

April 15, 2020

Covid-19 Related Rental Report, West Tisbury Board of Selectmen

The economic realities of the current pandemic are affecting island renters as they are all of us. Many have lost employment and income, others are maintaining partial income while pressed on other fronts such as having children home from school and limited access to personal, familial and community supports. If seasonal leases are being extended by some landlords, the typical scramble for summer housing has been made doubly difficult by necessary limits on property visits, interviews, and other aspects of the search. These factors all add significant anxiety and stress to the lives of renters on the Island.

Many town committees, service organizations, and concerned individuals are discussing or establishing emergency forms of support for the different needs arising from the pandemic. Tenant situations and possible supports require what situational factors we can discern and utilize in our planning and support.

The Housing Authority has divided tenant figures and support factors into the following three categories:

- 1) **DCRHA Tenants:** Island Wide, 82 tenants; Average rent, \$1,220
DCRHA, West Tisbury: 18 tenants; Average rent **\$1,254**

Supports available: DCRHA is arranging mortgage deferral on its properties in order to offer rent deferrals or waivers if/when necessary; Housing Assistance Corp of Hyannis administers RAFT for incomes below 50% and have added a Workforce Housing fund for incomes between 50% and 100%; Tower Foundation funding for the Emergency Financial Assistance Program (EFAP) is available to assist with up to a month's rent, as funding allows.

- 2) **DCRHA Rental Assistance (RA) Tenants & Landlords:**
Island wide: 54 RA situations; Ave. Rent, \$1,397; Ave. Tenant, \$787; Ave. Town RA, \$610
West Tisbury: 10 RA Situations; Average Rent, \$1233; Ave Tenant, \$631; Ave Town, \$601
Support Example: One month rent for seven Town RAs totals to \$60,410.
Pt. No West Tisbury Rental Assistance have requested support to date.

Supports available: Housing Assistance Corp, RAFT & Workforce Housing; DCRHA Emergency Financial Assistance Program; potential addition of CPA funds through town housing trusts.

- 3) **Market Rentals*:** Island rentals, **1,440**; less affordable rental units, **1,050** market rentals
West Tisbury: 60 Rentals; less DCRHA Rentals and RA, **40 Market Rentals**

Supports possibilities such as those listed above will not be as easily accessed by market tenants. Possible supports such as MVCS Financial Assistance and Permanent Endowment/DCRHA Emergency Rental Relief Program do not currently have the funding capacity to assist tenants waiting on promised assistance such as unemployment payments. Links to these and other Covid-19 related supports are listed on the DCRHA website: <https://housingauthoritymarthasvineyard.org/operations-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>

* To arrive at a conservative number of market rentals on MV, the last U.S. American Community Survey 5-year Survey, 2017 (MVC website) was utilized and the numbers listed for MV and the towns reduced by all "affordable rental units". There is little finite accounting for changes wrought by Airbnb and other factors since 2017. We wished only to capture moderate working numbers.