specific housing development. The VAHC has begun the process of contacting The Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program to bring experienced translators to resident's events as necessary. Additionally, the VAHC plans on working with the Association of Africans Living in VT, and other organizations to develop inclusive and culturally appropriate programs for the populations served. The VAHC will make every effort to insure that events are carried out in a culturally appropriate, accessible, and inclusive way.

b. Describe the diversity status of (i) your staff for this program and (ii) your Board. How does that compare with the diversity status of the clients of the program / project you're requesting funding for?

The members of our Steering Committee and Staff, while all white housing professionals, represent varying socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and ages ranging from low twenties to low sixties. We have a balance of male and female members, and one of our Steering Committee members has a physical disability.

Compared to the overall population, people of color are disproportionately represented in affordable housing, as are people with disabilities and special needs. The residents of the affordable housing properties the VAHC is working in are diverse in ethnicity, disability status, and gender. As such, the VAHC will make every effort to insure that all residents are fully include and represented throughout the organizing process.

c. Describe the diversity / cultural competency trainings that your staff and Board have participated in during the last year?

The current VAHC resident organizer spent August of 2010 through January of 2011 in South Africa studying social transformation, and spent a great deal of time focusing on efforts to deal with the country's history of racism on both an individual and societal level. During this time, he participated in a number of diversity and cultural competency trainings.

While the VAHC's other staff members have not participated in diversity/cultural competency trainings yet this year, they have in the past, and plan on attending trainings in 2012.

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 and number of residents that attend
- 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?

While the Resident Organizing Project began in mid august of 2011 with the hiring of an AmeriCorps* VISTA, the project is still in the early stages, and has not yet completed a fiscal year.

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.

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?

The VAHC has formed a Resident Organizing project advisory committee currently made up of member of VT Tenants Inc., CVOEO, CEDO, and community representatives from nonprofit project partners. As the project progresses resident leaders from affordable housing properties the VAHC is organizing will be identified and asked to join the project's advisory committee.

b. Who do you mainly work with (i.e., what partners) to get the outcomes you want for your clients?

Our project partners consist largely of other nonprofit housing professionals with an interest and experience in resident organizing, affordable housing preservation, or both. 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 decisions affecting 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. 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.

a. 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 in the second year 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

Readiness to Proceed

a. Is the project ready to begin July 1, 2012 and be completed by June 30, 2013?

Yes

b. If not, what are the expected start and completion dates?

N/A

c. Are there any other conditions (i.e., obtaining permits, the availability of other funding, etc.) 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.

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 percent, 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	
Federal	0	0	\$0	
United Way	0	0	\$0	
Private	0	\$ 29,000	\$0	
Program Income	0		\$0	
Other			\$0	
Total	\$	\$ **	\$	\$

* 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	\$ 8,000
Other Federal – please specify funder and program (i.e., HUD – Emergency Shelter Grant, etc.)	*
State – please specify funder and program (i.e., Department of Health – AIDS Prevention, etc.)	
United Way of Chittenden County	\$ 0
Private – please specify (i.e., individual donations, foundations, faith-based organizations, etc.)	
Haymarket People’s Fund	\$ 10,000
Ben and Jerry’s Foundation	\$ 15,000
Northfield Savings Bank Charitable Giving	\$ 2,000
Other bank foundations/project partner	\$ 2,000
Other – please specify (i.e., fee-for-service, etc.)	
TOTAL	\$ 37,000
	**

c. Proposed Budget Uses: Please be sure that all funding uses (including staff) that appear in Section IV also appear here.

<u>Line Item</u>	<u>CDBG</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
AmeriCorps* VISTA and millage	\$ 8,000		\$ 8,000
Project coordination & supervision (2 hrs/wk)		\$2,250	\$2,250
Resident Organizer Staff, millage, and fringe		\$20,800	\$20,800
Computer (nonprofit discount)		\$350	\$350
Office supplies		\$1,050	\$1,050
Food Supplies		\$400	\$400
Childcare		\$500	\$500
Conferences workshops and other training		\$3,650	\$3,650
TOTAL	\$8,000	\$ 29,000	\$ 37,000
	*		**

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