



TOWN OF EDGARTOWN
Community Preservation Committee
70 Main Street, P.O. Box 5158
Edgartown, MA 02539
508-627-6180

Date:09/29/2023

**APPLICATION AND APPLICANT INFORMATION FORM
AMOUNT REQUESTED \$319,600**

Purpose (please check each that apply):

Open Space / Recreation _____ Affordable Housing X Historic Preservation _____

Sponsor Name: Island Autism Group (IAG)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2786, Edgartown

Physical Address: 515 Lamberts Cove Road, West Tisbury

Telephone: 508-939-0668 Email: kate@islandautism.org

Summary of Proposal:

Describe project (attaching maps and any descriptive materials)

IAG has developed a vision of an Island Autism Center, a place on Martha's Vineyard where Island children and adults with autism can live life to their fullest potential. Thanks in part to past funding from CPC's, IAG purchased the land and has moved into the construction phase of the project. This ambitious plan will offer co-housing and programs designed for autistic individuals, including:

- Five residential units, in a variety of configurations, which will house 12-18 residents.
 - This request is to support Phase 2 of construction - building two, four-bedroom houses for adults with autism. The cost of this phase is \$4 million.
- A Hub House that is the home base for day programming for Island Autism, administrative offices, commercial kitchen, library, media room, gathering space, and living space for interns and guest lecturers.
 - This is Phase 1 and is underway and scheduled to be completed in January 2024.
- A micro farm to provide opportunities for physical skill development and to promote healthy eating. Our farm will be a local food source year-round, and will provide farm-made products in partnership with other local farms, artisans, and business owners. The farm will also sell produce on-site and at local farmers markets.
- Therapeutic and enrichment programs and opportunities tailored to the individual needs of residents and day program participants.
- Community inclusion through ongoing, year-round partnerships with island organizations and businesses.

List Sponsors (including, if applicable, governing Boards, Trustees, Directors, Management, etc...)

IAG has letters of support from the 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.

Please see attached letters.

Supporting Town Committee(s) ("NA" if none)

Submitter or Project Director:

Name: Kate DeVane

Email: kate@islandautism.org

Telephone: 508-939-0668

Please address the following topic (attach to this form):

1. Detailed project description, specific objectives for the project and Sponsor's experience in similar projects.

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 continued CPC 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 the 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 is located in West Tisbury, where we have 7.5 acres (abutted by Land Bank property) to allow for both seclusion and inclusion. The large main building for programming - the Hub House - (drawings attached) will have 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.

Island Autism is the sole owner of the property and will be the landlord for the participants in the program who live on campus. IAG is led by co-founder and executive director Kate DeVane. She is supported by a highly engaged board made up of nine members, as well as a committed team including a program director and part-time summer and afterschool programming staff. Kate has direct experience with the work she leads at IAG as the mother of a son on the autistic spectrum. She has lived year round on Martha's Vineyard for 25+ years. She is an experienced business and nonprofit leader on the Island, and recently completed the Institute for Nonprofit Practice's leadership program. Kate was one of the West Tisbury representatives on the Up-Island School Committee for eight years and Chair of All Island School Committee. She was previously chair of the Martha's Vineyard Parent Advisory Council on Special Education and was on the board of the Cape Cod Collaborative representing Martha's Vineyard.

2. How does this project accomplish the goals of the CPA?

IAG's 2020 Regional 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. 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.

In past years, each of the six towns contributed CPC funding towards the purchase price of the 7.5 portion; the funding requests to each of the six towns this year will go towards 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.

3. How does this project impact Edgartown's citizens and address current needs? What is the estimated or target number of people this project will benefit/effect? How will you measure the success of this 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 250 year-round residents, including 56 school-aged children diagnosed on the autism spectrum, undiagnosed adults, and family members impacted by autism. This is a number from a 2019 study and as we know this is a non refreshing group so the number only gets larger. 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 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.

4. Projected Action Plan and Timeline including major steps needed to complete the project.

IAG raised, with partners, investors, and donors, \$800,000 and 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. Phase 1 of construction - the build of the Hub House on the property is underway and is scheduled to be completed in January 2024. It will be used for IAG offices, as a common-space for residents, and as our program hub. This is fully funded.

IAG is requesting CPC funding for Phase 2 - construction of the first two residential units (two 4-bedroom houses). We anticipate breaking ground in November of 2023. If CPC funding is secured, construction of residences will be completed by November of 2024, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

5. Provide detailed financial information including the following, as applicable:

- ★ Initial Capital budget and proposed schedule of CPC disbursement of funds, should application be accepted;
- ★ Other revenue sources including private/public funds or in-kind contributions;
- ★ Annual revenue and operating costs, once the project is operational;
- ★ Annual cost to the town, once the project is operational;
- ★ What are the key assumptions in the budget? What are the risks?
- ★ Financial sustainability – how will the continuation of the project be secured after the grant?

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 \$12 million budget with a three million additional endowment budget (originally the construction budget was \$10 million but adjusted due to increase in construction material and labor costs) split into three phases over five years. To date, \$4 million has been raised and we have additional pledges from donors totaling more than \$1.2 million. The CPC funds that IAG was awarded in 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. Phase one is entirely funded with donations and grants and we are hoping the CPC will match those to keep us in line with our 50% private grants and donations 50% local CPC funding.

We are requesting CPC funding from each of the six towns in the following amounts:

- Edgartown CPC: \$319,600
- Oak Bluffs CPC: \$210,000
- Tisbury CPC: \$183,300
- West Tisbury CPC: \$143,900
- Chilmark CPC: \$114,800
- Aquinnah CPC: \$28,400

The second phase of the project will cost approximately \$4 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 \$4 million. IAG is requesting a total of \$1 million from the six towns' CPC's and will fund the remainder through private donations from individuals and foundations. IAG is happy to work with the CPC on a disbursement schedule that will allow us to meet ongoing construction costs for the project.

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.

6. Are there any legal ramifications and/or impediments to this project?

No.

7. Do you have the authorization of the property owner? What permits/orders/licenses will be required from which Town, Regional or Federal Agencies?

We are the property owner. We are starting the permitting process now and do not anticipate any issues securing the necessary permits.