

Vermont Council on Housing and Homelessness

Meeting Location

Waterbury State Office Complex
Sally Fox Conference Center
280 State Drive Waterbury Vermont, 05676
September 10th 10-12 pm

ATTENDEES

- Chair: Alex Farrell, Commissioner of DHCD
- Chris Winters, DCF Commissioner
- David Reigel, AHS
- Shaun Gilpin, DHCD
- Nedah Warstler, DHCD
- Angela Smith-Dieng, Adult Services Division Director at DAIL.
- Adnan Duracak, Dept. of Mental Health
- Angus Chaney, Homeless Prevention Center
- Katy Preston, Agency of Education
- Zak Hale - Hale Resources, LLC
- Pollaidh Major, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
- Frank Knaack, HHAV
- Daniel Blankenship, Vermont State Housing Authority
- Will Towne, Spectrum Youth and Family Services, CCHA
- Chadd Viger, Recovery House Inc.
- Patrick Shattuck, RuralEdge
- Monica Hutt, Governor's Office
- Rebecca Plummer, Vermont Legal Aid
- Lily Sojourner, VT Office of Economic Opportunity, DCF
- Kathleen Berk, Vermont State Housing Authority
- Derek Miodownik, VTDOC
- Rowan Hawthorne, VDOL
- Kim Anetsberger, Lamoille Community House
- Ari Kisler, Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity
- Catherine Dimitruk, Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- Beverly Boget, Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
- Jess Hyman, CVOEO Housing Advocacy Programs
- Ted Brady, VT League Center and Towns
- Liz Gieng, Cathedral Square
- Kelly Dougherty, AHS
- Rebecca Silbernagel, DAIL
- Jill Bowen, DAIL Commissioner
- Kristin Kellett, AHS

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No Public Comment 10:16 am

Alex Farrell report out for subcommittee

Recommendations to Remove Barriers to Housing Development

STRUCTURAL AND REGULATORY REFORMS:

- Recalibrate and Streamline the Corrective Action Plan Process:
- Simplify and expedite the Corrective Action Plan Process to be completed within 180 days.
- Improve administrative procedures and reduce associated costs.
- Recalibrate soil standards by consulting with both the Department of Health and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Establishment of a Housing Appeals Board:

- Create a Housing Appeals Board similar to New Hampshire's model.
- Board to consist of a three-person panel to hear appeals of municipal permitting decisions.
- Board decisions appealable only to the Vermont Supreme Court.
- Grant the Board jurisdiction over both municipal and state permitting decisions for consistency and effectiveness.

Short-term Rental Disincentives:

- Implement statewide regulations to reduce conversion of housing to short-term rentals (STR).
- Encourage conversion of STR units to primary housing through increased Meals and Rooms Tax or restrictions on STR ownership.
- Require that primary residents or affordable rental units be housed on-site for any STR properties.

FUNDING AND INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT:

Infrastructure Funding for Housing Development:

- Address the gap in infrastructure funding critical for housing development.
- Improve and expand municipal water and wastewater systems.
- Provide flexibility in funding for infrastructure needs, including water, wastewater, roads, and sidewalks.

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- Support projects facing significant initial infrastructure investments to alleviate cash flow issues before project initiation.

Council Members Continued Recommendations

Establishment of a Housing Infrastructure Fund:

- Create a fund in the range of \$50M-\$100M, potentially structured as a revolving loan fund.
- Include municipalities, private developers, non-profit housing developers, and homebuilders as eligible applicants.

Prioritization of Federal Infrastructure Funding:

- Review and prioritize federal infrastructure funding to support projects that directly facilitate housing development.
- Explore additional funding mechanisms such as:
 - Project-based Tax Increment Financing (Project-based TIF)
 - State Revenue Bonds
 - State General Funds

Additional Investment in Brownfields Revitalization Fund:

- Increase funding specifically for brownfields remediation to support housing redevelopment, especially in historic downtowns and villages.

Funding for Housing Unit Construction Programs:

\$80M for Permanently Affordable Housing:

- Aim to prevent homelessness, relieve cost burdens, and leverage federal resources including tax credits.
- If this target is not met, allocate 65% of housing investments to permanently affordable housing.

\$30M for Middle-Income Housing:

- Stimulate economic growth and workforce stability.
- If this target is not met, allocate 25% of housing investments to middle-income housing.

\$15M for Housing Preservation:

- Support existing programs such as the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) and the Manufactured Housing Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR).
- If this target is not met, allocate 10% of housing investments to housing preservation.

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Angus Chaney : 10:43 am

Looking to move building to places where public transit is available

Jill Bowen:10:45 am

Appreciate the percentage layout, looking more towards having weighable outcomes, what does success look like, how is progress measured?

Special populations Sub committee Report out: 10:55 am

Immediate Action Needed:

- Review special populations, current services, and future needs.
- Develop a plan to prioritize recommendations.

2024 Recommendations:

- Focus on addressing homelessness and near-homelessness among those with mental health issues, substance use, or other stressors.
- Recognize that not all populations are covered, with plans to address aging and disability in the future.
Future Plans (Starting October 2024):
- Identify special populations needing targeted housing solutions.
- Find gaps in existing systems.
- Make recommendations to address these gaps.

- Expand Definition of "**At Risk of Homelessness**": Review and update criteria with HUD Continua of Care.
- Common Housing Application: Implement a unified application process for housing.
- Increase Landlord Relief Funding: Boost financial support for the Landlord Relief Program.
- Create More Low Barrier Shelters: Increase the number of shelters with minimal entry requirements.
- Consolidate Housing Funds: Combine housing mitigation, contingency funds, and risk pools into the Statewide Landlord Relief Program.
- Community Outreach Teams: Enhance services provided by outreach teams (e.g., PATH).
- Expand School-Based Housing Support: Increase funding for positions that support housing needs in schools.

Molly DUGAN Questions 11:09 am Voucher Question Kids vs adults

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VCHH Special Populations 2024 Recommendations for the Tactical Action Plan

- 1. Increase DMH Housing Support funds**
- 2. Increase funding for the home voucher program through CVOEO**
- 3. Expand DMH Housing First Program**
- 4. Expand Recovery Housing**

Increase Department of Mental Health Housing

Support Funds (Directing housing funds to Subsidy + Care will free up contingency funds)

- DMH allocated \$1,026,399 to 10 DA's & 1 Specialized Service Agency
- Ongoing Rental Assistance:
 - o 97 clients housed through DMH Housing Support Funds
 - o Average monthly housing cost \$388
 - o Designated Agencies provided a total subsidy of (\$37,636 per month = \$451,632 annually)
- Temporary Rental Assistance (Security Deposits & Apartment Set-up costs, back-rent, hospitalization prevention, utility assistance, temporary housing)
- Temporary Assistance was provided to 501 clients totaling in the amount of \$410,299 annually.
- DMH Housing Subsidy Plus Care Program:
 - o \$1,040,000 allocated with 10% Administrative cost.
 - o 86 Clients Permanently Housed by DMH Housing Subsidy + Care Program
 - o 11 clients pending – searching for an apartment (avg. cost \$711 per month = \$93,852 annually)
 - o Average monthly housing subsidy costs \$711.
 - o VSHA provides a total of (\$68,967 per month = \$827,604 annually)
 - o *** Average monthly housing subsidy vary due to increased rental costs

Increase DMH Housing Subsidy + Care Program:

- Boost funding to \$2,080,000, with 10% for administrative costs.
- Transition 97 clients from Housing Support Funds to long-term housing assistance.
- Designated Agencies can use \$1,026,399 of existing Housing Support Funds for temporary housing needs.

🔗 HOME Family Housing Voucher Program:

- Provided 24 months of rental assistance to over 130 families.
- Modeled after the CARES Housing Voucher Program.
- Vouchers are ending by June 2025 and were funded by two one-time appropriations.

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- Families were referred through Coordinated Entry, with local organizations assisting with housing navigation and retention.

General Assistance Hotel/Motel Program:

- Houses 255 households with children.
- Families are assessed through Coordinated Entry (CE) and then referred to Family Supported Housing (FSH).

Family Supported Housing (FSH):

- Assists families with young children and complex needs in transitioning to and maintaining stable housing.

Home Voucher recommendation:

Extend Statewide HOME Voucher Program:

- Allocate \$5,000,000 to add around 150 vouchers for 36 months of rental assistance.
- Pair vouchers specifically with Family Supported Housing (FSH) households.

Purpose:

- Assist households exiting General Assistance (GA), homelessness, and those at risk of homelessness.
- Provide more time for families to find stable housing, secure long-term subsidies, and increase their income.

Total Funding Request: \$5,000,000

Housing First Program - DMH

Pathways Vermont, Inc.:

- **Specialized Services Agency (SSA):** Supports adults with homelessness and significant mental health disabilities.
- **Model:** Uses Sam Tsemberis' Housing First approach—provides housing first, then supportive treatment services.
- **Programs:**
 - Adult Mental Health Outpatient (AOP) Services
 - Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) Services

Housing First Program:

- Serves adults experiencing homelessness with significant mental health disabilities.
- **Core Populations:**
 - Individuals on Medicaid receiving outpatient services
 - Individuals receiving CRT services

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- **Service Areas:** Franklin, Addison, Chittenden, Washington, Windsor, Windham, and Bennington counties.
- **Current Investment:** \$2,542,315

Recovery Housing Recommendation

- Statewide expansion into every AHS district and expansion of capacity in existing communities to address unmet needs.
 - Budget = \$5,959,197. (\$3,570,117 for year one).
- Expansion into communities currently not served by the program.
 - Budget = \$2,941,733. (\$1,911,733 for year one).
- Expansion in single communities where the most impact from hotel/motel program changes is anticipated (Rutland or Chittenden County).
 - Budget = \$504,960. (\$378,719 for year one).

Supports and Services recommendations:

The Supports and Services Subcommittee identified five priorities from the Council's Tactical Action Plan for further review over its last three meetings:

- Permanent supportive housing
- Building off the Support and Services at Home (SASH) model
- Connecting provider services more effectively
- Rental subsidies
- Landlord relief

Expand Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Medicaid Benefit:

- **Approval:** PSH benefit approved in Vermont's 1115 Global Commitment Waiver renewal.
- **Program Start:** Scheduled to begin in 2025 with an initial caseload of 100 households.

Recommendation:

- **Additional Funding:** \$2,765,000 needed for FY26.
- **Goal:** Increase coverage from 100 to approximately 350 households/participants.
- **Includes:** Direct services and funding for additional state employee case manager positions.

Expand SASH for ALL:

- **Current Model:** SASH has been operating statewide since 2011, serving over 12,000 older adults and adults with disabilities under the All-Payer Model, which is funded through December 31, 2024.

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- **Benefits:** Provides comprehensive care coordination and preventive health services at home, reducing healthcare costs and improving quality of life.

Future Funding:

- **Priority:** Ensure SASH funding continues beyond 2025, preferably through the next multi-payer alternative model or, if not possible, state funding.

Recommended Expansion:

- **Target:** Serve about 1,000 people in five key areas (Bennington, Brattleboro, Rutland, Central Vermont, and Burlington).
- **Implementation:** Open 2 panels in each area (10 panels total) using existing SASH infrastructure.
- **Cost:** \$2,000,000 (at \$200,000 per panel), with operation by local non-profit housing providers in affordable general occupancy apartments.

Invest in Expanding Findhelp Tool Statewide:

- **Current Success:** Findhelp is successfully used in Lamoille County and helps people connect with community resources like food, housing, medical care, and job training.
- **Functionality:** Allows organizations to manage and coordinate care through referrals, outcomes tracking, and service updates.

📄 Expansion Plan:

- **Feasibility Check:** Vet Findhelp with 2-1-1 to ensure it is a suitable base product and avoid duplicating systems.
- **Statewide Rollout:** Support staffing and funding (to be determined) for full implementation across the state.
- **Recommendations:**
 - **Provide:** 1-2 full-time positions and a marketing budget.
 - **Coordinate:** Work with 2-1-1 to ensure successful expansion.
 - **Implementation:** Consider whether to roll out statewide or in regional phases.
- <https://www.findhelp.org/>

Motion on Rebecca Singelber, Minutes approved
Angus Chaney's second motion.

Approval of minutes for April and July

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To Do's:

1. Assign bullet points to subcommittees to discuss at the next Full council meeting.