

Maine HEARTH

Home Energy Aid & Response Team Help



Lead Organization: Maine Commission for Community Service

The Commission builds capacity and sustainability in Maine’s volunteer sector by funding service programs, developing volunteer managers, raising awareness of volunteers’ impact, and encouraging an ethic of service in Maine citizens. The Commission was established in 1994 and is led by a 25-member board of volunteer leaders with support from a small staff. As a grant-maker to community organizations of all sizes and types, the Commission uses a combination of public funds and private donations to target critical community needs. Its largest grant program is AmeriCorps (average grant: \$300,000); its smallest grant program is Martin Luther King Day of Service grants for service projects (average grant: \$500).

Partners: The partners for this initiative are all the various volunteer and community groups formed (and forming) to respond to local energy needs (emergency fuel assistance, home winterization and weatherization, energy conservation education, neighbor-to neighbor watch, etc.). In addition, there are statewide partners who recognized the need for Local Response Teams that form to coordinate assessment and response to citizen needs for help with home heating and energy throughout the cold months. The statewide partners have technical information to share with the Local Response Teams while the local teams have the community expertise to make practical use of the information. The statewide partners are the Office of Energy Independence and Security, Efficiency Maine/Maine Public Utilities Commission and MaineHousing.

Community Need:

- **Connect Local Response Teams with each other and to technical assistance.** At the grassroots community level, a myriad of Local Response Teams are emerging to help citizens adjust to and cope with rising energy costs. The response organizations have varying access to information on what energy conservation measures are effective, available public and private resources, what assistance fixed income families need to complement public support, effective practices for engaging volunteers in local response, how to sustain local response activities beyond the start-up period, etc. In the absence of a “home base” through which Local Response Teams register their existence, the grassroots organizations are finding it difficult to connect with one another to share information, strategies, resources, lessons learned, and innovations.
- **Connect Local Response Teams to 211 Maine so citizens in need can access help.** Simultaneously, individuals looking for resources, help, and information are calling central information phone lines (primarily 211 Maine) or using the associated websites. Unless local response teams have connected with these information sources, the help they offer is not evident and cannot be shared with callers seeking assistance.

Project Activities:

- Support the success of Local Response Teams by providing just-in-time coaching related to projects or activities they want to undertake but for which they need some technical assistance or training. As needed, identify sources of technical assistance or training and connect local response teams to those sources.
- Help local response teams engage volunteers in their work by advising and training on successful project planning and implementation.
- Identify the local winter response teams and projects throughout the state and connect them with 211Maine, each other (for coordination and info sharing), and VolunteerMaine.org so that local information is readily available to citizens using the “one stop” resources.

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- Temporarily (maximum of 2 years) establish a Community Response Coordinator to serve as the nexus for connecting local responses, information services, and regional as well as state energy efforts.
- Provide statewide energy and housing leadership with information on the geographic locations of response activities, types of needs addressed as well as form of response, and gaps in availability of local resources.

Outcomes / Impact:

- Community activities that provide energy information, education, and emergency assistance will be connected to tools, technical assistance, and promotional opportunities in order to be highly effective.
- Effective practices will be shared among the local response committees in order to shortcut development time and create a virtual resource center.
- Local responses targeting the same geographic area will function in a complementary manner to address both a broad array of community needs and the greatest number of citizens in need.
- Citizens will have ready access to the information or assistance they seek.
- Citizens who volunteer to carry out activities planned by local response teams will be utilized effectively, protected and have a satisfying experience.

Total Project Budget: \$442,500 (2 years)

Total project funding covers two years so that Local Response Teams can have support over two heating seasons. Budget summary data below shows the costs; the annual breakdown provides details on expenses. Each item can be underwritten by a different grantmaker or a combination of funders.

| ANNUAL AMOUNT | 2-YEAR TOTAL | PROJECT FUNDS WOULD SUPPORT |
|---------------|--------------|--|
| \$82,362 | \$164,724 | Coordinator and his/her activities |
| \$69,888 | \$139,776 | 4 academic internships (each additional = \$17,472) |
| \$64,000 | \$138,000 | 16 mini-grants for Local Response Teams (one for each Maine county) |

ANNUAL PROJECT BUDGET: \$151,850 per year

| | | |
|----------|----------|--|
| \$82,362 | \$59,000 | Coordinator: Salary <u>and</u> benefits |
| | \$23,362 | Travel & Communications |
| | \$ 1,512 | In-state travel to regional meetings of teams (300 mi/mo @ 0.42/mi X 12 mo) |
| | \$ 4,000 | eMeetings (voice/internet) with local response teams (\$400/mo X 10 mos) |
| | \$17,850 | Utilities/occupancy, computer/electronics, office supplies, phone service, toll calls, etc. |
| \$69,888 | | Four academic internships (Calendar 2009: 24 hrs/week @ \$14/hr including payroll taxes for 52 weeks = \$17,472/intern) to support outreach to local response groups in rural/rim counties and meeting their local needs for technical support, coaching and volunteerism training |

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related to response activities they want to implement. One would target Hancock/Washington; a second, Aroostook/Northern Penobscot; a third, Somerset/Franklin, and a fourth, Androscoggin/Oxford.

NOTE: If a funder is interested, additional internships could be created (\$17,472 each) so that the pairings are adjusted to extend coverage down state.

\$ 64,000 Mini-grants for local response teams to receive project planning training and conduct joint projects using volunteers over the course of an entire year (16 counties x \$4,000). The grant applications would cover an entire year so that Local Response Teams could continue through Spring 2009 to prepare for the following winter.

The projects undertaken could be anything from warming centers to community wood gleaning to energy information courses on local access cable to special information for people with disabilities or medical issues. The mini-grants would bring local teams together to compare notes, see what common activities they've decided to undertake, and then coordinate implementation to the extent practical.

If the Coordinator position is funded, the Maine Commission for Community Service would manage the promotion, application, review, and reporting functions for grant-makers. Funders would be involved in application review and progress reports. There would be no fee for these activities.

Funds Requested from the Philanthropic Sector: There is an opportunity for several funders to collaborate on this project. The request covers full funding for all planned activities.

Ability to Target Funds: If a funder wishes to "sponsor" a regionally focused activity, we recommend that they underwrite both an academic internship (\$17,472/year) and the mini-grants for the counties in which the intern would work. For example: the Somerset/Franklin region would require annual support of \$25,472.

Accountability/Reporting: The Commission envisions two types of reporting. The first is an accounting of Coordinator activities and impact which would be made to the underwriters for that position. The second is an accounting of the accomplishments of the interns and the impact of the mini-grants. These reports would be shared on a semi-annual or annual basis according to the wishes of the funder(s).

With regard to funds, the Commission would provide detailed reports from its audited accounting system. If MCCS is asked to handle the financial aspects of the internships or mini-grants, those would entail contracts and the fiscal reports produced would give funders a clear picture of where monies went and how they were spent. We would recommend that reporting associated with the mini-grants be scaled to their size.

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