



VERMONT

**AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

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DCF High-End System of Care Update in Accordance with Act 23, Section 14

- Report reiterates the High-End System of Care (HESOC) plan program types
- HESOC Expansion updates
- Stabilization and Treatment Settings – Foundational Principles Statement
- Partner engagement efforts and other recommendations
- Link to [DCF Act 23 report](#)

Woodside

Protecting children is our work – and in the running of Woodside we made mistakes

We have learned lessons from that model and will not be repeating it:

- First and foremost, there must be a system of treatment providers at a variety of levels of care, not just one facility.
- The system must be a therapeutic one with appropriate trauma-informed treatment and educational supports.
- There must be transparent oversight and accountability for the entire system, but more so for the higher levels of care, particularly any locked/secured sites.
- The State cannot be both the ultimate regulator and the provider.

Current High-End System of Care Capacity

Level of Care	Pre- Pandemic Contracted Capacity	Current Licensed Capacity	Actual Capacity- August 28, 2023	Actual Capacity (Percent of Pre-pandemic Contract)	Actual Capacity (Percent of Current Licensed Capacity)
Secure Programming	16	0	0	0%	0%
Crisis Stabilization	20	19	14	70%	70%
Mental Health Emergency Beds	16	18	11	69%	61%
Short Term Stabilization	14	16	6	36%	36%
Intensive residential	75	51	46	59%	96%
Community Based Residential	55	51	23	54%	51%
Total	196	155	100	51%	65%

*Data updated on 8/28/23

High-End System of Care

Short-Term Secure Stabilization: Hardware-secured physical structure with generalized therapeutic programming, designed to immediately manage acute safety crises for any justice-involved youth.

Short-Term Secure Treatment: Hardware-secured physical structure with specialized therapeutic programming, designed to address behaviors that present risk to personal or public safety for appropriate justice-involved youth.

Staff-Secure Crisis Stabilization: Community-based physical structure with generalized or specialized therapeutic programming, designed to immediately manage acute crises for any youth, including appropriate justice involved youth.

Psychiatric Residential Treatment: Community-based physical structure with specialized therapeutic services designed to serve youth with intensive mental health or developmental needs, including appropriate justice involved youth.

The Broad Approach

- The youth DCF generally supports have experienced trauma, have significant Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and experience mental health challenges as a result.
- Consistent with a more therapeutic approach, for decades Vermont has been moving towards using the least restrictive settings possible in a variety of systems of care.
- Setting matters. Brain science shows the value of nature for promoting healing and brain cognitive development.
- There are youth who are our neighbors, friends, students, and families. We, communities as well as State systems, have an obligation to serve and support them.
- DCF developed a statement of principles to guide development of programs and settings for the HESOC.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Per Act 78:

“Sec. E.316 STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP; FACILITY PLANNING FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH

(a) The Department for Children and Families, in consultation with the Department of Buildings and General Services, shall assemble a stakeholder working group to provide regular input on the planning, design, development, and implementation of the temporary stabilization facility for youth and on the development of a long-term plan for the high-end system of care.”

- First meeting of invited stakeholders will be October 27, 2023. The objective of the first convening is to build the operational framework and identify who else should be included.
- DCF’s intention is that stakeholder input and involvement will not be limited only to the group required in Act 78.

Short-Term Secure Stabilization, Temporary Site

Building: Renovation of former Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence (MTCR)

Program: Reduced census from previous uses (both DMH and FSD). Program will serve up to 4 youth in need of secure stabilization. This will not be a large enough program to meet the full demands for secure treatment in the state but will address the most acute needs.

Staffing: RFP issued (8/22/23) but no responses received. DCF is currently outreaching to local community providers.

Status: Construction permit submitted; anticipated opening between January and March 2024 depending on supply chain availability.

Short-Term Secure Stabilization and Treatment, Permanent Site

Building and Program: DCF and BGS have been moving to develop a secure campus setting that contains both short-term stabilization and treatment programs. The location and specific plans will be identified through the bid and design processes.

Program: Both programs will be served by a common core space that houses education, recreation, wellness, and administration components.

Staffing: RFP issued (8/22/23) but no responses received. DCF is currently outreaching to local community providers.

Status: Out to bid for design/build to lease. Submission deadline for bid proposals is Friday, November 10.

Staff-Secure Crisis Stabilization

Building: Windham County Sheriff's Building

Program: Currently wrapping up Architectural/Engineering phase. Working on aggressive schedule for construction phase to begin. Overall budget approved for moving forward.

Staffing: Finalizing minor details and budget. Staffing RFP will be ready for release within the coming weeks (mid-November).

Status: Construction bid documents will be ready for review in November. DCF anticipates being able to use this facility by the summer of 2024.

Short-Term Secure Treatment

Building: Summit Transition Home, Newbury

Status: Plans to renovate the Summit Transition Home into a short-term treatment secure program have been on pause during litigation. DCF awaits the Supreme Court's verdict.

Psychiatric Residential Treatment (PRTF)

Program: In collaboration with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL), DCF issued an RFP on 5/10/23 to develop a PRTF Facility within Vermont that can serve up to 15 Vermont youths.

Staffing: To be provided by the bidder.

Status: The RFP yielded a successful bid, and the Departments are currently engaging with the bidder in contractual negotiations.