

City of Burlington / CDBG 2012 Application Form

Eligibility _____ National Objective _____ NRSA _____
(Office Use)

Project # _____
(Office Use)

Project Name: WARMTH Support Program

Project Location/Address: 255 S. Champlain Street, Suite 9, Burlington, VT, 05401

Organization: Champlain Valley office of Economic Opportunity/Chittenden Community Action

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I. **CDBG Funding Request:**

\$7,000

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 WARMTH Support Program provides supportive services and/or financial assistance in the payment of home energy bills to households facing a home heating crisis. The WARMTH Program, created in 1986, is intended to supplement and extend available resources and not to replace any ongoing state or federal heating programs or services.

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?

CVOEO was incorporated in 1965, and is one of five Community Action Agencies in Vermont. CVOEO serves primarily the northwestern corner of the state -- Franklin, Grand Isle, Chittenden, and Addison Counties. The three Coordinated Statewide Housing Services programs of CVOEO (the Fair Housing Project, the Mobile Home Project, and Vermont Tenants, Inc.) serve residents statewide.

The Community Services Block Grant funds the anti-poverty Community Action Agencies and family self sufficiency efforts of a network of 1,100 community agencies, serving the poor in every state as well as Puerto Rico and the Trust Territories. By promoting self-sufficiency, not dependency, Community Action Agencies manage more than \$5.6 billion in public and private resources annually, serving more than 9.3 million low income persons.

The mission of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) is to address the fundamental issues of economic, social and racial justice and to work with low income people to achieve economic independence.

Chittenden Community Action (CCA) is one of the many CVOEO programs. CCA provides a broad base of services and programs for low income residents of Chittenden County. Emergency services include; fuel and utility assistance, housing assistance, transportation, and pharmacy co-payments. CCA provides assistance for those entering or re-entering the workforce by paying for identification, transportation and clothing. We also provide emergency vouchers to ReSource for their store, for furniture and other essential household items. CCA staff distributes Farm to Family coupons, seeds, plants, compost and determine eligibility for the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department for subsidized garden plots.

CCA also distributes tickets or vouchers for our clients to attend functions at ECHO, the Flynn Theater, Lane Series and the Shelburne Museum. Other services include; advocacy, information and referral services, assistance with various applications for both public and private agencies, 3SquaresVT outreach and eligibility. For more than 30 years CCA has hosted a VITA income tax preparation site.

The number of households living below the federal poverty level continues to increase in Vermont and across the nation. Meanwhile, incomes have not risen to help people meet their rising expenses and livable wage jobs remain a scarce commodity. Even solid middle-class Vermonters now find it difficult to afford their basic needs.

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:
Emergency Financial Energy Assistance	Direct service staff – salary	2,800 persons	1,850 persons	Maintain heat and safety in the home
Assistance with LIHEAP applications	Direct service staff – salary	750 persons	500 persons	Seasonal (non-emergency) benefit sent directly to primary fuel supplier

- 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
Emergency Energy Assistance	Community Service Worker – Fuel &	Contact energy supplier, commit	35 hours per week	8%

	Utility	payment, facilitate payment agreement		
Emergency Energy Assistance	Community Service Worker – Fuel & Utility	Complete LIHEAP and other public benefits applications	5 hours per week	2%

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
Emergency Energy Assistance	1,850	1,400	200	240	10
Emergency Energy Assistance	500	400	75	25	0

- 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
1,075	850	125	90	10

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

WARMTH staff enters demographic information about the household, including income, into the CVOEO "Tracker" database system during each interview. Clients are asked to provide proof of income for their household such as paycheck stubs, a letter from the employer, a letter from ESD or Social Security, income tax returns, etc. WARMTH staff are linked with the State's database, ACCESS, and can check income and resources for those receiving benefits from the state. The client then signs the intake attesting that the information that they have provided is accurate.

VI. Problem Statement

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

The WARMTH Program addresses the problems of a growing number of households that are unable to afford the rising cost of heat and energy. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports that increases for heating oil and propane expenditures are expected to increase by 8 percent and 5 percent, respectively, this winter (October 1 to March 31) compared with last winter. The warm start to this heating season has lowered the forecast of average household heating expenditures for heating fuels by about 3 percent from November's outlook.

Vermont is receiving a total of \$11.6 million from Washington for LIHEAP this year, significantly less than last year when Vermont received a block grant totaling \$25.7 million. Last winter the average fuel assistance benefit was \$866 per household and this year it is \$474. The year before last (2010) the average seasonal fuel benefit was over \$1,100. The outlook for keeping low income hard working Vermonters warm this winter, when fuel costs are the highest, are grim.

Many of the low income Burlington households that request assistance heat their homes with natural gas and live in rent subsidized housing units. Many of these households are either ineligible or receive a small benefit for the seasonal (non-emergency based) component of the LIHEAP Program and must rely on the emergency programs such as Crisis Fuel Assistance and WARMTH. WARMTH is a last resort program that can often assist households that are not eligible for other fuel assistance programs. WARMTH funds and services are usually available before the LIHEAP Programs open in November and after they close in mid-April.

b. How was this need identified?

Since 1986, the WARMTH Program has been helping low and moderate income households heat their homes. Due to the high cost of fuel and utility rates, that are higher than the national average and the highest in New England, WARMTH is facing another difficult year. Many households that have trouble paying for their energy during the winter are unable to meet the eligibility requirements for the public fuel assistance programs. The demand for WARMTH funds and services continues to increase and if not for WARMTH, these households would fall through the cracks and would most likely go without heat or utilities or be unable to meet some other of their basic needs.

c. Why is this a funding priority for Burlington?

More than ever this year, WARMTH is a funding priority for Burlington because it provides services that are essential in keeping our community and its residents safe and comfortable. Bringing more resources into the household allows our clients to manage their budgets more easily and will result in healthy and more vibrant citizens. Advocates are always concerned that households faced with a home heating crisis may turn to unsafe (such as cooking stoves) and illegal (such as portable kerosene heaters) methods of heating their homes, resulting in tragedy.

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?

The goal of the WARMTH Program has always been to prevent low income households from being cold by providing the resources to provide heat - one of the basic concerns of people living in poverty. Using WARMTH funds that are primarily donated by customers of participating utility and fuel companies, as well as our skills as negotiators, we have been able to resolve thousands of emergencies. We attempt to make the program as accessible as possible, often accepting telephone applications so that clients do not have to lose hours at work or so that young mothers are not forced to bring sick kids out in the cold. Our ultimate goal will always be to ensure that no household goes cold due to their inability to afford energy.

- 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.)**

Our target population is low and moderate income households that are experiencing a home heating emergency. WARMTH serves the elderly and disabled, single and two parent households, households without children, the working poor, refugees and other English language learners, the unemployed and those without any income.

VIII. Equal Opportunity/Accessibility:

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

Chittenden Community Action/CVOEO is committed to ensuring that our programs are accessible to all. All staff have had the opportunity to attend workshops and conferences that address cultural diversity in the workplace. We routinely hire foreign language translators when language is a barrier for our clients. Staff works closely with staff from Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV). One African staff member is fluent in 5 languages. When hiring new staff for vacancies each employment announcement states *'People of color and from diverse cultural groups are especially urged to apply'* and *"CVOEO is an equal opportunity employer."*

- 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?**

Chittenden Community Action has an African woman, fluent in five languages, on staff. A member of the CVOEO Board of Directors is also African.

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

All CVOEO staff in the Burlington office, including HAP staff, recently had the opportunity to participate in a year-long cultural competency project with the City of Burlington's Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO). CEDO's "We All Belong AmeriCorps*State Program" envisions a more welcoming and inclusive community by removing barriers that perpetuate poverty, racism and social inequity. It was an education, outreach, and community engagement initiative that engages diverse populations in the school, community and public life. Our Cultural Competency journey, which included a book club, a tour of shops owned by new Americans in the old North End and a luncheon with ethnic foods has allowed us to begin developing a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that assist us to work effectively cross-culturally.

IX. Impact and Evaluation:

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

Success of the WARMTH Program is measured by the number of heating related emergencies that are resolved as a result of assistance from the program. Each year thousands of home energy emergencies are prevented and heat is restored or maintained. WARMTH staff are experts on the rules surrounding deposits and disconnections and regularly attend trainings presented by the Department of Public Service, the state agency that enforces these regulations.

Virtually all of the income eligible households seeking WARMTH assistance are able to have their heating related emergency solved. Usually this is accomplished with financial assistance and advocacy from WARMTH but sometimes this is accomplished through collaboration with other organizations such as Joseph's House, JUMP, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, etc. All staff possess a good understanding of what services these other local agencies and organizations provide and meet with the other service providers several times each year.

- b. If this is an existing project:**

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

We estimated that 1,780 Burlington residents would be served by the WARMTH Program during the most recent completed funding period.

- 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.**

We actually served 1,981 Burlington residents residing in 753 households.

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 WARMTH Committee is made up of Community Action staff from all five of Vermont's Community Action Agencies, ESD employees and fuel and utility company representation. The WARMTH committee meets regularly and participates in fuel assistance training sessions sponsored by the State Office of Home Heating Fuel Assistance and with the Department of Public Service which regulates utility companies. The WARMTH staff is in constant face-to-face contact with households that are in crisis and are very responsive to their needs and suggestions for improvements to the program.

CVOEO is represented on the HEAT Task Force, a statewide policy and planning group. The HEAT Task Force is made up of Community Action staff from all five Vermont Community Action Agencies, Economic Services Division (ESD) employees, low income advocates, representatives from the disability community and fuel and utility company representation.

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

The WARMTH Program coordinates with 12 energy suppliers from around the state. Customers of these companies are solicited for donations using a brochure insert with the billing. The Burlington Free Press raises funds during the Giving Season Campaign from Thanksgiving through New Years Day. Churches, banks, foundations and other community organizations routinely contribute and raise funds that support WARMTH. One Hundred percent of all donations are used for client services. Our administrative funds to operate the program and pay for salaries, etc. come from Burlington Electric Department, Vermont Gas Systems, Green Mountain Power, the State of Vermont and CDBG funds.

XI. Sustainability

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

The City of Burlington will benefit from this project because warm, comfortable households are safer and thus WARMTH contributes to a stable community. We always encourage our clients to seek other resources rather than using their housing money when trying to pay for their energy. High utility and fuel bills are often cited as a reason for homelessness.

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

No. The need for WARMTH assistance continues to grow. We will continue to seek new funding sources from private companies and foundations.

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

No. CDBG funds are an essential piece of the mix of government and private funding. A loss of these funds would be detrimental to the future of the program.

XII. Consistency

a. What Consolidated Plan objective does this project support?

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

OBJECTIVE SL-1.4: Help 400 residents access health and public safety services each year over the next five years

b. What other City plans, if any, does this project support or complement?

None that we are aware of.

XIII. 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

a. 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?

WARMTH does use a creative mix of funding sources in order to maintain a fully staffed multi-service program. Loss of CDBG funds would have a detrimental effect on this mix.

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?

Financial support from Burlington's CDBG funds allows WARMTH to leverage funding from the Economic Services Division of the Department of Children and Families, Vermont Gas Systems, Burlington Electric Department and Green Mountain Power.

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

The Community Services Block Grant, (CSBG), which is the core funding for Community Action Agencies was reduced by approximately 5% during the 2011 Fiscal Year. Nearly all staff were required to take at least 1 week unpaid furlough. It is unclear if the grant will be cut further during FY 2012.

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

CVOEO's administration cost in the current budget is 5.7%. The remainder of funds are used for program activity.

XV. Budget

a. Summary

Project	Agency
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	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$5,263	\$7,000	\$23,901	\$37,000
State	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$2,287,306	\$2,844,060
Federal			\$6,591,660	\$6,764,792
Federal ARRA			\$2,001,174	\$0
United Way			\$162,786	\$167,670
Private	\$38,000	\$44,000	\$1,454,138	\$1,497,775
Program Income	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$262,003	\$365,250
Other			\$59,255	\$60,000
In Kind			\$5,100,000	\$5,355,000
Total	\$267,263	\$275,000	\$ 17,942,223	\$17,091,547

* 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	\$7,000
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.)	
Department for Children and Families – Economic Services Division	\$24,000
United Way of Chittenden County	\$0
Private – please specify (i.e., individual donations, foundations, faith-based organizations, etc.)	
Green Mountain Power Corporation	\$20,000
Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.	\$12,000
Burlington Electric Department	\$12,000
Other – please specify (i.e., fee-for-service, etc.)	
Private donations from utility customer donations, other private individuals, foundations and grants – 100% is used for direct client services, paid directly to the energy provider on behalf of eligible low income households	\$200,000
TOTAL	\$275,000

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>	CDBG	Other	<u>Total</u>
Salaries	\$7,000	\$33,000	\$40,000
Fringe – federally approved rate of 42% of salaries for Full Time/Part Year		\$16,800	\$16,800
Admin – federally approved indirect rate of 21.4% of salaries		\$8,560	\$8,560
Occupancy		\$6,140	\$6,140
Local Travel		\$700	\$700
Printing		\$700	\$700
Telephone/internet		\$1,000	\$1,000
Postage		\$600	\$600
Supplies		\$500	\$500
Direct Client Services		\$200,000	\$200,000
TOTAL	\$7,000	\$268,000	\$275,000

* Must match your CDBG request amount on Page 1.

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