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The Honorable Donald Sydnor
Cambridge City Council
410 Academy Street
Cambridge, MD 21613

Dear Commissioner Sydnor:

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development is accepting applications for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) due June 3, 2016. **This letter is to request a letter of support for an application by Dorchester County with Habitat Choptank as the subrecipient. Funding would support much needed critical home repairs for low-income qualifying home owners in Dorchester.**

Earlier this year the Habitat Choptank Board launched its FY16-19 Strategic Plan which provides a blueprint for operations in the effort to address additional needs in the community:

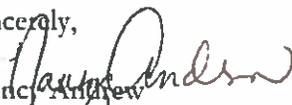
- working in multiple communities within Dorchester and Talbot counties: Cambridge, Hurlock, Easton and St. Michaels;
- developing well-prepared home owners using right-sized mortgages combined with education, support and relationships pre- and post-settlement;
- building stronger neighborhoods through: quality, sustainable new construction/rehabs and through Neighborhood Revitalization;

CDBG funding at this time will support the expansion of Neighborhood Revitalization in Dorchester County. Neighborhood Revitalization is a holistic approach that expands Habitat's traditional partnership with new home buyers and volunteers to include neighbors and local organizations for a far greater impact. While new home construction continues to play a vital role, a bigger toolbox that includes repairs and other services allows Habitat Choptank to assist more of our neighbors who are in need.

Through a two-year pilot project for other housing services, Habitat Choptank completed 14 weatherization projects for low-income home owners in the Choptank region. Last year with additional grant funding from Maryland Energy Administration, 40 weatherization projects were completed for income qualifying home owners between the two counties. For the next two years, \$300,000 in CDBG funding will be leveraged with another round of MEA funding to also complete critical home repairs in Dorchester County. It is estimated that this grant will fund at least 24 projects for income-qualifying home owners in Dorchester who are unable to afford or finance this work through their own resources.

Your consideration of this request at the Council's May 9th meeting would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Nancy Andrew
Executive Director



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25 April 2016

Ms. Cindy Stone
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
Community Development Block Grant Program
7800 Harkins Road
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Subject: Community Development Block Grant Application – Dorchester County

Dear Ms. Stone:

This letter is offered in support of the Community Development Block Grant application to fund critical home repairs over a two year period for income-qualifying home owners in Dorchester County. The recently completed 'Dorchester County Substandard Housing Study' confirms a pressing need for services such as this.

This funding will support the expansion of Habitat Choptank's Neighborhood Revitalization program in the county. Neighborhood Revitalization multiplies Habitat's traditional partnership with new home buyers and volunteers to include neighbors and local organizations for a far greater impact. While new home construction continues to play a vital role, a bigger toolbox that began with weatherization services and with this funding will also include housing repairs allows Habitat Choptank to assist more of our citizens who are in need.

Habitat Choptank has a proven track for growing to meet additional community needs. In 2004, a group of citizens in Cambridge began organizing around the issue of affordable housing. They were concerned about the existing housing stock and disproportionate rates of rental housing in some neighborhoods. That group began construction in 2005 on the first Habitat home in the City.

Since then, Habitat Choptank has steadily grown its program from completing one home a year to now three homes presently underway including a mix of new construction and renovation projects. These homes, which are sold with affordable mortgages to income-qualifying home buyers, help to directly improve the housing stock in areas that are in need of revitalization and to increase property tax revenues which benefit the community-at-large.

This project addresses critical unmet needs, will help Cambridge residents – especially seniors aging in place – safely and affordably maintain their homes, and is worthy of investment from a Community Development Block Grant.

Sincerely,

Donald J. Sydnor
Acting Mayor