

# City of Burlington / 2013 CDBG Application Form

Project Name: Dress for Success Burlington

Project Location / Address: 95 Saint Paul Street Suite 110, Burlington VT 05401

Applicant Organization / Agency: Dress for Success Burlington

Mailing Address: 95 Saint Paul Street Suite 110, Burlington VT 05401

Physical Address: 95 Saint Paul Street Suite 110, Burlington VT 05401

Contact: Harriet Williams Title: Executive Director Phone #: 802-316-1026

Web Address: www.dressforsuccess.org/burlington Fax #: N/A E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

EIN #: 45-5524834 DUNS #: \_\_\_\_\_

**CDBG Funding Request: \$20,000**

**1. Type of Organization**

Local Government

For-Profit Organization

Faith-Based Organization

Non-Profit Organization (please provide copy of your  
IRS 501(c)(3) tax exemption letter)

Institution of Higher Education

**2. Conflict of Interest:**  Please complete and sign attached form.

**3. List of Board of Directors:**  Please attach.

***Certification***

To the best of my knowledge and belief, data in this proposal are true and correct.

I have been duly authorized to apply for this funding on behalf of this agency.

I understand that this grant funding is conditioned upon compliance with federal CDBG regulations.

I further certify that no contracts have been awarded, funds committed or construction begun on the proposed program, and that none will be prior to issuance of a Release of Funds by the Program Administrator.

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

Harriet Williams  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Authorized Official

Executive Director  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

1/11/2013  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

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### **1. Project Narrative: Provide a description of the project/program to be funded with CDBG. (Refer to NOFA for required information in this section.)**

Dress for Success Burlington seeks funding to lease our space which will allow us to continue our efforts to help low and moderate income women move from poverty to economic independence. Our programming provides clothing and employment retention services, supporting women who are job ready by giving them free-of-charge, the clothing and resources they need to be successful in the job market. The need for this type of to support women in this region is quite visible. Of our current referral partners:

1. Women Helping Battered Women served 2,052 adults from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012. We hope to serve 110 of their population.
2. Vermont Works for Women served 832 people from 2011 to 2012; our goal is to serve 75 of those women.
3. Champlain College Single Parents Program served 53 students last year; our goal is to serve 20 of those women.
4. Reach Up served 1,300 families last year; our goal is to reach 75 of those women.
5. Vermont Adult Learners had 1,300 individuals in their program last year; our goal is to reach 50 of them.
6. United Way's Working Bridges program served 350 individuals last year; our goal is to serve 30 of those individuals.

The demographic we serve represents women who are living in poverty and those making the transition to work from abusive relationships, incarceration, and public assistance. The goal of our programs and services is to **help women move out of poverty**.

### **2. Innovation**

#### **a. What new programs and/or services will be provided as a result of CDBG assistance?**

Our programs offer services to women at all stages of their job search: before, during, and after. This is an innovative approach to job attainment and retention. Currently we are not able to offer the full scope of our programming as our energies are directed towards basic needs to keep our doors open while we wait for non-profit designation from the IRS. We currently are only providing career clothing. We do not have a fully operational Career Center or Professional Women's Group. In order to fully implement those programs, we need internet access, computer software and instructional materials for client use. With CDBG funding to support expenses related to our lease, we can focus attention on fundraising activities to obtain the items needed for programming purposes.

#### **b. How will existing programs and/or services be expanded as a result of CDBG assistance? Use actual numbers to demonstrate expansion.**

We are currently operating one of the three programs we aim to offer. As a result of CDBG funding, we will be able to be fully operational bringing our services from 33% to 100%. Of the 360 women we propose to provide with career clothing, we plan to serve 144 women (40%) in the Career Center; and we plan to enroll 40 women (11%) in our year-long Professional Women's Group. Our proposed service goals are consistent with national Dress for Success service goal numbers.

#### **c. Are there other programs in the community that address similar issues? Yes No If Yes, how is this proposal different?**

While Burlington has several agencies that provide some aspect of job-readiness programs and services to individuals experiencing poverty, few of them provide the on-going comprehensive approach to services that Dress for Success Burlington does. All women who come to us are job ready, where other area organizations work with women to get them job ready. Secondly, we provide each client with new or gently used clothing, shoes, jewelry, coats, and accessories. Other agencies offer vouchers that typically are not enough to obtain a full outfit and can only be used at limited retailers. Finally, we offer ongoing services beyond getting the job or the interview. Nationwide, 76% off the women who use Dress for Success' post-employment services are retained in their jobs beyond one year. Other service providers often end their relationship with their clients a few weeks after employment has been obtained.

## ***II. Proposed Outcomes***

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**1. How will this project/program impact individuals and contribute to the City’s anti-poverty strategy?**

Our three programs, the Suiting Program, the Career Center and the Professional Women’s Group provide direct services to unemployed and newly employed women who are extremely low- to moderate-income in Chittenden County. These programs give women, at no cost to them, the tools and resources they need to secure employment and subsequently work toward economic independence. Our three programs will help move women out of poverty by providing them with the tools they need to succeed. No other program in the area provides both the work attire as well as the work preparedness tools for women. Our programs don’t stop at the clothing or the job. Once a woman is connected to us they have access to our services throughout their professional lives through our Professional Women’s Group, which offers seminars on health and wellness, financial literacy, unwritten rules of the workplace, time management, and professional communication and ongoing opportunities to receive and give mentorship.

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

<b>Goals/Objectives</b>	<b>Activities to implement</b>	<b>Expected outcomes</b>
Serve 360 women during the funding period (July 1 <sup>st</sup> 2013 – June 30 <sup>th</sup> 2014).	-Career Center and PWG: Develop and present materials for workshops, seminars, and events; -Develop, implement, and monitor, along with program staff, goals, strategies, timelines, metrics, and drivers for each program; -Oversee the delivery of each program and its activities in accordance with the mission and goals of DFS Burlington; -Ensure that each program operates within the approved budget.	-Suiting Program: Serve 360 women;  -Career Center: Serve 40% of our total population of 360 women (or 144 women);  -Professional Women’s Group: Serve 11% of our total population (or 40 women).
Increase referral agencies from 6 to 12 by 7/2013	-Continual recruitment of referral agencies.	- Increased number of referral agencies will yield more clients.
Evaluate programs and identify areas for improvement	-Development of assessment tools for each program; -Administer assessment to clients and referral agencies.	-Identify areas for improvement -Adjust programming based on feedback -Provide annual report and evaluation findings to funding CDBG

**III. Experience / Organizational Capacity**

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

Our mission is *to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and life.* The proposed activities are signature programs of Dress for Success. Worldwide, Dress for Success has suited more than 650,000 women since its inception in 1997; in 2011 alone over 55,000 women were served. Data on the success of affiliates internationally serves as a success model for how we hope to impact our clients. Internationally, 75% of Professional Women’s Group (PWG) members have retained their jobs after participating regularly for one year. 57% of PWG group members have furthered their education by enrolling in or completing a GED or college program. 60% of PWG members have improved their credit. (\*Source: Dress for Success Impact Overview 2012 Annual Report). Their PWG program members’ accomplishments include: 83% remain employed; 67% have an emergency fund; 21% now serve in a supervisory role; 74% have a savings account; 69% have health insurance; 86% have a checking account.

**2. How long has your agency been in operation?**

We officially opened our doors September 28, 2012, but began serving clients August 2, 2012.

**3. What programs and services do you offer?**

Dress for Success Burlington’s programs includes the Suiting Program, Career Center, and Professional Women’s Group. The Suiting Program offers job ready women clothing appropriate to their work atmosphere. Women are referred to us by one of our six partnering referral agencies once they secure a job interview or employment. At that time the client meets one-on-one with a highly trained volunteer. They begin with a mock interview and then our client is able choose an outfit for her interview. Along with the clothing she can accessorize her outfit with jewelry, shoes, a purse, any undergarments she needs and personal hygiene products. When our client secures a job she can return and be suited for an entire weeks worth of clothing, shoes, accessories, handbags and undergarments.

Dress for Success Burlington’s Career Center provides educational resources and support to help clients secure and maintain employment while also enhancing professional skills. Each client is able to work one-on-one with a staff member or volunteer to create resumes and cover letters, receive career counseling, conduct mock interviews, and facilitate access to our professional skills training course. The Career Center will be equipped with computers, laptops, books, and a printer solely for the use of our clients.

The Professional Women’s Group (PWG) provides our network of employed women with support, practical information, and inspiration to achieve self-defined success in their careers and lives. The PWG aids women with specific tools for job retention. Through mentoring and peer cohorts women learn how to become a successful professional, manage finances, and establish a work-life balance. The PWG is meant to inspire women to remain employed so they can truly thrive in work and life.

**4. 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 Narrative.**

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
We do not have any paid staff at this time.				

**5. Explain how your agency has the capacity to carry out the proposed activity (i.e., staff qualifications and years of experience related to this type of activity, etc.)**

The **Executive Director**, Harriet Williams, reports to the board of directors and ensures that the organization delivers a high quality service to the women referred, and works closely with the board to develop and maintain a strategic planning process with long-and short-range goals for organizational growth. The Executive Director oversees the administrative staff that includes the Career Center Coordinator and the Professional Women’s Group Coordinator. Harriet holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, a Master of Arts degree in Liberal Studies, and a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Harriet has worked for 15 years in higher education. Her most recent position was as Director of the federally funded TRIO/Student Support Services program where she drafted and administered a 5-year \$1.6mil grant. She has experience in nonprofit administration and has served on numerous boards. Harriet has experience in program design and implementation as well as a close familiarity of women’s issues and professional organizations, particularly in Vermont. Harriet composed the business plan and application to open the Dress for Success Burlington affiliate; therefore she has a strong commitment to the mission of this organization as well as its success and future growth.

The **Career Center Coordinator**, Brit Cava designs the services offered to job-seeking clients. She develops programming for the Center, identifies budget needs, and recruits individuals to provide assistance to clients participating in the Career Center. She manages the schedules of volunteers for the Career Center to make sure there are always resources and people available to assist clients. Brit tracks the expertise of volunteers to ensure that clients receive appropriate support. She will regularly collect and assess feedback about the Career Center and make changes to offerings as needed. Brit recently



**4. How do you ensure that your programs are accessible to all, inclusive and culturally appropriate?**

Dress for Success Burlington is located in a facility that is accessible to persons of differing ability levels. Clients who utilize our services are supported if they require interpreters or assistance with mobility. Our services are open to limited income women of any age, ethnicity, religion, and gender identity and expression who are employment ready. Our referral agencies serve women of all backgrounds and we design our interactions with each client based on their individual needs.

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

Dress for Success Burlington is a culturally competent organization that is sensitive to the needs of the population of women that we serve. The members of the board represent a diverse group of people who support our organizational mission. In addition, we work with a number of volunteers that represent a wide diversity of experiences, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Our relationships with partnering nonprofit agencies area colleges and universities ensure that our volunteers reflect many of the experiences of the clients we serve.

**V. Budget / Financial Feasibility**

**1. Project Budget**

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
<b>Lease of space</b>	\$20,000	\$10,300	\$30,300
<b>Career Center</b>	\$	\$9,700	\$9,700
<b>Professional Women’s Group</b>	\$	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Boutique (clothing in sizes not in stock)</b>	\$	\$2,500	\$2,500

**2. Funding Sources**

	Project		Agency	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$	\$20000	\$	\$
State (specify) Contract with Reach Up for fee for service for clients referred to agency				\$4375
Federal (specify)				
United Way				
Private (specify) Fundraising efforts from individuals and corporations and special events to support programming				\$23500

Program Income				
Other (specify) Grants from other sources				\$5000
<b>Total</b>	\$	\$20000	\$	\$32875

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

$$\frac{\$ \underline{20,000}}{\text{CDBG Funding}} \div \frac{\$ \underline{52,875}}{\text{Total Project Cost}} = \underline{38} \% \text{ Percentage}$$

**4. Of the total project cost, what would be the total cost per person?**

$$\frac{\$ \underline{20,000}}{\text{CDBG Funding}} \div \frac{\$ \underline{360}}{\# \text{ Proposed Beneficiaries}} = \underline{\$ 55.55} \text{ Cost Per Person}$$

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

At a funding level of \$20,000, the cost for serving 360 clients would be \$55.55 per person. This cost is nominal considering that free-of-charge, women receive a full outfit suitable for interview purposes, and up to one weeks worth of clothing once employment is obtained. The clothing women leave with may include, new or nearly new pants/skirt/dress, blouse, jacket, panty hose, scarves, undergarments, shoes/boots, jewelry, purses, and a coat in the winter. Toiletries and make-up are also available. In addition to clothing, women are able to use computers in our facility for job searching, resume and cover letter generation, and receive on-going mentoring support once they have found a job.

**6. Describe your use of community resources. Include any resources not listed in your budget.**

Dress for Success Burlington has been open officially since October 1, 2012, however, we secured our space in July and began serving clients in August 2012. Since taking occupancy of our space, we have received numerous donations of furniture, computers, clothing and accessories from businesses and individuals from all over the state of Vermont.

**7. Has your organization experienced any significant changes in funding levels during the past year?**  Yes  No

If Yes, please explain.

\*\*As a new organization in our first year of existence, we are working on our funding capacity at this time.

**8. What cost-cutting measures has your organization implemented?**

A major cost-cutting measure has been the decision to function with a volunteer staff for our first two years of operations. We currently have four interns who have responsibility for the individual programs. We also have several volunteers who provide support for each of those programs. The Executive Director does not receive a salary or financial compensation for her work.

## **VI. Community Support / Participation**

**1. What other organizations or key individuals (if any) have given support to this project?**

Dress for Success Burlington has a growing relationship with area service agencies. Currently we are partnered with six agencies that refer women who access our services. These agencies include: Vermont Children & Families/Reach Up, Vermont Works for Women, Women Helping Battered Women, Champlain College/Single Parent Program, United Way Chittenden County/Working Bridges, Vermont Adult Learners. The programs that we partner with are a growing list-our goal is to expand our partnerships to a minimum of 12 programs by July 2013. Our goal is to serve 360 women in our first year.

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

Referral agencies are invited to have a member of their organization serve on committees with the board of directors in an advisory capacity and offer insight into the experiences that referred women have with our affiliate.

**VII. Readiness to Implement**

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**1. Is the project ready to begin on July 1, 2013 and be completed by June 30, 2014?**

Yes  No

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

**2. List any conditions (i.e., obtaining permits, availability of other funding, etc.) that may affect your ability to begin or complete this project.**

Dress for Success Burlington has been open officially since October 1, 2012; however, we secured a space in July and began serving clients in August 2012. Since taking occupancy of our space, we have received numerous donations of furniture, computers, clothing and accessories from businesses and individuals from all over the state of Vermont. Based on our ability to build our partnering agencies that have supported our operations to this point, we are confident that we will be able to increase the number of women served to our goal of 360 women by the end of our first year of operations.

Our largest challenge has been funding. We submitted an application for 501(c)3 status in July 2012 and due to a backlog in the processing of applications with the IRS, the usual waiting period of two (2) months for designation is currently estimated to be up to one year. During this waiting period, we have managed to maintain our space, but have been seeking alternate methods of support while we await our non-profit designation.

**VIII. Impact / Evaluation**

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**1. Describe how this project will effectively measure outcomes.**

Dress for Success Burlington implements several steps that enable us to regularly collect data on our performance and progress. We track each client that is served in several ways. When a woman is referred, data is collected on her that includes demographics (age, ethnicity, parental status, educational attainment). The referral also includes information on the type of job she is interviewing for or for which she has gained employment. Once the woman receives service, we collect data on the types and amounts of clothing she has been provided with. We track the number of times each individual woman uses the Career Center and the Professional Women's Group as well.

We also collect data on our performance and progress through our annual Worldwide Standards of Accountability (SOA) process. The SOA focuses on three key areas: governance/operations, financial practices and fundraising. Each year, in February, we submit a comprehensive report of the work that we have done. This report is provided to the Worldwide office and each affiliate is internally rated. The SOA demonstrates how Dress for Success affiliates around the world exceed widely accepted non-profit business practices. Affiliates that meet accountability standards are listed on the Worldwide website ([http://www.dressforsuccess.org/whatwedo\\_SOA.aspx](http://www.dressforsuccess.org/whatwedo_SOA.aspx)). As a new affiliate, Dress for Success Burlington will participate in this process for the first time in February 2013.

**2. What strategies will you implement to collect the data necessary to analyze your results?**

In addition to internal methods of collecting data, we rely on our partner agencies to ensure that the women who are referred meet federal guidelines for low-income status. Internally, we maintain a database of all donations or clothing and track all items that are provided to clients. The database is structured in a way that allows us to easily provide data for the SOA and is regularly maintained throughout the year.

**3. How are clients better off as a result of your program?**

The impact that Dress for Success Burlington seeks to have on our community is that we will provide

comprehensive services designed to support employment-ready women attain jobs. Once employed, we provide services designed to retain women in employment beyond the first year of employment. National data from Dress for Success Worldwide indicates that 76% of women who regularly attended the Professional Women's Group remained employed after one year.

## ***IX. Sustainability***

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**1. How will this project have a long-term benefit to the City of Burlington? If this project ends, will that benefit continue?**

This project will provide women in our city with much needed support to gain employment and be retained in their jobs. The impact of that will have a ripple effect on companies seeking qualified employees. It will serve to reduce the number of women and families in poverty in Burlington and will support the efforts of area agencies that provide employment services to their clientele. As a result, the benefits of this program will continue well beyond the project.

**2. Provide evidence of long-term support for this project.**

Since introducing Dress for Success Burlington to our community, we have experienced a high level of donations in the form of clothing, furniture, and general office supplies. In addition, we have done very little marketing to date. The name recognition of Dress for Success with women in business has resulted in the Burlington affiliate being established quickly. We have generated strong interest in our program with partnering referral agencies and have served several clients already. We have also developed partnership with area businesses that either host fundraising events for us, provide direct services to our clients or have supported us as corporate donors. As an overall organization, Dress for Success has been in existence in the United States for 15 years and results from the impact of the programming offered has resulted in over 50,000 women served in 2011 alone. Our goal to serve 360 women fits well within this national number in comparison to other affiliates of our organization

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

Yes. The need that we have for assistance with our overhead costs is temporary. As we move forward and receive our non-profit status, we anticipate that our giving programs and corporate donations will cover the needs for our programming and administrative costs. Evidence of this is that prior to our grand opening in October, we had received our first corporate donation. By the end of the calendar year of 2012, we had received more than double our initial goal for corporate donations for our first year. We believe strongly that receiving our non-profit status will open additional doors to corporate relationships, ensuring the funding needed to continue our programs.