



DATE: February 19, 2021  
TO: House Appropriations Committee Members  
FROM: Women's Legislative Caucus  
Reps. Lynn Batchelor, Mollie Burke, Rep. Sara Coffey Co-Chairs  
Rep. Tiff Bluemle, Communications

On behalf of the members of the Women's Legislative Caucus, we write to urge you to support the request by the Vermont Network for Fiscal Year 2022, a \$850,000 request that includes \$200,000 to support the re-entry of women into their communities from Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF); \$400,000 to Domestic Violence Accountability Programming as suggested by the Council on State Governments in the Justice Reinvestment report and \$250,000 increase in state funding for the Vermont Network and its 15 Member organizations.

The members of the Women's Caucus have focused on the health and well-being of Vermont's incarcerated women, a decades long priority. The Vermont Network is a vital organization that works with its 15 member organizations to provide advocacy and support to victims of domestic and sexual violence and critical re-entry support services for incarcerated women. Supporting women to successfully reintegrate in their communities and achieve economic independence is critical to addressing recidivism, primarily caused by community supervision violations.

Our members whole heartedly support the recent efforts of Justice Reinvestment II. This is a collaborative effort across the three branches of state Government to ensure that Vermont has a criminal justice system that is equitable and rehabilitative; a system where sentenced and incarcerated Vermonters have access to due process and programs and services that meet their needs and set them up for successful reentry and participation in our communities; a system where people are treated with dignity and respect; and a system that ensures public safety.

We believe that the \$850,000 for the Vermont Network will be a strategic investment that aligns with the state-wide recommendations of the Justice Reinvestment II working group. These recommendations call for increased investments in risk-based domestic violence intervention programming, evidence-based transitional housing, workforce development, and supports for those leaving prison.

We urge that the House Committee on Appropriations include the \$850,000 appropriation in the FY22 budget, which will enable Justice Reinvestment II to achieve its intended goals of reducing re-incarceration and support Vermonters in their reentries to becoming productive members of our communities.

Generous thanks for your consideration.