



community development partnership

Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape

An Update from The Lower Cape Community Housing Partnership

“Housing is a complex topic. The work that we do empowers both residents and community leaders to address housing needs on the Lower Cape.”

Pelinda Deegan
CDP, Housing Programs Manager

For twenty-eight years the Community Development Partnership has been at the forefront of housing advocacy on the Lower and Outer Cape. Through our Lower Cape Community Housing Partnership, we work with town elected & appointed officials, and community members to provide the knowledge, skills and resources they need to support the creation of housing that is affordable in their communities.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic our work has become all the more important. With many people still out of work, and a potential eviction crisis in the near future, it is critical for towns and organizations to come together, share resources, and put a plan in place to support residents who find themselves in unable to pay their rent due to unemployment or reduced hours.

Typically, the CDP organizes and facilitates quarterly Housing Peer Groups for local leaders to share information and resources, and present updates on housing projects in their respective towns. In March, even though we were only in the early stages of the pandemic, town and local leaders recognized the potential severity of the pandemic and its possible effects on affordable housing. The group decided to meet monthly instead of quarterly. Thus, when the CDP convened the Housing Peer Group in April, instead of focusing on preparing for town meetings, which were ultimately postponed, and discussing warrant articles and affordable housing projects, the conversation centered around how the CDP, and Lower Cape towns and organizations were responding to the economic impacts of the pandemic.



Outer Cape Winter Peer Group Meeting
January 2020

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Lower Cape Winter Peer Group Meeting
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Hadley Luddy, Chief Executive Officer at the Homeless Prevention Council and a strategic partner of the CDP, presented an overview of their services designed to link families in need with a variety of public and private programs designed to cover rent and stabilize finances. The Massachusetts Housing Partnership provided information on how other towns are using their Community Preservation Act and Affordable Housing Trust funds for emergency rental assistance.

Discussions in May and June continued to revolve around how each town was responding to COVID-19, and a working group was established to explore the creation of a regional rental assistance program.

“Because everyone is working from home, we have seen an increase in registration and participation,” says Pelinda Deegan, the CDP’s Housing Programs Manager.

In the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent protests across the country, July’s meeting continued discussing the impacts of the pandemic while also addressing diversity, inclusion, and racial equity. Judi Barrett, a housing consultant from Plymouth, led a discussion on local preference in affordable housing and how, in a place like the Lower and Outer Cape, it can perpetuate racial inequality. “As towns embark on housing development, representatives from multiple towns showed a strong interest in ensuring the local preference policy and lottery process is more racially equitable,” notes Pelinda.

The regional rental assistance working group formed in May announced that program guidelines for the emergency rental assistance program had been created. This program requires a single application for residents of any Lower and Outer Cape town making up to 100% of the area median income, filling in the gaps between programs aimed directly at lower income residents. The goal of the program is to provide economic assistance for affordable rental housing with social support services to bridge Households and help residents to stay in their homes during the ongoing health crisis. “It was exciting to see the initial conversations about rental assistance develop into an actual regional program,” says Pelinda.

Looking towards the fall and winter the CDP continues to create engaging virtual programming by responding to the needs of the community. The Lower Cape Housing Institute, the CDP’s signature housing training program for local elected & appointed officials and town staff, is fully scheduled for this winter. The CDP will also be offering a housing 101 training. “Housing is a complex topic. The work that we do empowers both residents and community leaders to address housing needs on the Lower Cape,” explains Pelinda. On top of keeping everyone safe and healthy, we hope that our online format will make these programs and trainings more accessible to those who would have been unable to attend in person.

The pandemic has drastically affected the day to day lives of everyone on the Lower and Outer Cape. The CDP, local officials, and other non-profit organizations are working to ensure residents are supported and that the focus on safe, stable, and affordable housing is not lost in the chaos caused by the Coronavirus.