

HOWARD CENTER FY2025 BUDGET REQUEST

REQUEST #1 - \$523,000 - Residential Program (Housing, Room and Board)

Howard Center is requesting \$523,000 in FY2025 to help maintain its Adult Bed Based and Residential Services. *Please see page 2 for a summary of these programs and services.*

FY2025 is projected to be the second year Howard Center will have an operational deficit for its residential programs. Currently, the Howard Center is not able to cover the cost of providing treatment or the cost of housing, room and board for these programs.

\$523,000 would address the housing, room and board deficit in FY2025, helping bridge the gap for a year and allowing Howard Center to continue to explore options for future sustainability – looking at current models, ways to adjust programming to reduce costs, continued dialogue with state partners and exploring how Howard Center can optimize its relationships with local housing agencies.

Without this “bridge” funding, Howard Center would be faced with running an operational deficit for three consecutive years. Howard Center will conduct the programmatic analysis described above whether or not it receives additional funding from the state. However, without the FY2025 funding to support the housing, room and board component of the residential programs, it will be significantly more challenging to maintain these programs.

**NOTE: Howard Center has an operational deficit of \$503,000 for room and board costs in its residential programs in FY2024 and a \$1.3 million treatment deficit. Howard Center is not requesting funding to cover this deficit, but it should be noted as it adds to the budget pressures the organization is facing.*

REQUEST #2 - \$300,000 - Cultural Liaison Program

Howard Center is requesting \$300,000 in FY2025 to cover the cost of operating its Cultural Liaison program. The House approved \$166,000 in FY2024 in BAA to cover the gap for this program. However, the Senate removed the appropriation from its version of FY2024 BAA.

Please see page 4 for a summary of this program.



Adult Bed Based and Residential Support Services Summary

- The Community Rehabilitation Services (CRT) program serves adults with the most serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression. Howard Center serves approximately 771 CRT clients annually through our Community Support Program (CSP) and Assist.
- 73% of our adult mental health service expenses are for our CSP and Assist programs.
- 44% of those costs support bed-based and residential support services programs. 10% of those costs are for Room and Board (food, utilities, housing costs); 90% for treatment services.
- 375 unique clients were served in these bed-based and residential support services programs last fiscal year with 116 individuals receiving support through these programs at any given time.
- The predominance of these individuals are on a fixed (social security) income.
- Where charged, client room and board/rental rates are established based upon income thresholds (either set by the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living’s licensing division or set annually based on 40% of income). These fees do not cover costs or keep up with inflation.
- According to a study conducted by Stacker and Foothold Technology, “Vermont is the fourth-least affordable state to rent in, but it’s particularly pricey if you’re renting in the Burlington metro area.”

FY '24 Budget: Adult Bed Based & Residential Support Services Programs	# Beds	Room & Board Gain/(Loss)	Treatment Gain/(Loss)	Total Gain/(Loss)
Next Door Program	8	(177)	(154,137)	(154,314)
Lakeview	16	(84,282)	(103,741)	(188,023)
MYPAD	10	(228,396)	(61,789)	(290,185)
Safe Haven Shelter	7	(58,382)	(140,223)	(198,605)
Shelter Plus Care Home	6	(28,966)	(113,741)	(142,707)
Branches	6	(27,696)	22,599	(5,097)
Assist	6	(127,071)	(299,898)	(426,968)
N. Winooski (HUD)	8	0	(47,998)	(47,998)
Spruce Street (HUD)	7	0	(143,707)	(143,707)
Community Housing (BHA; CHT)	42	0	(160,742)	(160,742)
TOTAL	116	(554,970)	(1,203,376)	(1,758,346)



Program Descriptions:

Next Door is a licensed therapeutic living program for eight adult clients of the Community Support Program (CSP). The program is designed to help residents transition from the hospital into the community and also serves as a possible hospital diversion alternative.

North Winooski is a licensed residential treatment program for eight individuals who are CSP clients. The program is designed for individuals who could benefit from a structured, supportive environment before moving to a less restrictive level of care.

Lakeview Community Care Home is a sixteen-bed licensed residential program offering housing with some nursing oversight for unlimited lengths of stay. Residents are adults who are not able to live on their own. Residents receive assistance with activities of daily living such as meals, laundry, and personal care.

MyPad is an intensive supported apartment program for ten CSP clients with two locations in Essex Junction. The program serves clients who have had repeated hospitalizations without improvement or those who have lived in other residential programs without progress towards more independence.

Safe Haven is a seven-bed shelter for people who are usually homeless and whose behavior precludes other housing options. It is for adult CSP clients. Clients have their own bedrooms and share a living room, kitchen, and bathrooms. Unlike many shelters, Safe Haven residents do not need to leave during the day. It is a transitional co-ed housing program, and most admissions come from hospital referrals. Half of each guest's monthly income is saved for future housing. The program is a collaborative with Champlain Housing Trust.

Shelter Plus Care offers permanent supportive co-ed housing for six CSP clients. A variety of services are offered, including medication management, supportive counseling, conflict management, and assistance with daily living activities.

Spruce Street offers permanent supportive co-ed housing for seven CSP clients. A variety of services are offered, including medication management, supportive counseling, conflict management, and assistance with daily living activities.

Community Housing includes Monroe Place, Allen House, and St. Paul which are supportive independent living situations for adults. Monroe Place offers one-bedroom subsidized apartments for 15 clients and one resident manager apartment. St. Paul offers one-bedroom subsidized apartments for five clients and one apartment for a resident manager. Allen House is a single-room occupancy building with 25 subsidized rooms. A variety of services are offered at each site as needed, including medication management, supportive counseling, conflict management, and assistance with daily living activities. Allen House and St. Paul are Champlain Housing Trust properties and Monroe Place is owned by Cathedral Square.

Branches is permanent supported housing, with six rooms, designed to promote independence and housing stability. It is a single room occupancy and not a licensed home.

ASSIST is a six-bed crisis stabilization program for any Chittenden County adult who is experiencing a psychiatric crisis. ASSIST helps people remain in the community and avoid hospitalization.

Howard Center Cultural Liaison Program

- Howard Center Cultural Liaison Program started in February of 2022. Our team consists of three individuals who are from the Bhutanese Nepali, Burundi, and Congolese resettled, immigrant, and asylee communities.
- Our team has the common experience of resettling in Vermont and can walk with our resettled community members while they are seeking and receiving services.
- This program aims to build a connection from our resettled community to Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use services at Howard Center.
- Our Cultural Liaisons reduce barriers by increasing understanding and improving access to our services at Howard Center. While our Cultural Liaisons are not interpreters (although we do use interpretation services), they educate and facilitate understanding of Howard Center's work by explaining concepts and clarifying professional language strange to other cultures.
- Since 2022 we have served over 92 immigrant families and provided nearly 1100 services.
- We have served families of 13 countries and 10 different languages, with Nepali (32), Swahili (12), and Somali (10) being the greatest numbers.
- We work closely with Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) and United States Committee on Refugees and Immigration (USCRI) and individual resettled country organizations to provide access to services for our resettled community.

How we help

- A 6-year-old Somalian child attending elementary school was disruptive and distressed at school. After the school had many interventions with the child and parents, our team was brought in. We learned the parents were distrusting of the school, Howard Center, and felt a sense of powerlessness and helplessness for their child's education. Because of their mutual resettled background, a trusting relationship was forged between the parents and cultural liaisons. With the help of our liaisons the parent engaged with the school team and sought help for their child. The child finished their prior school year, and they are now getting the support they need at the Baird School.