

## Town of Groton Emergency Rental Assistance Program Guidelines

Through its Affordable Housing Trust and using Community Preservation Committee funding, the Town of Groton has organized this Emergency Rental Assistance Program for eligible Groton residents. This is a temporary emergency program that issues grants to landlords in order to help eligible tenants pay rents on their Groton apartments during this COVID-19 pandemic. It is understood that negative economic impacts such as job losses, income reduction and difficulty obtaining replacement income may continue well after the public health crisis has passed.

The primary purpose of the program is to assist income eligible tenants who may be at risk of losing their housing. This program has the additional indirect benefits of assisting landlords who are providing rental housing and also stabilizing the Groton rental market.

Grants will be provided for up to four months in duration and monthly payments will be based on the number of bedrooms in the apartment. Payments will be made directly to the landlord. The program will be administered by Metro West Collaborative Development, Inc. ([www.metrowestcd.org](http://www.metrowestcd.org))

All documentation needed to apply for the program may be executed electronically. Signatures delivered in an electronic format -- scanned, emailed PDF, facsimile, or similar -- shall be effective. All information is held securely by Metro West CD and will not be shared with other parties.

### Grant Assistance

Grant amounts will be awarded based on the size of the rental unit but in no event will the monthly grant exceed actual rent if actual rent is lower than set grant amount:

Studio to 1 bedroom	= \$800/month
2 bedrooms	= \$1,000/month
3 bedrooms and up	= \$1,200/month

Duration will be up to 8 months of rental assistance disbursed to landlords in monthly payments. Initial grant awards will be for 4 months. An extension of 4 additional months will be available provided the household remains income eligible. Fewer months of aid will be expended if program end date is reached before all rental grants have been made.

### Eligibility

**Residency.** Eligible applicants will be current Groton resident households renting an apartment located in the Town of Groton. A 'household' is defined as an individual or two or more persons who will live regularly in the unit as their principal residence and who are related by blood, marriage, law, or who have otherwise evidenced a stable inter-dependent relationship. A current lease or similar documentation must be in place for the duration of the grant.

**Income Eligible.** Eligible applicants will have a total annual household income of no more than 80% of the area median income as measured by the current HUD area median income data for the Lowell metropolitan area. Total income is defined as income of the applicant together with all other members of the applicant's household of at least eighteen years of age (18) adjusted for household size. An applicant's total household income cannot exceed the following limits:

Household size	1 person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person	6 person
80% Income Limit	\$54,950	\$62,800	\$70,650	\$78,500	\$84,800	\$91,100

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### Ineligible for Rental Assistance.

Applicants households who are related by blood or marriage to the Landlord shall not be eligible. Applicant households who own residential real estate property shall not be eligible.

Applicant households who are currently receiving rental assistance from any other local, state or federal program shall not be eligible.

### **Application Process**

Application process will verify household income, apartment location/size and monthly rent. The on-line application is available from the Metro West CD by contacting [merkeisha@metrowestcd.org](mailto:merkeisha@metrowestcd.org) (preferred method) or at 617-504-8868. Metro West CD staff are available to help applicants with limited English or access to technology.

Please note that applicants may also request reasonable accommodations, which may include a change to policy, procedure or practice to allow an applicant with a disability an equal opportunity to fully participate in the housing program.

The Town of Groton and Metro West CD do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, age, marital status, children, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, ancestry or veteran/military status.

### **Grant Award Process**

Applicants who have submitted complete applications by the deadline (December 18, 2020) will be entered into a lottery, if one is necessary. The lottery will establish the order in which households are offered assistance. Applications may be submitted after the deadline and will be added to the bottom of the list in the order received. Applications will continue to be received and assistance disbursed until all funds are committed.

Eligible applicants must have landlord cooperation as evidenced by the landlord's willingness to:

1. accept payments from Metro West CD, evidenced by a completed W-9 form
2. sign a Landlord Participation Agreement that agrees to no rent increases or initiation of eviction proceedings during the pendency of the grant assistance, and

Funds will be set aside for the awarded applicant for 14 days. After 14 days, if the participation agreement and W-9 form have not been completed and returned fully executed, then the reserved funds are released back to the program. In that event, an applicant will be able to re-apply but loses his or her place in ordered list of completed and verified applicants. Metro West CD will be able to grant short extensions to the 14-day time limit.

### **Outreach**

Initial advertising conducted from November 30, 2020 – December 18, 2020. Program information is available on the Town of Groton website, and distributed to local organizations, boards and committees, mailed with Town electric bills and announced in the local paper. Updates, if any, will be posted here:

<https://www.grotonma.gov/government/departments/housing-coordinator/>