

CUMBERLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CDBG PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION – 2010

Community(s) Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG)

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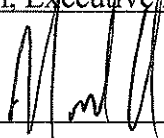
Project Title: “Capitalizing on the Global Assets in Greater Portland”

Amount of CDBG funds requested \$27,500.00

Total estimated project cost \$39,000.00

Name of Authorized Official: Neal Allen, Executive Director, GPCOG

Signature of Authorized Official: _____



COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION - 2010

1. DESCRIBE THE COMMUNITY PROBLEM OR NEEDS Given the severe constraints facing our communities, local governments, and educational resources, it is imperative that the Greater Portland Region embraces strategies for economic development and job creation that build upon three fundamental themes: (1) Identifying and utilizing existing community assets, (2) Promoting community partnerships, and, (3) Embracing innovation and entrepreneurship. The Center for Global Engagement, located at the Greater Portland Council of Governments, staffed by a volunteer, part-time director and the GPCOG Executive Director focuses on this imperative. Our goal for 2010 is to be a catalyst for using our region's global assets to create new jobs and economic opportunities for the citizens of our region. GPCOG requests \$27,500.00 to be matched by GPCOG cash and in-kind contributions of \$11,500.00 to work in partnership with Cumberland County to design a data gathering system that will catalogue the region's global assets, and to showcase them as community resources using state of the art web-based technology. Through networking, sharing and celebrating our global assets, our regional economy will be stronger, more stable and ultimately more sustainable. The region boasts a wide range of underutilized global assets representing business, education, arts and culture, sports, tourism and recreation, and the environment. Some examples: Our neighbors represent over 40 countries and speak over 30 languages, bringing the world to our backyards. We have international students learning English and American culture at our educational institutions and summer camps in the Lakes Region. A New Mainer from Somalia won a scholarship to study business in Germany; he dreams to complete an MBA program, find a job in finance, and raise his family in Gorham. We have businesses and individuals engaged in global commerce and in 2000, a Maine physician founded a health partnership in Haiti; today it is fully immersed in coordinating relief donations from Mainers in the aftermath of the earthquake. These real life stories are exciting examples of the world in Maine. These "global assets," add further value to Maine's "Quality of Place" and offer an underutilized resource for advancing our economic future if they are more strategically recognized and used. "Capitalizing the Global Assets of the GPCOG Region" proposes an opportunity to identify and transform exciting information into bold action, the critical first step needed to connect our regional economy to the world.

Background In 2008 the mayor of Portland recommended and the Portland City Council unanimously agreed to form a task force to explore the potential of establishing the Greater Portland area as a Global Community. The task force, consisting of 23 community leaders representing the business, education, government, non-profit, immigrant and cultural sectors, met throughout the year, and produced a final report that was presented to the Portland City Council in early 2009 and later that spring to the GPCOG Board of Directors. The report's key finding points that "amidst profound global economic change, the region must embrace international engagement and cultural diversity... aspire to develop a citizenry and civic culture that is committed to advancing Greater Portland as a unique global community." The task force recommended the establishment of a regional clearinghouse to identify and coordinate its global assets: "These important global assets must be recognized, celebrated and used more strategically to bring tangible benefits to the region, and the State of Maine. We believe that the best strategy for unlocking potential opportunities that will emerge from our region's global assets is to undertake this journey through a regional approach."

THE SCOPE, MAGNITUDE AND SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM

As demonstrated throughout its final report, the Greater Portland Global Community Task Force viewed the economic downturn as an opportunity to develop a proactive strategy that would include a concerted plan for capitalizing on our global assets. This focus is consistent

with GPCOG’s 2008 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and its recognition of the need to highlight and promote global assets as part of the larger objective to build stable communities through sustainable economic development. The 2008 CEDS found that over the previous 18 months, over 1,000 people were laid off from work due to the closures and downsizing of businesses large and small. The communities hit hardest during this time period include Portland (359 jobs), South Portland (310 jobs), Freeport (240 jobs), and the Sebago Lakes Region (123 jobs). In the two years since hundreds more jobs throughout the region have been lost due to layoffs and closures of small businesses of less than 50 employees. The CEDS further projected that future cost cutting measures will continue to threaten manufacturing, with Cumberland County projected to lose another 25% of its manufacturing base by 2025. On a promising note, GPCOG’s 2008 Sustainability Principles provide planning guidelines for a region that might flourish as a vibrant, highly educated, and globally competitive community. Through these principles, the region stands committed to think globally and act regionally, respect the local interests of all citizens, and plan for diversity. We believe that global engagement and regional economic development must go hand-in-hand in the immediate future.

PAST EFFORTS THAT HAVE ADDRESSED THE PROBLEM: The task force found that while some U.S. cities have established offices of international affairs, few if any have taken a regional and comprehensive approach to global engagement through partnering and coalition building. It also found no city that has implemented a global assets catalogue and clearing house function such as proposed for GPCOG’s Center for Global Engagement, and no examples of initiatives relying on citizen action to promote economic development through capitalizing on global assets. We believe our proposed approach to economic development exemplifies Jim Damicis’ recent article in PolicyOne Research, Inc. newsletter, “Grassroots Economic Development – Businesses and Citizens Driving Economic Development”.

WHY CDBG FUNDS ARE CRITICAL TO THE PLANNING ACTIVITY’S SUCCESS: The task force identified five opportunity sectors that would benefit from capitalizing on global assets: Economic and Sustainable Development; Education, Multicultural Community; Arts and Culture; and Citizen Diplomacy. GPCOG requests CDBG funding to implement the task force’s recommendations primarily in the Economic and Sustainable Development sector; specifically to design a systematic and meaningful way to identify and share among community members the global assets with regard to the economic growth. The creation of synergies and linkages of existing global resources would result in a non-site specific “Virtual Center for Global Engagement” that makes economic global connections within and among the communities of Cumberland County. GPCOG plans to seek funding from other sources for implementation of the remaining opportunity sectors, using the model presented in this proposal as a planning template for identifying and sharing global asset information in those areas.

2) WHAT’S THE STRATEGY TO COMPLETE THE PLANNING PROJECT?

ARE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED AND ENGAGED IN THE PROJECT? GPCOG will build on the initial partnerships forged during the task force process and will expand the base via the formation of the Advisory Board during Phase One of the planning stage (see Table below).

<u>DESCRIBE THE PLANNING TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN</u>	<u>OUTLINE THE PROJECT’S SCHEDULE</u>
PHASE ONE: COLLECT THE GLOBAL ASSETS	July – December 2010
GOAL: Build a grassroots coalition committed to linking the global assets to economic development in GPCOG communities. ACTION: Form an Advisory Committee consisting of business leaders, and organizations with stakeholders’ interests in economic development, including:	July 2010

area chambers of commerce; service clubs; ME Int'l Trade Center; Businesses for Social Responsibility; Convention & Visitors Bureau; Bureau of Tourism; summer camps associations; immigrant New Mainer groups, and university/college Schools of Business and Centers for Entrepreneurship.	
GOAL: Bring global perspectives to creating, implementing and measuring a regional economic and sustainable development strategy. ACTION: Design a data gathering process to further identify global assets that could benefit each GPCOG member community. The data will be gathered through the use of student interns from area colleges and universities.	July – December 2010
GOAL: Highlight the connections between global assets and economic development in GPCOG communities. ACTION: Create a dynamic data base to catalogue global assets for community network mapping to establish the relationship between the global assets and economic development. The data that will be collected will be used throughout the implementation of Phase Two.	August 2010
PHASE TWO: OPTIMIZE THE GLOBAL ASSET CONNECTIONS TO BENEFIT ALL GPCOG COMMUNITIES	December 2010 – September 2011
GOAL: Inform local businesses and citizens about the benefits of a global economy in GPCOG communities ACTION: Develop an appropriate public outreach strategy including companies and individuals whose work extends globally to inform our communities of GPCOG's global assets resource directory and its linkage to the GPCOG and County home pages.	December 2010 – January 2011
GOAL: Celebrate the accomplishments and engage in future planning of integrating global perspectives in economic development. ACTION: Plan first annual Regional Global Summit, scheduled to occur in September 2011	January – September 2011

3) CONVEY YOUR COMMUNITY'S READINESS TO PROCEED

a. How has the project been conveyed to community residents? Following the positive acceptance and endorsement of the Task Force Report by the Portland City Council, the GPCOG Board representing its 26 member communities voted to endorse the report and its recommendations. The Global Communities Task Force Summary Report has subsequently been posted on GPCOG's website, and regular meetings have been held with a number of interested parties and stakeholder groups.

b. Are matching funds available for the project? To date we have received \$5,500 from private anonymous donors and in-kind support from GPCOG office and staff, along with the time of the current volunteer part-time director of the Center for Global Engagement. As previously mentioned, we also plan to seek funding from area agencies and foundations to identify and develop the other opportunity sectors defined in the task force report.

c. Are staff and/or consultants available to complete the project? The project will be led by the part-time volunteer director of GPCOG's Center for Global Engagement and in partnership with Cumberland County. A consultant may be hired to provide oversight in the design of a survey instrument and outreach strategies. GPCOG's Executive Director will continue to be involved in this initiative along with other GPCOG personnel as needed.

Planning Grant Application --- Program Budget

Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds/ In-kind	Total
Consultant Services	2,000			
Advertising	n/a			
Public Meetings	500			
Printing	500			
Mailings	n/a			
Other				
1. Web development	7,500			
2 Data base development	5,000			
3. Survey instrument development	1,000			
4. Center Director	10,000	5,000		
Support Staff	1,000	500		
Ex.Director			6,000	
Total Costs	\$27,500	\$5,500	\$6,000	\$39,000