

Pathways Vermont Housing first program currently serves 200 people in 6 counties and we work with 90 landlords. Pathways tenants average 4 years of homelessness each and the housing retention rate in the program is 85%.

Program Outcomes

Saving Vermont money

- Pathways Vermont's Housing First Services are \$40/night
 - 1/3 the cost of incarceration
 - 20 times less expensive than a psychiatric hospitalization
- Pathways saves Vermont over \$40,000 in hospitalization expenses *in just one month of service*

Ending Homelessness in Vermont

- More than 210 Vermonters housed in permanent, independent apartments and receiving intensive mental health support services
- Housing retention rate of 85% (on any given night 85% of program participants are in a Pathways apartment)
- Housing located for all program referrals (new intakes are awaiting housing)
 - All housing is scattered-site, independent residences
- 80,000 nights in apartments NOT in shelters, on the streets or state-funded hotels
- 92% reduction in nights homeless

Decreasing Institutionalization and Contact with Emergency Services

- 85% reduction in total nights spent in emergency rooms
- 56% reduction in nights spent in hospitals
- 53% reduction in total nights in jail or prison
- 24-hours/day on-call phone support; more than 750 on-call contacts a year

Serving Unserved and Difficult-to-House Vermonters

- No program refusals based on criminal history, poor credit, lack of income, repeat hospitalizations, active substance use, hoarding
- Served 16 sex offenders (14 currently housed in the community)
- Over 650 monthly in-person contacts with program participants
- 700 program referrals in three years
- Many referrals are ineligible for other programs or banned from mainstream services
- Participants report increases in everyday functioning, perceptions of choice, empowerment and productive activities

Overview

Pathways Vermont's Housing First program provides housing and intensive support services to Vermonters who have experienced chronic homelessness and serious mental health issues. Pathways has been recognized for being a leader in providing person-centered care in a non-coercive and respectful manner. The Housing First program creates necessary choice in local communities for those seeking services.

Pathways Vermont's Housing First program receives \$800,000 annually in federal grants which will expire in October 2014. In addition, Pathways relies on \$830,000 in annual funding from the Vermont Department of Corrections (\$330,000 of which funds participant's rent) and \$555,000 from the Vermont Department of Mental Health.

Population

Program participants are adults with chronic homelessness and serious mental health issues. Participants have spent years in shelters, psychiatric hospitals, and prisons; 89% of clients have experienced trauma, more than half have been hospitalized for psychiatric services, 79% are chronically homeless (homeless for at least a year or at least 4 times in the past 3 years), and more than 40% have been incarcerated.

Service Area

Pathways' Housing First program provides service in six Vermont counties: Addison, Franklin, Chittenden, Washington, Windsor and Windham.

Composites (to protect anonymity) of individuals served:

Sue's Story:

For more than two years Sue had been cycling between a state funded motel, a psychiatric hospital, and a shelter. This period included more than 200 days in the hospital (over \$200,000 in state funds). Prior to this period of homelessness Sue was evicted from an apartment where she had incurred over \$40,000 worth of damages. Sue refused to work with her local mental health service providers, but was willing to connect with Pathways. The Pathways' Housing First team assisted Sue with acquiring a federal housing subsidy, locating an apartment, securing a security deposit, and moving in. The team meets with Sue at her apartment several times a week and supports her with financial management, crisis stabilization, daily living skills and taking college courses. After three and a half years Sue has not returned to a psychiatric hospital, maintains her apartment, and has reconnected with family. Pathways services are less than \$40/day (\$14,600 a year)

Eddie's Story:

An adult local interagency team referred Eddie to Pathways as local service providers had been unsuccessful in engaging him in treatment and services. Eddie was a 20 year active alcoholic who would spend his nights in one of four places: main street benches, in the "drunk tank" at jail, in the emergency room, or in a motel room (funded by the state). Eddie was not able to stay in shelters due to his drinking. The community was concerned for Eddie and his safety, but also for the community as Eddie would frequently defecate on public benches, which created public health and cost concerns. Eddie moved into an apartment with support services from Pathways and, while he continued to have challenges related to his drinking, he did not return to sleeping out and discontinued use of emergency services.

Sam's Story:

A local mental health agency and the local police, contacted Pathways about Sam. Sam had a 10 year history of going in and out of state psychiatric hospitals, and before that was a part of Vermont's foster care system. When we met Sam we were warned by the police that if they had to arrest Sam, it would take more than 8 officers to subdue him. Sam was an active drug user, and often threatening and aggressive. Sam also destroyed property when upset and pounded on cars or walked into traffic. Sam has had several apartments with Pathways over a three year period, but has not incurred an eviction. He is currently living in an apartment that he has maintained successfully for over a year (his longest time in an apartment to date). While doing so he has remained out of the hospital, he got his drivers license, bought a car, and has reconnected with his son.

Testimonials about the Community Impact of Pathways' Housing First

Being in my apartment has meant the world to me and still does every day and night I feel so proud that I never gave up. Also being in my apartment means my life now has purpose again. I can cook a meal and sit down on a chair with a table with no worries of seagulls or bugs.

Molly, Pathways Vermont Housing First Tenant

Having an apartment has meant freedom from unhealthy co-dependent relationships. Peace. Ability to look beyond the day to day struggles I endured while living on the street or in shelters.

Shiloh, Pathways Vermont Housing First Tenant

Pathways Vermont has been enormously successful at breaking the cycle from our emergency shelters to the ER and back to the streets and shelters. When you consider how many people with persistent and chronic mental health issues are now in permanent housing and the percent who have successfully maintained that housing, it's remarkable. In twenty years working at COTS, I've never seen a housing/support program so effective and responsive for this population. It's a blessing to have so many housed, rather than so many vulnerable people cycling from shelter to streets to the ER.

Rita Markley, Executive Director
Committee on Temporary Shelter, Burlington

It has been my pleasure to work with the dedicated staff at Pathways Vermont. They have consistently been able to take our most challenging and difficult clients and work with them... They have truly served this population in a way I have never seen other service providers come close to doing. They fill a huge gap in the system of care and are compassionate and caring in providing services.

Kristin Prior, Field Services Director
Agency of Human Services, St. Albans

My experience with Pathways has been positive. They worked early on to establish a relationship with me, knowing my housing situation and as such try to pair the tenants up with the apartment they have leased. I find them to be responsive to my calls and questions. I feel pretty safe and secure that when there is a "situation," that it is dealt with rapidly and respectfully.

Tess Taylor
Landlord & Vermont State Legislator

I have found Pathways to consistently be professional, compassionate, proactive, patient and always caring. Their model of "Housing First" continues to meet the housing needs of many. Their client driven practice allows for individuals to be active participants in their own planning and goal setting, while also providing a platform for plans and goals to evolve as the individual grows and takes on new challenges as they move towards independence.

Rob Farrell, Director of Community Linkage
Correct Care Solutions