

Funds for Housing Rehabilitation

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Every little bit helps and the town of Mount Jackson is hoping to receive federal funding to improve homes in their community. About 15 single-family residences could benefit from a Community Development Block Grant application that the town is currently working on with the help of People Incorporated.

"Community Development Block Grants are funds meant to rehabilitate owner-occupied housing," said Rob Goldsmith, of People Inc. "They are used for repairs such as roofing, water and heating systems, not cosmetic repairs."

The funds are federal, but flow through the state, Goldsmith said.

"Once a year, proposals are accepted and some towns, counties, and cities are awarded the funds to use for their community," said Goldsmith.

The grant, if the town applies and receives it, will be for \$700,000.

The application deadline is March 12 and according to town manager Charlie Moore, the town is working on the application process.

Before officially applying the town must hold two public hearings. The first was held last night (after press time) and the second will be held on March 9 at the regular council meeting.

"It can [mean] significant improvements to family homeowners and provide long term benefits to the residences," Moore said.

The improvements would come to the town and residents with no cost. If received, the grant will improve about 15 homes in the community who qualify.

There are certain criteria based on income for homeowners to receive grant-funded improvements. The advantage for citizens of a rural area such as Shenandoah County is that criteria are based on statewide income values.

"Many people in this area do qualify because incomes are compared with places such as Northern Virginia and Hampton roads where incomes are typically higher," said Moore.

If all goes to plan, work will begin in about a year, according to Goldsmith.