

Vermont Council on Housing & Homelessness

2023 Report

DECEMBER 2023

Recommendations to support affordable housing development and help reduce and prevent homelessness. Established by Governor Scott's Executive Order 01-23.



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Introduction

In the face of a nationwide housing crisis, Vermont recognizes the urgency and need to address our housing shortage and support individuals experiencing homelessness. The Vermont Council on Housing and Homelessness, established by Governor Scott's Executive Order 01-23, undertakes the critical mission of crafting an annual report with strategies and tactics to ensure affordable housing options exist for every Vermonter at all income levels. The primary homelessness prevention measure identified by this Council is the creation of more affordable housing units. Recognizing that successful homelessness prevention hinges on creating more affordable housing units, the Council commits to active collaboration with national associations and continuous engagement with regional groups and neighboring states.

This document outlines strategic recommendations that can be implemented now and identifies areas that may be viable options but require further investigation. The recommendations in this document are organized into three categories, including recommendations to:

1. Remove Barriers to Housing Development & Streamline Processes
2. Design and Test Innovative New Programs
3. Support What Already Works

Moreover, the Council emphasizes a multifaceted approach, acknowledging the interconnected issues of substance use disorder, mental health, employment, and homelessness. Efforts will be directed towards identifying funding, dismantling barriers, supporting specialists, and fostering collaboration with community providers such as Designated Agencies, Preferred Providers, Community Action Agencies, and housing and homelessness providers. By fostering peer support and sharing promising practices, Vermont aspires to cultivate a network that strengthens the collective effort toward housing for all.

Understanding the direct correlation between high rents, the cost of living, and elevated homelessness rates, the Council emphasizes the need for comprehensive solutions. Beyond housing, there is a recognition that mental health and substance abuse support are integral components. Therefore, the Council is poised to address this complex challenge by not only expanding housing options but also enhancing support systems for individuals grappling with mental health and substance use issues.

Not all households who are homeless have the same needs, and while for some, housing alone will address their needs, many populations require housing with services. These include households with complex medical conditions and disabilities, many of whom are older adults. We recognize other populations like households with mental health issues, substance use disorders, and families with children also may require a combination of housing and services such as healthcare, mental health supports, substance use treatment, home health care, and physical or other therapies. Some of this may be covered in the recommendations to invest in services within the housing with supportive services model, but for older adults and some of these diverse populations, this also speaks to a need for more affordable licensed care settings when the needs of the household are beyond what is typically provided in the supportive housing model.

Introduction

The Council represents a broad range of stakeholders, and this report is a product of that diversity of perspectives. The work to arrive at this set of recommendations was based on consensus. Therefore, the list of recommendations is not exhaustive.

Recommendations to Remove Barriers to Housing Development

Clarify the language in Act 47 of 2023: This Act amended laws to enable new opportunities for housing development within state, regional, and local planning, and development regulations. As parts of this Act have been implemented, there has been a need for additional clarity within these new standards. The recommendations below, except for strengthening the height requirement, are updates to the legislative language meant to clarify legislative intent without changing the impact of the legislation.

- **Clarify density standard of 5 units per acre.** Update language to read: “(12) In any area served by municipal sewer and water infrastructure that allows residential development, bylaws shall establish lot and building dimensional standards that allow five or more dwelling units per acre for each allowed residential use, ~~and density with that standard being applied on a proportional basis, allowing one unit for every one-fifth of an acre.~~ Any lot that is smaller than one acre but granted a variance of not more than 10 percent shall be treated as one acre for the purposes of this subsection. Density and minimum lot size standards for multiunit dwellings shall not be more restrictive than those required for single-family dwellings.”
- **Clarify duplexing by-right provision.** Update language to read: “In any district that allows year-round residential development, duplexes shall be ~~an allowed~~ a permitted use with the same dimensional standards ~~that are no more restrictive than is required for~~ a single-unit dwelling, including no additional land/lot area than would be required for a single-unit dwelling.”
- **Clarify quad-plex provision.** Update language to read: “In any district that is served by municipal sewer and water infrastructure that allows residential development, multiunit dwellings with four or fewer units shall be a permitted use, ~~and the established lot size for a single-unit dwelling shall be sufficient for up to four dwelling units such that no more than 1/5 of an acre shall be required,~~ unless that district specifically requires multiunit structures to have more than four dwelling units.”
- **Strengthen height provisions in Act 47:** Height restrictions on residential development significantly hinder the opportunity for greater density and quantity of housing units. Allowing for greater height in residential development helps to generate units near infrastructure, services, and amenities, and it meets conservation goals by focusing more on development within our development centers. Residential development must be allowed and encouraged to be built with greater height than is commonly permitted under municipal zoning in Vermont’s communities. Therefore, this Council recommends strengthening the height provisions in Act 47 to encourage residential construction at greater height.

Appeals: Appeals and drawn-out review processes can delay, halt, and increase the cost of housing development. Below are some recommendations on how to streamline the review and appeal processes.

- **Housing Appeals Board:** This Council recommends the establishment of a Housing Appeals Board comparable to that established in New Hampshire, whereby appeals of housing developments are diverted from the judiciary and instead are heard by a three-person panel. This Board shall have jurisdiction over appeals of municipal permitting decisions. Decisions of this Board should be

Recommendations to Remove Barriers to Housing Development

appealable only to the Vermont Supreme Court. This Council also recommends granting the Housing Appeals Board jurisdiction over State permitting decisions. The Council wishes to acknowledge the political burden that may come with consideration of jurisdiction over State permitting but recognizes that providing this Board with jurisdiction over both Municipal and State permitting decisions provides the most logically consistent and effective means of achieving the desired objectives.

The Housing Development subcommittee met with Ben Frost, Deputy Executive Director of New Hampshire Housing, to learn more about New Hampshire's Housing Appeals Board. The New Hampshire Housing Appeals Board was passed in 2019 and opened in 2020. So far, the court has made between 60 and 70 determinations on municipal decisions over two years. The board has three members selected based on their expertise, having both an attorney, and surveyor or engineer on the board. Appeals must be filed within 30 days of the decision, and the Housing Appeals Board must reach a decision within 150 days. Currently, they are averaging around 120 days until a decision. Given that the appeals process was reported to often take over a year, this has dramatically increased the appeal process's speed and led to more appeals being filed.

- **Limit Appeals in Designated Areas:** This Council recommends adjustments to state statute to prevent appeals of residential development such that in areas zoned for residential development and within the boundaries of a state-designated area (Designated Downtown, Village Center, Neighborhood Development Area, Growth Center, or New Town Center), residential or mixed-use developments that meet the requirements under municipal zoning. The Council proposes that if a permit is issued in an area that meets the previously outlined requirements, it is not subject to appeal of the Development Review Board's (or applicable municipal panel's) decision. However, we advocate that developers can appeal if a permit is issued with burdensome conditions. This Council recommends establishing the same restriction on appeals of state permits with the same conditions stated above.

Parameters around Development Review Board (DRB) or Appropriate Municipal Panel (AMP)

Timelines: Establishing timelines in state statute for the approval of residential development permits, such that a DRB or AMP has a limited number of days from the time the application is submitted to the municipal officer to decide on the issuance of a permit, would support housing development. If the AMP does not reach a decision within that timeframe, the permit shall be issued by the end of the last day without conditions. Timelines should be established on a sliding scale such that larger municipalities shall have a stricter timeline, and smaller municipalities (considering population, municipal staff, and grand list value) shall be given more leeway. In any instance, if the applicant and the AMP agree to a continuation beyond the set timeline, the agreed-upon extension shall be granted.

Recalibrate the Requirements for a Corrective Action Plan: Based on the feedback the Council received, the corrective action plan process is far too burdensome and takes a significant amount of time, delaying or halting much-needed housing development. This Council recommends the Agency of Natural Resources develop a plan whereby the Corrective Action Plan Process is completed within 180 days.

Recommendations to Support Innovative New Initiatives

Create a Housing Assistance Fund: Modeled by the successes of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) contingency fund program, we recommend the creation of a Housing Assistance Fund Program available to those who meet the Medicaid Supportive Housing Assistance criteria for Services, as defined in the Vermont Global Commitment to Health section 1115. The contingency fund program will provide financial resources for increased housing opportunities, expansion of temporary rental assistance, and financial support related to preventing homelessness and improving access for Vermonters with Substance Use Disorders, Mental Health Issues, TBI, Complex Physical Health Needs or Developmental/Cognitive Disability – where the DMH Contingency Fund is unavailable. Eligible uses for this fund would be the same as the current eligible used for the DMH contingency (see DMH Contingency Fund section in the [Recommendations to Support What Already Works](#) section). The Agency of Human Services (AHS) should conduct assessments to determine the most appropriate organizations to administer funding. This Council will continue to explore if this type of fund could become part of the Landlord Relief Program, along with the DMH contingency funds, so the process is streamlined for consumers and landlords (see [Areas of Future Investigation](#) to learn more about possibly combining these funds).

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Stabilization Locations: For individuals in need of withdrawal management (without needing medical monitoring), we recommend clinically managed residential withdrawal management, which provides 24-hour supervision, observation, and support for patients who are intoxicated or experiencing withdrawal. We recommend continued Request for Proposals (RFPs) for this level of programming.

We further recommend redesigning Public Inebriate Program (PIP) beds to receive funding related to individuals needing to briefly bridge between services who do not have a need for withdrawal management. Those needing withdrawal management would utilize higher levels of care prior to transitioning to the next appropriate program, recovery residence, or shelter.

Fund S.100: It is recommended that aspects of S. 100 not supported elsewhere be fully funded. There should be further discussion around how to best support and expand rental arrears funding in Vermont. The eligibility proposed in S. 100 is broader than that currently supported in existing state programs (Housing Opportunity Grant Program Client Financial Assistance), and a recommendation needs to be made on the best way to increase the capacity to support rental arrears in Vermont. Options to consider include funding rental arrears through S.100 and removing it as an eligible expense from the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP), expanding the definition of at risk of homelessness and increasing funding to support rental arrears through the HOP program, increasing funding to the Landlord Relief Program and adding rental arrears as an eligible expense, or another option.

Explore an Expanded Definition of “At Risk of Homelessness” with the HUD-Recognized Continua of Care: The HUD-recognized Continua of Care organizations (CoCs) are encouraged to adopt an expanded definition of “at risk of homelessness,” and may consider the Medicaid Supportive Housing Assistance criteria for Services, as defined in the Vermont Global Commitment to Health section 1115. It

Recommendations to Support New Innovative Initiatives

is recognized that an expanded definition of “at risk of homelessness” will need to be accompanied by additional funding for services to meet the needs of the expanded eligible population.

Develop a Statewide Model for Medical Respite with an Associated Funding Source: Medical respite beds are recognized as a service for those who are currently homeless and having an acute or post-acute medical episode, as well as needing to prep for medical screening procedures. These medical issues can be exacerbated by mental health or substance use disorders, resulting in people needing more significant support. Without medical respite, individuals with specialized needs experiencing homelessness record longer stays in both hospital in-patient and emergency rooms. While not explicitly preventing homelessness, medical respite beds have been proven to reduce the use of hospitalization and improve health management through connections with primary care providers and ongoing system supports that might not otherwise be realized. In 2023, the National Alliance to End Homeless identified 133 medical respite programs across 38 states. They are established through long-term care facilities, hotels, motels, and shelters. Medical respite beds require financing and can be staffed or supported through health care and community provider systems. Given the increase in the unhoused population with vulnerable medical, mental health, and substance use conditions, medical respite is an area this Council supports exploring in partnership with hospitals and healthcare providers.

Common Housing Application: Housing applications range from a few pages to nearly 30 pages long. Individuals seeking housing have consistently voiced the need for a common application to streamline the process. Through interviews, the State Housing Authority has found that multiple applications are discouraging and are a primary factor preventing households from completing the housing application process. The affordable housing continuum should compel itself to develop the common elements of a basic application with allowable addenda that may be required for completion based on funding streams requiring additional scrutiny. While a common application has been created, not all assisted housing providers use it. VSHA is working on an electronic version of the common application, and we recommend housing continuum develop a plan to adopt it as the primary application by 2025.

Recommendations to Support What Already Works

Additional Funding: In alignment with the Housing and Homeless Alliance of Vermont (HHAV), the Council is generally supportive of their recommendations while recognizing the limitations of available funding, which **include \$160 million for housing capital**, \$6 million to bridge the gap between those existing the General Assistance Emergency Housing program in April, \$34 million for supportive services, \$2 million for expanded state rental subsidies and \$2.5 million for a new eviction diversion program. The Housing Capital request includes:

- **\$110 million in one-time funding for VHCB:** (separate and in addition to VHCB receiving \$26 million of base funding representing its full statutory share of the Property Transfer Tax) to provide support and enhance capacity for the production and preservation of affordable rental housing and homeownership units, including:
 - Perpetually affordable homes for low-and moderate-income household
 - Improvements to manufactured homes and communities
 - Permanent homes for people experiencing homelessness
 - Recovery residences
 - Housing for refugees and farm workers
 - Shelter production
- **\$10 million for the Vermont Rental Housing Improvement Program (VHIP):** In addition to HHAV's request, the Council recommends future updates and support for the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP). Base funding is recommended for this program because it is a low-cost way to develop and maintain Vermont's Housing stock. The average VHIP grant is \$38,400 per unit. For comparison, on average, it costs about \$500,000 to build a new modest apartment, and similar programs that develop Accessory Dwelling Units in New York offer up to \$395,000 in funding (Plus One ADU pilot program).

VHIP provides grants to property owners to rehabilitate old non-code compliant units, create Accessory Dwelling Units, or develop new rental units. Upcoming changes to VHIP add an option for property owners to select a 10-year forgivable loan option that will not have the requirement that the unit serves households exiting homelessness. This program expansion will allow it to support more property types and be more adaptable to the needs and desires of property owners. However, there is a disincentive for property owners to enroll in the 5-year tract that serves homeless populations because of the tax implications of the VHIP grants. **Allowing the 5-year tract to be a grant or forgivable loan would reduce the yearly tax burden on property owners enrolling in the program and would remove this disincentive to enroll in the 5-year tract serving the homeless population.**

Recommendations to Support What Already Works

- **\$25 million for VHFA's Homeownership Development Program** (previously named the Missing Middle Homeownership Development Pilot Program)
- **\$15 million for specific programs and services to support manufactured home residents**, prioritized as: Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Healthy Homes Program, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity's (CVOEO) Mobile Home program, and the Manufactured Housing Improvement & Repair Program (MHIR), administered by Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA)

Increase funding for the Landlord Relief Program: This funding would be used to expand eligibility and sustain the ongoing, annual administration of the program. The Landlord Relief Program is administered through the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) to help landlords who rent to Vermonters receiving rental assistance or exiting homelessness to ensure Vermonters with low income have access to rental units in Vermont. By providing resources to landlords, the inventory of rental units available to Vermonters who are low-income or experiencing homelessness will increase, creating housing stability for Vermonters. The availability and structure of the funds create a stronger relationship among landlords, tenants, and providers. This funding is an innovative and proven addition to the landlord engagement and recruitment plan. For example, VSHA reports an increase in positive feedback from landlords engaging with their voucher programs since the launch of the Landlord Relief Program. Between when the program started in February 2023 through November 2023, 200 applications have been approved with an average award of \$5,179 per landlord. This program is currently funded with a one-time award. Due to the limited nature of the funding, the program is prioritized to include specific eligible expenses and eligible units. It is recommended that this program receive annual funding of \$500,000 to ensure ongoing administration and sustainable funding that would allow for broader eligibility, benefiting more landlords and tenants. More information can be found on VSHA's [website](#) and the appendix speaks to the current criteria of eligible landlords and units, this could be expanded with ongoing and increased funds.

Placed-Based Support Services: Provide a robust and reliable human services funding stream to build out place-based and proven support services in permanently affordable housing sites. Nationally, resident services programs are widely utilized and have been shown to connect affordable housing residents to outside resources, build community, and improve housing stability. The Vermont-grown Support and Services at Home (SASH) model has shown health improvements and reduced unnecessary healthcare spending for participating residents. During the last several years, the service needs of residents in the affordable housing portfolio have increased drastically. At the same time, the social service delivery network has experienced a great deal of turnover and vacancies. As a result, to increase the likelihood of successful and sustained tenancies, the housing organizations have identified an immediate need to expand place-based service coordination for residents, including community-wide activities and programs. Place-based services supplement individualized case management and reduce evictions. This model is already being successfully implemented around Vermont but lacks a sustainable funding mechanism. As an initial step, funds will provide for and expand the capacity of existing tenancy-

Recommendations to Support What Already Works

preserving interventions, including resident service coordinators and similar positions to partner with vulnerable residents and local partners to preserve tenancy, support success in housing, and prevent homelessness. Funds will additionally be targeted to systematize supportive services in the affordable housing network by expanding on the current SASH model to scale up SASH for All across the state in a reasonable and deliberate time frame. This is a phased approach to increase the capacity of the affordable housing network to meet the immediate needs of high-acuity tenants. To begin implementation of this phased model, it is recommended that \$1,000,000 in human services funding be invested annually to support 11 resident coordinator positions at Vermont's regional and statewide affordable housing providers to support and strengthen the existing efforts of housing providers to preserve tenancy. The second phase will work to expand SASH for All statewide to meet this need long term.

Increase Department of Mental Health (DMH) Contingency Fund: The DMH Contingency Fund is appropriated to the designated agencies through the Department of Mental Health's budget. It was created in 1988. The fund continues to provide financial resources for increased housing opportunities, expansion of temporary rental assistance, and financial support related to preventing homelessness and improving access for Vermonters with serious and persistent mental illness who are enrolled in the Community Rehabilitation and Treatment Program. Eligible uses include temporary rental assistance, security and apartment set-up costs, utility deposits or furnishings, payment of rental arrears, rental subsidy while on the Section 8 subsidy waiting list, and other discretionary uses as approved by DMH. This extremely hard-to-house population has benefited greatly from this fund, yet it has not increased in many years, and the Council sees the need to increase the funding as imperative. We recommend an increase of \$1,026,399 in annual funding for this program.

Increase funding for the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP): Ensure sufficient funding to support Homelessness Prevention activities. Currently, 5% of the HOP budget supports prevention services across the state; increased HOP funding would support the expansion of these services (approximately \$900,000 would support one position per district). HOP funding currently supports Landlord Liaison capacity in two communities; ERAP Housing Stability Services provides supplemental funding through June 30, 2025, to support Landlord Liaisons in four additional communities. Additional funding could establish this position statewide (approximately \$450,000 would be needed in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025 to ensure 1 Landlord Liaison per AHS District, and \$787,800 would be needed to maintain capacity in SFY26 as ERAP HSS funding ends). \$2.2 million in one-time funding supports HOP client-based financial assistance, in SFY23 49% of those funds supported rental arrears to help prevent homelessness. The Council supports increasing funding for this program to prevent the loss of this one-time funding.

Supportive Housing: Create an inventory of existing Permanent Supportive Housing projects in Vermont (public, private funding), and, from that inventory, assess the strengths and gaps. Use this data to expand the scope and funding of evidence-based programs, promising practices to increase the number of supportive housing units in both supportive housing communities and scattered sites and increasing the funding for these services, which case managers, peer supports, and housing specialists across

Recommendations to Support What Already Works

designated agencies, peer recovery partners, parent and child centers, and community action agencies provide. Continue to explore other supportive housing models as needed, including reducing barriers for those with a higher level of service needs across the range of housing assisted living or nursing homes.

Permanent Supportive Housing Medicaid Benefit: Support the current efforts of the Vermont Agency of Human Services in designing and implementing a Medicaid Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Assistance Program (funding, including for positions at AHS). This new program will be for adults who have Medicaid and meet certain health and risk criteria who are also experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Approximately \$1.1 million dollars in the first year would serve 100 households and then an ongoing annual budget of \$2.6 million would serve between 300 and 400 households.

Increase funding for the Vermont Rental Subsidy for Reach Up Families: This funding would allow families on Reach Up who are experiencing homelessness or meet the definition of at risk of homelessness to have access to a subsidy and lengthen the time of the subsidy (36 months) to ensure a bridge to a permanent voucher or until the family no longer needs financial support. There are approximately 120 households currently receiving this voucher. Given the state's limited number of federal vouchers and the ongoing challenges in the rental market, the length of time should be extended to 36 months per household. Allowing new families to join the program to meet the demand (approximately 150 households are currently in the GA Emergency Housing Program would cost an additional \$4 million for the full 36 months) while extending the length of the program for current households would cost an additional \$2 million per year.

Department of Mental Health (DMH) Housing First Program: Expand the DMH Vermont Housing First Program into every Agency of Human Services (AHS) District, further expand capacity in existing communities to address unmet needs, and into one single community where the most impact from motel program changes are anticipated. Below are the anticipated costs associated with these proposals:

- Statewide expansion into every AHS district and expansion of capacity in existing communities to address unmet needs. Budget = \$5,776,891 (\$3,466,134 for year one).
- Expansion into communities currently not served by Pathways Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program. Budget = \$2,856,052 (\$1,856,433 for year one).
- Expansion in one single community where the most impact from motel program changes is anticipated. Budget = \$490,253 (\$367,689 for year one).

Expand Funding for School-Based Housing Support Positions: As evidenced by the work done in the Champlain Valley School District, it is recommended that the school-based housing support position be invested in and expanded to other school districts to connect with students and their families before they experience literal homelessness. Sustainable funding should be identified through the Agency of Education (AOE) or other appropriate entities. In under two years of work within the Champlain Valley School District, this position has had 97 families referred, supporting 188 total students. 39 households

Recommendations to Support What Already Works

were moved from homelessness into permanent, stable housing. For an additional 42 households, this position helped prevent eviction and stabilize their current housing.

Recovery Housing: This Council recommends increased capital and operational funding for the creation of at least two Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences (VTARR) Certified recovery homes in each county (with four in Chittenden, Rutland, Washington, and Windsor – our most populous counties). “Housing: A Critical Link to Recovery” ([Housing: A Critical Link to Recovery](#)) was produced in early 2019. An updated analysis should be conducted with a plan to sustainably fund the capital and operational needs to allow for proper scaling of this resource to meet Vermont’s needs.

Community Outreach Teams: Expand funding for community outreach teams to engage those experiencing unsheltered homelessness (outreach, housing navigation, and community drop-in centers). The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is funding efforts through a combination of ongoing and one-time funding; this Council recommends creating additional funding to support the extension of the current one-time efforts (approximately \$1.3 million to support additional capacity in six communities) and to expand the program generally.

Expand Residential Therapeutic Group Homes: Currently located in 8 of the 10 regions served by the Designated Agencies, we recommend funding two Residential Therapeutic group homes to serve regions currently without group homes. The approximate annual cost is \$1,000,000 for each five-bed residential program.

Areas of Future Investigation

Overall, the following recommendations warrant and require further exploration to determine their viability and both intended and unintended impacts. Future reports will likely include more details about the feasibility of these recommendations.

ACT 250, Designation, Regional Planning Commission Studies: Act 250 has been identified as a barrier to housing development, and the state designation program is an important tool for encouraging smart housing development in our town centers. Ongoing studies about Act 250 and the State Designation program will be prepared by the end of December 2023. The Housing Development subcommittee plans to review these studies' findings and develop recommendations based on the information presented and will include those recommendations in future reports. Additionally, the regional planning commissions were tasked with gathering data on current and expected demographic data, the current location, quality, types, and cost of housing in Act 47 of 2023. When this data becomes available, the Council plans to review and use the data to inform future recommendations.

Workforce: The workforce is one of the largest challenges to providing services to vulnerable Vermonters. It is necessary to implement innovative ways to increase the social service workforce to support people in obtaining and maintaining housing. The ideas discussed include offering incentives for those who pursue social service degrees and positions, creating a certification for housing specialists, exploring opportunities to create apprenticeships or paid internships in social service fields, recruiting and incentivizing people with lived experience to work in social services, creating incentive programs to support staff who have stayed in housing positions at varying intervals, or providing funding to engage young people through school counselors. The Council will investigate these ideas and others to inform future recommendations.

Additional Tax on Seasonal or Second Homes: Act 68 of the 2023 session includes a study by the Department of Taxes to examine the impact of distinguishing between different types and characteristics of property and their uses. This will be an important first step towards understanding the potential scope of an additional tax on non-primary, year-round residences. Once fully completed in December 2024, the Council may use this information to inform future recommendations in this area.

Regulatory Reform: Several regulatory reforms were raised as possibilities, including landlord incentives, restricting large investors from purchasing large quantities of units, and implementing rent increase regulations. These ideas need further exploration before the Council can make specific recommendations.

Explore the Consolidation of Housing Mitigation, Contingency Funds, and Risk Pools under the Umbrella of the Statewide Landlord Relief Program: A multi-disciplinary work group would assess current funds available and analyze key components (target population, eligibility, eligible expenses,

Areas of Future Investigation

benefit minimum-maximum, etc.) to make a recommendation on whether consolidation of funding would be beneficial for providers, landlords, and Vermonters and worth exploring in future years.

Embed Mental Health Clinicians, Supportive Services in Nursing Facilities: This would offer support and consultation for individuals with complex needs such as severe mental illness, substance use, or other related issues. This idea will be investigated further in the coming year.

Connect Provider Services: Explore opportunities to leverage technology to connect provider services more effectively. We propose an exploration of technology tools that creates a platform for both service providers and clients to access resources, make referrals, track outcomes of referrals, maintain current information on the availability of services, and help with the coordination of services to ensure that client needs are met, and that communication is enhanced. A pilot of this tool is being launched in Lamoille County, and data on its success will be collected in the next year with the goal of minimizing duplicative work, higher engagement in services, clearer communication amongst providers, and more streamlined referrals. An analysis of this tool is recommended after one year of use in Lamoille to see if it could be replicated across the state.

Create Additional Low Barrier Shelter Capacity: While not within the scope of the Tactical Action Plan, the Council felt it must speak to the high numbers of Vermonters currently experiencing homelessness and the need to expand options to prevent unsheltered homelessness (shelter capacity, state funded subsidies, etc.). The Council intends to devote time to this issue and developing specific actionable recommendations in the year ahead.

Conclusion & Council Member List

The Council extends its appreciation to our members, dedicated subcommittee contributors, and the invaluable presenters who lent their expertise to the Council to develop and refine these recommendations. It is the collective commitment of these individuals that has made the development of this Tactical Action Plan possible. As we conclude this year, the Council remains resolute in its commitment to advance our analyses and recommendations. Future meetings will serve as a platform for continued collaboration and the expansion and refinement of these recommendations, particularly those outlined in the Areas of Future Investigation section.

Ex Officio Council Members

Commissioner of the Department of Housing & Community Development: Alex Farrell

Commissioner of Department for Children and Families: Chris Winters

Secretary or Deputy Secretary of the Agency of Human Services: Jenney Samuelson

Commissioner of Corrections: Nicholas Deml

Commissioner of Mental Health: Emily Hawes

Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL): Monica White

Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Health: Mark Levine

Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board: Amanda Wheeler

Chief Prevention Officer: Monica Hutt

Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Labor: Michael Harrington

Executive Director of the Vermont State Housing Authority: Kathleen Berk

Executive Director of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency: Maura Collins

Executive Director of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board: Gus Seelig

Executive Director Vermont League of Cities and Towns: Ted Brady

Governor Appointed Members

Private Sector Housing Provider: Zak Hale, Hale Resources

Executive Director of a Homeless Shelter or Service Provider: Kim Anetsberger, Lamoille Community House

Executive Director of a Regional Non-Profit Housing Provider: Patrick Shattuck, RuralEdge

Representative of the Chittenden County Continuum of Care: Will Towne, Spectrum Youth Services

Representative of the Balance of State Continuum of Care: Position Not Filled

Representative from a Regional Planning Commission: Catherine Dimitruk, Northwest Regional Planning Commission

Council Members & Contributors Continued

Executive Director *of a Substance Use Preferred Provider*: Chadd Viger, Recovery House

Executive Director *of a Mental Health Designated Agency*: Mary Moulton, Washington County Mental Health

Housing Development Subcommittee Members

Alex Farrell, Department of Housing and Community Development

Zak Hale, Hale Resources

Kathleen Berk, Vermont State Housing Authority

Patrick Shattuck, RuralEdge

Maura Collins, Vermont Housing Finance Agency

Gus Seelig, Vermont Housing Conversation Board

Kim Anetsberger, Lamoille Community House

Tom Steveson, Volunteered by Representative Wood

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Additional Contributions From

Adam Hall, CORA Community – Presented on Outreach Teams

Ben Frost, New Hampshire Housing – Presented on the New Hampshire Housing Appeals Board

Chadd Viger, Recovery Housing – Presented on Recovery Housing

Crystal Jones, Burlington Housing Authority – Presented on Family Supportive Housing

Jay Ramsey, Department of Labor – Provided input on Job Training and Employment Stabilization

Jenny Davis, Chittenden County Homeless Alliance – Presented on School Based Housing Navigators

Kathleen Berk, Vermont State Housing Authority – Presented on Eviction Prevention

Lily Sojourner, Office of Economic Opportunities (OEO) -Presented on the OEO's Programs

Nichele Carver, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) – Presented on the Federal All In Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

Rebecca Plumber, Vermont Legal Aid

Naomi Cunningham – Prepared the final draft of the Tactical Action Plan with input from the Council

Kristen Kellett – Administrative support for Council and Subcommittee meetings