

FY26 RFP #2 – COMMON APPLICATION

**Housing Program Application for CPA Funds**

Date of Application December 30, 2025

**A. Agency Information**

1. Agency Name and Address: RESPOND, Inc.  
PO Box 555 Somerville, MA 02143
2. Non-profit designation (if applicable): Yes  No
3. Contact name, phone number and email address for program manager:  
Victoria Helberg (617) 625-5996 VictoriaH@respondinc.org
4. Contact name, phone number and email address for contract manager:  
Darcie DeLuca (617) 625-5996 Darcie@respondinc.org
5. Contact name, phone number and email address for invoicing:  
Darcie DeLuca (617) 625 - 5996 Darcie@respondinc.org
6. Agency's DUNS # 121625057
7. Agency's Tax ID # 51-0163763

**B. Program Information**

8. Amount of request (CPA): 208,950
9. Describe the overarching program goals and details about the proposed activity (attach additional pages as needed):

RESPOND, Inc. has served survivors of domestic violence in Somerville and the surrounding communities for more than 50 years and operates the city's only emergency domestic violence shelter. Across all its programs, RESPOND supports hundreds of residents fleeing abuse, many of whom arrive at shelter with no financial resources, disrupted employment histories, limited rental records, and urgent safety-driven relocation needs.

Domestic violence is a leading driver of homelessness for women and children. While emergency shelter provides immediate safety, the lack of affordable rental options in Somerville often leaves survivors "stuck" in shelter long after they are ready to move forward. Families who are prepared to live independently remain unable to secure housing due to market rents that far exceed what survivors rebuilding their lives can afford. This

creates bottlenecks in the shelter system, limiting RESPOND’s ability to admit new families in crisis and forcing some survivors to leave the community altogether.

RESPOND proposes to address this gap through time-limited rental assistance for households exiting emergency shelter. RESPOND will prioritize households currently residing in its emergency shelter who are assessed as housing-ready but unable to secure housing in Somerville due to financial barriers. Eligible participants will be selected from RESPOND’s emergency shelter population based on housing readiness and expressed long-term goals of self-sufficiency. Eligibility will be determined using consistent housing-readiness criteria applied uniformly across shelter residents. This funding will support three households residing in Somerville—one one-bedroom and two two-bedroom units—by paying rental subsidies directly to landlords for up to 24 months per household. The program is designed to stabilize families at the critical transition point from crisis to permanence, preventing returns to homelessness, preserving community ties, and ensuring that survivors are not displaced from Somerville due to economic hardship.

Assistance will be tied to a specific unit through a signed lease or Oral Tenancy Certification and an Agency/Owner subsidy agreement in the format provided by the City of Somerville. CPA funds will be used exclusively for rental assistance. All utilities, housing stabilization services, arrears beyond CPA limitations, and case management will be funded through non-CPA sources, including Department of Public Health, Cummings Foundation support and private donors.

10. Provide details about the number of households or individuals you intend to serve.

RESPOND intends to serve three households residing in Somerville during the grant period, including one one-bedroom household and two two-bedroom households, each receiving up to 24 months of rental assistance.

11. Timeframe for performance:

The program will operate from January 1, 2026, through January 1, 2029. Each participating household may receive up to 24 months of rental assistance during the performance period, based on ongoing eligibility and housing stability.

12. Describe the need within the community for the type of program proposed. List other agencies that may be addressing it. If there are differences between this proposal and the operation of other agencies administering this or a similar program, please note the differences. Is there a gap in funding to meet the need within the community? If so, describe how the amount/size of the gap is determined/measured.

RESPOND serves approximately 20–25 families annually through its emergency domestic violence shelter. For virtually all of these households, securing affordable housing in Somerville represents the single greatest barrier to exiting shelter. While families may be emotionally, legally, and practically prepared to live independently, they are often unable to locate housing that is both safe and financially attainable in the current rental market.

Simultaneously, 51% of calls into RESPOND's support and intake line are requests for shelter or housing support beyond current capacity, underscoring the urgent demand for targeted housing stabilization resources in Somerville. In recent years, RESPOND has seen increasing housing barriers for survivors as market-rate rents continue to rise while incomes for many shelter residents remain stagnant or unstable following abuse. The typical length of stay in RESPOND's shelter is approximately six months, though many families remain significantly longer despite being housing-ready.

Survivors with the greatest structural barriers may remain in shelter for a year or longer despite being ready for independence. For example, in late 2024 RESPOND served a survivor who entered shelter fleeing immediate danger. With trauma-informed support and case management, she stabilized and no longer required emergency shelter services. However, more than a year later she remains in shelter due solely to delays in work authorization tied to her immigration status. Although lawfully present, she has been unable to meet income requirements or secure housing and has been denied multiple rental opportunities as a result. This case illustrates how survivors can become trapped in shelter not because of safety concerns or lack of readiness, but because existing housing systems do not account for immigration-related barriers.

Survivors face compounding barriers including poor or limited credit histories, lack of rental references, past evictions, immigration-related documentation challenges, income gaps created by disrupted employment, the need for immediate safety-driven relocation, and discrimination in landlord screening processes. Single adult survivors face particularly steep challenges in securing housing due to limited income and lack of co-tenants. Many survivors are ineligible for or unable to access federal housing programs due to documentation barriers or the urgency of safety-related moves, leaving local resources as their only viable path to stability.

As a result, families may remain in shelter for extended periods while continuing to search for housing. This creates bottlenecks in the shelter system, limiting RESPOND's ability to admit new households fleeing life-threatening situations. In the past year, only a small number of families were able to secure housing in Somerville, despite many expressing a strong desire to remain in the community to preserve children's school placements, employment, medical care, and social supports. Demand for housing assistance routinely exceeds available resources, underscoring the importance of maximizing each placement and prioritizing households who are ready to transition out of shelter when support becomes available.

Other local providers, including Somerville Homeless Coalition, are highly respected partners within Somerville's housing system and play an important role in homelessness prevention, housing search, and stabilization services for a broad population. While these programs are essential, survivors of domestic violence often require safety-informed housing interventions that address trauma, legal protections such as restraining orders, confidentiality concerns, and the urgent need for safety-driven relocation. RESPOND's program is designed to complement this community work by focusing specifically on the housing barriers unique to survivors as they transition out of crisis and into stable housing.

By accelerating exits from shelter, this program increases bed availability for families in immediate danger and reduces the length and cost of emergency shelter stays. The proposed program directly addresses a measurable gap in the housing response system by enabling survivors who are ready for independence to access safe, stable housing without leaving the community.

13. Describe other sources of funding available for the type of program proposed. Describe the degree to which your agency is leveraging other sources.

RESPOND will leverage multiple non-CPA funding sources to ensure that this program is fully supported beyond the limitations of CPA-eligible uses. These sources include the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), Department of Public Health (DPH), support from The Cummings Foundation, and private individual donations, all of which are currently awarded.

Collectively, RESPOND anticipates leveraging approximately \$65,300 each year (130,764 total for the contract duration) from these sources to support utilities, stabilization services, and case management for households participating in this program. These funds will comprise the majority of total program costs, with CPA resources supporting the rental assistance component.

Non-CPA funds will be used to cover utilities, housing stabilization services, and comprehensive case management, ensuring continuity of care for participating households. These services are already embedded within RESPOND's shelter operations, allowing families to transition seamlessly from emergency shelter into stable housing without disruption in support.

RESPOND will leverage \$130,764 in non-CPA funding over the grant term to support the operational backbone of this program. These funds will cover approximately \$21,600 in utilities associated with participating households, \$75,970 in case management and housing stabilization services delivered by shelter-based advocates and housing staff, and \$15,000 in client services including furnishings and move-in support secured through community partners. An additional \$18,184 will support administrative and program management costs, including financial processing, compliance monitoring, and reporting requirements associated with the delivery of rental assistance.

Together, these non-CPA resources ensure that CPA funds are dedicated exclusively to rental assistance while the full continuum of stabilization services is sustained through RESPOND's existing operational funding.

These funding sources represent recurring awards that RESPOND has maintained for multiple years, providing a stable foundation for sustaining this program throughout and beyond the CPA performance period.

14. Provide the income level of targeted beneficiary/beneficiaries. See Appendix 1 for Fiscal Year 2026 income limits.

Households served will be income certified at or below 100% of Area Median Income (AMI), in accordance with 24 CFR Part 5.609 income certification requirements. Income eligibility

will be documented and recertified as required by the Trust.

15. Description of who the program will benefit (i.e. veteran population, chronically homeless, fragile elderly, youth aging out of foster care, etc.) and please note the extent to which beneficiaries are Somerville residents):

The program will primarily benefit families with children, who represent approximately 83% of RESPOND's emergency shelter population. RESPOND also serves youth, teens, and young parents through specialized programming, and many participating households will be engaged in these services as they transition into permanent housing.

Survivors served by RESPOND include individuals facing multiple, intersecting barriers to housing stability, including limited English proficiency, immigration-related challenges, trauma histories, prior criminal records connected to abuse, disabilities, and LGBTQ+ identity. These factors often compound the difficulty of securing safe housing in the private market.

Households enter RESPOND's shelter from both within and outside Somerville; however, once admitted, families become part of the city and establish critical community connections through schools, healthcare providers, legal systems, and local employment. Without targeted rental assistance, many of these families are forced to leave Somerville, disrupt their children's education, or return to unsafe environments in order to survive financially. This program prioritizes maintaining those connections by enabling survivors to secure housing in Somerville rather than being displaced from the community due to economic hardship.

16. Will your agency provide case management services and quarterly follow-up with clients after assistance is provided using other sources of funding beyond CPA funds? Please describe.

RESPOND will provide comprehensive, trauma-informed case management and ongoing monthly follow-up to all participating households using non-CPA funding sources. These services will be delivered by the same shelter-based advocates and housing specialists who supported families during their shelter stay, ensuring continuity of care and eliminating service disruptions at the point of housing placement.

Case management begins while families are still in emergency shelter and continues seamlessly after move-in. Staff work with survivors to develop individualized housing stabilization plans that address safety planning, income recovery, employment goals, childcare and education needs, and connections to medical, mental health, and legal services. For survivors navigating restraining orders, custody matters, or criminal proceedings related to abuse, RESPOND coordinates directly with courts, law enforcement, and legal partners to ensure housing plans reflect ongoing safety considerations.

RESPOND also operates specialized programming for youth, teens, and young parents, recognizing that housing stability is inseparable from the well-being of children. Youth specialists and parenting staff support school engagement, developmental needs, and family stability during the transition from shelter to housing.

Housing staff maintain active relationships with landlords and property managers, providing documentation support, mediation, and early intervention when challenges arise. RESPOND has established, long-standing relationships with landlords in Somerville, which facilitates timely unit identification and increases landlord confidence in renting to survivors participating in the program. Staff utilize standardized housing stabilization plans to track income changes, rent burden, safety risks, and tenancy concerns over time. RESPOND provides ongoing landlord engagement and problem-solving support to minimize risk, address concerns early, and promote long-term tenancy stability.

Monthly follow-up includes structured check-ins to assess housing stability, income changes, safety concerns, and emerging service needs. Program success will be defined as households maintaining stable housing for at least six months after rental assistance ends. As rental assistance approaches its conclusion, staff will work with households to transition toward self-sufficiency through income stabilization, budgeting support, and connection to longer-term housing resources when available.

This integrated, continuity-based model ensures that CPA-funded rental assistance is paired with disciplined, outcomes-focused support capable of producing lasting housing stability for survivors rebuilding their lives after violence.

## **Program Impacts**

17. Describe the program's performance objectives, and how outcomes of the program will be measured and tracked:

This program is an extension of RESPOND's existing Emergency Shelter Program and is fully integrated into the agency's established housing stabilization workflow. All services, rental assistance activity, and outcomes will be documented within Clarity, RESPOND's secure case management and reporting system currently used across shelter, housing, youth, and community-based programs.

RESPOND employs a dedicated Contracts and Data Administrator who oversees data quality, reporting timelines, and compliance across all housing and victim services contracts. This role ensures that program activity is accurately documented, outcomes are reviewed regularly, and all Trust reporting requirements are met.

RESPOND will monitor housing stabilization outcomes for participating households at intake, quarterly intervals, and program exit, including successful placement into permanent housing, housing retention over time, any eviction or lease disruption activity, and whether households avoid re-entry into shelter. These indicators are already part of RESPOND's Emergency Shelter Program data framework and will not require the creation of a parallel tracking system. Data is reviewed quarterly to identify early warning indicators such as income loss or tenancy risk, allowing staff to intervene proactively to prevent eviction or shelter re-entry.

Financial assistance provided under this grant will be tracked through RESPOND's financial management system and reconciled with client-level data in Clarity to ensure accurate reporting and compliance. Quarterly outcome summaries will be reviewed internally for quality improvement and shared with OSPCD Housing in accordance with Trust requirements.

By embedding this assistance within RESPOND's existing Emergency Shelter Program infrastructure, the agency ensures continuity, data integrity, and consistent performance monitoring without creating administrative inefficiencies.

18. Note if your agency 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.

RESPOND has received Trust funding, during current fiscal year, RESPOND is serving 3 households, achieving their goals of housing stability and living a life free of domestic abuse.

### **Financial Information**

19. 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 and the amount of funds that will be leveraged.

RESPOND is requesting CPA funding to provide targeted, unit-based housing assistance for three Somerville households, consisting of one (1) one-bedroom unit and two (2) two-bedroom unit. CPA funds will be used exclusively for eligible housing costs, including rental subsidies and security deposits paid directly to property owners, as permitted under CPA guidelines.

RESPOND will leverage secured funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to fully support program staffing and administrative infrastructure. DPH funds will cover staff time dedicated to eligibility determination, income certification, landlord coordination, compliance monitoring, invoicing, and required reporting. This leveraging strategy ensures that the maximum possible share of CPA funds is directed to direct housing assistance rather than staffing and administrative costs.

20. 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 with CPA funding requested through this application and with leveraged non-Trust funding. RESPOND is not requesting any additional Affordable Housing Trust funds beyond this application.

CPA funds will support direct, unit-based housing assistance, including rental subsidies and security deposits. Leveraged Department of Public Health funding will support staffing and administrative functions necessary to operate the program in compliance with CPA and City of Somerville requirements. This funding structure allows the program to be fully implemented as proposed while maximizing the impact of CPA funds and ensuring program sustainability without reliance on additional Trust resources.

21. If the agency has operated this program in the past, what is the average amount that each tenant contributes to their rent?

While this proposal represents a new CPA-funded housing program under GENERAL HOUSING PROGRAM, RESPOND has extensive experience administering housing stabilization and rental assistance programs through its Domestic Violence Housing Division.

Across RESPOND's existing housing programs, tenant rent contributions are structured to be income-based, affordable, and sustainable, with assistance levels calibrated to ensure housing stability while encouraging long-term self-sufficiency. Tenant contributions vary by household income, rent level, and available supports, with rental assistance used to address the gap between what a household can reasonably afford and the actual cost of housing.

For the proposed CPA-funded program, tenant contributions will be determined on a case-by-case basis based on household income and overall housing affordability, ensuring that monthly housing costs remain sustainable while CPA assistance stabilizes tenancies and prevents homelessness.

22. If the agency had operated this program in the past, what proportion of clients served were tenants in market-rate housing? What percentage of clients served were tenants in affordable housing?

Although this proposal represents a new CPA-funded initiative, RESPOND has a long-standing track record of operating housing stabilization and rental assistance programs serving households in the private rental market.

Across RESPOND's existing housing programs, approximately 98% of clients are housed in market-rate units, with approximately 2% residing in income-restricted or subsidized housing. This experience demonstrates RESPOND's capacity to successfully stabilize tenancies in Somerville's high-cost private rental market and to work effectively with private landlords.

This background directly informs the proposed program under GENERAL HOUSING PROGRAM, which is designed to preserve housing stability for income-eligible households through targeted, unit-based assistance in market-rate housing.

## **Organizational Capacity**

23. 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 operated by the agency and how they relate to other programmatic activities. Does your agency have adequate staffing to manage the program's administrative requirements?

RESPOND is a well-established nonprofit with a staff of 30 and a successful history of administering complex housing and victim services programs across Somerville and surrounding communities. The agency operates a fully integrated service model that combines emergency shelter, housing stabilization, youth and young parenting programs, community intervention and education, and re-entry support for justice-involved survivors.

The proposed program will be administered by RESPOND's Manager of DV Housing Programs. It will be supervised by the Residential Services Coordinator in collaboration with experienced shelter advocates, housing specialists, youth specialists, and the agency's Finance Department. RESPOND's Director of Finance and Administration oversees fiscal management, contract compliance, and internal controls, while the agency's dedicated Contracts and Data Administrator is responsible for data integrity, reporting, and performance monitoring. The Manager of DV Housing Programs retains overall responsibility for program implementation.

RESPOND currently manages multiple state and federal contracts, including VOCA, VAWA, and EOHLC and ESG state housing funding, and has demonstrated its capacity to meet complex administrative, financial, and monitoring requirements across jurisdictions. The agency serves multiple municipalities and is routinely monitored by public funders without open findings.

RESPOND maintains strong internal financial controls, including role-based system access, separation of duties, and documentation protocols that support income certification, landlord payments, invoicing, and audit readiness. This program builds on RESPOND's existing Emergency Shelter Program infrastructure and does not require new staff hires. The agency has sufficient staffing capacity to manage all administrative, financial, and compliance responsibilities associated with this grant.

24. Is your agency monitored by HUD or another funder for housing programs?

Yes  No

25. If yes, has the monitoring resulted in any currently open findings?

Yes  No

26. Does your agency agree to in-person monitoring by OSPCD staff when/if possible?

Yes  No

#### **Compliance with Requirements for Use of Funds**

27. Does your agency agree to share completed client application documents with the Housing Division? These documents will include those used to establish eligibility for each client according to program requirements, and to those used to determine the sustainability of each client's tenancy after assistance is provided.

Yes  No

Does your agency agree to administer the program in accordance with Trust guidelines, and if necessary, agree to work with OSPCD Housing to implement any new guidance or to ensure uniformity?

Yes  No

Does your agency agree to in-person monitoring by OSPCD staff when/if possible?

Yes  No

## Furthering the City of Somerville's Housing Plans and Objectives

28. 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](http://www.somervillema.gov)).

The proposed program advances the City of Somerville's housing objectives by preventing displacement, stabilizing vulnerable households, and preserving access to housing for residents who would otherwise be forced to leave the community. Survivors of domestic violence are at heightened risk of homelessness due to safety-driven relocations, disrupted employment, and limited financial resources following abuse.

By providing time-limited rental assistance to households exiting emergency shelter, this program supports the City's efforts to reduce reliance on crisis systems and increase housing stability for low- and moderate-income residents. The program enables survivors to remain in Somerville, preserving children's school continuity, access to healthcare and legal systems, and connections to local employment and community supports.

This program also improves system flow by accelerating exits from emergency shelter, increasing the availability of shelter beds for families in immediate danger, and reducing the length and cost of shelter stays. Together, these outcomes strengthen Somerville's overall housing response system by addressing the intersection of domestic violence and housing instability in a coordinated and efficient manner.

29. 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](http://www.somervillema.gov)).

SomerVision 2040 identifies housing affordability, displacement prevention, and homelessness mitigation as central challenges facing the City of Somerville. The plan emphasizes the need to expand programs that help residents remain housed in the community despite rising rents and market pressures, and it specifically highlights the importance of preventing the displacement of low- and moderate-income residents through targeted stabilization strategies.

The Somerville Domestic Violence Housing Stabilization Program directly advances these goals by addressing one of the most acute and under-recognized drivers of housing instability: domestic violence. Survivors fleeing abuse often experience sudden loss of income, safety-driven relocation, disrupted credit histories, and urgent legal needs that place them at immediate risk of homelessness. Without targeted intervention, many are forced to leave Somerville entirely or remain in emergency shelter for extended periods because they cannot access market-rate housing.

By providing time-limited rental assistance for households exiting emergency shelter, this program reduces displacement risk for survivors who are otherwise ready to live independently but cannot overcome the financial barriers of the local rental market. This directly aligns with SomerVision's call for a diversity of homelessness prevention tools and housing stabilization approaches, particularly for residents who fall outside traditional federal housing eligibility or require immediate safety-driven relocation.

SomerVision also frames housing affordability as an equity issue, recognizing that rising housing costs threaten the ability of long-term residents and vulnerable populations to remain in the community. Survivors of domestic violence—many of whom are women with children, immigrants, young parents, or individuals with disabilities—are among those most vulnerable

to involuntary displacement. By enabling these families to secure housing in Somerville, the program supports SomerVision’s equity goals by ensuring that residents rebuilding their lives after violence are not excluded from the city due to economic hardship.

Finally, SomerVision emphasizes the importance of coordinated systems that use resources efficiently and prevent crisis escalation. By accelerating exits from RESPOND’s emergency shelter into permanent housing, the proposed program improves system flow, preserves scarce shelter capacity for families in immediate danger, and reduces the long-term cost burden associated with extended shelter stays. In this way, the program contributes to a more resilient, responsive, and inclusive housing system for Somerville residents.

Through its focus on displacement prevention, housing stability, and equity for vulnerable populations, the Somerville Domestic Violence Housing Stabilization Program operationalizes SomerVision’s housing goals in a tangible, measurable way.

Budget Snapshot (Attachment Placeholder)

Source	Use	Amount
CPA Trust	Rental assistance (24 months, 3 units)	\$208,950
Non-CPA Funds	Program operations	\$130,764
Total Program Cost		\$339,714

## CPA General Housing

Organization Name: RESPOND, Inc.

Project Name: General Housing Assistance

	Start Date		End Date			
Budget Period	1/1/2026		1/1/2029			
	CPA Funding Request	% of Total	RESPOND Budget	% of Total	Total Project Budget	% of Total
<b>Income Sources</b>						
CPA Funding	\$ 208,950	100%	\$ -	0%	\$ 208,950	62%
Government Grants	-	0%	30,357	23%	30,357	9%
Foundation and Corporate Grants	-	0%	100,000	76%	100,000	29%
Private Donations	-	0%	407	0%	407	0%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 208,950</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 130,764</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 339,714</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Expenses (fill in your items here)</b>						
Ongoing Rental Assistance (TBRA)	\$ 200,592	96%	\$ -	0%	\$ 200,592	59%
Security Deposits	8,358	4%	-	0%	8,358	2%
Staff salaries and payroll costs	-	0%	75,970	58%	75,970	22%
Utilities	-	0%	21,600	17%	21,600	6%
Client Services	-	0%	15,000	11%	15,000	4%
Administrative and Operation Costs	-	0%	18,194	14%	18,194	5%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 208,950</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 130,764</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 339,714</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Margin</b>		<b>0%</b>	<b>\$ (0)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>\$ (0)</b>	<b>0%</b>

**\* Additional Funding Details (List all grants here)**

Source	Amount	Pending or Secured
CPA General Housing	\$208,950	Requested
Cummings Foundation	\$100,000	Secured
Department of Public Health	\$30,357	Secured
Private Donations	\$407	Secured