



**Housing for Everyone Law Project**  
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To: Tom Stevens, Chair, House Committee on General and Housing  
Copy: Kathleen Berk, Vermont State Housing Authority  
From: Jean Murray, Vermont Legal Aid, Inc.  
Date: January 8, 2024  
Re: Eviction prevention  
Budget Adjustment Act and Act. 47, sections 43, 44, 45

Last session your committee worked on H. 391, which became part of S.100, which was enacted as Act 47. However, funding for Section 43, 44, and 45 was not appropriated. Over 530 more evictions were filed in calendar year 2023 than were filed in 2022. To prevent eviction, the Act includes three programs. Eviction diversion services, Tenant full representation pilot, and Rent Assistance. I urge that what was enacted last year now be funded as part of the Budget Adjustment Act.

Diversion services	\$ 400,000 (statewide)
Tenant full representation 2 year pilot	\$1,025,000 (just 2 counties)
Rent assistance for VSHA	<u>\$2,500,000</u>
	\$3,925,000

Sec. 43 of Act 47 delineates eviction diversion services. These services would be best located within the Judiciary, perhaps as a part of additional Judiciary funding sought this year. Eviction diversion services could be in the Judiciary rather than CVOEO as was proposed last year.

Sec. 44 of Act 47 is the tenant representation pilot. The budget for a two-year pilot for just Windsor and Lamoille, 2 attorneys + supervision and support is \$1,025,000. The budget to include Chittenden and Franklin in addition (about 40% of all evictions in the state) would be 8 attorneys + supervision and support for \$3,470,000. I can produce spreadsheets to show the items covered in this budget ask.

Sec. 45 of Act 47 is a back- rent assistance program. What is proposed would not be a duplicate of HOP as it would extend assistance to tenant household up to 80% of AMI and would not be limited to three months' back rent.