



community development partnership

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

CDP Provides Housing Consulting Services to Harwich and Chatham

“What matters most is that there are more housing units on the Lower Cape and that towns can move the needle on achieving their housing goals.”

Andrea Aldana
CDP Director of Housing Advocacy

Most Cape towns on the Lower Cape have a plan about their housing needs and how to achieve them. All towns have volunteer boards addressing housing issues, but they aren't necessarily equipped to handle the complexities of managing, never mind developing, affordable housing while navigating public resistance.

Thus it's no surprise that towns that are successful in reaching their housing production goals are towns that have housing staff. Without it, no single person in town hall is responsible for advancing housing production goals and it is left to volunteer boards. Provincetown, which has had a full-time housing specialist for several years, leads the entire region with an inventory of affordable housing stock at 9.8%.

To address this lack of resources, adopting a more regional view by sharing staff is an efficient solution. Staff can serve multiple towns facing similar issues and provide education and consulting services to town boards, committees, town leaders and those seeking affordable housing.

Last month the CDP entered into contracts with Harwich and Chatham to provide housing consulting services. For now, Andrea Aldana, the CDP's Director of Housing Advocacy, is serving in this position while the CDP hires a Housing Advocacy Program Manager to take on this role .

This is a ground-breaking program on the Cape that is modeled after two other successful off-Cape programs. It is the first time that a non-profit is offering services to towns in this way. The housing consultancy services the CDP will be providing will include office hours offered at Town Hall where CDP staff will assist residents in accessing municipal housing programs including referrals to housing providers, homeless prevention services and general housing related information.

As town housing consultant, the CDP will also provide staff support to housing related committees such as the Affordable Housing Trust or Affordable Housing Committee. The CDP may also monitor each town's Subsidized Housing Inventory and create a database of eligible units and a dossier for

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eligible properties. Specific tasks will be driven by the towns, however; all services are offered within a regional context to foster regional collaboration.

Aldana will be holding office hours in Chatham from 8:00 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Thursdays in Harwich. Residents looking for information about programs that they might qualify for may come in and learn about town programs and have their questions answered. Counseling also extends to committees and trusts, helping them to achieve their goals while also working closely with town administrators. In the end, Aldana said, “What matters most is that there are more housing units on the Lower Cape and that towns can move the needle on achieving their housing goals.”

Aldana notes that the climate around solving housing issues through regional collaboration is beginning to find traction on the Lower Cape. In 2018, for example, Wellfleet and Orleans contributed financial support to build the Village at Nauset Green, the 65 unit development to be built off Brackett Road in Eastham.. The Cape Housing Institute, a joint program of the CDP and Housing Assistance Corporation, has helped in part by bringing municipal leaders and employees together from around the Cape to learn how to develop sustainable solutions for this regional problem. The program encourages collaboration and most importantly initiates dialogue, the sharing of best practices, builds trust and supports ongoing dialogue between Towns.

Working together, sharing resources and viewing solutions from a regional perspective is our best hope for developing sustainable solutions for our community.