

TO: City of Gloucester - ARPA Listening Group

FROM: Housing 4 All Gloucester

DATE: June 16, 2022

RE: Proposal for ARPA Funding Allocations for Affordable Housing



Housing 4 All Gloucester is a growing coalition that includes concerned Gloucester residents, housing related service providing agencies and other local stakeholders who advocate for increased housing of all kinds in Gloucester, particularly affordable housing.

In noting this, we are meaning housing that is affordable to the full range of low to moderate incomes across the 30%, 50%, and 80% of Area Mean Income since 50% or more of Gloucester residents are eligible for these levels of affordability.

We believe that the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds received to aid public health and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, offers a major investment opportunity for the City of Gloucester to significantly address our housing crisis. Although not the direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has further highlighted our community's inability to address its lack of affordable housing options for renters and cost burdened home owners alike.

Governor Baker, state legislators and housing policy leaders, like Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) and Citizens Housing, Planning Association (CHAPA) and others have all recommended that municipalities allocate a significant portion of their direct ARPA fiscal recovery funds towards housing investments.

As a campaign priority for Mayor Verga (<https://www.voteverga.com/housing-development>) a commitment of ARPA funds would reflect the administration's commitment to support programs to help us build more affordable housing.

Housing 4 All Gloucester proposes a commitment of 20% of Gloucester's total awarded ARPA funding be utilized for the following housing goals:

- **Increase the production and availability of affordable housing** by making capital investments.
- **Increase access to homeownership that is affordable**, particularly for first-generation home buyers.
- **Improve and preserve existing public housing.**
- **Provide housing assistance services for Gloucester low and middle income residents** who continue to be disproportionately economically impacted by the pandemic due to systemic inequities.

We recommend that the city's commitment to affordable housing include funding allocations to **all** our local housing related resources including: Gloucester's Affordable Housing Trust; our local housing and human services agencies; and to our existing and aging public housing inventory managed by the Housing Authority.

For Affordable Housing Trust Initiatives to plan and provide for:

- Affordable Rental Housing Production and Preservation to provide increased housing options that are climate resilient, energy efficient, and accessible to disproportionately impacted populations.

- Financial Assistance Incentives for homeowners who want to add an Accessory Dwelling unit, retaining both as deed restricted affordable.
- Expanded Homeownership Investments to build new affordable homeownership opportunities for households with low and moderate incomes and to expand resources for first-time homebuyers, including down payment assistance.
- Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Projects that continue to provide financial assistance to homeowners, particularly for seniors, persons with disabilities, and families, in need of emergency repairs, building or health code violation repairs, removal of hazards like lead paint and mold, and/or other repairs in order to improve the safety, accessibility, and energy-efficiency of their home.

For Housing Related Service Agencies Initiatives to plan and provide for:

- Supportive Housing investments that end homelessness, including for rent assistance, operating costs for supportive services, and the acquisition of properties able to convert into permanent, deeply affordable homes.
- Counseling and Legal Aid Services to prevent evictions for Gloucester renters and house burdened owners at risk of losing their homes.
- Tenant Outreach and Assistance provided by local community-based organizations, nonprofits, and groups to help families and individuals learn about and apply for all available housing assistance, including emergency assistance and legal aid.

For Gloucester Housing Authority to plan and provide for:

- Public Housing investments for capital repairs and improvements of existing and aging public housing inventory.
- Redevelopment for the long-term preservation of local affordable housing.

ARPA includes funds for cities to build affordable housing and offers us a variety of housing related uses. If we, as a community, are serious about addressing our housing affordability issues with proactive solutions and increased housing investment, then we must also make a serious commitment of ARPA funding to achieve this.

We thank you for this consideration and look forward to you positive response.

On Behalf of Housing 4 All Gloucester:

Submitted and signed by 67 Gloucester Residents