



**January 19, 2023**  
**Homelessness Awareness Day**  
**Kara Casey**  
**Director of Economic Empowerment**

Hello. My name is Kara Casey and I am the Director of Economic Empowerment at the Vt Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. Thank you for inviting us to speak today for Homelessness Awareness Day. The Vermont Network is statewide domestic and sexual violence coalition. Our member organizations serve every county and every town in Vermont. You may wonder why I am here today to introduce this testimony. If you talk to survivors and advocates in any county about barriers that survivors face, inevitably housing will come up. That is why I have been involved in the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH) for many years and I currently serve as the President of their Board.

The VCEH is a nonprofit organization that seeks to ensure that people living in Vermont have a safe, stable, affordable home, and if homelessness does occur it is brief, rare and non-recurring and those experiencing homelessness are treated with dignity and respect. We support the HUD Balance of State Continuum of Care, a coalition of homelessness service providers, housing providers, people with lived experience and many others. VCEH, along with the Chittenden County Homelessness Alliance, which is the HUD CoC serving Chittenden County, are tasked with coordinating HUD CoC funding, conducting the annual Point In Time Count of unhoused people in Vermont, and Homelessness Awareness Day (among other things). We are joined by the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition; we acknowledge that we cannot end or prevent homelessness without homes, and Vermont Interfaith Action; partners such as the faith community, mental health providers, local businesses and state agencies are integral to this work.

Today we have lined up testimony for you that we hope will shine a light on the experience of people living in our communities that are unhoused, what is working right now and where we hope to go in the future. There are also regional events taking place in communities around the state today. I would encourage you to visit our website <https://helpingtohousevt.org/local-housing-coalition-homelessness-awareness-day-events/>