

PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES - PROJECT DESCRIPTION
PETTENGILL HOUSE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Detailed Scope:

The Pettengill House, Inc. (aka Pettengill) is the main social service agency for nine local communities with offices in Amesbury and Salisbury. The organization's clientele are primarily concerned with survival issues of food, clothing, shelter, health and safety. Pettengill provides the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter and assists people with more specific needs by offering prevention education, emergency assistance and therapeutic support to individuals, children, and families in need. In collaboration with community partners, they have extensive experience in providing "wrap-around" services to support at-risk individuals, children and families.

Pettengill offers case management to each client to help determine and resolve immediate needs along with a focus on stabilization, self-sufficiency, and growth. Assistance is only provided to applicants who agree to meet with a Pettengill counselor and undergo an extensive intake process, including an income qualification process that meets the standards established by DHCD for similar programs.

During 2018, The Pettengill House provided \$87,532.73 in emergency assistance to clients in nine area communities. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the total emergency assistance funds totaling \$34,289.60 assisted Amesbury individuals and families. These funds provided financial assistance pertaining to basic needs, housing, utilities, transportation, education/recreation and medical needs.

In 2018, Pettengill continued to see an increase in the needs of residents who were previously self-sufficient, now seeking assistance due to environmental issues, domestic violence, health and/or a delay in receiving state entitlement benefits due to increased demands.

This program will provide \$45,000 to Pettengill to meet the increased need it is experiencing and allow Pettengill to provide higher levels of assistance than it has in the past. The requested grant funds will provide \$30,000 for emergency assistance payments and \$15,000 for intake and family counseling services.

Pettengill House Emergency Assistance Program will provide support to identified at-risk, underserved, low and moderate income individuals and families who, due to crises or other circumstances, are without food and/or shelter or have lost the ability to provide basic necessities for their households. CDBG funds will be used to provide direct cash assistance paid directly to the client's service provider, i.e. utility company or landlord, to help them successfully maneuver through their time of crisis. This will ensure that the funds go directly where they are needed most. Pettengill normally limits financial assistance to \$500 per household, but Amesbury residents assisted under this program will be eligible for up to \$1,000 per household.

Non-CDBG funded components:

CDBG funds are supplemented by a combination of funding from private grants and unrestricted donations from private donors. Pettengill also relies heavily on volunteers. In 2018, approximately 8,100 volunteer hours were donated. The requested Community Development Block Grant funding in the amount of \$45,000 will double the amount of funding available for Emergency Assistance to Amesbury households, which allows the maximum amount of assistance to be doubled.

Project Need and beneficiaries served:

The majority of Amesbury clients supported by The Pettengill House are at-risk, low income, underserved families facing an array of challenges, including social deficits and physiological needs such as food, clothing, shelter and safety. Many are under-educated and have generational family

histories of abuse, neglect, poverty and mental health related issues. It is the goal of Pettengill to work with clients to identify areas of need, educate clients on how best to address their needs and “break the chain” of poverty and abuse while increasing health, education and well-being.

In 2018, Amesbury residents comprised 40% of the 3,089 clients within the nine communities that The Pettengill House supports. A total of 1,231 Amesbury residents (604 adults, 101 elders, and 526 children) were served in 2018. Of the 1,231 residents, 144 were homeless or without permanent housing (108 adults and 36 children). Pettengill estimates the requested funding will allow the Emergency Assistance Program to assist 50 LMI households or 120 individuals.

Of the total number of Amesbury residents accessing Pettengill services, 98% currently live at or below the poverty rate and rely on or are awaiting federal, state and local assistance, including Social Security benefits, unemployment, *TAFCD/EAEDC* (cash benefits), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), Mass Health (Medicaid) and Medicare, and public or Section 8 housing. In addition, clients receive assistance from Pettengill and its community partners including food pantry and meals programs. In its efforts to address the challenges facing its clients, Pettengill provides basic needs (food, clothing, shelter and safety) along with family counseling and referrals to other financial assistance programs.

Community Action, Inc., recently conducted a community needs survey among throughout its northern Essex County service area. The regional needs were prioritized by the respondents (including Amesbury). The results of this survey show the top 3 needs in the area are: 1) affordable housing, 2) food, and 3) pre-school/childcare. Pettengill can provide assistance or refer clients to other agencies in all of these areas.

A recent analysis of the Pettengill House Emergency Assistance Program shows 58% of its client households were female heads of household. Of the female heads of household with children, 67% cited monthly bills and housing as their major concerns. One-hundred percent of the participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with the services. Those being served by this program are individuals and families who are without food and shelter or have lost the ability to provide the basic necessities for their household. Residents currently have access to services through Pettengill but risk being turned away when funds are low. Pettengill never turns a qualified person away completely; however, the organization does send residents seeking emergency assistance to various relief agencies outside of the City when funds are depleted. Since Amesbury has limited public transportation, clients with no transportation have a difficult time finding the relief they seek. Without assistance from CDBG funds, Pettengill will be unable to meet needs again this year.

How the Community Identified Need:

The feedback the City has received from other community groups about the importance of Pettengill’s programs and the tremendous resource it is to the Council on Aging, Amesbury Public Schools and Amesbury Police. (**Att. 401 – Letters of Support**) In addition, Community Action, Inc.’s FY18-20 Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan corroborates the need for CDBG funds to support emergency assistance to LMI Amesbury households. The plan reports that housing, food and preschool/childcare are the highest rated needs in the area and Pettengill has resources to help in all three areas.ⁱ

Anticipated Outcomes:

Additional outcomes of this proposal include:

- Access to Formalized, Community-Based Social Services within the City of Amesbury through The Pettengill House and its Community Partnerships
- Prevention of Homelessness

- Increased Family Stabilization
- Increased Access of Care and Supportive Services
- Increase of Self-Sufficiency, Education and Quality of Life
- Decrease of Social Deficits (physical, mental health issues)
- Decreased Physiological Needs of Food, Clothing, Shelter and Safety

Beneficiaries & Outcomes:

If funded, this grant will provide direct-benefit services to an estimated 50 households with 120 beneficiaries (\$750 average disbursement per household) served by this program. All eligible applicants will have a gross annual household income from all sources that is at or below 80% of the median income for the area. This program is designed to assist residents in their time of need. Providing the ability to pay for rent and/or utilities could really make a difference between electricity being shut off or even eviction. Indirect results include the fact that all those receiving emergency assistance will be encouraged to access other programs Pettengill provides, i.e. food pantry, counseling, etc. Pettengill is a clearinghouse for aid available to those who need it. Seeking emergency assistance will open doors for many and help clients on their way to becoming self-sufficient. More importantly, receiving emergency assistance may be all that is standing between some families and homelessness.

When the service period ends, Pettengill will provide a final report to Amesbury calculating the number of households and residents served, how many direct assistance payments were made (quantitative measure). Clients receiving funds for emergency assistance will complete an anonymous survey to determine their satisfaction with the program (qualitative measure). Survey results will also tell Pettengill how many clients were successful in preventing eviction and/or utility turnoff, and how many benefited from other services available through the organization. The survey will also ask clients for any suggestions for improvement to the service.

How the Program will be operated:

The City of Amesbury’s Office of Community and Economic Development manages the CDBG program through contracted grant management services. The City will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Pettengill that will include reporting and monitoring requirements.

The *CD Director* will be responsible for preparing the Memorandums of Understanding, ensuring program compliance, quarterly monitoring of activities, assessing overall performance, addressing specific program policy matters, issues, etc., and will respond to grievances. The *CD Director* will also be responsible for reviewing and approving monthly invoices for payment.

The *Program Manager* will be responsible for monitoring Pettengill’s files including ensuring the data required for reporting purposes is being collected properly, reviewing income verification information for conformance with DHCD’s Implementation Manual and the HUD income limits for the Boston area, and preparing quarterly and other reports required by DHCD, the Office of Community and Economic Development or the City Council.

Pettengill has been providing services since 1994 to 9 cities and towns of northern Essex County and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Pettengill’s *Executive Director* will provide supervision of the non-profit’s staff of 14 employees and will act as liaison between the agency and the *CD Director*. The *Assistant Director* will provide direct supervision to program coordinators and staff.

ⁱ Community Action, Inc.’s FY18-20 Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan, p. 29