

**TOWN OF BRIDGTON, MAINE
&
CUMBERLAND COUNTY**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT –CDBG

**PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM APPLICATION
Program Year 2016**

Applications due Monday, January 11, 2016 on or before 3 PM

FY 2016 Bridgton CDBG Public Service Program

The CDBG Public Service program provides funding to local public service agencies that provide a direct benefit to the residents of Bridgton.

Proposals submitted to the program must be consistent with the Goals and National Objectives of the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Program. Any applications submitted that do not meet these Goals and National Objectives will be excluded from review.

Eligible Use of Funds - The Public Service program can fund operating expenses, equipment, and program materials for public service programs or projects that benefit low-to-moderate income Bridgton residents.

Timetable & Requirements

- Applications are due no later than **3 PM on Monday, January 11, 2016** to the Bridgton Municipal Office, 3 Chase Street, Bridgton 04009 c/o Anne Krieg
- Applicants are required to attend one MANDATORY “workshop” with Community Development staff to review requirements and project eligibility. There will be two opportunities with 2 different time slots to attend a workshop:
 - Tuesday November 24, 2015 at 10 AM or 2 pm
 - Thursday December 10, 2015 at 10 AM or 2 PM
- Applicants are invited to present their application on **January 20, 2016 at 8 am** to the Community Development Committee, which will be reviewing applications and recommending funding to the Select Board. The Select Board will receive the applications and recommendations at their regular meeting February 9, 2016. The Select Board must make their decision for Cumberland County review before April 1, 2016. Funds will be available for disbursement after July 1, 2016.

Rules & Record Keeping Requirements

Funded applicants will be required to sign a contract with the Town of Bridgton that will state all the requirements placed on the applicant, which include but are not limited to:

- You will be required to provide monthly or quarterly reports stating the total number of persons served. These figures are required to be reported to HUD.
- You will be required to obtain written proof of income and ethnic origin for each person or household whom you assist, unless your clients are a Presumed Group or your activity qualifies as Area Benefit. These figures are required to be reported to HUD.
- Grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Written records justifying all expenditures must be maintained for a period no less than four years after the full grant is expended. These records will be subject to review by the Town, Cumberland County, and HUD.

I certify that I have read and understand the above rules and record keeping requirements of the Bridgton CDBG program:

Signature of Authorized Official Jack De Beradinis

Date 1/8/12

PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM APPLICATION

COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION: Bridgton/Regional Transportation Program (RTP)

CONTACT PERSON: Jack De Beradinis, Executive Director of RTP

ADDRESS: 127 Saint John St., Portland, Maine, 04102

E-MAIL: jackd@rtprides.org

PROJECT TITLE: Subsidized Fares for the Lakes Region Explorer

Select one CDBG "NATIONAL OBJECTIVE":

LOW/MODERATE INCOME:

Area Benefit (services are available to and benefit all people in a specific geographic area that is low/moderate income)

Service Area: Bridgton

Limited Clientele (serves individual clients/households, the majority of whom are low/moderate income)

Presumed Group – select one (services benefit a group that HUD presumes to be low/moderate income)

- Elderly
- Homeless Persons
- Disabled Adults
- Battered Spouses
- Abused Children
- Illiterate Adults
- Persons with AIDS
- Migrant Farm Workers

AMOUNT OF CDBG FUNDS REQUESTED: \$5,000

NAME OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Jack De Beradinis, RTP

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

Jack De Beradinis

For additional information and assistance with this application please contact Anne Krieg at the Town of Bridgton Planning, Economic and Community Planning and Development Office at Bridgton Town Office at 207.647.8786 or by email krieg@bridgtonmaine.org

**TOWN OF BRIDGTON AND CUMBERLAND COUNTY FY 2015 CDBG
APPLICATION NARRATIVE QUESTIONS**

NAME OF PROJECT/APPLICANT:

Subsidized Fares for the Lakes Region Explorer Bus Service / Applicant is the Regional Transportation Program (RTP)

1). DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM/PROJECT – Please describe and quantify specifically the services or products to be provided as a result of the expenditure of CDBG funds. Who will you serve? What activities will you undertake?: (30 Points)

This project will provide subsidized bus fare on the Lakes Region Explorer to low-to-moderate income individuals in Bridgton. RTP will work with Bridgton's General Assistance department, the Bridgton Community Center, the Lake Region High School Guidance Office, the Bridgton Police Department, and the Opportunity Alliance to distribute passes and confidentially determine eligibility, interest, and need.

The proposed \$5,000 in CDBG funding will be used to purchase 400 10-ride passes at the discounted price of \$12.50 (passes are normally \$25 each). This represents a 100% in-kind match from RTP.

2). IDENTIFY THE COMMUNITY NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED: (30 Points)

This proposal will directly benefit low-to-moderate income residents who face economic hardships and transportation challenges. While not always noticeable, an appreciable portion of Bridgton's poor cannot afford a vehicle. Or, if they own a vehicle its use is limited by lack of money for gas or maintenance. National research shows the average low income family spends more than a third of their income on operating vehicles. Others are not able to drive due to a disability or the loss of their driving privileges.

For these community members, long commutes and a lack of reliable transportation are often significant barriers to working. Limited transportation options also isolate them from the many services and programs designed to lift them out of poverty, or improve their health and well-being. These residents -- and in many cases their dependents -- are often trapped at home where even the most routine trips can present major logistical hurdles

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010-2014 American Community Survey, in Bridgton an estimated:

- 283 households (13.4%) have incomes of less than \$10,000;
- 292 households (13.8%) have incomes of between \$10,000 and \$20,000;
- 118 households (5.6%) have no vehicle available; and
- 737 residents (14.0%) have a disability.

Our own research, outreach, and experiences seem to support these figures. In the 2013 assessment, "*Access to Health*," conducted by the Opportunity Alliance Healthy Lakes HMP, lack of transportation was cited as the foremost barrier to care and good health for rural residents. The agency's more recent 2015 "*Cumberland County Needs Assessment*" came to the same conclusion.

In March of 2015 the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) conducted a region-wide opinion survey of over 450 Lakes Region residents to help RTP, the voting public, and elected officials make more informed decisions about the bus service. Even in the relatively small subgroup of 96 respondents from Bridgton, 14 (15%) reported total annual household incomes of less than \$20,000, while 12 (13%) indicated they had limited access to a vehicle or didn't feel safe driving themselves.

In addition to the region-wide survey, GPCOG also conducted an on-board ridership survey over the same time period. When respondents were asked why they were riding the bus, 24 of 57 (42.1%) indicated there was no car available on that day; 21 (36.8%) did not have a drivers license, and 19 (33.3%) reported they were not able to drive. While this survey was conducted before the service was extended to Bridgton, we suspect the results would be similar for residents in Bridgton as well. (We will be conducting another ridership survey in March, 2016).

3). CONVEY YOUR ORGANIZATION'S READINESS TO PROCEED – Is this a new program/project? How will the project be managed and staffed? What is your agency's experience providing these services and reaching your target population?: (20 Points)

After more than a decade of visioning and planning, the Lakes Region Explorer began service in November, 2013. After receiving local funding support from each Lakes Region community along the route, RTP was able to extend the service to Bridgton in August, 2015. The hybrid bus currently makes four round trips each weekday from Bridgton to Portland along Route 302 with stops in each community along the way. The bus has room for 18 seated passengers, two wheelchair users, and nine standing passengers. It's also equipped with wifi and bike racks. The current fare is \$3 per one-way trip and discount packages are also available (10-ride passes for \$25; monthly passes for \$50). In Bridgton, the bus makes its final stop at the Bridgton Community Center, and we are grateful the Town has allowed us to park there overnight.

While the Explorer has been in operation for over two years, the idea to provide subsidized bus fare to eligible Bridgton residents is new. (It should be noted, RTP is also submitting a multi-jurisdictional CDBG application for the remaining Lakes Region communities -- Windham, Raymond, Casco, and Naples -- asking for the same assistance). To distribute passes RTP will rely on staff at the Bridgton Town Office, the Bridgton Community Center, the Lakes Region

High School Guidance Office, Bridgton Police Department, and the Opportunity Alliance to determine eligibility and provide the necessary paperwork and documentation. Staff members from each of these organizations are ready and willing to assist us in this effort. At the close of each month, RTP will compile the information and provide it to the County to meet CDBG reporting requirements.

4). IDENTIFY THE MEASURABLE IMPACTS OF THE ACTIVITY: (10 Points)

If funded, the proposed project will provide 400 10-ride passes to Bridgton residents over the course of the year. In turn, these passes will provide up to 4,000 free one-way trips to those Bridgton residents most in need of transportation assistance.

Depending on the circumstances, the savings for individuals or families -- who would otherwise pay full value for their pass -- will be between \$25-\$100 per month and perhaps more if they are riding the bus in lieu of driving. For a senior living on a fixed income, or a single parent with multiple kids, this leaves more money for other essential expenses. This could mean having the money in their pocket for another week's worth of groceries or to keep the heat turned up to a comfortable level.

A secondary impact of this project is improved economic efficiency for the Town of Bridgton. When a bus pass allows an unemployed individual to find and keep a job, this can save Bridgton significant costs by reducing payments for General Assistance and other social services. Likewise, when an elderly resident who is unable to drive uses the bus to reach health services this promotes aging in place and population stability -- thereby protecting the town's tax base.

Finally, this program will leverage twice as many free passes for Bridgton residents in need as RTP can currently cover. By using \$5,000 in CDBG funds to cover half the cost of free passes, RTP is able to provide 400 passes to the community. Additional in-kind support will come from staff time at the Bridgton General Assistance Department, the Bridgton Community Center, the Lake Region High School Guidance Office, the Bridgton Police Department, the Opportunity Alliance, and GPCOG, all of whom have agreed to distribute passes or help with the administration of the program.

5). DEMONSTRATE THE NEED FOR CDBG PROGRAM FUNDS: (10 Points)

Few resources are currently available to address the transportation barriers experienced by Bridgton residents. Despite the clear need for transportation to access employment, health and social services, only a small number of residents are able to utilize existing state-funded transportation. While individuals enrolled in MaineCare and those with an extremely limited income are eligible to use DHHS-funded rides, many people in need do not qualify because they make slightly too much or their transportation needs are non-medical. These include seniors on a fixed social security income with Medicare, teenagers looking to hold part-time jobs, and families with a single income. Bridgton also has the Health Care Access Program which provides transportation, but as the name indicates, rides are for medically-related needs.

Recognizing the need to help out, RTP has been working with community partners to distribute free 10-ride passes this fall in a very small pilot program. Between October-December 2015, 30 passes were distributed to Bridgton residents through the Bridgton Police Department, the

Bridgton Community Center, the Bridgton Dental Hygiene Center, and through Opportunity Alliance case workers. These organizations report that recipients of the passes are currently using the bus to access jobs and educational opportunities, and in some cases to look for housing. The demand for these 10-ride passes has been strong and ridership on the Lakes Region Explorer has increased because of it.

Since RTP is a small organization with very little discretionary income, additional funding is key to meet the demand for free 10-ride passes in Bridgton. RTP will continue to provide some passes in-kind, but the organization is not able to cover the cost of all passes needed.

6). PROGRAM BUDGET – please fill in the below table with the proposed budget specific to this program.

COST CATEGORY	CDBG FUNDS	ORGANIZATION FUNDS	OTHER FUNDS	TOTAL
ADMINISTRATION				
MATERIALS/SUPPLIES				
OPERATING COSTS				
OTHER -- 400 10-ride passes	5,000	5,000		10,000
TOTAL COSTS:	5,000	5,000		10,000