

City of Somerville, Massachusetts
Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Program Application for CPA Housing Funds

Date of Application: *03/05/2019*

1. Agency Name and Address:

Heading Home Inc.
The Schrafft Center
529 Main Street, Suite 100
Charlestown, MA 02129

2. Non-profit designation (if applicable): *501(c)(3)*

3. Contact name, phone number and email address for program manager:

Meredith Amshoff, MA, LCSW
Director of Individual Services
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Phone: (617) 864-8140 Fax: 617-864-2541

4. Name of proposed Program: *Heading Home's Somerville Permanent Supportive Housing Programs*

5. Amount of request (CPA): *\$50,000*

6. Note which eligible use category the proposed program fits (see pgs. 1-2):

Our program fits under the "Support" category, specifically rental assistance.

7. Describe proposed activity (please attach additional pages as needed):

Heading Home is requesting \$50,000 to support our clients with rental assistance funds, within Heading Home's Somerville Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs. The time period for performance is July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. Heading Home's Somerville PSH programs assist 16 chronically homeless Somerville residents living at or below 30% of the area's median income. Through their participation in the programs, individuals with disabilities move into their own apartments and successfully live on their own, while receiving supportive case management. Rental assistance funds would allow us to secure housing for a very difficult to house population of clients, presenting with vulnerabilities that have prevented them from securing housing in the past. Heading Home's Somerville PSH programs are a critical link in the Continuum of Care for people who are homeless in Somerville. These programs have helped individuals with long histories of moving through the shelter system and of living on the streets,

and with lengthy incarceration backgrounds. One of the important elements of our programs are that they allow homeless individuals whose criminal records would have prevented them from obtaining Section 8 vouchers to obtain subsidized and permanent supportive housing, within a rental market that continues to increase in cost. In addition, these programs allow homeless individuals whose behavioral health has alienated them from significant others and society at large to obtain a safe and stable environment so that they can begin accessing treatment and other supports, in hopes of rebuilding their social networks and thereby increasing their resiliency and self-sufficiency.

8. Timeframe for performance: *7/1/2019 through 6/30/2020*

9. If it is a new program, estimated time to set up program:

Heading Home is in the process of spending last year's SAHT grant.

10. Describe the need within the community for the type of program proposed and note any other agencies that may be addressing it (to the extent applicant is aware) and how this program is different:

Heading Home's Somerville PSH programs are currently in a real estate crisis, and this grant will play a large part in determining whether the program can be sustained until a proposed CoC merger that would open up more affordable rental options for the program. As housing prices have increased rapidly in the CoC geography and HUD has become more strict about requiring that rentals remain in that geography, the number of rental apartments in the program has dwindled from 16 to seven, and without additional funding to cover the gap between HUD leasing funds and the actual cost of rental apartments, that number will approach two, which is the number of affordable apartments we currently have within the CoC geography. (The other five units are out of area and need to be moved.)

In addition to the growing gap between actual rents (which were recently assessed by Heading Home's leasing staff at \$1500 for a studio and \$1600 to \$1750 for a one-bedroom on the low end) and HUD's Fair Market Rent or FMR (\$1253 and \$1421 respectively), the programs are at a disadvantage because they were originally structured around the use of 11 affordable SROs at the Cambridge and Somerville YMCAs, but we can no longer find any SROs that are affordable and meet the program's standards. As of early 2015, it became clear that the Somerville YMCA, which was the source of about half the units in the Somerville's programs, was not up to HUD's Housing Quality Standards and that the management of the building was not going to bring it up to that standard, so Heading Home began transitioning out of that property. That transition was complete by the end of 2016. When HUD made it clear that the Cambridge YMCA also needed to be phased out due to its location, we were faced with a declining number of compliant apartments and therefore a declining number of housing opportunities for Somerville residents. We are applying for the Trust support funds, for another consecutive year, because the barriers mentioned above still persist and the prospect of finding affordable units within the CoC

geography (until the CoC geography expands through a merger), and the number of units will continue to decrease over time as clients leave the program.

Due to these issues, we find ourselves having to return HUD money because we are unable to find acceptable units anywhere near FMR. These funds—vitaly needed for housing by the Somerville community—will continue to go unspent until we are able to bridge the rent gap and may disappear entirely if the program continues to have such low enrollment. The funds provided by the Trust would be allowing us to secure units that we had previously been unable to rent and will enable us to leverage the full HUD grant to house the maximum number of chronically homeless Somerville residents.

To our knowledge, other agencies working within the Somerville CoC face similar challenges when it comes to finding affordable units in the geographic area.

11. Provide the income level of targeted beneficiary/beneficiaries:

The income level of our targeted beneficiaries is 30% of AMI or lower.

12. Description of who the program will benefit:

Heading Home's Somerville PSH programs will benefit chronically homeless individuals (all with a disabling condition). 100% of our participants (within this program), will be Somerville residents.

13. Estimated number of individuals or households to be served: *16 chronically homeless individuals*

14. Describe how program outcomes will be measured and tracked:

Outcome tracking at Heading Home is facilitated by the use of an electronic Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). All client information is collected and entered into the HMIS database we use (Clarity Human Services HMIS). The system collects demographics, case management notes, and outcome measures on all participants, including entry and exit. This electronic system allows us to track client progress through standards reports, including but not limited to Annual Performance Reports (APRs). Additionally, Heading Home has a full time Data and Research Manager who pays special attention to data quality and outcome measures. Clarity can generate reports that inform our understanding of program performance and feed back into program design. We also use this data support our efforts in applying for private funding. Lastly, we use Individualized Action Plans (IAPs), which are also uploaded into our HMIS, to track progress on measurable goals outlined alongside our clients during case management provision.

Heading Home's Somerville PSH programs track outcomes in three main areas:

- *Housing stability*: housing stability is measured primarily in terms of the number of participants who remain housed after one year.

- *Self-sufficiency*: Heading Home is committed to helping our clients thrive and achieve self-sufficiency—both financially and otherwise. Income and benefits are measured at program entrance and tracked throughout a client’s participation in the program. Our goal is to help clients obtain all financial and health benefits for which they are eligible, and to help them gain financial literacy skills that translate to increased self-sufficiency. We also support them in pursuing both paid and volunteer work opportunities if they are able. On a related note, we work with clients to mitigate criminal records that may prevent them from accessing opportunities such as employment, education, and/or housing supports.
- *Achievement of personal goals*: case management focuses on the development of meaningful and genuine client-case manager working relationships, to maximize positive outcomes. Our goal is to ensure that all of our clients engage in the IAP process to set personal goals and work with their case managers to assess progress either quarterly (or when goals are met, whichever occurs sooner).

15. Please attach a complete program Budget and include the status of all funding source (note any funds pending or already received) and all sources and uses by amount. (*See attached*).

16. Describe whether the proposed activity will be carried out with or without any other funding from the Trust:

The proposed activity will be carried out without any other funding from the Trust.

17. Experience and capacity of the agency and staff – please describe staff available to work on the project (and note if staff need to be hired) and describe any similar successful programs and how they relate to other programmatic activities:

Heading Home’s Somerville PSH programs house over 200 individuals on any given night. When these programs are full, they are served by one to two case managers with caseloads of approximately 15-17 clients. (Case managers serve more than one program.).

Heading Home has been working toward ending homelessness for 44 years, expanding from a one-room Emergency Shelter program in Cambridge, to multiple programs throughout Greater Boston. Our shift in focus from emergency services to permanent, supportive housing as an approach with most potential to end homelessness resulted in a name change from “Shelter Inc.” to “Heading Home” in 2004. Over the past decade we have more than tripled in size in response to a growing demand for our services in the Greater Boston area.

Heading Home provides emergency, transitional and permanent housing, and support services, to low-income homeless and formerly homeless individuals and families in the communities of Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Quincy, Revere and Somerville. As our name reflects, a home provides the optimal foundation to get back on track; our programs focus heavily on getting people permanently housed as quickly as possible). The organization has

adopted a Housing First approach overall, and the vast majority of our permanent supported housing programs adhere to the Housing First model.

We own 10 properties that house and serve clients. In addition, we secure rental subsidies from state and federal sources to rent apartments in the private market. In collaboration with community partners, our staff also broker essential outside services (e.g., access to medical and mental health providers, counseling, financial supports, and educational supports). All of Heading Home's clients are extremely low-income, at or below 30% of area median household income, and ages range from infants to elderly.

In addition, we pride ourselves in being a learning organization, with a focus on ensuring that our staff receive the support and training necessary to provide the most beneficial and client-centered services. The Director of Human Resources and the Director of Clinical Services are responsible for developing and implementing a robust curriculum for staff development. Curriculum is based on legal requirements and the needs and feedback of staff, to ensure that our clients are receiving necessary supports to maintain housing and take steps towards economic mobility and improvements in quality of life. In recent years, Heading Home has implemented motivational interviewing (MI), a collaborative, goal-oriented form of coaching to elicit clients' motivation for change. MI is now a part of our staff on-boarding, ongoing trainings and staff evaluations. In addition, all new Heading Home staff must complete an orientation that includes exploration of the history of homelessness and Heading Home. New staff directly working with clients must also be oriented in specific areas such as client confidentiality, mandated reporting, and Trauma-Informed Care principles. Additional education and support modules include boundaries, domestic violence, documentation, responding to disclosures of sexual assault, and suicide awareness. Staff working directly with clients must attend a minimum of one monthly community of practice session, where they receive peer input on challenging client situations and integrate MI principles. We also implement clinical supervision for staff with a clinical background. In addition, Heading Home provides staff a modest annual allowance for both graduate school reimbursement and conference attendance.

18. Note if applicant has previously been funded by the Trust and, if yes, a concise summary of the number of residents served in the prior fiscal year and the impact of the program:

Heading Home has been previously funded by the Trust and in the most recent year (from 07/01/2018 to 06/30/2019). Obtaining this grant was instrumental in the continuation of the programs, which ran at a deficit even before Somerville housing prices took off in recent years. However, our agency has faced a good number of challenges that have directly impacted our capacity to promptly spend this grant. Among the main challenges are Heading Home's internal restructuring of the Real Estate Department which manages our unit searching and leasing processes as well as the delays finalizing the contract with the City of Somerville.

Despite the challenges, we have signed our first lease, using this grant, and have other leads in Somerville pending to be approved and signed.

19. Explain how the proposed activities/project addresses a need and/or strategy in City of Somerville's 5 Year Consolidated Plan (Can be viewed online at www.somervillema.gov).

The City of Somerville's 5 Year Consolidated Plan states that "Priorities identified in the Needs Assessment section include issues of housing cost burden, especially for the extremely low and very low income households." The clients we aim to serve through Heading Home's Somerville PSH programs are extremely low income residents who have been unhoused repeatedly or over long periods. Additionally, the clients we aim to house receive essential support services in order to help reduce the burdens that prevent them from maintaining housing.

20. Explain how the proposed activities/project addresses a Goal or Action Step in the SomerVision Comprehensive Plan (Can be viewed online at www.somervillema.gov).

Relevant goals within the SomerVision Comprehensive Plan include: preserving and expanding affordable housing for households of all sizes and types, mitigating displacement of low- and moderate-income residents, addressing the needs of homeless residents, and expanding resources for housing. As mentioned above, our goal is to ensure that clients we serve (chronically homeless, very low-income, and most vulnerable residents), are given the opportunity to obtain and maintain housing. Heading Home programs are designed with the purpose of providing supportive services focused on helping clients maintain their housing. For this reason, we focus on all benefits, increasing social networks/supports, helping clients access and engage with treatment when appropriate, and helping clients increase their self-sufficiency by providing client-centered case management that respects that clients are the driving force in their own lives.

Heading Home, Inc.: Somerville PSH Programs Budget
Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund Grant Proposal
March 2019

Category	Amount	Notes
Revenues		
HUD CoC program grants	\$ 227,937	\$206,748 leasing; \$21,189 other
SAHTF grant	\$ 50,000	To cover most of the rent gap**
CSPECH	\$ 29,841	Estimate 6/16 participants eligible @ \$15.14 daily rate, discounted 10%*
Participant rent	\$ 25,920	Average rent collection \$150/participant per month, discounted 10%*
Heading Home private fundraising	\$ 63,500	Portion of the funds raised at our annual event in April
TOTAL revenues	\$ 397,198	
Expenses		
Rent	\$ 298,080	8 1 BR @ \$1,800 monthly rent; 8 studios @ \$1,650 monthly rent, discounted 10%*
Personnel (salary and fringe)	\$ 58,004	FTEs: .05 intake, .05 Director, .1 Program Manager, .64 Case Manager, .1 Leasing Manager
Security deposits	\$ 3,450	1 new 1 BR @ \$1,800; 1 new studio @ \$1,650
Other	\$ 1,500	Program supplies, transportation
Admin Allocation	\$ 36,103	10% of expenses
TOTAL expenses	\$ 397,137	
TOTAL surplus (deficit)	\$ 61	

* Some amounts discounted slightly based on expectation that it will not be possible to lease all units and fill all slots by beginning of grant period

** Gap between HUD leasing funds and rent is \$70,143