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CITY OF AMESBURY, MA

CITY OF AMESBURY
IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

SPONSORED BY: Kassandra Gove **BILL No. 2026- 130**
Kassandra Gove, Mayor

An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a grant awarded to the Amesbury Council on Aging of \$25,000.00 through the FY27 Field Demonstration Project.

Summary: The Massachusetts Councils on Aging has awarded the Amesbury Council on Aging \$25,000.00 through the FY27 Field Demonstration Program. The funding will support modernization of the kitchen located at the Costello Center, including the replacement of outdated and nonfunctioning kitchen equipment and related improvements to enhance nutrition services, accessibility, safety, and programming for older adults.

Be it Ordered by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

That the City of Amesbury authorizes the Mayor to accept and expend a grant of \$25,000.00 from the Massachusetts Councils on Aging through the FY27 Field Demonstration Project to support modernization of the kitchen located at the Costello Center.

Project Description

0 / 500 words - Describe the project for which funding is being requested and explain how grant funds will be utilized, including how this grant will identify and address unmet needs and enhance your COA's ability to support older adults and/or caregivers in your community.

The Amesbury Council on Aging is seeking funding to modernize and upgrade its kitchen facility in order to improve the delivery of nutrition services, expand programming opportunities, and better serve older adults and caregivers in the community. The current kitchen infrastructure and equipment are outdated and limit the Council on Aging's ability to efficiently prepare meals, safely accommodate increased demand, and provide expanded nutrition and wellness programming for a growing senior population.

Grant funding will be used to support the renovation and modernization of the kitchen space, including the replacement of aging commercial appliances (at this point, no working stove/oven or refrigerator) and improvements to kitchen infrastructure, workflow, accessibility, safety, and food preparation capacity. Proposed upgrades will include new refrigeration and freezer units, commercial ovens, food preparation surfaces, ventilation improvements, updated plumbing and electrical systems, accessible workstations, improved storage, and energy-efficient equipment designed to meet current health and safety standards.

The modernization project will directly address unmet needs related to food security, healthy aging, and social connection among older adults in Amesbury. The Council on Aging currently supports congregate dining programs, nutrition education, special events, and coordination with home-delivered meal services. Demand for these services continues to increase as the older adult population grows and more residents face challenges related to fixed incomes, isolation, transportation barriers, and access to healthy food.

The upgraded kitchen will improve the Council on Aging's ability to provide fresh, nutritious meals in a safe and efficient environment while creating opportunities for expanded chef-led demonstrations, wellness programs, culturally inclusive meal offerings, and caregiver support activities. The project will also improve operational efficiency, reduce disruptions caused by outdated equipment, and allow staff and volunteers to better meet the nutritional needs of older adults in the community.

In addition to improving meal service capacity, the modernized kitchen will create a more welcoming and functional gathering space that promotes social engagement,

reduces isolation, and supports overall health and wellness for older adults and caregivers. The kitchen will continue serving as an important community resource for nutrition, education, and connection.

The project is expected to benefit hundreds of older adults annually through congregate meals, nutrition programming, and expanded support services, while also indirectly supporting caregivers and families who rely on the Council on Aging's programs. The modernization will strengthen the long-term sustainability of the COA's nutrition services and position the organization to continue responding to evolving community needs for years to come.

Through this investment, the Amesbury Council on Aging will enhance its ability to provide equitable, accessible, and high-quality services that support healthy aging, independence, and quality of life for older adults throughout the community.

Project Workplan and Timeline

0 / 500 words - Explain your COA's capacity to successfully oversee and implement this project, including proposed workplan and timeline.

The project will be overseen by the Amesbury COA Assistant Director and the Healthy Aging Program Manager in coordination with municipal facilities staff, the town/city procurement office, the building department, and the selected contractor. The Assistant Director and the Health Aging Program Manager will serve as the primary project managers responsible for contractor coordination, communication with all collaborators, monitoring timelines, and ensuring compliance with procurement and grant requirements.

The Amesbury COA will also work closely with AgeSpan staff and kitchen personnel to ensure the redesigned kitchen improves workflow, food safety, accessibility, and efficiency while minimizing disruption to meal services. Temporary meal preparation arrangements and contingency plans will be established in advance to maintain continuity of services during construction.

The Amesbury Council on Aging anticipates that the kitchen modernization project will be completed within approximately 6–9 months following grant award and authorization to proceed. The project timeline includes planning and design, procurement, equipment acquisition, construction, installation, inspections, and staff training to ensure a smooth transition with minimal disruption to nutrition services.

Proposed Work Plan

Phase 1 – Project Planning and Design (Months 1–2)

- Finalize project scope and kitchen modernization priorities
- Conduct site review and confirm equipment specifications
- Prepare construction/design documents
- Coordinate with facilities, health, and inspection departments
- Develop temporary meal service continuity plan

Phase 2 – Procurement and Contractor Selection (Months 3–4)

- Issue bid documents in accordance with municipal procurement laws
- Review bids and select qualified vendors/contractors
- Finalize contracts and implementation schedule
- Order kitchen equipment and materials

Phase 3 – Construction and Installation (Months 5–9)

- Demolition and removal of outdated fixtures/equipment
- Electrical, plumbing, ventilation, and infrastructure upgrades
- Installation of modern commercial kitchen equipment
- Flooring, lighting, and safety improvements
- Ongoing project oversight meetings and inspections

Phase 4 – Final Inspection and Operational Transition (10-11)

- Final health, safety, and building inspections
- Staff orientation and training on new equipment
- Testing of kitchen workflow and meal production systems
- Full reopening and project closeout documentation

Timeline

Project Phase	Estimated Timeline
Planning & Design	Months 1–2
Procurement & Bidding	Months 3–4
Construction & Installation	Months 5–9
Final Inspection & Staff Training	Month 10-11

The Amesbury COA's established administrative systems, experienced leadership team, and strong collaboration with municipal departments provide a solid framework for successful project implementation. Modernization will strengthen the Amesbury Council on Aging's ability to provide safe, efficient, and high-quality nutrition services to older adults for many years to come.

Awareness and Access

0 / 300 words - How will you ensure that all older adults and/or caregivers in your community who will directly benefit from this project are aware of it and will have access to it? Please note how you plan to build inclusivity and equitable access around languages, cultures, or disabilities.

The COA will use a comprehensive communication and outreach strategy to inform residents about the improved kitchen and expanded nutrition services. Information will be distributed through multiple channels, including:

- COA newsletters and mailed notices
- The municipal website and social media platforms
- Local newspapers and community cable television
- Flyers and posters at public buildings, libraries, housing sites, faith communities, and healthcare providers
- Outreach through partner organizations, meal programs, and caregiver networks

The COA recognizes that effective outreach must reach residents where they are and in formats they can access. To support equitable access, materials will be translated into the primary languages spoken within the community whenever possible, and staff will

work with multilingual partners and interpreters to assist non-English-speaking residents and caregivers. Outreach efforts will also be culturally responsive and designed to welcome older adults from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Accessibility for individuals with disabilities will remain a priority throughout implementation and ongoing operations. The modernized kitchen and related programming will comply with ADA accessibility standards, and communication materials will be made available in accessible formats when requested. The COA will continue offering accommodations such as large-print materials, mobility-accessible spaces, and assistance for individuals with hearing or vision impairments.

To ensure equitable participation, the COA will continue collaborating with local housing authorities, health agencies, veterans' services, transportation providers, disability advocates, and community-based organizations that serve socially isolated and underserved older adults. These partnerships help identify residents who may otherwise face barriers related to transportation, language, income, disability, or social isolation.

The modernization project will ultimately improve the COA's ability to provide safe, nutritious meals and community programming in an environment that is welcoming, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the entire older adult population and their caregivers.

Impacts and Outcomes

0 / 300 words - Describe the impacts and outcomes that will result from this project and how grant activities and participant data will be tracked, measured, and evaluated, noting how many older adults/caregivers you expect to impact through your project.

The upgraded kitchen will allow the COA to:

- Improve food safety and compliance with current health standards
- Increase efficiency in meal preparation and service delivery
- Enhance the quality and variety of meals offered to older adults
- Expand congregate dining, home-delivered meal support, and special nutrition programming

- Reduce equipment failures and operational interruptions
- Improve accessibility and workflow for staff and volunteers
- Create a more welcoming and functional environment for community engagement

The project is expected to directly benefit approximately 400–600 older adults annually through congregate meals, home-delivered meal services, nutrition education programs, wellness events, and caregiver support activities. In addition, caregivers and family members who rely on nutrition and support services for older adults will indirectly benefit from improved reliability and expanded programming capacity.

The modernization will also strengthen the COA's long-term sustainability by reducing maintenance needs, improving energy efficiency, and supporting the increasing demand for senior nutrition services as the community's older adult population grows.

To ensure accountability and measure project success, the COA will track grant activities, participation levels, and program outcomes through existing administrative and reporting systems. Data collection and evaluation methods will include:

- Tracking the number of meals prepared and served
- Monitoring congregate meal attendance and home-delivered meal participation
- Recording the number of older adults and caregivers served
- Documenting new or expanded nutrition and wellness programs
- Tracking kitchen operational efficiency and equipment performance
- Maintaining project timelines, invoices, procurement records, and contractor reports
- Collecting participant feedback through surveys, comment forms, and informal interviews

The COA Director and staff will review participation data and program outcomes regularly to evaluate whether the modernization project has improved service capacity, accessibility, and participant satisfaction. Findings will be used to inform future programming, operational improvements, and reporting to grant administrators and municipal leadership.

Best Practices

0 / 300 words - Indicate how you will document best practices gained from this project and share lessons learned with other COAs.

The Amesbury Council on Aging (COA) will document best practices and lessons learned throughout the kitchen modernization project to support continuous improvement and provide a useful model for other Councils on Aging undertaking similar facility upgrades. Documentation efforts will focus on project planning, procurement, construction coordination, operational transitions, accessibility improvements, and strategies for maintaining uninterrupted nutrition services during implementation.

The COA Assistant Director and project team will maintain records throughout the project, including:

- Project timelines and implementation milestones
- Procurement and contractor coordination processes
- Budget tracking and cost-management strategies
- Equipment selection and operational considerations
- Approaches used to minimize disruption to meal services
- Accessibility and safety improvements
- Staff training and workflow enhancements
- Participant feedback and program outcomes following completion

The COA will evaluate what strategies were most successful, identify challenges encountered during implementation, and document recommendations for future projects. Feedback from kitchen staff, older adults, caregivers, volunteers, municipal departments, and project partners will be incorporated into the evaluation process to ensure multiple perspectives are represented.

Lessons learned and successful practices will be shared with other COAs and aging-service organizations through several methods, including:

- Presentations at regional and statewide aging network meetings
- Collaboration with neighboring Councils on Aging and senior center directors

- Informal peer-to-peer consultations
- Written project summaries, checklists, and implementation guidance documents
- Participation in Massachusetts aging services associations and professional networks
- Sharing before-and-after operational outcomes and program data when appropriate

The COA is committed to contributing to the broader aging-services network by helping other communities better understand effective approaches to kitchen modernization, accessibility improvements, nutrition program expansion, and continuity of services during capital projects. By documenting and sharing these experiences, the project will provide value beyond the local community and support stronger, more resilient senior nutrition programs across the region.

Sustainability

0 / 300 words - Explain if your funding is for a one-time project or if you intend to continue this project after the grant period ends. If you plan to continue the project, please describe how you will ensure its ongoing sustainability, including future sources of funding.

The Council on Aging (COA) is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the kitchen modernization project and the continued expansion of nutrition programming beyond the grant period. Grant funding will support the initial modernization and enhancement of kitchen operations, including the introduction of fresh food preparation and chef-supported programming. Following the completion of the grant period, the COA intends to continue these efforts through a combination of municipal support, community partnerships, program revenue opportunities, and ongoing fundraising.

The COA has established relationships with local organizations, volunteers, and community supporters that will help sustain enhanced nutrition services over time. In particular, the Friends of the Council on Aging will play an important role in supporting future kitchen-related programming and operational needs. The Friends

organization has a history of fundraising and community engagement in support of senior center initiatives and will continue assisting with:

- Fundraising events and community campaigns
- Donations designated for nutrition and wellness programs
- Support for fresh food purchases and special meal initiatives
- Assistance with equipment replacement and program enhancements
- Sponsorship opportunities through local businesses and community partners

The COA will also pursue additional grant opportunities through state agencies, foundations, local businesses, and charitable organizations that support healthy aging, food security, and community wellness initiatives. Partnerships with regional food programs, nutrition organizations, farms, and community agencies will help offset costs and expand access to fresh and healthy food options for older adults.

Municipal operational support will continue to fund core staffing, facility maintenance, and ongoing nutrition services, helping ensure that the upgraded kitchen remains fully functional and integrated into the COA's long-term programming strategy. The modernization itself is expected to improve operational efficiency, reduce maintenance costs associated with outdated equipment, and strengthen the COA's ability to sustain and expand meal services in future years.

