

Chilmark Community Preservation Committee Application for CPA Funds

1. Project Outline: Please provide written answers to the following questions and email a pdf (preferred) or submit your application to:

Kara Shemeth
kshemeth@chilmarkma.gov
508-645-2104
Chilmark Town Hall
P.O. Box 119 401 Middle Rd
Chilmark, MA. 02535

2. Application Information: Please be sure to include the following information with your application:

- **Date:** October 4, 2022
- **Project Title:** Island Autism Center
- **Applicant/Contact Person:** Kate DeVane
- **Sponsoring Organization – if applicable:** N/A
- **Mailing address, email address, phone number:**
P.O. Box 2786, Edgartown, MA 02539
kate@islandautism.org
508-693-2568

3. Project Category: Which of the following CPA fund categories apply to your application and project -- more than one category may apply; Please explain how your project meets the criteria for the fund categories you are requesting.

Open Space Preservation;
Community Housing;
Open Space-Parks & Recreation

IAG's 2020 and 2021 Community Preservation Act funding application was approved by all six towns and funded a portion of the land cost, in exchange for permanent restrictions on a 7.5-acre property at 515 Lamberts Cove Road, as well as funding construction costs for the residential units. That Deed restriction has been put in place. The property will be used for affordable housing for 12-18 adults - and a farm manager - with autism and autism-related disorders, and open space and recreation as part of programs to provide occupational and residential programming and related activities and service for individuals of all ages with autism and autism-related disorders. See attached site plan.

Over the past two years, each of the six towns contributed CPC funding towards the purchase price of the 7.5 portion and planned construction improvements on that same 7.5 acre plot. IAG covered the cost of \$400,000 of the \$800,000 total land purchase cost. This approach leverages local and private funding necessary to address the community's critical affordable housing need for income eligible adults with autism and autism-related disorders and their caregivers. Local preference will be offered to income eligible residents living in the six island towns with autism and autism-related disorders and their caregivers. For the housing units funded by this proposal priority will be given to intense-needs autistic adults from local towns.

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While this specific request is to support the construction of affordable community housing, the overall Island Autism Center project - of which these housing units are a critical part - will also accomplish CPA goals with regards to open space preservation and open space - parks and recreation. The grounds of the Center will include open space, trails for community use, gardens, and other components that align with the goals of these two categories.

4. Funding Scope: What is the total cost or budget of your project – please provide itemized substantiation for the cost. If this is a large construction project, please provide a detailed professional cost estimate. How much CPA funds are you requesting and how much from each category? Please outline the sources and amounts of all funds for your project—both CPA and non-CPA sources.

The Island Autism Group has worked with staff, board, and outside consultants to create an ambitious but realistic financial plan to build and sustain the Island Autism Center. The financial plan includes a \$15 million budget (originally \$10 million but adjusted due to increase in construction material and labor costs) split into three phases over five years. Phase One, the purchase of the property, pre-development, permitting and build-out of the day program and farm buildings is well underway. Upwards of \$3.5 million has been raised to date. The CPC funds that IAG was awarded in 2020 and 2021 enabled us to successfully raise matching funds from our individual and foundation supporters, and we are confident that we will be able to do so again if we are awarded the requested CPC funds.

The second phase of the project will cost approximately \$2.9 million. This budget - for construction of two 4-bedroom residential buildings - is based on the budget for construction of the Hub House; while the design phase of the residential buildings is complete, the construction work has not yet been put out to bid. IAG did, however, consult with a professional estimator and is confident that the budget will be approximately \$2.9 million. IAG respectfully requests \$99,800 from the Chilmark Community Preservation Committee.

Annual operating costs for the housing portion of the Center will be covered by residents' state social security, department of developmental services, and employment earnings. The farm and day programming portion will be supported by these monies, grants and donations, and revenue from the farm (the goal for the farm is for it to be financially self-sustaining; all revenue from farm activities will be invested back into the farm and the program). There will be no annual cost to the town and it is our assertion that the cost to the state may be lessened by bundling the adult care costs, as residents will be in a community living setting.

The key assumptions in the budget are that adult residents will be funded by State and Federal funds that they already collect but that the burden will be lessened by the bundling plan mentioned above. The farm will function primarily as a programming vehicle and the day program will cost less when we no longer need to pay for spaces off-site spaces and venues. The risks are that State and Federal programs will try to lower the overall payout to individuals for programming when they are bundled, but they cannot lower the social security payout so the rent portion will always be secure. Once constructed, the on-going operation and maintenance of the autism housing will be paid from the revenues from the rental operations.

5. Goals: What are the specific objectives of the project? Who will benefit and why? Why are you seeking Chilmark CPA funds?

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IAG is a well-established non-profit that serves autistic children and their families on Martha's Vineyard. IAG was founded in 2009 and has helped autistic children on the Island access extracurricular programs and works closely with teachers, therapists, parents, and partner organizations in support of those with autism.

IAG respectfully requests support to help create the Island Autism Center. Our vision for the Center is to provide a residential opportunity for adults with autism who need that level of support and programming for people with autism who live off campus, to develop life and job skills through meaningful work and have a structured, purpose-driven life. Our secondary goal is to create inclusive educational spaces so that extended families, the local community and island visitors can all enjoy and benefit from the programs and learning opportunities we will provide. They will be the first affordable housing units for Islanders with Autism on island.

We will provide five residential units in two configurations. This request is to support Phase Two of the project: building two 4-bedroom houses that will house people with 24-hour on-site staff (see attached floor plan). Ideally, Phase One - construction of the Hub House, the barn, and the farm stand - will overlap with Phase Two to maximize resources and efficiencies around materials and labor. Phase Three of construction (the remaining housing units and a potential endowment) will commence as soon as funding is fully secured.

The Center will be located in West Tisbury, where we have 7.5 acres (abutted by Land Bank property) to allow for both seclusion and inclusion. We will have a large main building (drawings attached) with accommodations for guest speakers, meeting space, dining space, office and a professional kitchen where young adults can learn cooking skills and where meals and snacks will be prepared for campers and on occasion families. The location of the property in West Tisbury is ideal. It is just off one of the island's main roads in the North Tisbury business district, including Island Gymnastics, the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School, Cronigs Market, Conroy Apothecary, the West Tisbury Post office, Police and EMT. It is also a 5-minute walk from a major bus route and only 10 minutes from the Vineyard Haven ferry terminal.

6. Community Need and Support: Why is the project needed? Does it address needs outlined in existing Town or regional plans—such as master plans? What is the nature and level of community support for the project? How have you solicited public input and what public feedback have you received in support of your project?

The shortage of appropriate affordable housing for adults with Autism is exacerbated by the well-documented need for affordable rental housing island-wide. The 2013 Martha's Vineyard Housing Needs Assessment recommended the creation of 50 units of affordable community housing per year, with 20% for affordable homeownership and 80% for year-round rental housing serving those earning 60% or less of the area median income - our most vulnerable population. The Housing Production Plan adopted by the six towns' combined identifies the need to create 223 units of affordable housing serving low/moderate income residents over the next five years. We believe the Center itself will serve as a model, building upon the island community's unique acceptance of abilities and differences to show how it's possible to fully integrate residents and participants in employment and social settings.

IAG has identified approximately 200 year-round residents, including 56 school-aged children diagnosed on the autism spectrum, undiagnosed adults, and family members impacted by autism. It is hard to accurately track the number of adults living with ASD due to a higher number of adults being undiagnosed and that there is no tracking system for those over

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22-years old. However, we now know there is a significant and growing population of young adults who have recently turned 22, or who will be in the next few years. Though difficult to isolate data specific to Martha's Vineyard, we know that nationally more than 70%-80% of adults with autism live "at home", often with older caregivers, usually parents who themselves may require care. The Corporation for Supportive Housing estimates the current nationwide shortage of supportive housing units at 1.2 million, and those in need have to compete with another 7 million "Worst Case Needs" (50% or less of Area Median Income) people in the affordable housing market according to a 2017 HUD report.

Numerous studies, organizations and government reports indicate a critical shortage of affordable supportive housing for those with autism. In the eleven-year period from 2005 to 2015, the number of 12 to 17 year-olds in Massachusetts receiving special education through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) based on autism increased three-fold and that growth is not anticipated to level off until 2030. The data indicates conclusively that we will see a significantly growing number of people aging out of special education services at age 22.

All of our residents will be in the Worst Case Needs cohort, with incomes at less than 30% of Area Median Income. The shortage of affordable housing, particularly purpose-built supportive housing, coupled with an ever-increasing rate of autistic adults aging out of social service programs at age 22, and the aging general population on Martha's Vineyard turns this housing shortage into a housing crisis. Courts have mandated that the developmentally disabled not be "warehoused", thus expanding pressure on existing housing stock. Five years ago, the Massachusetts Autism Commission stated that housing capacity in existing programs is outstripped by demand, and we continue hearing that adults on Cape Cod who qualify for state support are being told that there is a shortage of beds on the Cape, and that they may be placed off-Cape, away from their community, familiar surroundings and support network.

IAG has letters of support from the MV Land Bank, Dukes County Regional Housing Authority, the Edgartown Affordable Housing Committee, MV Public Schools, MV Community Services and Island Disabilities Collaborative, and parents of children with autism for the Island Autism Center & Neighborhood project-funding proposal.

7. Timing: Please provide an itemized project timeline from start to finish. When will you need Chilmark CPA funds? Please understand if your project is recommended to voters and approved, the Committee prefers to reimburse paid project expenses with proof of payment before releasing the CPA public funds.

In 2020 IAG purchased the West Tisbury property to include residences, a barn, a Hub House, and open fields. MVLB purchased 10 acres abutting the 7.5 acre property, and will advise IAG on the future use of the undeveloped land, including woodlands. We will begin with Phase One - the build of the Hub House on the property. It will be used for IAG offices, as a common-space for residents, and as our program hub. This is fully funded.

Planning, design, and permitting will be completed for the overall campus plan and more specifically for phases one and two. IAG is requesting CPC funding for Phase 2 - construction of the first two residential units (two 4-bedroom houses). We anticipate breaking ground in 2022. Construction of the residences will be completed by 2024, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

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8. Other Information: Please provide any additional information such as sketches, renderings, plans, photos, designs, feasibility reports.

Please see attached site, subdivision, and floor plans.

9. Permits: Please provide evidence that the project does not violate any Town bylaws. Is approval required from the Martha's Vineyard Commission?

The plans for the Island Autism Center were unanimously approved by the Martha's Vineyard Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Planning Board (with one recusal). IAG is waiting for the Planning Board to draft their written decision, which will then be submitted to the West Tisbury building inspector. We are finalizing our contract with a local builder, and we expect to break ground on the project in November 2022, with construction on the residential units commencing in Spring 2023.

10. Deadlines for Annual Town Meeting: Your attendance is required for the CPC meeting and public hearing to answer any questions.

- a. Receive completed application (email pdf): 10/4/22
- b. CPC Public Hearing: TBD