



The Island's Community Foundation



Dukes County Regional Housing Authority
Martha's Vineyard

The **Emergency Rental Relief Program (Rental Relief)** is funded by the Permanent Endowment for Martha's Vineyard and administered by the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority to address the immediate needs of Island renter households with Covid-19 related losses of income.

The Need:

Conservatively figured, there are 1,000 working Island households who live in un-subsidized rental housing. Of these, there are a significant number that for various reasons, do not have access to most of the state and federal promises of financial assistance for Covid-19 related losses of employment and income. While some are lucky to have year-round housing, the balance have seasonal rentals of eight to nine months and must find alternate housing in the summer. Most of the Island landlords involved in these rentals rely on that income to pay their own mortgages and household bills.

These rental households are year-round community members who work in our stores, restaurants, offices, and building trades. Additionally, they contribute to Island life through our children's schools, faith communities, and arts and sports programs. Many have lost work and income and need immediate assistance with daily costs and demands until safety net supports are in place and employment returns.

The Program:

The direct support from the Rental Relief Program is based on three simple criteria: gross household income, documented monthly rent payment, and explanation of Covid-19 related financial needs as well as avenues of support applied for. The Housing Authority staff has 40 cumulative years of direct experience with affordable rental and ownership certification which is applied to these new applications. Rental relief will be provided to as many Island households as private funding through the Permanent Endowment is able to support. Both organizations partnered in this support have waived all administrative fees so that each dollar of support goes directly to Island renters and their landlords.

The Response:

Given the immediacy and far-reaching economic instability of this pandemic, the need is urgent and critical. Conversations with Rental Relief applicants and landlords reveal how important and impactful this program has been in just the first two weeks. Among the stories are these:

- The husband and wife who are laid off from food service jobs are now able to cover additional bills and daily costs while waiting for unemployment payments and a return to their jobs.
- A landlord who rents a room in her home to help cover costs and now has a little breathing room.
- The three laid-off tradesmen who share a home and hope that the news of limited re-start of construction work on the Island means a return to work, income, and the ability to make rent.
- The young Brazilian father whose carpenter's job supported his wife and young child and is waiting for the restart of construction.
- The landlord who assisted her young tenant to submit the application, is relieved to keep a good tenant, and thankful for the work of the Permanent Endowment and Housing Authority and what it means at this time.

To Date:

Rental relief has been provided for **50** qualified applicants for a total of **\$77,470**. These include individuals and families with 42 children amongst the households served. 24 of these households are from the Brazilian community.

The Goal:

To be prepared to offer support to rental households needing relief for the yet to be determined duration of time that people's income remains impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.