

Can CPA be Used for Rental Assistance? The Answer is Yes!

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It goes without saying that this is a stressful and difficult time for Massachusetts residents as they grapple with the impact of COVID-19. But there are things that CPA communities can do to help - in particular, using CPA funds for rental assistance may be worth looking into.

One question we've received from housing advocates recently is how CPA can help with rental assistance—can CPA support housing programs that allow residents to stay in their homes when it's more important than ever? The good news is that CPA already has the means to help with this crisis; in fact, several communities have already mobilized CPA funding for rental assistance in the past, including Georgetown, Somerville, Waltham, and the communities on Martha's Vineyard.

The 2012 amendments to the Community Preservation Act clarified that rental assistance programs are an eligible CPA community housing application. Projects of this type fall under the “support category” of the allowable uses chart, as defined in section 2 of the CPA legislation:

"Support of Community housing", shall include, but not be limited to, programs that provide grants, loans, rental assistance, security deposits, interest-rate write downs or other forms of assistance directly to individuals and families who are eligible for community housing, or to an entity that owns, operates or manages such housing, for the purpose of making housing affordable.

If this appears to be a need in your community, [**here are some important guidelines from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership \(MHP\)**](#) to review first. MHP has also put together [**a comprehensive Q&A document**](#) for using local funds for short-term emergency rental programs. We also recommend checking in with your local housing experts: affordable housing trusts, municipal staff, local housing authorities, or community development corporations. It's possible that these groups may not be aware that CPA can be used for rental assistance, so coordinating with them on possible opportunities would be the best place to start.

Rental assistance may or may not be a great project for your community in the coming months, but in times of need, it's always important to know all of the different ways that CPA can help.

Further Resources:

- **Resources for Emergency Rental Assistance Programs from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP):**
 - [**Guidelines and Advice on Rental Assistance Programs**](#)
 - [**Q&A Guide for Short-Term Rental Assistance Programs**](#)
 - [**Checklist for Implementing Rental Assistance Programs**](#)
- [**How to Run CPA Rental Assistance Programs - Case Studies**](#)
- [**The Most Important Rule for CPA Housing Projects: Income Limits Apply to All CPA Housing Expenditures**](#)
- [**Free Assistance for CPA Housing Projects \(CPA Affordable Housing Circuit Rider Program\)**](#)
- [**The Role of Grant Agreements in Funding Private Projects**](#)