Using the Community Preservation Act (CPA)
For Rental Assistance Programs

Suggestions from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership

1. Remember, rental assistance programs using CPA funds have a household income limit of 100% area median income (AMI).

2. Guidelines for the program should be clear and well-advertised. Reasonable accommodations should be made to assist those with physical, mental, or language challenges.

3. If this is a temporary program only, make that clear. Additionally, some communities may want eligibility to only extend to existing residents. Federal case law prohibits durational residency requirements when seeking public assistance. Exclusion of people who don't already live in the community could be problematic, particularly if the program becomes long-term. Perhaps revisit the guidelines for the program every 90 days.

4. Be cautious about restricting eligibility to people working in certain industries (e.g., hospitality) when many people in a variety of industries are feeling the impacts of COVID-19.

5. Applications should be readily available and require standard documentation to determine income eligibility.

6. Rent payments should be made directly to landlords.

7. To comply with the Anti-aid Amendment, add an addendum to an existing rental lease or create a grant agreement with the rental assistance beneficiary and landlord.

8. It is advisable to partner with an organization or consultant with experience running affordable housing programs to establish and implement a rental assistance program.

If you have any further questions about pursuing rental assistance projects with CPA funding, we recommend contacting:

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