

Mobile Home Program

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April 9, 2020

Dear Honorable Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee Chair and Members:

I come to you on behalf of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity Mobile Home Program (CVOEO MHP) to advocate for mobile home parks and its residents in this unprecedented time facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Primarily funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCH), CVOEO MHP is the only statewide mobile home residents' advocacy program in the State of Vermont and we strongly believe that government dollars could have a crucial impact in the lives of these important communities who make up the backbone of our state's workforce.

Due to their unique community structure and status, we believe that mobile home parks and its residents are likely to be gravely affected by this pandemic. Our main concern is the current living condition of vulnerable and elderly mobile home residents living in remote part of the State, without internet and other media access. They certainly have difficulty getting accurate info about COVID-19 prevention measures, access to food and medication with the current stay-home order in place; a real danger for remote MHP communities. Another concern is that the effectiveness of recovery efforts to support Mobile Home Parks could be compromised without accurate data on the impact of COVID-19 on residents and their immediate and short-term needs. If data is not collected in a timely manner, we could see many residents and Vermonters falling between the cracks, a widening of already existing socio-economic inequities, lasting health and safety issues.

CVOEO MHP is actively looking to increase its capacity (6 months Part Time MHP Data collection/Resource Specialist-\$20,000) in order to urgently implement a statewide COVID-19 Mobile Home Park response/recovery outreach effort via phone, email and mail (in person when permitted), to connect with our service recipients, collect info on their overall current living conditions and needs and provide info, resources and referral as needed. The info collected will also give us an outlook on the impact of COVID-19 on MHP residents and possibly help us-funding permitting-design an informed program recovery plan supporting residents post "Stay Home Order" recovery efforts. We need to connect with as many mobile home residents as possible and in a timely manner, requiring more hands than our current 1.5 FT staff team if we have to effectively proceed.

We believe that immediate action and consideration are required to tend to crucial issues affecting the lives, health, safety and wellbeing of these important labor force communities and sustain their existence. It is imperative to have our mobile home parks and its resident's particular circumstances in mind in relief and recovery planning efforts. Feel free to contact me with questions/concerns.

We appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

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