

**TO: House & Senate Appropriations Committees**

**From: Paul Dragon on behalf of the Vermont Community Action Partnership**

**Subject: Coordinated and Integrated Funding Request for the Vermont Community Action Partnership:  
*Landlord Liaisons, Fair Housing, and Mobile Home Stability***

**Date: 2.20.26**

### Purpose

This memo outlines a coordinated and integrated funding request in support of the Vermont Community Action Partnership (VCAP) to strengthen three interconnected housing stability strategies:

- **Landlord Liaison Services – Request for \$600,000 to support all 5 Community Action Agencies**
- **Fair Housing Enforcement and Education - \$200,000 to replace federal funding for a statewide program**
- **Mobile Home Park Stability and Resident Support - \$500,000 to support a statewide program with staff at all 5 Community Action Agencies**

Together, these investments form a unified housing stabilization framework designed to prevent homelessness, preserve affordable housing, and reduce pressure on emergency systems statewide.

### Background

VCAP represents Vermont's five Community Action Agencies, which collectively serve thousands of low-income Vermonters annually through housing navigation, homelessness prevention, energy assistance, economic mobility, and basic needs programs.

Across the state, housing instability is being driven by:

- Limited affordable rental inventory
- Rising rents and operating costs
- Increasing evictions and informal lease terminations
- Displacement in mobile home communities
- Ongoing discrimination in the rental market

While each of these challenges is often addressed separately, they are deeply interconnected. Tenants denied housing due to discrimination may cycle through emergency shelters. Mobile home residents facing park closure risk displacement into an already constrained rental market. Landlords struggling with tenant support needs may exit the market altogether.

A coordinated investment through VCAP would align prevention, landlord engagement, and housing rights protections into a single, integrated response system.

### Integrated Strategy

#### 1. Landlord Liaison Services

Landlord Liaison programs serve as structured partnerships between property owners and Community Action Agencies.

These programs:

- Provide education and the Preferred Renter Certificate Program
- Mediate tenant–landlord disputes
- Support lease compliance and communication
- Connect tenants to rental assistance and supportive services
- Reduce evictions and unit loss
- Incentivize landlords to continue renting to higher-need households

Without landlord engagement, prevention programs cannot succeed. Landlords must have a reliable partner when renting to households using vouchers or emerging from homelessness.

Embedding landlord liaisons within VCAP agencies ensures that mediation, rental assistance, and service coordination operate as a seamless system rather than fragmented interventions.

## 2. Fair Housing Enforcement and Education

Vermont law prohibits housing discrimination under the federal Fair Housing Act and state statutes. However, enforcement and education capacity remains limited relative to need.

VCAP agencies regularly encounter:

- Source-of-income discrimination
- Disability-related discrimination
- Familial status discrimination
- Barriers for individuals with rental assistance vouchers

Strengthening fair housing capacity allows:

- Reduction in homelessness
- Reduction of costly evictions
- More community stability
- Investigation and resolution of discrimination complaints
- Education for landlords and tenants
- Systemic correction of discriminatory practices
- Greater access to existing housing inventory

Fair housing work is not separate from homelessness prevention—it is foundational to it. When households cannot access units due to discrimination, public investments in vouchers and rental assistance are undermined.

## 3. Mobile Home Park Stability and Resident Support

Mobile homes represent one of Vermont’s largest sources of naturally occurring affordable housing. Yet residents face unique vulnerabilities, including:

- Park sale or closure
- Infrastructure deterioration
- Lot rent increases
- Limited relocation options

Because mobile homes are costly to move and often cannot be relocated, instability in mobile home parks can result in permanent housing loss.

VCAP agencies are well-positioned to provide:

- Resident organizing and technical assistance
- Financial counseling and stabilization services
- Mediation between park owners and residents
- Coordination with state housing and infrastructure partners

Preserving mobile home communities prevents displacement into emergency shelter systems and protects one of Vermont’s most affordable housing resources.

### **Why a Coordinated Investment Matters**

Individually, these initiatives address specific housing barriers. Together, they form a comprehensive housing stability strategy:

- Landlord liaisons preserve rental relationships and prevent eviction.
- Fair housing services ensure lawful access to available units.
- Mobile home stabilization protects long-term affordable housing stock.

Without coordination, costs shift downstream—to shelters, hospitals, law enforcement, and municipalities.

An integrated VCAP framework allows for:

- Shared data and referral systems
  - Regional consistency
  - Faster intervention before housing loss
  - Reduced strain on emergency services
  - Greater return on state housing investments
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### Scale and Community Impact

Community Action Agencies serve every region of Vermont and are often the first point of contact for households in crisis. A coordinated investment through VCAP would:

- Strengthen landlord participation statewide
- Increase lawful housing access
- Preserve existing affordable housing stock
- Prevent avoidable homelessness
- Support rural and urban communities alike

This approach benefits tenants, landlords, municipalities, and the broader housing ecosystem.

### **Current Need – \$1,300,000**

**To effectively implement this integrated housing stability strategy, VCAP requires predictable, recurring funding dedicated to:**

- **Regional Landlord Liaison staffing**
- **Fair Housing enforcement and education capacity**
- **Mobile Home Park stabilization and resident technical assistance**

One-time allocations do not provide the continuity necessary to build landlord trust, enforce housing rights, or stabilize vulnerable communities.

Establishing reliable annual funding for this coordinated initiative will:

- Prevent housing loss before crisis occurs
- Protect public investments in rental assistance
- Reduce reliance on emergency shelters
- Preserve Vermont's limited affordable housing supply

A unified investment in landlord engagement, fair housing, and mobile home stability is a proactive, cost-effective strategy that strengthens Vermont's entire homelessness response system.