

DUKES COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

ANNUAL REPORT, 2015

The Dukes County Regional Housing Authority is publically chartered and locally funded to assist the towns of Dukes County to address the need for stable community housing opportunity. The Housing Authority collaborates with the towns and state, regional and island organizations to provide year-round rentals and rental assistance, homebuyer training, lottery support and affordability monitoring, as well as advocacy and planning for future housing development, management and support.

Good news in 2015 for the Vineyard's important summer rental and second home economy also resulted in decreased availability of year-round rentals at most income levels. The Housing Authority participated in numerous discussions and planning efforts around needed rentals including: the Island Housing Trust's Water Street and Kuehn's Way properties in Tisbury; Meshacket Road in Edgartown; the fire station site in West Tisbury; and a site possibility in Oak Bluffs. Ongoing MV Commission support of town production plans was joined by the important All-Island Planning Board discussion of island-wide rental development coordination and cost sharing. Currently, the Housing Authority manages seventy nine apartments on twelve properties in five towns; assists with administration of West Tisbury's forty nine Accessory Apartments; maintains a rental housing waitlist numbering two hundred and thirty households; and partners with the Housing Assistance Corporation, The Resource Inc. and other organizations that offer assistance with rent, utilities and apartment rehabilitation to island tenants and their landlords.

The growing lack of year-round leases is also affecting Rental Assistance funded through town Community Preservation monies and used historically by an average of seventy working households who can afford at least half of a fair market rental. For the second consecutive year, use of this source of support with high housing costs has been reduced due to the loss of landlords reentering the heated up seasonal rental market. For this reason it is additionally important that permanent year-round rental development continues across the island. In the meantime, future funding of Rental Assistance will be subject to each town's annual decision making process and the Housing Authority will provide the usage, need and cost figures necessary for thorough town deliberation.

2015 included significant effort and accomplishment around housing stresses and homelessness on Martha's Vineyard including: the Health Council's sponsorship of Rural Scholar work to better define the issue locally; the County Manager's work with our legislative representatives towards a housing counselor position; and island clergy and parishioner effort to establish an emergency housing option for the winter season. The extensive work of numerous volunteers has insured that our community has added supports needed by islanders in tough transitions as well elders, folks with disabilities and others with limited or lower incomes.

The Housing Authority's work on homeownership in 2015 included lotteries for an

affordable home in Oak Bluffs and resales of an Edgartown Resident Homesite and a Home Buy-Down property with lottery agency, homebuyer training and Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing; six affordable home re-finances; fifteen referrals through Edgartown's Demolition Delay by-law; and maintenance of the Homebuyer Clearinghouse used to publicize homebuyer opportunities and currently numbering four hundred island households.

The Housing Authority manages the Vineyard Housing Office on State Road in Vineyard Haven as a clearinghouse for rental and homeownership opportunities and as a focus for islanders working together on housing issues. The VHO currently is home to the Housing Authority, the Island Housing Trust and Habitat for Humanity of Martha's Vineyard.

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