CAPE COD COMMISSION

Barnstable County
FY27 License Plate Grant Application Submission

Independence House, Inc.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Organization Name: Independence House, Inc.
Location: 160 Bassett Lane, Hyannis, MA 02601
Project Manager Name: Morgan Baker
Project Manager Title: Director of Development & Marketing
Project Manager Email: morganb@indhouse.net

PROJECT INFORMATION

Name of Project: Independence House Landlord Incentive Pilot (IHLIP)

Brief Project Description:
Independence House requests $25,000 to launch the Independence House Landlord Incentive Pilot (IHLIP), a 12-month program that will help domestic violence survivors move from shelter, transitional housing, or unstable community housing into safe, year-round rentals on Cape Cod. Financial abuse often leaves survivors with damaged credit, disrupted employment, and rental-history barriers, while Cape Cod's housing shortage further limits available options. IHLIP will offer vetted private landlords financial incentives, risk mitigation, and agency support to lease to survivors. The pilot will reduce landlord risk, expand year-round housing access, support confidential placements, and help survivors achieve safety, independence, and long-term community stability.

How does the project advance one or more 2024 Cape Cod CEDS Key Actions?
This proposal advances the regional goals established by the Barnstable County Economic Development Council (BCEDC) and the Cape Cod Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by increasing access to year-round housing, implementing a replicable landlord incentive model, and supporting retention of essential workers in Barnstable County. Action 1: Incentivize Year-Round Housing: This model financially encourages private landlords to offer 12-month leases to survivor families with modest incomes. Survivors of domestic violence are vital contributors to the Cape's regional economy, working in critical local sectors such as healthcare,

education, retail, trades, and municipal services. Ensuring these families have access to stable, safe, year-round housing helps prevent workforce displacement and supports regional economic stability. By using FY27 Cape Cod and Islands License Plate Grant funds to secure long-term, year-round leases with a closed network of private landlords in Barnstable and Dennis, this project aims to keep essential workers rooted in Barnstable County, reduce employee turnover for Cape employers, and foster long-term community stability.
Action 2: Provide Opportunities to Pilot Ideas: This project introduces a targeted pilot partnership between Independence House and vetted private landlords. Through a trauma-informed landlord mitigation framework, the program reduces perceived financial risk by offering a dedicated damage-mitigation reserve and clear, ongoing communication with Independence House. This collaborative approach will generate regional data on housing stabilization costs, create a practical model for future replication, and strengthen shared community solutions to Cape Cod's year-round housing challenges.

What economic development needs/priorities will this project address?
The seasonal tourism market and high density of short-term vacation rentals on Cape Cod have caused an acute crisis in year-round housing availability. For domestic violence survivors, this crisis is amplified by financial abuse, disrupted employment, fractured rental histories, and poor credit ratings that can make it difficult to qualify for stable housing.
Landlords often view damaged credit, employment gaps, and fractured rental histories as high-risk factors and may choose seasonal vacationers over low- or modest-income year-round residents. This project responds to that imbalance by creating a financial bridge through Independence House's landlord partnership model and offering landlords a competitive, lower-risk alternative to seasonal rentals. By deploying upfront incentives backed by a dedicated mitigation reserve, Independence House will reduce landlord risk aversion and help unlock safe, stable housing for up to 10 survivor households.

What is the anticipated impact of this project on these economic development needs/priorities? How will this project support Cape Cod's economic resiliency?
Economic resiliency requires preserving Cape Cod's local workforce. Survivors of domestic violence are integral to the year-round economy, working across healthcare, education, hospitality, municipal services, and trades. When housing instability forces a survivor to leave the Cape, local employers face operational disruptions, turnover, and recruitment costs. Stabilizing survivors through permanent year-round leases supports workforce retention while addressing the compounded pressures of the seasonal tourism economy and the short-term rental market. By using a dedicated mitigation reserve, Independence House offers landlords a financial backstop that makes year-round leases more feasible and allows survivor households with employment skills to stay in the region.

Are there any anticipated challenges to implementing the project within the required timeframe of the grant award?

Safety, Confidentiality, and Privacy Conflicts

The Challenge: Standard corporate property management practices directly conflict with domestic violence survivor safety. Routine corporate inspections, automated communication loops, and rigid background screening algorithms (which flag credit and employment gaps caused by financial abuse) can accidentally expose a survivor's location or disqualify them from housing entirely.

Mitigation Strategy: Independence House will mitigate this risk by using a closed network of vetted private landlords rather than relying on broad public recruitment or corporate property complexes. Because these independent owners maintain direct control over their properties, our agency can negotiate individualized safety plans, address screening barriers caused by financial abuse, and protect survivor confidentiality without the delays and risks associated with corporate property-management systems.

Programmatic Capacity and Relationship Strain

The Challenge: Landlords frequently misinterpret incentive programs, expecting the agency to act as a 24/7 property manager. When trauma triggers, court dates, or safety crises cause unexpected lease breaks, private landlords can experience immediate financial strain, risking the loss of a critical housing partner.

Mitigation Strategy: We will continue to cultivate deep, one-on-one relationships with our handpicked landlord network to ensure clear alignment from day one. Every private landlord signs a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clearly delineates roles, and we will assign a single, dedicated Independence House staff member to liaise with them. This direct line of communication prevents landlord burnout, manages expectations, and preserves the integrity of our private housing pool.

Financial & Legal Sustainability Risks

The Challenge: High demand or unpredictable unit damage claims can rapidly deplete incentive budgets. Furthermore, private independent landlords are often highly sensitive to tax-reporting friction, and unexpected IRS 1099 requirements on sign-on bonuses can cause them to withdraw abruptly from the program.

Mitigation Strategy: To protect our handpicked landlord partners from immediate financial loss, we will establish a dedicated Risk Mitigation Fund, separate from standard sign-on incentives, to ensure rapid repairs.

Would the funding be used to support a grant program? Yes / No

No

Which municipality or municipalities are supportive of this project? (Optional)

The Town of Barnstable is supportive

SCOPE OF WORK AND TIMELINE

Task 1

Description: Independence House will recruit, vet, and formalize agreements with private landlords in the identified towns to secure safe and permanent year-round housing for domestic violence survivors. Independence House will administer the financial sign-on incentive bonus, create and manage the landlord risk-mitigation fund, facilitate confidential survivor matching, and provide ongoing support to improve housing retention, expand and preserve regional housing access, and support long-term independence for survivor households. Completed by Housing Liaison Coordinator and Housing Liaison Coordinator.
Deliverable: Executed Landlord MOUs: Signed partnership agreements outlining the landlord's commitment to the program's year-round rental terms.
Safety Inspection Logs: Documentation verifying that each unit meets basic safety, security and habitability standards.
Estimated Completion Date: Completed by 1st quarter (December 1, 2026 - February 28, 2027).

Task 2

Description: Landlord Engagement & Onboarding: Implement Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) that outline the agreement structure, facilitate confidential physical safety and habitability assessments of the rentals, and establish streamlined communication channels between our vetted landlords and the Independence House liaison. Completed by the Co-directors of Emergency Program.
Deliverable: Up to 10 Signed 12-Month Lease Agreements: Fully executed, year-round rental contracts between private property owners and qualified Independence House clients.
Estimated Completion Date: Completed by 2nd quarter (March 1, 2027 - May 31, 2027).

Task 3

Description: Financial Administration & Risk Mitigation: Provide financial sign-on bonuses to vetted landlords upon lease execution, set aside the dedicated risk-mitigation reserve to cover potential emergency shortfalls, and issue the remaining milestone retention bonuses at specified intervals. Completed by Housing Liaison Coordinator.
Deliverable: Deliverable Task #3 & 4: 10 Financial Disbursement Records: Verifiable financial documents tracking the distribution of signing incentives and the allocation of the risk-mitigation fund.
Estimated Completion Date: Completed by 3rd quarter (June 1, 2027 - August 31, 2027).

Task 4

Description: Matching & Stabilization: Match eligible survivor families with private rentals, based on safety and accessibility needs, facilitate secure lease agreements, and conduct regular check-ins with survivors and landlords to resolve any issues early. Completed by Housing Liaison Coordinator.
Deliverable: Deliverable Task #3 & 4: 10 Financial Disbursement Records: Verifiable financial documents tracking the distribution of signing incentives and the allocation of the risk-mitigation fund.
Estimated Completion Date: Completed by 3rd quarter (June 1, 2027 - August 31, 2027).

Task 5:

Description: Compile certified receipts, leases, incentive-disbursement records, and a financial reporting summary outlining household results, landlord participation, mitigation-Fund use. Completed by Independence House Finance Staff and Codirectors of the Emergency Program.
Deliverable: Final reporting summary outlining retention rates achieved through the project, landlord participation, incentive disbursements, mitigation-fund use, and lessons learned for future replication.
Estimated Completion Date: Completed at the end of the 4th quarter (September 1, 2027 – November 30, 2027).

PROJECT PARTNERS

Project Partner 1:

Name: Brittany Lopes
Title: Property Owner
Email:
Role/Description: Private Landlord

Project Partner 2:

Name: Kiley Chapasko
Title: Property Owner
Email:
Role/Description: Private Landlord

FY27 LICENSE PLATE GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET

Please upload this sheet as a PDF as part of your application.

Please fill in all budget categories relevant for your proposed project, including a brief description of the funds requested. The total amount requested should equal the total amount noted in the scope of work. All project expenses are provided on a reimbursement basis.

Category	Amount Requested	Match Amount (optional)	Total Project Cost	Budget Narrative
Personnel/Labor from Staffing Plan)	$ 5,000.00	$ 13,418.00	$ 18,418.00	Housing Liaison Coordinator 127 @ $40 over 12 month period
Fringe Benefits (from Staffing Plan)	$ -	$ 1,879.00	$ 1,879.00	Payroll Taxes
Travel				
Equipment				
Supplies				
Contractual/Consulting				
Small Grants Program				
Other	$ 20,000.00	$ -	$ 20,000.00	$10000 Landlord Financial Incentives (10 @ $1000); $7500 Risk Mitigation Reserve; $2500 Admin & Outreach (staff coordination, outreach materials for housing networks, and trauma-informed landlord-tenant mediation resources.
Total Direct Cost	$ 25,000.00	$ 15,297.00	$ 40,297.00	
Indirect Costs*				
Total	$ 25,000.00	$ 15,297.00	$ 40,297.00	

*Maximum of 15% of project direct cost unless the project applicant has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.

FY27 LICENSE PLATE GRANT APPLICATION STAFFING PLAN

Please upload this sheet as a PDF as part of your application.

For each individual participating in this project, please share their name, title, and associated hourly rate, number of hours. In addition, please list the tasks that each staff member/volunteer will participate in. The staffing plan should be uploaded at the end of the application.

Staff Name and Title	Hourly Rate	Number of Hours	Total Project Cost	Amount Requested	Match Amount
Example: Jane Doe	$25.00	15	$375.00	$281.25	$93.75
Ellen O'Donnell	$51.30	130	$6,669.00	$0.00	$6,669.00
Emonalesia Thomas	$51.30	130	$6,669.00	$0.00	$6,669.00
To be hired Housing Liaison Coordinator	$40.00	127	$5,080.00	$5,000.00	$80.00
Total Personnel		397	$18,418.00	$5,000.00	$13,418.00
Fringe (enter fringe rate as percent):	10.20%		$1,879.00	$0.00	$1,879.00
TOTAL:			$20,297.00	$5,000.00	$15,297.00

Staff Name and Title	Tasks/Responsibilities
Example: Jane Doe	Example: Management
Ellen O'Donnell, Co-Director Independence House Residential Programs	Contract oversight, compliance tracking, and deliverables reporting will be provided by existing Residential Services Co-Directors as an in-kind contribution, with no grant funds requested for this line item.
Emonalesia Thomas, Co-Director of Independence House Residential Programs	Contract oversight, compliance tracking, and deliverables reporting will be provided by existing Residential Services Co-Directors as an in-kind contribution, with no grant funds requested for this line item.
To be hired, Housing Liaison Coordinator	Ensure that year-round housing inventory is available via landlord engagement and streamlined communication

3225 Main Street
Barnstable, MA 02630
9/14/2026

Subject: Letter of Intent to Partner with Independence House, Inc. as a Rental Housing Provider for the FY27 License Plate Grant Application

To the Members of the Selection Committee,

Please accept this Letter of Intent as a formal statement of our commitment to partner on the proposed *Landlord Incentive Pilot*, currently under consideration for the FY27 Cape & Islands License Plate Grant Fund.

As a private landlord provider operating residential units within Barnstable County, we are acutely aware of the severe shortage of secure, year-round rental options on Cape Cod. We recognize that housing stability is foundational to long-term safety, community resilience, and regional economic independence.

Upon approval and formal award of the $25,000 grant, we will collaborate as a private landlord under the following mutually agreed-upon framework:

1. **Year-Round Unit Allocation:** We will make four rental units available for standard 12-month lease agreements to qualified survivors of domestic violence referred by Independence House during the 12-month grant window.
2. **Acceptance of Program Framework:** We agree to participate in the program framework, including the $1,000 sign-on bonus per unit and access to the dedicated Risk Mitigation Reserve capped at $1,000 per unit.
3. **Collaboration on Safeguards:** We commit to working directly with the designated Independence House, Inc. program liaison to maintain program requirements and resolve any issues.
4. **Confidence in Program Partnership:** We have full confidence in Independence House, Inc. as a longstanding nonprofit serving Cape Cod and believe this pilot offers a practical, localized solution that enables property owners to support safe housing access for families.

We proudly support this application and look forward to executing a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) once funding is secured.

Sincerely,



Brittany and Elio Lopes

9/25/2026

Signature of Authorized Representative

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company/Entity Name: _____

Geography (Towns): _____

Contact Email/Phone: _____

3225 Main Street
Barnstable, MA 02630
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Sincerely,

Signature of Authorized Representative
Name: Kiley Chapasko
Title: Miss
Company/Entity Name: _____
Geography (Towns): Cape Cod
Contact Email/Phone: 508-801-7786
Kileychapasko1@gmail.com

Town of Barnstable

Planning & Development Department

www.townofbarnstable.us/planninganddevelopment

September 17, 2026

Cape Cod Commission
P.O. Box 226, 3225 Main Street
Barnstable, MA 02630

Subject: *Independence House, Inc. – FY27 License Plate Grant Application*

To the Members of the Selection Committee,

On behalf of the Town of Barnstable, I am writing to express my purposeful understanding of the grant application submitted by Independence House, Inc. for their proposed Landlord Incentive Pilot (IHLIP) through the FY27 Cape & Islands License Plate Grant Fund.

Our municipality is acutely aware of the severe regional housing crisis impacting Cape Cod. The compounding pressures of a seasonal tourism economy and an expanding short-term rental market have drastically diminished our year-round rental inventory. This shortage disproportionately harms vulnerable populations, particularly domestic violence survivors, who face steep systemic barriers when trying to secure safe, long-term, stable housing in our community.

The proposed Landlord Incentive Pilot directly addresses a critical gap in our local housing strategy. By offering targeted financial incentives—such as landlord signing bonuses and a dedicated risk mitigation reserve—this program effectively lowers the barrier to entry for private property owners. It encourages them to offer 12-month lease agreements to families who desperately need them.

Furthermore, this initiative aligns perfectly with our town's housing production goals and the broader Barnstable County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to Incentivize Year-Round Housing and Provide Opportunities to Pilot Ideas.

Independence House has a long-standing, proven track record of delivering exceptional trauma-informed services and case management within our municipality. We are confident that their staff will provide the necessary stabilization support and landlord mediation to ensure these tenancies are successful and enduring.

The Town of Barnstable views this pilot program as a highly practical, localized solution to a regional crisis.

Sincerely,

James Kupfer
Director, Planning & Development