



VERMONT
COMMUNITY ACTION
PARTNERSHIP

- ❖ Tom Donahue, BROC Community Action (BROC)
- ❖ Alison Calderara, Capstone Community Action
- ❖ Paul Dragon Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)
- ❖ Jenna O'Farrell, Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA)
- ❖ Joshua Davis, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)

February 22, 2026

Jenna O'Farrell, Executive Director, Northeast Kingdom Community Action – *on the behalf of VCAP – Vermont Community Action Partnership*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of adding **\$1,250,000 for Concrete Supports** for the VCAP to the budget.

This funding would be shared among Vermont's five Community Action Agencies to provide direct, flexible assistance to individuals and households facing acute and immediate needs. While all five agencies receive limited federal funding designated for concrete supports, and actively fundraise to supplement those dollars, the demand consistently exceeds available resources.

Concrete Supports are small, targeted investments that stabilize families before a crisis escalates. They allow us to address an acute economic barrier such as a utility shut-off notice, a gap in rent, car repairs needed to maintain employment, or essential household items before a household spirals into homelessness. In many cases, a modest intervention at the right time prevents far more costly emergency shelter or motel placements later.

These funds also support individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness. Concrete Supports provide essential items such as clothing, hygiene kits, cleaning supplies, work boots, bedding, and other necessities that help restore dignity and remove barriers to employment, housing placement, and community stability.

The strength of this approach lies in its flexibility. Community Action Agencies are embedded in their regions and can respond quickly to unique, local needs. We meet people where they are and deploy resources strategically, ensuring that assistance is timely, accountable, and directly tied to stabilization goals.

An investment of \$1,250,000 in Concrete Supports is not simply a line item. It is a cost-effective prevention strategy. Our ability to support the most vulnerable Vermonters can prevent homelessness, mitigate child neglect, and allow access to emergency medical treatment. It reduces strain on emergency systems, supports workforce participation, and strengthens families before instability becomes crisis.

We respectfully urge you to include this funding in the budget. Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to supporting Vermont households in their most vulnerable moments.