

Thank you for listening. My name is Whitney White. I am the Women's Regional Manager for Vermont Foundation of Recovery. I am here in support of the request for additional funding for recovery residences.

I am in long term recovery from alcoholism and addiction. I grew up in central Vt at 24 I had nothing and couldn't fathom life with or without alcohol and drugs. I checked myself into the hospital where they got me in touch with a detox center where I stayed for 7 days. The detox facility encouraged me to seek treatment at a rehab and to try sober living. I knew that if I went back to where I was living that I would drink and use drugs. I needed to have a space to break the pattern of addiction and then move on to a place to hold me accountable. It was at rehab that I had first heard about Vermont Foundation of Recovery and the women's sober house they had where I was accepted after completion of rehab.

As a member of VFOR I was held accountable for following policies and a commitment to stay drug and alcohol free. I was given the encouragement and guidance to learn how to be a productive member of society. I got a job and kept it. I began to actively participate in a program of recovery. I finally felt like I had a community that supported and understood me. VFOR staff and the peer support I received at the home helped carry me through difficult situations and stay clean and sober while doing it. I learned about patience with others, let's be honest living with other people can be challenging when you are learning how to live a full life for the first time! Most importantly VFOR staff taught me compassion through their own actions with me. VFOR helped me recreate a life worth living by giving me a foundation to build on when it came time for me to move on.

I am indebted to VFOR and their commitment to helping others like me. I stayed in touch with VFOR staff through the years after I moved on. VFOR had a job opportunity as the Women's Regional Manager that I sought out and received. I am now able to help other Women who have had a similar story to mine break the patterns of addiction and alcoholism. Members feel safe knowing that VFOR understands that

recurrences can happen and we will work with them to figure out the next steps while they stay in our emergency bed or with a safe family or friend. In my experience working at VFOR we have never left any members out on the streets. In one case I can remember myself and another VFOR staff worked late into the night searching for safe housing for a member that needed a place to go after deciding that VFOR was no longer the appropriate fit. With the assurance of safety and peer support that VFOR offers, members are given the opportunity to work together to recreate the members' lives giving them a foundation in recovery. With the additional funds, VFOR will be able to grow across the state of Vermont bringing a safe, recovery-based home to those ready for a way out of addiction. The funding received will allow VFOR to hire proper staffing and on-going training to better support our members throughout their journey. In addition to the houses, we will be able to create transitional apartments for those that are ready for the next phase of recovery that allows for more independent living while still having accountability, with these recovery homes and transitional apartments this will provide close to two years of a stable recovery housing to help ensure long time sobriety. Together we can give our Vermonters the opportunity to have a safe place to live that teaches and supports recovery. Thank you all again for listening. I support the request for additional funding for recovery residences.