



## Testimony for FY26 Budget Hearing

*Presented by Candace Gale, Director of Community Relations, Vermont Foundation of Recovery*

Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Candace Gale, and I am here on behalf of the Vermont Foundation of Recovery and Recovery Partners of Vermont to advocate for the funding necessary to sustain and expand Vermont's certified recovery residences.

We are requesting a \$660,000 increase in base funding to ensure recovery residences remain operational and to support future expansion. Currently, our request includes \$360,000 in general funds and \$300,000 in Opioid Abatement funds on top of the recommended \$1.2 million.

Additionally, we ask that you restore \$325,000 in scholarship funding to ensure that recovery housing remains accessible to those in need. Right now, this funding is not included in the Opioid Abatement fund recommendations, but it is essential for individuals entering recovery residences who may not have the financial means to do so.

This funding is about more than just growth—it is about keeping our existing homes fully operational ensuring Vermonters in need have access to certified recovery residences. Thanks to past legislative support, 40 additional beds were brought online in the past year, increasing access to recovery housing. However, demand continues to rise. Without additional investment, we cannot sustain or expand these critical resources. Our FY26 request includes support for current operators and funding to help bring new recovery residences online in regions that still lack access to this vital resource.

Recovery residences are more than just a place to live. They provide a structured, peer-supported environment where individuals can focus on their recovery, regain stability, and rebuild their lives.

Restoring scholarship funding is critical. Entry costs to a recovery home can be a major barrier, and these scholarships ensure that anyone committed to recovery has access to safe, supportive housing, giving them the best chance at long-term success.

By investing in recovery residences, we are investing in Vermont's future. I urge you to approve these funding requests so we can continue to provide safe, stable, and supportive recovery housing for those who need it most.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Candace Gale", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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