



TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519
(508) 839-5335 ext. 1120 • FAX (508) 839-4602
www.grafton-ma.gov

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

July 23, 2020

Town of Grafton
Community Preservation Committee
30 Providence Road
Grafton, MA 01519

Re: Statement of Need: Emergency Rental Assistance Program Funding

Dear Committee Members:

At its meeting on July 22, 2020 the Grafton Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) authorized the Town Planner to apply to the Community Preservation Committee for funding related to implementation of a temporary Emergency Rental Assistance Program, to assist local residents affected by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic. As the economic impacts of the health crisis continue to evolve and come to light, many Massachusetts communities have recognized the need for Emergency Rental Assistance Programs in order to assist local residents at risk of losing their homes due to loss of income and other financial hardship related to the pandemic. The AHT finds timely implementation of a similar program, administered through MCO Housing Services, LLC, to be critical to the preservation and support of existing affordable housing opportunities in Grafton.

Both the 2001 Comprehensive Plan and 2018 Housing Production Plan recognize a local need for affordable housing opportunities. The program's consistency with these plans is in maintaining and supporting the progress made by the Town and the current residents who depend upon these programs. The program will help preserve the essential character of the town by helping established residents at risk of eviction remain local and landlords to meet the financial needs of maintenance and repairs through direct disbursements of overdue rent. There are currently no similar programs at the local level to support the population affected by COVID 19 facing potential eviction.

Although the complete fiscal impacts and local needs are difficult to determine at the current point in time, the AHT, in consultation with MCO Housing Services has developed a program that is based in local context, comparable to other Massachusetts communities and able to be expanded if additional need arises. The 2018 Housing Production Plan identifies approximately 2,000 households, would likely qualify for housing assistance as their incomes were at or below 80% of area median income. The current program has been budgeted at \$325,000 to initially meet the needs of approximately 45-50 households, with potential to be expanded further as existing funds are used. These costs include \$300,000 in direct disbursements (maximum 3 disbursements of \$2000¹ per household), as well as administrative costs of a single \$3,000 setup fee and

¹ The 2018 Housing Production Plan identifies the median rent is not affordable to about 28% of all Grafton households and notes rental values tend to be underestimated in the census data and actual market rents are typically higher citing two-bedrooms generally renting for over \$1,300.

\$400 processing fee per approved applicant.² The program will utilize the existing AHT funds to implement the program in early August and proposes the requested funds be used to either expand the program in October if needed, or reimburse the AHT account and preserve the Trust's capacity to implement other Affordable Housing objectives.

We trust this letter summarizes the AHT's proposed program and request for funding. I am happy to discuss any portion of this letter which is unclear.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher J. McGoldrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and "M".

Christopher J. McGoldrick
Town Planner

² $50 \times \$6,000 = \$300,000$ | $(50 \times \$400) + \$3,000 = \$23,000$

General Criteria

The project must meet all the legal criteria of the Community Preservation Act. The project must be well documented and provide sufficient information to be feasible. The following criteria will be considered as the project is evaluated. However, meeting all of the criteria does not guarantee CPC support for the project. In addition to filling out the Funding Rating General Criteria, there are individual category rating criteria.

Answer each line as it applies (Yes/ No):

- _____ 1.) Does the project have other sources of funding?
 If so, indicate percentage: _____
- _____ 2.) Does the project require urgent attention?
- _____ 3.) Does the project serve a currently underserved population?
- _____ 4.) Does the project preserve a threatened resource?
- _____ 5.) Is the project consistent with existing Grafton Planning Documents such as the Master Plan or Open Space Plan?
- _____ 6.) Does the project fit within the current or already proposed zoning regulations?
- _____ 7.) Does the project have a means of support for maintenance and upkeep?
- _____ 8.) Does the project involve currently owned municipal assets?
- _____ 9.) Does the project have two other sources of funding?
- _____ 10.) Does the project have more than two other sources of funding?
- _____ 11.) Does the project involve two core concerns of the CPA?
- _____ 12.) Does the project involve all three-core concerns of the CPA?
- _____ 13.) Does the project have community support?
- _____ 14.) Does the project have sufficient supporting documentation?
- _____ 15.) Does the project have support from another Board or Committee?
- _____ 16.) Does the project provide a positive impact to the community?
- _____ 17.) Does the project have the support of the majority of immediate abutters?
- _____ 18.) Does the project reclaim abandoned or previously developed lands?
- _____ 19.) Does the project require special permitting?

Affordable Housing Selection Criteria

Answer each line as it applies (Yes/ No):

- _____ 1.) Will this involve the renovation of an existing building? If so,
_____ Is the building structurally sound?
_____ Is it free of lead paint? (This would be necessary if children are to live there).
_____ Is it free of asbestos, pollutants, and other hazards?
_____ Is there Town sewerage?
_____ Is the septic system in compliance with Title 5?
_____ Does the building comply with building and sanitary codes?
_____ Is it handicap accessible?
_____ Is this a conversion of market rate to affordable housing?
_____ Is this a tax title property?
- _____ 2.) Does this project involve the building of a new structure? If so,
_____ Will the structure be built on tax title property?
_____ Will it be built on Town-owned land?
_____ Will it be built on donated land?
_____ Are there other grants available to help fund this project?
_____ Explain: _____
_____ Are there other programs, such as Habitat for Humanity, involved?
_____ Will the project be built on a previously developed site?
- _____ 3.) Does the project provide housing that is similar in design and scale with the surrounding community?
- _____ 4.) Does this serve the 60% income level population?
- _____ 5.) Does this serve the 80% income level population?
- _____ 6.) Will this be geared to one age group?
- _____ 7.) Is this infill development?
- _____ 8.) Will there be more than two bedrooms?
- _____ 9.) Will it be located near conveniences (grocery, mass transit, etc.)?
- _____ 10.) Does this project fit with the Master Plan?
- _____ 11.) Will there be multiple units?
- _____ 12.) Is long-term affordability assured?
- _____ 13.) Will priority be given to local residents, Town employees, or employees of local businesses?