

**Paul Dragon, Executive Director  
Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)**

## **CVOEO's Community Resource Center 2026 Legislative Request: \$650,000 for FY27**

**CVOEO requests \$650,000 to support the Community Resource Center (CRC) and our critical homeless outreach operations for State Fiscal Year 2027.** As the housing crisis in Chittenden County intensifies, the CRC remains a frontline sanctuary for Burlington's most vulnerable residents. We are currently serving an average of 131 people per day, with more than 50% of our guests being strictly unsheltered.

The CRC is more than a "drop-in center"; it is a vital component of Burlington's healthcare and public safety infrastructure. We save the state money by diverting individuals from emergency rooms and jails through on-site de-escalation, overdose reversal, and direct housing placement.



Over the past year, the CRC has faced a "perfect storm" of challenges: a growing housing shortage, long shelter waitlists, and the displacement of our physical space due to construction. Despite these pressures, our team remains an unwavering anchor for those with nowhere else to turn. **State funding is essential to maintaining daily operations, stabilizing staffing, and continuing to provide the lifesaving interventions the community relies upon.**

**The CRC is often the only place where those experiencing chronic homelessness feel seen and safe.**

- **Restoring Dignity:** Recently, Ryan, one of our Permanent Supportive Housing case managers, successfully housed a client who had been homeless for nine years. Even with a roof over his head, he returns to the CRC daily, stating, "I'm still going to come and check in with you guys because you're my friends."
- **Empowering Stability:** Eliza, a CRC staff member, recently assisted a household of two through a moment of crisis, helping them secure the vital documents needed to reclaim their lives. Days later, a CRC staff member encountered them working at a local business. The client insisted on providing a service for free, stating, "If it wasn't for your space and Eliza, my partner and I would be hungry and hopeless. You guys saved our life."

- **Crisis Intervention:** Our staff are trained first responders in the heart of the opioid epidemic. In a single two-week period, staff members Kolby and others reversed two on-site overdoses. Two neighbors are alive today specifically because our doors were open and our team was trained to intervene.
- **Safe Haven:** For those fleeing domestic volatility, the CRC is a known "safe zone." When a young woman entered our center fearing for her safety, our staff immediately de-escalated a physical confrontation, issued a no trespass order to the aggressor, and drove the survivor to a secure location. She told us through tears, "I knew if I came to the CRC, I would be safe."

**The Department of Mental Health receives monthly data reports from the CRC team. The figures below summarize our services and supports over the past year:**

- 2,152 unique individuals served.
- 23,570 total visits.
- 36,858 hot meals provided (self-funded by CVOEO).
- 168 individuals transitioned from homelessness to stable shelter or housing.
- 82 Coordinated Entry assessments completed.
- 249 direct referrals to medical and mental health services.
- 729 distributions of survival gear (tents, sleeping bags, handwarmers).
- 114 individuals assisted with vital documents (IDs, birth certificates, Social Security cards).
- 153 individuals provided transportation to essential appointments or housing opportunities.
- 447 hygiene kits distributed.
- Services delivered at 31 outreach sites, including encampments.

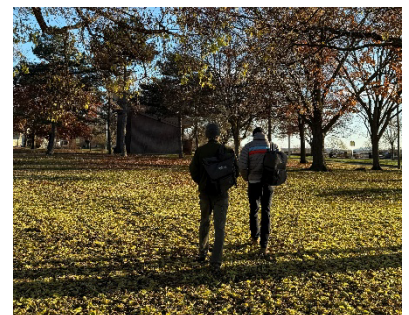
### **Who We Serve: Population Demographics**

The population we serve faces significant barriers to traditional housing. Sixty percent of CRC guests have a formal disability diagnosis. Among those individuals:

- 38% have a mental health diagnosis.
- 31% have a physical health diagnosis.
- 29% have a substance use disorder diagnosis.

### **Age Breakdown**

- Under 55: 68%
- Ages 55–61: 14%
- Ages 62+ (seniors): 11%
- 7% of data is missing, primarily from housed individuals who access the free breakfast program without entering the full tracking system.



## Racial Demographics

- White: 87%
- Black: 11%
- Asian and American Indian: 2%

