



Powering Independent Living

CUMBERLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CDBG GENERAL PROGRAM APPLICATION - 2010

Lead Community: Cumberland County

Additional Communities: _____

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Project Title: Critical Access Ramps / Cumberland County

Program Category: Public Service ___; Public Infrastructure/Facility ___;
Housing X; Downtown Revitalization ___; Economic Development ___

Select your CDBG "National Objective":

Low/moderate income: Area-wide X; Limited Clientele ___; Direct Benefit

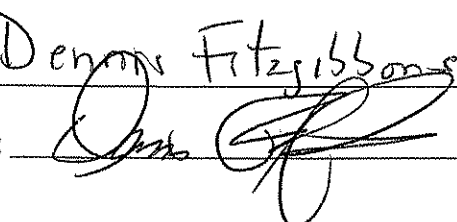
Presumed Group people with a disability (identify group)

Slum/Blight: Area-wide ___; Spot Basis ___

Amount of CDBG funds requested: \$ 50,000

Total estimated project cost: \$ 50,000

Name of Authorized Official: Dennis Fitzgibbons

Signature of Authorized Official: 



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CRITICAL ACCESS / CUMBERLAND COUNTY - 2010

Brief Summary

Alpha One is proposing the continuation of its successful *Critical Access Ramp Program* for Cumberland County in 2010 to be funded at the level of \$50,000. *Critical Access* is a program designed to enable people to obtain a well-built wheelchair ramp for their home quickly and efficiently. Families and individuals, with low to moderate incomes who are not able to enter or leave their home because of an inability to use stairs, would have an opportunity to obtain a wheelchair ramp within approximately 2-3 weeks.

Using modular construction techniques, together with qualified installers, this program provides a rapid response on the installation of a ramp necessary to assist seniors or people with a disability who have a mobility impairment to access their homes and live more independently. Getting through the front door is often an important first step in regaining independence after experiencing a disability that impacts mobility.

Building on the success of *Critical Access* in Cumberland County in 2008, when \$40,000 was allocated and five ramps were successfully completed, Alpha One is proposing a continuation of the county-wide program; aimed at encouraging greater independence for low and moderate income Cumberland County residents experiencing mobility limitations.

Management of Critical Access

Alpha One has been successfully delivering the *Critical Access* program throughout the State of Maine since a 2007 pilot program was funded by the Department of Economic and Community Development using funds from the Small Cities CDBG Program. That program was expanded and has included additional funding from the Maine State Housing Authority. The city of Portland has also included *Critical Access* as a component in its CDBG program.

In 2008, Cumberland County provided \$40,000 from its CDBG allocation to begin the program for county residents. With that initial grant, Alpha One has successfully completed five ramps, including two of greater than usual dimensions -- each almost the equivalent of two ramps. At present, Alpha One has stockpiled enough modular components to build one additional small ramp, as well as a little over \$1,000; however, this is not enough to defray the cost of installation. Under this proposal, these resources would be carried over into the 2010 program year to complete an additional ramp.



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The key to this program is rapid deployment -- often essential when someone experiences a disability that limits mobility. If stairs become an obstacle to accessing your home, a solution must be quick. By using a proven modular approach to construction (over 100 of these ramps have been constructed in Maine), *Critical Access* has made an enormous difference in the lives of many low and moderate income Maine citizens who have experienced a loss of mobility.

Modular ramp components are pre-fabricated out of pressure-treated wood and then stockpiled. Trained, professional installers then pick up, deliver, and build the modules into a ramp quickly and efficiently. Because a sound installation is not necessarily permanent, the components could be disassembled and re-built if the consumer moves to a new location; people would not have to seek funds to build a new ramp each time they move. This program would be available to families and individuals who rent, and not limited to homeowners only.

This moveable wooden ramp can help improve many of the obstacles in acquiring a ramp. The ramp is not permanently attached, so a person can take it with them when they move, thereby eliminating the constant struggle for acquiring another ramp for each new home. Since it is not part of the real estate it also becomes personal property, can serve as its own collateral, and thereby may make a low-income consumer more eligible for other loan programs. Finally, much of it is pre-built in modules off-site to significantly expedite the building and installation process. With this design, along with a comprehensive building and installation program, acquiring a ramp could be reduced to a matter of days rather than months.

By developing and deploying the *Critical Access* program, Alpha One has built the capacity to manage this program effectively and efficiently. Alpha One staff will continue to deliver *Critical Access* for Cumberland County. The staff, all of who are familiar with disability issues and include licensed professionals such as occupational therapists, is already providing independent living services in Cumberland County. These Independent Living Specialists (ILS) will be the primary point of contact with consumers and will continue to follow the standard operating procedures that are already in place for the delivery of the statewide program.

Since *Critical Access* is already operative in most of the state under the Small Cities CDBG grant, and has been successfully deployed in Cumberland County, Alpha One is ready to deliver this program immediately. The elements are in place to continue delivering this vital service, including:

- Identifying local installers (since the ramp elements are already constructed and stockpiled)
- Continuing outreach in Cumberland County to alert eligible consumers
- Accepting applications and constructing ramps
- Evaluating outcomes and providing grant closeout for Cumberland County

In accordance with the federal CDBG standards, the installers will be paid based on the prevailing wage rate for residential construction in Cumberland County.



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Readiness to Proceed

Alpha One is ready to deploy additional ramps in Cumberland County immediately. As soon as the grant award is finalized and funds are available, Alpha One will build and stockpile modular components that will be ready for erection on site as consumers are identified and qualified for the program. Given staff capacity and extensive experience in Cumberland County, as well as materials on hand from the last program cycle, Alpha One is ready to launch *Critical Access* for 2010 in Cumberland County.

Need for the Activity

At full funding, 5 to 7 individuals and their families are expected to be provided with substantially improved access into and out of their homes. These individuals and their families will then be able to more fully participate in their community, such as going to local stores and other businesses. They will be able to engage more fully in community, political, and social activities, as well as school, religious, and employment activities; and will be able to more effectively conduct all the other activities of personal and daily life.

A great many people with disabilities cannot get in and out of their own homes. Many cannot begin to take the first steps toward an independent, meaningful life because they cannot cross their own thresholds and get out the front door.

Obtaining a ramp has been a long-term barrier for many people and the scope of the problem promises to get worse. It is not uncommon for people to be forced into long-term care facilities after rehabilitation, who have great difficulties getting to their dialysis treatments, who can't get to the mailbox, walk the dog, or visit friends. They are basically trapped in their homes for months or even years, simply because they have no effective way to enter and exit their home.

Disability is increasing as the population ages and as medical care advances. People want to stay in their own home, so critical home-access needs will only increase. In 2002, Alpha One commissioned the Disability Research Unit at Rutgers University to undertake a major primary research project to capture information about persons with disabilities in the state of Maine. The study reinforced the census, finding that almost 1 out of every 5 Maine citizens is a person with a disability. Even more important, the Rutgers study projected that while Maine's population is expected to increase by 12% over the next 25 years, the population of people with a disability will grow more than twice as quickly, increasing by 27%. Driving this trend is the aging of the population and the growth of disability that often accompanies an increasing elderly population.



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The CDBG program presumes that people with a disability meet low to moderate income guidelines. Loss of a job and income is a common occurrence after acquiring a disability. Employment opportunities for people with disabilities remain poor. Many of the existing grant and low-interest home improvement programs are for property owners only, but diminished financial circumstances typically put home ownership beyond the reach of people with disabilities. A great many must rent. Therefore, *Critical Access* is designed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of both homeowners and renters.

Alpha One is committed to maximizing the impact of the Cumberland County CDBG funds on the target population, those with low to moderate incomes. Given the limited funds available for this initiative, together with the expected demand based on past experience, *Critical Access* standard operating procedure includes an eligibility test as a threshold requirement for each recipient. In this way, Alpha One can guarantee 100% of the recipients will be in the low to moderate income range.

In 2008/2009, Alpha One utilized nearly all of the resources available. This year, with the addition of Westbrook as part of the Cumberland County area, demand is likely to increase. *Critical Access* has already built two ramps in Westbrook as a part of the statewide, Small Cities CDBG pilot program, so the project has already been a success in the sizable new market area within Cumberland County.

Need for CDBG Program Funds

Funding from CDBG program funds is essential to the continued deployment of *Critical Access* in Cumberland County. Without a commitment of Cumberland County CDBG funds, residents of the county will not be able to participate, since all of the existing funds in the program are for non-entitlement areas, or other entitlement areas such as the City of Portland. Alpha One's goal is to have all the CDBG programs within the state of Maine participate in this unified program, so that no residents are excluded as a result of their location.

Should Cumberland County provide partial funding for this project, the number of ramps to be constructed will be reduced proportionately.

Thus, CDBG funding is the exclusive conduit for delivering *Critical Access* ramps to Cumberland County's low and moderate income citizens.

The *Critical Access* program for Cumberland County will also continue to be effectively leveraging \$250,000 of the investments made in the program by the Maine Small Cities CDBG program. These and other past partners, who have piloted and funded the program, make it possible for *Critical Access* to buy and construct modules in volume in order to deliver this cost effective product for consumers in Cumberland County.



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As a part of this larger program consortium, *Critical Access* is able to leverage the expertise and simultaneously reduce the administrative burden for program delivery. Ramp components have already been designed; some are fabricated and stockpiled. That front-end investment benefits the Cumberland County program directly and is made possible by the leverage of resources committed by these other agencies. At least a 20% in-kind contribution to this project will be made through the administrative efficiencies and investments that have been made to develop this project so it is ready to be delivered in Cumberland County.

Budget – Construction Projects

Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds	Total
Design/Engineering				
Land Costs				
Materials/Supplies	43,478			43,478
Construction Costs				
Project Management	6,522			6,522
Other				
1. N/A				
Total Costs	50,000			50,000



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Activity	Q #1 J - S 2010	Q #2 O - D 2010	Q #3 J - M 2011	Q #4 A - J 2011	Q #5 J - S 2011	Q #6 O - D 2011	Q #7 J - M 2012	Q #8 A - J 2012
Build Ramp Modules	X							
Outreach to Consumers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Erect Ramps on Site		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reporting		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Project Completed:								