

February 28, 2024

Ed Augustus, Secretary
Executive Office of Housing and Livable communities
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300
Boston, MA 02114

Re: CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Application for FY24

Dear Mr. Augustus,

I am writing to express Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard's support of the following communities submission of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications to the Executive office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). These grants will allow the regional lead towns of Edgartown, and Oak Bluffs, to continue meeting the housing rehabilitation and childcare voucher needs of LMI (low-moderate income) residents in 6 towns across the Commonwealth.

The affordable housing and economic development challenges across the Commonwealth are historically well documented; our current economic and health crisis has only exacerbated those challenges. Now, more than ever, CDBG funding is a vital resource for stabilizing and preserving existing homes in our region and ensuring that working families have affordable childcare.

As a planning, advocacy and community building organization, HAMV is well aware of the housing challenges not only of Older Adults but for all members of our community. Our Island-wide Older Adult survey of 2020 (with 2, 480 respondents) confirmed that almost 90% of Older Adults live in a home they own, and over 40% recognize that they need modifications to their home to be able to age-in-place. Furthermore;

- 4 out of 5 respondents with <\$25K in annual income lack some or all of the funds needed to modify 4their homes.
- 2 out of 3 who have <\$50K in annual income lack some or all of the funds needed.
- 50% of Black respondents report needing some support funding home modifications.



1 in 3 of our year round residents are 65+ which further amplifies the need. The ability to provide childcare funding for the workforce who serves our Older Adults is also a critical need.

The Housing Rehab Program provides homeowners earning less than 80% of the area median income with an opportunity to address critical safety and energy upgrades to their homes. The childcare component of these grants provides financial assistance for LMI families who rely on local, licensed childcare providers to care for their children while they are at work. Given the extraordinary current economic situation in our region, these programs typically reach full capacity by the third quarter of the fiscal year. Together, the Housing Rehab Program and Childcare Voucher Program play a vital role in stabilizing the year-round families living in these towns.

For FY24, the towns of Oak Bluffs and Edgartown are hopeful to receive funding that will allow them to work on 52 housing rehab projects through the following grants:

- The Oak Bluffs Regional Grant, serving the towns of Oak Bluffs, Tisbury and Chilmark, will provide approximately \$1.7 million to rehab about 25 homes and provide childcare vouchers for up to 35 families;
- The Edgartown Regional Grant, serving the towns of Edgartown, Aquinnah and West Tisbury, will provide approximately \$1.7 million to rehab about 26 homes and provide childcare vouchers for up to 28 families;

We urge you to provide the funding necessary to keep these vital resources/programs available to the residents of Martha's Vineyard.

Sincerely,

Cindy Trish

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