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**Pathways Vermont** is a social service agency that provides housing and support services to over 1,000 Vermonters each year. The **Housing First** program helps individuals with long histories of homelessness and institutionalization lead independent lives in their local community through permanent supportive housing. The **Supportive Services for Veteran Families** program provides rapid re-housing and short-term assistance to veterans and their families who have recently become or are at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

In addition to our Housing programs, Pathways has developed a number of community mental health initiatives, each filling an unmet need in the community:

- The **Vermont Support Line** and the **Wellness Co-op** (a community center), provide immediate access to non-judgmental support for Vermonters who have experienced trauma and mental health crisis.
- **Soteria Vermont** will provide residential support for individuals experiencing their first mental health crisis, hopefully preventing the need for hospitalization (opening February 2015.)

In May 2014 Pathways was awarded conditional designation as a Specialized Services Agency by the Department of Mental Health in order to access Medicaid funding for Housing First services. These funds replace a five-year federal SAMHSA start-up grant that ended at the end of September 2014.

### **What is Housing First?**

Housing First is an evidence based practice that supports individuals struggling with homelessness, mental health, substance use and other life challenges locate and maintain permanent housing in the community. Our multidisciplinary team provides essential services to support independent community functioning and prevent lapses into homelessness, incarceration and institutionalization. Services include case management, resource and benefit coordination, psychiatric services, substance abuse and recovery support, and supportive employment services. 70% of Housing clients are diagnosed with a form of Mental Illness, 50% are diagnosed with a clinical Substance Use Disorder and 33% are dually diagnosed, meaning they struggle with both. 90% of our clients are survivors of past experiences of violence or trauma.

### **Why is Housing First Different?**

Housing First is distinct from other models serving similar populations in that it provides **immediate** access to permanent, independent housing. Access to housing does not have prerequisites such as participation in mental health treatment or substance use abstinence, which are major barriers to many individuals in overcoming homelessness and crisis. Housing First programs have an 85% Housing Retention Rate, meaning that on any given night 85 out of every 100 participants remain housed in permanent, independent apartments.

### **Why is Housing First Effective?**

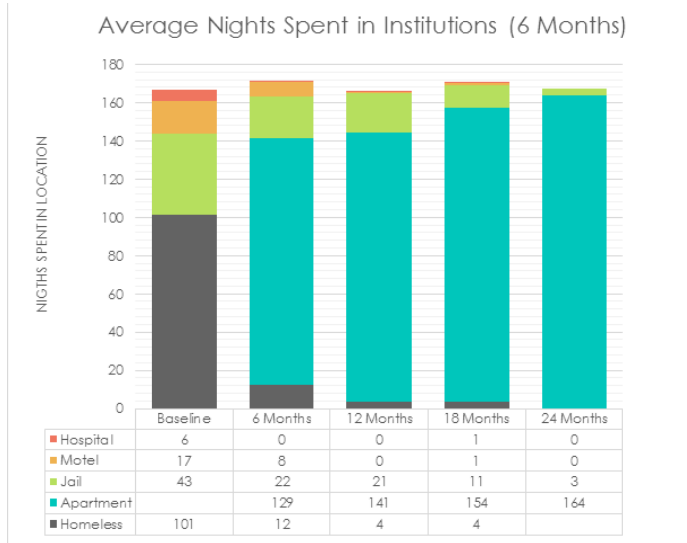
The Housing First model is not only a proven method to ending chronic homelessness, it is also cost-effective. Providing subsidized housing and community-based support reduces utilization of other, more expensive, institutional forms of housing and care. On a given month, Pathways Vermont's Housing First program prevents (per 100 clients):

- \$150,000 in inpatient psychiatric hospitalization costs
- \$48,600 in incarceration costs
- \$17,850 in emergency housing costs

Pathways' Housing First Program had the following impact on the lives of vulnerable Vermonters since 2010:

- 160+ chronically homeless individuals housed (Housing First)
- 92 individuals successfully transitioned from institutions to community (Housing First)
- 76% decrease in institutionalization of population served (Housing First)

**Program Outcomes:  
Housing Retention:**



Pathways Vermont’s Housing First program averages an 85% housing retention rate, meaning that on any given night 85 out of 100 program participants are housed in permanent, independent housing.

For this population, housing retention means fewer nights in other, more expensive service settings. As the chart to the left demonstrates, once housed, program participants show increased housing stability over time, spending fewer average nights in emergency housing (state-funded motels), correctional facilities and psychiatric hospitals.

**Cost Savings:**

Pathways Vermont’s Housing First program reduces the utilization of other, more expensive services - including both emergency housing and institutionalization. The following graphic depicts aggregated services expenditures of a matched sample of 129 program participants in the 6 months preceding Housing First intervention and the 6 months following:

**Pre-Housing First Intervention:**



**Post-Housing First Intervention:**



## Pathways Housing First Program Funding

Grant	Funding	Status
Federal SAMHSA Grant (FY 15 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter)	\$200,000	Funding ended September 30, 2014
Vermont Department of Mental Health (9 months)	\$611,920	FY 15 Budget Adjustment request
Vermont Department of Mental Health	\$555,000	Ongoing base funding
Vermont Department of Corrections (includes \$330,000 for rental subsidies)	\$830,000	Ongoing base funding
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,196,920</b>	

## Housing Voucher Breakdown:

Source	Housing Funding Type	Number
State	Mental Health Vouchers (Subsidy & Care)	81
State	Mental Health CRT Housing Support Fund	5
State	Department of Corrections	48
Federal	Section 8	16
Federal	Shelter + Care	48
Federal	VASH vouchers (Veterans Administration)	2
Other	Family/Self-Pay	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>205</b>