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**CUMBERLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
CDBG PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION – 2011**

Community(s): Falmouth, Yarmouth

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Project Title: **Falmouth Food Pantry - Renovation and Expansion**

Amount of CDBG funds requested \$ 6,000

Total estimated project cost \$ 6,750

Name of Authorized Official: Nathan Poore, Town Manager

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

**1. Describe the community problem you wish to address with Community Planning Program funds.**

**a. Describe the scope, magnitude and severity of the problem**

Few people know that there is a Food Pantry in Falmouth, and that it has been in existence for almost thirty years and has operated continuously since 1982. Even fewer people know that in 2010 225 families have come to the Falmouth Food Pantry for much needed food supplies and that since last September eight to fifteen new families signed up each month for this service. The Food Pantry is now in urgent need of more and better functioning space in order to meet its clients' needs in the most efficient manner possible.

Let's back up a moment. The mission of the Falmouth Food Pantry is to provide food supplies and household items to any family or individual in need in Falmouth as well as neighboring communities. For many years it operated out of a 60 sq.ft. local church basement. Over time the Food Pantry outgrew that space. Need and opportunity met and in 2008 the Falmouth Town Council permitted the Food Pantry to occupy 475 sq.ft. of Town Hall space rent-free. This space had recently been vacated by Falmouth Police Department (which relocated to a new police station). The move into the former police dispatch area and storage areas was accomplished with minimal renovations.

Also in 2008, the Falmouth Food Pantry became a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, attracted media coverage and additional volunteers, began record keeping, started organizing community suppers, expanded its opening hours and food offerings, started a community speaking program, and gained a presence on the Town's website:

[http://www.town.falmouth.me.us/pages/FalmouthME\\_FoodPantry/index](http://www.town.falmouth.me.us/pages/FalmouthME_FoodPantry/index). In addition, deliveries by the Food Pantry to "shut-ins" and others without transportation increased as well as referrals by social service agencies. The new location and additional activities provided more community visibility to the Food Pantry than ever. This, combined with other economic factors, has resulted in a phenomenal growth of the client list: from 35 families in 2008 to 225 families in 2010. Some families pick up food once every 2 to 3 months. The maximum is twice a month.

Who are some of the 225 families who come to the Falmouth Food Pantry? Fathers who have lost jobs. Families who have recently moved into the area, both refugees and people from other states. People living on fixed incomes. People struggling with very large medical expenses. Families who before were able to pay their bills, but now find, due to rising cost of heat, food, and transportation, that they no longer can purchase basic, essential items.

Families also come from places other than Falmouth, such residents from Yarmouth, North Yarmouth, Cumberland, Pownal, Portland, and Westbrook. The Food Pantry is one of eleven food pantries in Cumberland County which accept clients from nearby communities. Many clients prefer not to visit the food pantry in their place of residence. (It is estimated that 5% of clients visit multiple food pantries.) While over 50% of the clients are from Falmouth, the pantry provides very much a regional service.

Take Yarmouth for example. Yarmouth - which is a co-applicant to this application - has its own Yarmouth Community Food Pantry that is open once a week, but does not offer non-perishable foods such as frozen meats and fresh vegetables or eggs. The Falmouth Food Pantry supplies its Yarmouth clients with these items. Of the 100 or so clients from outside Falmouth roughly five come from Yarmouth. Furthermore, the Yarmouth and Falmouth food pantries have a cooperative relationship and share information. In addition, the Falmouth Food Pantry shares summer produce with the Yarmouth

Pantry. This is just one example. As noted, some 100 clients in Falmouth also come from North Yarmouth, Cumberland, Pownal, Portland, and Westbrook.

Using the “as-is” former police dept. space, combined with the increased demand, the Food Pantry is now in urgent need of more and better functioning space. A renovation of 475 sq.ft. of space and a new addition of approximately 325 sq.ft. is projected to meet the Food Pantry’s current needs. This will allow improved ADA accessibility, increased operating space, better flow of space, efficient operations, plus confidentiality and physical comfort for clients.

As logistics of handling a large quantity of food each month is a major issue for any food pantry, adequate space is a primary concern. Our most urgent challenges are:

- conflicts between different uses in same space: The narrow entrance hall also serves as food storage area. This impedes wheelchair accessibility. The office area also serves as food distribution area. This results in poor shelf access and is disorienting to clients;
- lack of storage space: Due to insufficient shelf area there is no consistency or timely rotation of food items and much time continuously reorganizing shelves is spent by staff. Due to lack of space, non-perishable items are often stored at volunteer homes;
- absence of a confidential meeting area for clients and secure client record storage;
- absence of inclement weather seating for elderly or disabled clients; and
- inadequate lighting, -unsanitary flooring (currently carpet), and inadequate ADA accessibility

**b. Describe past efforts, if any, to address the problem.**

The Food Pantry may be a victim of its own success. While the effort of relocation from the church basement to Town Hall in 2008 provided much-appreciated temporary space relief, the visibility of the new space and expanded activities by the organization’s volunteers helped to sky-rocket the needs of the Food Pantry beyond its capacity. The Town of Falmouth’s current effort is conducting a Community Facilities Planning Study, including the needs of Town Hall and Food Pantry. While this study has not yet been completed, the Falmouth Town Council indicated in November 2010 a preference to have the Town Hall offices remain in their current location. This has cleared the way for the Food Pantry to become a more formal and permanent “tenant” in Town Hall and start its long-term future planning. The Food Pantry Board has determined that the current location is the preferred one in the community and that it likes the association with Town Hall and proximity to its General Assistance clients.

**c. Does the problem have specific impacts on low/moderate income households or low/moderate income neighborhoods?**

100% of the Food Pantry’s 225 families are low/moderate income (LMI) households. The physical problems listed above have resulted in long waiting during the Food Pantry’s opening hours for these households. As no indoor waiting or seating is provided, inclement weather poses a problem for elderly and disabled clients. Due to cramped conditions, accessibility and variety of goods is limited for the clients. Privacy for clients cannot be provided for. The reuse of carpeted areas for food handling has resulted in not optimal hygienic conditions. The Food Pantry believes the quality of its service delivery can be improved further.

**d. Why are CDBG funds critical to the planning activity’s success?**

CDBG funds will enable the Food Pantry to hire an architect and conduct soil tests to develop a cost-effective concept plan. The concept plan will be used to obtain required approvals and solicit private and public matching funds in the community to complete the renovation and construction.

## **2) What's the strategy to complete the planning project?**

### **a. Describe the planning tasks to be undertaken**

The Food Pantry anticipates to undertake the following tasks:

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| • Hire architect:  | July 2011      |
| • Review existing Town Hall floor and site plans:                      | August 2011    |
| • Visit other Food Pantry locations, e.g. Freeport Community Services: | September 2011 |
| • Determine program requirements for Falmouth Food Pantry:             | October 2011   |
| • Develop concept plan options:  | October 2011   |
| • Select preferred concept plan:                                       | November 2011  |
| • Conduct soil test to verify construction feasibility:                | November 2011  |

Preparing a schematic floor plan and elevations and specifications that can be used for cost take off and/or construction purposes is not part of this project. The hope is to apply for a 2012 CDBG Program Grant to seek construction cost assistance for such work.

### **b. Outline the project's schedule - See 2a. above**

### **c. Are community partnerships established and engaged in the project?**

The Falmouth Food Pantry is comprised solely of volunteers and community partnerships. Approximately 50+ community volunteers and six churches are involved, as well as the Falmouth School Department, Falmouth Rotary Club and Lions Club, numerous local businesses, and hundreds of residents who donate food or make financial contributions. In addition, the Falmouth Food Pantry has a cooperative relationship with the food pantries in Yarmouth and Cumberland, and works with Preble Street and Wayside Food Recovery. Food supplies and knowledge are exchanged on a regular basis.

## **3) Convey your community's readiness to proceed.**

### **a. How has the project been conveyed to community residents?**

The Food Pantry conveyed the need for additional space to the community during the past 1 ½ year through personal letters to supporters, in presentations at local churches and Falmouth Lions Club, at Food Pantry board meetings and also by communication to friends of the 50+ food pantry volunteers. In addition, the Falmouth Town Council reviewed and endorsed this application in a public meeting on January 10, 2011.

### **b. Are matching funds available for the project?**

In-kind matching funds are available through the work of Food Pantry volunteers and Town Hall staff assistance (i.e. by Town Manager, Director of Long Range Planning, Building Facilities Manager, and Budget Director). In addition, the Town of Falmouth has provided space for the Food Pantry rent-free and utility-cost and is expected to do so in the foreseeable future. Cash matches and other in-kind donations will be sought by the Food Pantry as part of the construction phase of this project.

### **c. Are staff and/or consultants available to complete the project?**

The Town Manager, Budget Director, and Director of Long Range Planning, and Building Facilities Manager are available to work on this project. Architects and engineers will be hired to complete the professional work, as required. This work includes: programming space needs, code research, conceptual design, site, boundary, and utility investigations, and geotechnical soils report.

<b>Planning Grant Application --- Program Budget Cost Category</b>	<b>CDBG Funds</b>	<b>Municipal Funds</b>	<b>Other Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Consultant Services</b>	6000			6000
<b>Advertising</b>				
<b>Public Meetings</b>		450		450
<b>Printing</b>		50		50
<b>Mailings</b>			250	250
<b>Other</b>				
<b>1.</b>				
<b>2.</b>				
<b>3.</b>				
<b>Total Costs</b>	6000	500	250	6750

Multi-community applicants must answer the additional questions in a maximum of one page:

**1) What role will each applicant community play in the planning project?**

The Town of Falmouth will continue to act as the Food Pantry's land lord and will provide administrative oversight of this grant.

The Town of Yarmouth will continue to offer advice and consultation through the Yarmouth Community Food Pantry.

**2) How will each community benefit from the planning project?**

The Town of Falmouth will benefit from a well-planned addition to its historic Town Hall. The building has had multiple additions over time. The addition will result in a more efficient way of handling the Food Pantry's clients' needs and result in less conflict with other Town Hall operations.

The Town of Falmouth will also benefit by having the LMI households residing in the community provided for.

Falmouth households who use this service can obtain it locally instead of having to drive to out-of-town locations. The Town of Falmouth benefits from less road congestion.

Through the Food Pantry's partnership efforts, the Town of Falmouth receives the benefits of increased "social capital," community pride and cooperation.

The Town of Yarmouth will benefit by having some of the LMI households residing in the community provided for, especially with non-perishable foods such as frozen meats and fresh vegetables or eggs.

The Town of Yarmouth will continue to benefit from the cooperative relationship, information sharing, and summer produce sharing with the Town of Falmouth and Falmouth Food Pantry.