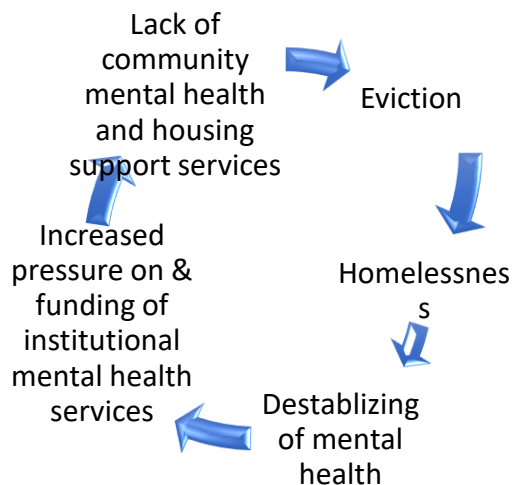


Supportive Housing in the Medicaid Global Commitment Waiver

During the worst of the pandemic, **Vermont demonstrated the effectiveness of housing and housing support as a powerful tool to promote health and public health.** To continue and build on this effort, the State asked for, and received, [approval to use Medicaid funds](#) to develop and strengthen our now fragmented and low functioning system of housing supports.

The Supportive Housing Assistance Pilot will provide individuals with services to successfully transition into and maintain residency in close coordination and collaboration with agencies that provide rental assistance. Eligible individuals will have access to pre-tenancy supports, tenancy sustaining services, and community transition services for enrollees moving to supportive housing from any setting.

Medicaid supportive housing can be a high impact and transformative program for people with disabilities to access and retain safe, stable housing in the community.



For years, reports identified a lack of adequate community mental health, supportive housing, and housing support services as a barrier to preventing and ending homelessness.ⁱ This has also been our experience at Vermont Legal Aid.ⁱⁱ It is much harder to find housing post-eviction, especially for tenants with disabilities, and especially mental health disabilities.

Although labeled “pilot”, AHS has sharedⁱⁱⁱ their intent for this to be a permanent part of Vermont’s Medicaid program. **We support this program being high impact**

and permanent, but it will be years until this program is operational. There are many pieces of regulations and funding streams which need to be coordinated and complied with to make sure that the program is sustainable. The Agency intends to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire an outside consultant to help design the program.

It would be helpful to have the Legislature involved for three reasons:

- (1) The perspective and input of legislators, as stakeholders and representatives of stakeholders, would be invaluable for program design.
- (2) Having legislators tracking on the progress of program development might help expedite the start up of the program.
- (3) There may be a role for legislators in making interim assistance or resources (such as mapping existing resources) available until this program is fully up and running.

Vermont Legal Aid has asked the Agency to look at ways to implement some interim versions of this program as it is being built up. Everyone agrees that right now, there are some housing support services available through programs like CRT, Family Supportive Housing, SASH. But these programs each have different requirements, serve different populations, and provide different services. It can be difficult to know which programs one is eligible for and which programs best fit one's needs. As the Agency is mapping the resources that already exist, we hope it may be possible for the Agency to help more people know about the services that already exist and how to access them.

ⁱ See e.g. Strengthening the Housing and Services System: Recommendations and Strategies for Vermont, December 2021, available at https://vhfa.org/sites/default/files/publications/Strengthening_Housing_Services_System.pdf, Report to the Vermont Legislature from the Specialized Housing Vouchers Working Group, November 15, 2019, available at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Specialized-Housing-Voucher-Report-FINAL.pdf>; Vermont Roadmap to End Homelessness, January 15, 2017, available at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Homelessness-Study.pdf>

ⁱⁱ See e.g. Wrongly Confined A Disability Rights Vermont Report in Consultation with Melodie Peet, M.P.H., March 2020 <https://disabilityrightsvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/DRVt-Olmstead-Report.pdf>

Jill Rudge, Vermont Legal Aid, Mental Health and Housing in Vermont: Challenges and Opportunities, August 9, 2020 available at <https://vtbarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Fellow-Report-2020-8-9-Final-Report.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ The people we met with at the Agency of Human Services were Wendy Trafton, Deputy Director of Health Care Reform, Ena Backus, Director of Health Care Reform, and Dave Riegel, AHS Director of Housing Policy and Planning. The people from Legal Aid who were at the meeting were Maryellen Griffin and Sandra Paritz. Michael Costa, CEO of Northern Counties Health Care, Inc., connected us and also participated in the meeting.