



297 Bath Road
Wiscasset, ME 04578
207-882-5983

September 20, 2024

-VIA EMAIL ONLY-

Dennis Simmons, Town Manager
Town of Wiscasset
51 Bath Road, Town Office
Wiscasset, ME 04530

Aaron Chrostowsky, Economic Development Director
Town of Wiscasset
51 Bath Road, Town Office
Wiscasset, ME 04530

RE: Town of Wiscasset's Application to the Lincoln County Affordable Housing ARPA Funds Letter of Interest for Town Planning Projects

Dear Dennis and Aaron,

Thank you for submitting a Letter of Interest to the Lincoln County Affordable Housing ARPA Funds for Town Planning Projects. **The Review Committee has reviewed your letter and supporting materials and are interested in funding your project.**

Rather than requiring communities to submit a formal application for funds, the Review Committee is connecting with applicants to ask questions about the proposal, request a letter of support from the municipality's select board, and schedule a time to speak by Zoom to discuss the project scope, tasks, and funding/ARPA compliance requirements in more detail.

For Wiscasset's project we'd like to know more about the following:

1. **Project Scope and Timing:** Based on your LOI, we understand your project involves:

- \$165,000 - Regulatory Analysis
- \$75,000 - Master Planning and Public Engagement
- \$100,000 - Design Plans and Permitting

TOTAL: \$340,000

What is your timing for this project? Specifically, how much time is needed for each of these steps? We ask because it is important for you to be aware that ARPA funding for the project scope must be spent by December 31, 2026. That is a tight window in which to complete all three project elements. If the entirety of the project scope cannot be completed within the two year

window we ask that you refine the project elements/funding request to what can be accomplished by December 2026. Any unspent funds by 12/31/2026 will need to be returned to the U.S. Treasury.

2. **Emphasis on Affordable Housing:** We would like to better understand how this project will lead to the development of affordable housing on the Old Ferry Road property (either by the Town or a developer). An ARPA funding contract will include an assurance that this project aims to increase affordable housing in Lincoln County.

Next steps in the Review Process with Lincoln County include the following:

1. Please **address in writing the project-specific items listed above** and submit them via email to the Review Committee c/o Emily Rabbe (erabbe@lcrpc.org).
2. **Contact Emily to schedule a time to speak with the Review Committee.** We anticipate this conversation to be about 45 minutes and offer the following timeslots to choose from:
 - Monday, October 7, 2024 at 11:30AM
 - Monday, October 7, 2024 at 12:30PM
 - Monday, October 7, 2024 at 1:30PM
 - Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 12:00PM
 - Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 1:00PM
 - Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 2:00PM

During the Zoom call we will finalize the project scope and tasks, review ARPA compliance and timelines, discuss the contract process with the County, and how LCRPC can be a resource as you implement your project. Our goal is to have contracts signed by December 1, 2024.

3. **Obtain a letter of support for the project from Wiscasset's Select Board.** We will require this letter to be submitted before a contract is signed.

An Item to be aware of as it relates to your affordable housing project:

DECD's Housing Opportunities Program (HOP) is applying for grant funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Program (HUD). The grant opportunity, known as Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) appropriates \$100 million in grant funding for the identification of and removal of barriers to affordable housing production and preservation. HUD anticipates awarding funding to up to 30 applicants.

The State of Maine's proposal aims to increase affordable housing production by addressing key barriers and will primarily serve Lincoln and Franklin counties, two counties determined by HUD

as “priority geographies”, meaning they have greater housing needs relative to other jurisdictions.

Specifically, Maine’s proposal proposes the following three activities:

- \$2,340,000 to create a Pre-Development and Land Acquisition Grant Program in Franklin and Lincoln Counties to jumpstart housing development by providing pre-development and land acquisition grants to affordable housing developers and/or municipalities;
- \$150,000 to create a statewide land use toolkit to provide best practices in land use and zoning to municipalities to increase the development of affordable housing; and
- \$200,000 to conduct a series of statewide housing educational sessions with municipal leaders, land use planners, community members, affordable housing advocates, and affordable housing developers to facilitate productive conversations about the impact of affordable housing in communities.

As part of the application process, DECD’s Housing Opportunities Program must hold a public hearing on the draft application. The public hearing will provide an overview of the draft application, a timeline of the grant application process, and an opportunity for public feedback on DECD’s proposal. **The hybrid public hearing will be held on Friday, September 27, 2024 from 10:30AM to 12:00PM at LCRPC’s office (297 Bath Road, Wiscasset) and on Zoom. We strongly encourage you to attend this public hearing to support this application and the benefits it will provide to Lincoln County, if awarded.** If you need the Zoom link please reach out to LCRPC Staff. DECD will also accept written comments on its draft proposal until 11:59PM on Wednesday, October 9, 2024. To submit written comments, please email housing.decd@maine.gov.

We look forward to working with you to advance your project to a signed contract for ARPA funding. If you have any questions before we meet via Zoom please reach out to LCRPC Staff.

Sincerely,



Emily Rabbe
Executive Director

ER: er

cc: Carrie Kipfer, County Administrator (via email only)
Curtis Brown, Land Use and Transportation Planner (via email only)
Laura Graziano, Community Resilience Planner (via email only)

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