

# ***THE ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING OFFICE***

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## **St. Lawrence County – CARES (SLC-CARES) Housing Rehabilitation Program**

### **Public Hearing #2**

April 3, 2023

In September 2021, St. Lawrence County applied for \$580,000 through the NYS Community Development Block Grant Program in order to fund the **St. Lawrence County CARES (SLC-CARES) Housing Rehabilitation Program**.

The SLC-CARES program was designed to assist **low- and moderate income (LMI)** households to rehabilitate their housing units to ensure that they meet building codes; particular attention was paid to serve those who were most vulnerable to COVID-19.

This application was successful; in October 2021 the County was awarded \$ 580,000. A Grant Agreement was signed, effective October 14, 2021. The Agreement stipulated that all funds must be expended within 12 months (by October 14, 2022). The Agreement anticipated that 10 households would be assisted.

The County estimated that all Program funds plus all Program Delivery costs (\$551,000) would provide Direct Benefit to LMI households. This ratio ( $\$ 551,000 / \$ 580,000 = 95\%$ ) of Direct Benefit to LMI households exceeds the 70% threshold for LMI Benefit required by HUD.

The ***NYS Community Development Block Grant Administration Manual*** requires that:

***“All Recipients of NYS CDBG funds must meet the citizen participation requirements at 24 CFR 570.486 and New York State’s Citizen Participation Plan, as amended which require Recipients to follow a citizen participation plan providing for ... one public hearing (one in each jurisdiction of a joint application) prior to the submission of an application for funding ... **and one public hearing, if awarded, to be held during the administration of the grant to solicit comments on the effectiveness of the program’s administration.**”***

A public hearing was held during the preparation of the application for **SLC-CARES**; this hearing was held on August 9, 2021. Now, a second hearing is required, to furnish citizens with the following information:

- The amount of CDBG funds made available: \$ 580,000 total. This included \$ 475,600 for rehabilitation assistance; \$75,400 for Program Delivery; \$ 29,000 for Administration.

- List of activities undertaken with CDBG funds:
    - 8 units completed.
    - Costs have ranged from \$ 36,200 to \$ 105,000.
    - Average assistance was \$ 59,450 per household.
  - Amount of CDBG funds made available for activities that benefit LMI National Objective: all program funds \$ 475,600) and most Program Delivery funds (\$ 40,666) directly benefit LMI Households. This represents an 88.9% Direct Benefit to LMI households.
- It must be reported that the County asked for, and received, an extension until March 2023 to complete the program. Approaching the March deadline, there remained an unexpended balance of \$34,734.62. The County requested a second extension in order to spend the remaining funds; the request was denied.
- If CDBG activities resulted in displacement, review the displacement plan: No displacement of households occurred.
  - Progress toward program goals and objectives: The County proposed completing 10 units; the County delivered a total of 8 units (80% of proposed activity).
  - Provide for and encourage citizen participation. This is the purpose of today's hearing.
  - Provide citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on activities that were undertaken, or to comment on any activity(ies) which were added, deleted or substantially changed from the application submitted to the State.

Comments will be accepted until April 14, 2023; they may be sent to:

**Jason C. Pfothenauer, Director of Planning**  
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### **CDBG History in St. Lawrence County**

The County Planning Office has administered CDBG-funded housing programs since 1982. All CDBG-funded projects benefit low- or moderate-income persons.

- We have obtained 24 grants to do homeownership assistance; these programs have enabled 625 LMI households to purchase homes.
- We have also obtained 38 grants to rehabilitate substandard units; these programs have helped 658 LMI households to improve their living conditions.

The County's CDBG housing programs have assisted over 1,280 LMI households. This equals approx. 3,100 LMI persons. The 1,280 houses improved total over 3% of all occupied housing units in the County.

**The Planning Office estimates an economic impact from these programs of over \$ 97 million.**

Other communities in St. Lawrence County have successfully secured and administered CDBG-funded housing programs on their own; these communities include the City of Ogdensburg; Villages of Gouverneur, Massena, Potsdam; Towns of Fowler, Madrid.

CDBG funds have also been used in St. Lawrence County for community planning projects; water and sewer projects; community centers; economic development projects.