



**Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
Act 81 September Report, September 25, 2023
Submitted by Gus Seelig, Executive Director**

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) appreciates the opportunity to participate in the state's efforts to provide homes to Vermonters experiencing homelessness through carrying out the requirements included in Act 81. VHCB continues to work to add new housing and shelter projects to the construction pipeline. On Sep. 21, the VHCB board met and awarded funds for an important community development project in Bennington that will result in 17 new affordable homes, three of which will be targeted to households exiting homelessness. The Board also supported two shelter projects in St. Johnsbury and Hartford that, when completed, will result in 40 new shelter beds. The project in St. Johnsbury, if successful, will result in opening the only shelter in the Northeast Kingdom with the goal of opening this winter.

Housing Vermonters Exiting Homelessness – In August, VHCB began reporting on the number of households exiting homelessness who have been rehoused within VHCB's partner portfolio. This reporting covers both new units, and existing units that are available to households with modest incomes because of their perpetual affordability covenants. Reporting for this fiscal year demonstrates that VHCB partners are exceeding the goal set in Act 81, issuing 40 percent of new leases to households exiting homelessness, resulting in housing for 89 households in the first two months of reporting. Vermont's perpetually affordable portfolio is a key asset in the State's ability to transition households out of shelters and unsheltered homelessness. Since the Governor's 2016 Executive Order on Homelessness, Vermont's core network of 10 regional non-profit affordable housing providers has been engaged in a sustained effort to prioritize the needs of those experiencing homelessness. They report that 1,714 households who previously experienced homelessness are currently residing in their affordable housing. This represents 25 percent of these organizations' permanently affordable rental homes. Further, they report that over the last 12 months, of the more than 800 units that became available through turnovers, 43 percent were leased to a household exiting homelessness.

Ensuring Resident Service Coordination – Following the passage of Act 81, VHCB reached out to the affordable housing network partners to ask them to sharpen their focus on housing Vermonters exiting homelessness. Partners emphasized the critical importance of supportive services in keeping households successfully housed. VHCB has entered into discussions with the Agency of Human Services on how the Agency can provide funding to support resident service coordinators at each of the regional non-profit housing providers. VHCB conducted a needs

analysis of its partners and presented a proposal to AHS for \$1,000,000 to fund resident service coordinators at 11 regional and statewide non-profits to work with households to connect them to housing retention services and resolve challenges that threaten tenancy. These dollars may leverage philanthropic support that VHCB has identified for this initiative. These discussions are ongoing.

VHIP and MHIR – VHCB is working closely with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) to finalize grant agreements to fund the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) and the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR). VSHA has expressed concerns that some homes that apply for repair funding are in a state in which they would cost more to repair than to replace. In these cases, investment in the repair of the home through MHIR would not result in safe housing for the family and could result in the family facing homelessness in the coming years. In these cases, VSHA seeks the authority to use MHIR funding to replace the home with a low-cost used unit. Because this expansion of the MHIR program would prevent homelessness and be more cost-effective than repairs, both DHCD and VHCB support this program expansion. VHCB asks the committee for the authority to allow replacement as an allowable use of funds for the \$4 million in MHIR funds flowing to VSHA through VHCB.

Manufactured Home Replacement & Infill Program- VHCB has established and opened a program for manufactured home park owners to access funding to fill vacant and underutilized lots in parks to house Vermonters exiting homelessness as directed by Act 81. VHCB held stakeholder conversations throughout the summer and formally opened the program for applications in September. The program name references replacement because stakeholders shared that the majority of available underutilized lots have uninhabitable homes on them that must be replaced. Allowable uses of funds are not limited to replacement and can be used to site homes on empty lots if any are identified. On September 22, VHCB held a public information session for potential applicants. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and VHCB is in the process of reviewing an initial application from Housing Foundation Inc., the largest owner of manufactured home communities in Vermont. VHCB will seek to quickly award funds to eligible projects to ensure that homes are purchased and made available in the early spring. It should be noted that FEMA is also reviewing the inventory of vacant lots in three counties for possible placement of FEMA housing. More information about the program can be found on VHCB's [Manufactured Home Replacement & Infill Program website](#).

Flood Response – VHCB continues to have conversations with state government, community leaders and partners to identify ways to engage in Vermont’s flood response. Some VHCB programs are already actively engaged; the Farm and Forest Viability Program is providing business counseling to farmers impacted by flooding working and the Rural Economic Development Initiative stands ready to provide technical assistance to community partners seeking to implement flood recovery projects. The Board’s core work is in investing in long term community resilience, the Board has the authority to respond to critical needs and is exploring short term needs for housing and conservation resources. VHCB is exploring three interventions: partnering with the buyout program to achieve a conservation outcome, providing technical assistance and project support for communities planning for resilience, and providing housing support for manufactured home residents seeking to relocate. VHCB is evaluating each of these interventions to understand where there is the most need, how they align with current VHCB programing, and where there is a critical funding gap.

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Affordable Housing Units Newly Leased to Households Experiencing Homelessness

MONTH:	JULY		AUGUST		OVERALL	
Total units turned over in last calendar month:	93	Percentage	92	Percentage	185	Percentage
Of these units, number leased to households who experienced homelessness:	38	41%	34	37%	72	39%
Total new units brought online in the last calendar month:	17	Percentage	18	Percentage	35	Percentage
Of these units, number leased to households who experienced homelessness:	8	47%	9	50%	17	49%
OVERALL PERCENTAGE		42%		39%		40%

Summary of New Units Coming Online as of September 19, 2023

Time Period	Homeless Units	New Units	New Shelter Beds
Prior Months (July-Aug)	17	69	0
Current Month (Sept)	4	20	0
Next Month (Oct)	20	20	0
Remainder of FY24 (Nov - June)	60	270	30
Total Units Coming Online FY24	101	379	30
Total Units Coming Online FY25+	161	641	25
GRAND TOTAL	262	1020	55

VHCB Rental & Shelter Projects by Anticipated Occupancy

as of September 19, 2023

Rental Housing

	Project Name	Primary Applicant	Town	County	Total Homeless Units	New Units	Anticipated / Actual Occupancy
FY 2024	Village Center Apartments	Lamoille Housing Partnership	Morristown	Lamoille	4	24	07/01/2023
	River Bend Apartments	Lamoille Housing Partnership	Morristown	Lamoille	6	16	07/01/2023
	Tuttle Block	Housing Trust of Rutland County	Rutland City	Rutland	3	3	07/31/2023
	East Calais General Store	East Calais Community Trust Inc.	Calais	Washington County		3	08/01/2023
	West Burke Housing	Gilman Housing Trust dba RuralEdge	Burke	Caledonia	4	8	08/31/2023
	Firehouse Apartments	Addison County Community Trust	Bristol	Addison	4	20	09/01/2023
	Braeburn Apartments	Champlain Housing Trust, Inc.	South Burlington	Chittenden County	20	20	10/01/2023
	47 Flat Street	Windham & Windsor Housing Trust	Brattleboro	Windham	5	15	11/01/2023
	Willows Mobile Home Park	Shires Housing	Bennington	Bennington		7	01/01/2024
	61 North Pleasant	61 N Pleasant Development LLC	Bradford	Orange	1	6	01/01/2024
	Main Street Family Housing	Committee on Temporary Shelter	Burlington	Chittenden County	16	16	01/15/2024
	O'Brien Lot 10	Summit Lot 10, LP	South Burlington	Chittenden County	12	47	02/01/2024

VHCB Rental & Shelter Projects by Anticipated Occupancy

as of September 19, 2023

Rental Housing

	O'Brien Farms Lot 11 9%	Summit Lot 11, LP	South Burlington	Chittenden County	8	47	02/01/2024
	Recovery Housing	Champlain Housing Trust, Inc.	Essex	Chittenden County		32	03/01/2024
	Mountainvale Apartments	Twin Pines Housing Trust	Hartford	Windsor	8	40	03/29/2024
	Riverwalk Apartments	Twin Pines Housing Trust	Hartford	Windsor	8	42	04/01/2024
	Squire Recovery Housing Project	Shires Housing	Bennington	Bennington		7	04/14/2024
	612 Gage Street	Shires Housing	Bennington	Bennington	2	9	06/01/2024
	Green Mountain Support Services Transitional Housing Expansion	Green Mountain Support Services Inc.	Wolcott	Lamoille		2	06/30/2024
FY 2025	Kelley's Field II	Cathedral Square Corporation	Hinesburg	Chittenden County	5	24	07/23/2024
	747 Hartford Avenue	Twin Pines Housing Trust	Hartford	Windsor	18	18	08/30/2024
	Granite City Apartments	Downstreet Housing & Community Development	Barre City	Washington County	3	9	09/01/2024
	Newport Crossing	Gilman Housing Trust dba RuralEdge	Newport City	Orleans	12	43	11/30/2024
	Lake and Maple Apartments	Lake and Maple Apartments L.P.	St. Albans City	Franklin	11	72	12/15/2024
	Salisbury Square	Randolph Area Community Development Corporation	Randolph	Orange	3	12	12/16/2024
	10th Cavalry Apartments	Champlain Housing Trust, Inc.	Colchester	Chittenden County	11	65	04/01/2025

VHCB Rental & Shelter Projects by Anticipated Occupancy

as of September 19, 2023

Rental Housing

	Alice Holway Drive, Putney	Windham & Windsor Housing Trust	Putney	Windham	5	25	04/01/2025
	Central & Main	Windham & Windsor Housing Trust	Windsor	Windsor	6	30	04/01/2025
	Marble Village	Housing Trust of Rutland County	West Rutland	Rutland	5	24	04/01/2025
	Fox Run 4% Bond	Downstreet Housing & Community Development	Berlin	Washington County	3	15	05/01/2025
	Fox Run 9% allocated	Downstreet Housing & Community Development	Berlin	Washington County	3	15	05/01/2025
	East Creek Commons	Housing Trust of Rutland County	Rutland City	Rutland	4	13	05/01/2025
	Post Apartments - VFW	Champlain Housing Trust, Inc.	Burlington	Chittenden County	8	38	05/01/2025
	Reid Commons	Cathedral Square Corporation	St. Albans City	Franklin	6	33	05/01/2025
FY 2026	Bay Ridge Bond	Champlain Housing Trust, Inc.	Shelburne	Chittenden County	20	0	07/01/2025
	Bay Ridge New Construction	Champlain Housing Trust, Inc.	Shelburne	Chittenden County	10	48	07/01/2025
	51 South Main Street	Downstreet Housing & Community Development	Waterbury	Washington County	5	26	07/01/2025
	Pine at CityPlace	Champlain Housing Trust, Inc.	Burlington	Chittenden County	17	85	08/01/2025
	Packard Court	Gilman Housing Trust dba RuralEdge	St. Johnsbury	Caledonia	6	30	08/31/2025
TOTAL RENTAL APARTMENTS:					262	989	

VHCB Rental & Shelter Projects by Anticipated Occupancy

as of August 30, 2023

Emergency Shelters

Emergency Shelter	Primary Applicant	Town	County	Total Shelter	New Shelter Beds	Anticipated / Actual Occupancy
Emergency Shelter Exterior Rehab	John W. Graham Emergency Shelter	Vergennes	Addison	36	0	Occupied Rehab
Tim's House	Champlain Housing Trust, Inc.	St. Albans City	Franklin	16	0	Occupied Rehab
NewStory Center Campus Expansion	NewStory Center	Rutland City	Rutland	8	8	11/01/2023
Good Samaritan Shelter Upgrade	Good Samaritan Haven	Barre City	Washington County	30	0	Occupied Rehab
Forest Hill Emergency Housing	Lamoille Housing Partnership	Hyde Park	Lamoille	21	22	11/15/2023
Upper Valley Haven Shelter Expansion & Day Station	Upper Valley Haven	Hartford	Windsor	25	25	09/01/2024
TOTAL SHELTER BEDS:				136	55	