
2023 Legislative Recommendations for Vermont's Mobile Homes

1. **Increased funding for individual mobile home repair grants** accessible to all income-eligible mobile home owners in all registered mobile home communities statewide, meeting the highest level of need beyond existing support (~15,000 per household). On an individual household level, the greatest unmet need for many mobile home owners is a lack of access to home repair funds that could prevent the further degradation or potential condemnation of their home, with many mobile home owners being ineligible for existing repair resources for myriad reasons. The creation of an ongoing flexible funding pool (\$100,000) accessible on a shortened timeline for crisis situations administered by the Mobile Home Program of CVOEO should also be strongly considered.
2. **Sustained funding for mobile home parks technical assistance services**, specifically to support the unique needs of mobile home residents and communities, through direct investment in the CVOEO Mobile Home Program as the statewide mobile home park technical assistance provider, in the vein of that provided to Tri Park Cooperative by DEC as part of Act 179 of 2020. At a community level, successful uptake of available resources will be the key determinant of the network's future sustainability – investing in sustained technical assistance now can push the states mobile home parks in the right direction.
3. **Continued funding for mobile home park water infrastructure**, specifically focusing available ARPA Healthy Homes resources on parks without strong administrative/technical capacity to ensure the parks (and residents) that need it most are given realistic opportunity to apply for this potentially transformational funding.
4. **Additional funding given for mobile home-specific legal assistance** including the creation of a mobile home statute legal specialist position able to provide legal counsel to mobile home owners. Additionally, it is imperative there be pathways created within jurisdiction of oversight agencies like DHCD and DEC that ensure park resident complaints receive responses in a timely fashion and that enforcement measures are effectively enacted. If creating a specialist position is not possible, creating a legal fund accessible to park residents could be established for more nuanced community-level legal situations such as issues with probate court or prolonged resident rights violations without correction. Should a resident be displaced as the result of murky legality? They often lose their home (as it is likely unable to be safely moved) to their park owner and become homeless as it is claimed as abandoned property. Additionally, if a park is stuck in a legal quagmire, residents may feel the most acute harm should the situation further devolve. Increase capacity in these areas would also help close loopholes in the current statute that allow for chronic rights violations and environmental injustices.

5. **Assistance for the purchase of mobile home parks to maintain them as affordable housing** through subsidy, down payment assistance, interest rate relief, or other model to increase the likelihood that parks are able to be purchased by a nonprofit or become resident-owned communities when they are sold. Due to the history of underinvestment, affordable housing providers have been reluctant to add mobile home parks to their portfolio in recent years out of trepidation that they may uncover significant infrastructure or capital needs after taking ownership leaving foreclosed and parks for sale as easy prey to out of state investors. We have seen consistently that nonprofit and resident ownership models maintain lower lot rents than for-profit park ownership, yet the barriers to these models are continuously increasing. While we have largely avoided the national trend of large out-of-state investors buying Vermont's mobile home parks, we may begin to move in this direction.

6. **Further dedication of mobile-home-specific considerations in all housing assistance programs**, including provisions that consider the unique needs of mobile home residents in all future broad housing investments and through the creation of a working group of pertinent state departments (DEC, DHCD, VEM and others) to consolidate understanding of these needs and how to address them.

As a state, we need to further invest in our mobile home communities' future to preserve this incredibly valuable component of our affordable housing network. Parks and residents need immediate investment through the expansion of grant programs accessible to mobile home communities and individual households, expansion of the CVOEO Mobile Home Program as the statewide comprehensive dedicated technical support provider, strengthening of mobile home owner protections in Vermont statute so that this critical form of affordable housing is preserved and strengthened.

Awaiting the opportunity to discuss this further; do not hesitate to contact me with questions and or concerns by calling 802-660-3455 ext. 204 or via email at skibuey@cvoeo.org.

Sincerely,



Sandrine Kibuey, Director- MHP-Housing Advocacy Programs/CVOEO