

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Human Services to which was referred House Bill No.  
3 91 entitled “An act relating to the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program”  
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the  
5 bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in  
6 lieu thereof the following:

7 \* \* \* Findings and Legislative Intent \* \* \*

8 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

9 The General Assembly finds that:

10 (1) according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban  
11 Development’s 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report, Vermont had  
12 the fourth highest rate of homelessness in 2024 in that 53 of every 10,000  
13 Vermonters are experiencing homelessness, with only Hawaii, New York, and  
14 Oregon experiencing higher rates;

15 (2) in 2023, according to the same Annual Homelessness Assessment  
16 Report, 51 of every 10,000 Vermonters were experiencing homelessness;

17 (3) according to the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont’s  
18 2024 Point-in-Time Count, there were approximately 3,458 unhoused  
19 individuals in Vermont, which represents a 300 percent increase over the 1,110  
20 unhoused individuals prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020;

1           (4) of the 3,458 unhoused individuals in Vermont identified by the  
2           Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont’s 2024 Point-in-Time Count,  
3           166 experienced unhoused homelessness, which is the highest count of  
4           unhoused homeless individuals in Vermont within the past decade;

5           (5) according to the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont’s  
6           2024 Point-in-Time Count, over 35 percent of those Vermonters experiencing  
7           homelessness were unhoused for more than one year and over 72 percent were  
8           unhoused for more than 90 days;

9           (6) according to the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont’s  
10          2024 Point-in-Time Count, 737 of those Vermonters experiencing  
11          homelessness were children and youth under 18 years of age and 646 were 55  
12          years of age or older;

13          (7) according to the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont’s  
14          2024 Point-in-Time Count, Black Vermonters are 5.6 times more likely to be  
15          unhoused as compared to white Vermonters;

16          (8) the 2024 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment notes that 36,000  
17          Vermont primary homes are needed between 2025–2029, 3,295 of which are  
18          needed to address homelessness; and

19          (9) the 2024 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment notes that “[h]alf of  
20          all Vermont renters are cost-burdened, and one-in-four pay more than 50  
21          [percent] of their income on housing costs, putting them at high risk of

1 eviction,” which “is heightened by Vermont’s rental vacancy rate of 3  
2 [percent], which is well below the 5 [percent] rate of a healthy market.”

3 Sec. 2. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

4 (a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Vermont Homeless  
5 Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program  
6 established in 33 V.S.A. chapter 22 is a step toward ensuring that:

7 (1) homelessness be addressed in Vermont and interim shelter  
8 opportunities be available to provide a stable pathway to permanent housing  
9 for all Vermonters experiencing homelessness, including safe shelter options  
10 for individuals living in unsheltered homelessness;

11 (2) Vermont increase the supply of emergency temporary and  
12 transitional shelter as well as permanent supportive housing that meets the  
13 specific needs of individuals;

14 (3) community components of an emergency temporary and transitional  
15 shelter program are integrated in a systemic manner;

16 (4) arbitrary time limits, night-by-night shelter, relocation between  
17 interim shelter sites, and other disruptions in housing stability be eliminated to  
18 the extent possible;

19 (5) Vermont’s emergency housing statutes, rules, policies, procedures,  
20 and practices incorporate Housing First principles; and

21 (6) noncongregate shelter be used to the extent possible.



1           (4) “Department” means the Department for Children and Families.

2           (5) “Extreme weather event” means extreme hot or cold temperatures or  
3 weather events, such as hurricanes, flooding, or blizzards, that create  
4 hazardous conditions for outdoor habitation by humans.

5           (6) “Homeless” means lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime  
6 residence.

7           (7) “Household” means an individual and any dependents for whom the  
8 individual is legally responsible and who live in Vermont. “Household”  
9 includes individuals who reside together as one economic unit, including those  
10 who are married, parties to a civil union, or unmarried.

11           (8) “Regional resource organization” means a designation for a  
12 community service agency that has been authorized by the Department to lead  
13 the assigned region’s response to preventing and addressing homelessness.

14       § 2203. ESTABLISHMENT; VERMONT HOMELESS EMERGENCY

15                 ASSISTANCE AND RESPONSIVE TRANSITION TO HOUSING

16                 PROGRAM

17           The Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition  
18 to Housing Program is established in the Department and shall be composed  
19 of:

1           (1) case management services to support households experiencing  
2           homelessness or those households that are precariously housed pursuant to  
3           section 2204 of this chapter:

4           (2) extreme weather event shelters operated by a statewide organization  
5           representing municipalities under contract with the Department pursuant  
6           section 2205 if this chapter;

7           (3) emergency temporary shelters operated or caused to be operated by  
8           regional resource organizations pursuant to section 2206 of this chapter; and

9           (4) transitional shelters operated or caused to be operated by regional  
10           resource organizations pursuant to section 2207 of this chapter.

11       § 2204. CASE MANAGEMENT

12           A regional resource organization shall offer or cause to be offered case  
13           management services to unhoused or precariously housed households in its  
14           service area, including household needs assessments, individualized household  
15           plans to address identified needs, assistance obtaining and retaining housing,  
16           including financial assistance, referrals to other services and supports,  
17           mediation with landlords, advocacy, and progress monitoring and  
18           interventions.

19       § 2205. EXTREME WEATHER EVENT SHELTER

20           (a) The Department shall contract with a statewide organization  
21           representing municipalities for the operation of shelters throughout the State

1 that shall be used by the organization during extreme weather events to shelter  
2 any homeless individual who presents themselves at the shelter. **The**  
3 **Department shall prioritize funding under this section to regions of the State**  
4 **most impacted by homelessness.** A shelter offered pursuant to this section  
5 during an extreme weather event may include time-limited congregate  
6 accommodations.

7 (b) The Department shall adopt guidance for the organization representing  
8 municipalities under contract with the Department regarding when extreme  
9 weather event shelters shall be operated.

10 (c) The Department shall maintain a website with the locations of all  
11 extreme weather event shelters.

12 § **2206.** EMERGENCY TEMPORARY SHELTER

13 A regional resource organization shall serve eligible households in its  
14 service area in need of the services of a temporary emergency shelter in the  
15 manner it deems best to meet the needs of the service area. A regional  
16 resource organization may provide or cause to be provided temporary  
17 emergency shelter through community-based shelters, temporary use of hotels  
18 or motels, lease agreements for full or partial use of an existing building, need-  
19 specific shelter arrangements, or other arrangements or combinations of  
20 arrangements that comply with the intent of this chapter.

1     § **2207**. TRANSITIONAL SHELTER

2             A regional resource organization shall serve eligible households in its  
3 service area in need of the services of a **transitional** shelter in the manner it  
4 deems best to meet the needs of the service area. A regional resource  
5 organization may provide or cause to be provided **transitional** shelter through  
6 **community-based shelter**, master grant leases, developing shelter capacity, or  
7 other arrangements or combinations of arrangements that comply with the  
8 intent of this chapter.

9     § **2208**. ELIGIBILITY

10            A regional resource organization shall provide or cause to be provided  
11 temporary emergency housing and transitional housing pursuant to sections  
12 **2206** and **2207** of this chapter to households that attest to lack of a fixed,  
13 regular, and adequate nighttime residence and have a member who:

14                (1) is 65 years of age or older;

15                (2) has a disability that can be documented by:

16                    (A) receipt of Supplemental Security Income or Social Security  
17 Disability Insurance; or

18                    (B) a form developed by the Department as a means of documenting  
19 a qualifying disability or health condition that requires:

20                        (i) the applicant’s name, date of birth, and the last four digits of  
21 the applicant’s Social Security number or other identifying number;



- 1                    (ii) a description of the applicant’s disability or health condition;  
2                    (iii) a description of the risk posed to the applicant’s health, safety,  
3                    or welfare if temporary emergency housing is not authorized pursuant to this  
4                    section; and  
5                    (iv) a certification of a health care provider, as defined in 18  
6                    V.S.A. § 9481, that includes the provider’s credentials, credential number,  
7                    address, and phone number;  
8                    (3) is a child 19 years of age or under;  
9                    (4) is pregnant;  
10                    (5) has experienced the death of a spouse, domestic partner, or minor  
11                    child that caused the household to lose its housing;  
12                    (6) has experienced a natural disaster, such as a flood, fire, or hurricane;  
13                    (7) is under a court-ordered eviction or constructive eviction due to  
14                    circumstances over which the household has no control; or  
15                    (8) is experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault,  
16                    stalking, human trafficking, hate violence, or other dangerous or life-  
17                    threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a  
18                    household member that caused the household to lose its housing.

19                    § 2209. REGIONAL RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

- 20                    (a) The Department shall designate a regional resource organization within  
21                    each service area of the State to serve or cause to have served eligible

1 households that are experiencing homelessness or that are precariously housed  
2 by providing temporary emergency shelter, transitional shelter, or other  
3 supportive services pursuant to sections 2204, 2206, and 2207 of this chapter.  
4 The Department shall conduct a redesignation review of each regional resource  
5 organization at least every three years.

6 (b) A regional resource organization shall:

7 (1) have existing infrastructure to support eligible households in the  
8 service area, including an established leadership team, human resources staff,  
9 the ability to receive grant funding, and issue subgrants;

10 (2) have the ability to meet the Department’s reporting requirements,  
11 including past history of reporting compliance;

12 (3) have community connections with other providers in the region,  
13 including providers of coordinated entry, mental health and disability services,  
14 substance use disorder services, and services for older Vermonters; and

15 (4) be a community action agency.

16 (c)(1) The Department shall consult with the regional resource  
17 organizations to develop appropriate resources allocations. The resource  
18 allocation shall take economic indicators, rate of homelessness, rental vacancy  
19 rates, and other variables into account, as appropriate.

20 (2) Annually, the Department shall distribute funding to each regional  
21 resource organization using the allocation developed pursuant to subdivision

1 (1) of this subsection. If the Department and regional resource organizations  
2 agree, the Department may disperse a joint allocation for all regional resource  
3 organizations, which the regional resource organizations shall decide how to  
4 distribute amongst themselves.

5 (d) The Department shall consult with the regional resource organizations  
6 to develop appropriate measures and methods for accountability of regional  
7 resource organizations. The regional resource organizations shall provide any  
8 previously agreed upon information to enable the Department to evaluate the  
9 services provided through grant funds, the effect on households receiving  
10 services, and accounting expended grant funds.

11 § 2210. REGIONAL PLANNING; NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

12 (a) As part of the plan required pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 59, the  
13 regional resource organizations shall jointly develop a regional needs  
14 assessment for use in each regional resource organization’s service area to  
15 inform future plans addressing housing and homelessness in each service area.

16 Each plan shall:

17 (1) address progress in reducing the number of households experiencing  
18 homelessness in a service area;

19 (2) assess the rate households placed in permanent housing return to  
20 homelessness and the underlying reasons;

- 1           (3) identify resources developed and utilized in the service area to  
2           address homelessness;
- 3           (4) determine the rate of household compliance with coordinated entry  
4           processes;
- 5           (5) identify system gaps and the funding needed to address those gaps,  
6           including periodic inflationary adjustments; and
- 7           (6) utilize existing information informed by the point-in-time count  
8           produced by a statewide homeless advocacy organization, coordinated entry  
9           assessment results, and community conversations.

10           (b) Each regional resource organization shall submit plans developed  
11           pursuant to this section to the Department in a format prescribed by the  
12           Department. The Department shall aggregate the results of these reports and  
13           submit the aggregated report to the House Committee on Human Services and  
14           to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

15           § 2211. USE OF HOTEL AND MOTEL ROOMS

16           (a) Hotels and motels providing temporary emergency shelter or  
17           transitional shelter pursuant to this chapter shall comply with:

- 18           (1) Department of Health, Licensed Lodging Establishment Rule (CVR  
19           13-140-023); and
- 20           (2) Department of Public Safety, Vermont Fire and Building Safety  
21           Code (CVR 28-070-001).

1        (b) Annually, the Department shall propose hotel and motel rates as part of  
2        its budget presentation for approval by the General Assembly. A regional  
3        resource organization shall not pay more on a per room, per night basis than  
4        that rate approved by the General Assembly. A regional resource organization  
5        may enter into contracts for the use of blocks of hotel and motel rooms and  
6        negotiate the conditions of use for those blocks, including access for providers  
7        of case management other support services.

8        Sec. 4. VERMONT HOMELESS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND  
9                RESPONSIVE TRANSITION TO HOUSING PROGRAM  
10                IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11        (a) Creation. There is created the Vermont Homeless Emergency  
12        Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program Implementation  
13        Advisory Committee to provide advice and recommendations to the  
14        Commissioner for Children and Families and to the regional resource  
15        organizations as defined in 33 V.S.A. chapter 22 regarding the design,  
16        implementation, and transition to the Vermont Homeless Emergency  
17        Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program established in 33  
18        V.S.A. chapter 22.

19        (b) Membership. The Advisory Committee’s membership shall reflect the  
20        growing diversity among Vermonters, including individuals who are Black,  
21        Indigenous, and Persons of Color, as well as with regard to socioeconomic

1 status, geographic location, gender, sexual identity, and disability status and  
2 shall be composed of:

3 (1) five individuals with lived experience of homelessness, appointed by  
4 the lead coordinated entry agency;

5 (2) two individuals representing the regional resource organizations,  
6 appointed by the community action agencies;

7 (3) a representative of the coordinated entry agency in Chittenden  
8 County;

9 (4) a representative of the remaining coordinated entry organizations in  
10 the State, appointed by the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont;

11 (5) the Secretary of Human Services or designee;

12 (6) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee;

13 (7) the Deputy Commissioner of the Department for Children and  
14 Families' Economic Services Division or designee;

15 (8) the Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living or  
16 designee;

17 (9) the Commissioner of Mental Health or designee;

18 (10) the Commissioner of Corrections or designee; and

19 (11) the Commissioner of Health or designee.

20 (c) Assistance. The Advisory Committee shall have the administrative,  
21 technical, and legal assistance of the Department for Children and Families.

1        (d) Meetings.

2            (1) The Commissioner shall call the first meeting of the Advisory  
3 Committee to occur on or before July 15, 2025.

4            (2) The Committee shall select a chair or co-chairs from among its  
5 members at the first meeting.

6            (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

7        (e) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Advisory  
8 Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of  
9 expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 12 meetings  
10 annually. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the  
11 Department.

12        (f) Sunset. The Advisory Committee shall cease to exist on July 1, 2029.

13        Sec. 5. **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

14        **On or before February 1, 2026, the Department for Children and Families**  
15 **shall submit a plan for the implementation of the Vermont Homeless**  
16 **Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program**  
17 **established by 33 V.S.A. chapter 22. Specifically, the implementation plan**  
18 **shall address:**

19            **(1) agreed funding allocations among the regional resource**  
20 **organizations;**

1           (2) the appropriate measures and methods for accountability developed  
2 by the Department and the regional resource organizations pursuant to 33  
3 V.S.A. § 2208(d); and

4           (3) any anticipated challenges requiring a legislative solution.

5                           \* \* \* Community Services Agencies \* \* \*

6           Sec. 6. 3 V.S.A. chapter 59 is amended to read:

7                           CHAPTER 59. COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCIES

8           § 3901. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

9           (a) Recognizing that the economic well-being and social equity of every  
10 Vermonter has long been a fundamental concern of the State, it remains  
11 evident that ~~poverty continues to be the lot of~~ a substantial number of  
12 Vermont’s population continues to experience poverty. It is the policy of ~~this~~  
13 the State to help develop the full potential of each of its citizens so they can  
14 contribute to the fullest extent possible to the life of our communities and the  
15 State as a whole.

16           (b) It is the purpose of this chapter to strengthen, supplement, and  
17 coordinate efforts that further this policy through:

18           (1) the strengthening of community capabilities for planning,  
19 coordinating, and managing federal, State, and other sources of assistance  
20 related to the problem of poverty;



1           (2) the better organization and utilization of a range of services related  
2 to the needs of ~~the poor~~ individuals with low-income;

3           (3) the broadening of the resource base of programs to secure a more  
4 active role in assisting the poor from business, labor, and other groups from the  
5 private sector.

6 § 3902. OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

7           (a) ~~The Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity~~ Commissioner for  
8 Children and Families is hereby authorized to allocate available financial  
9 assistance for community services agencies and programs in accordance with  
10 State and federal law and regulation.

11           (b) ~~The Director~~ Commissioner may provide financial assistance to  
12 community services agencies for the planning, conduct, administration and  
13 evaluation of community service programs to provide a range of services and  
14 activities having a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of  
15 poverty in the community or in areas of the community where poverty is a  
16 particularly acute problem. Components of those services and activities may  
17 involve, without limitation of other activities and supporting facilities designed  
18 to assist ~~low income~~ participants with low-income:

19           (1) to secure and retain meaningful employment;

20           (2) to obtain adequate education;

21           (3) to make better use of available income;

1 (4) to provide and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living  
2 environment;

3 (5) to obtain prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services  
4 for the prevention of narcotics addiction, alcoholism, and for the rehabilitation  
5 of narcotic addicts and alcoholics individuals with substance use disorder;

6 (6) to obtain emergency assistance through loans and grants to meet  
7 immediate and urgent individual and family needs, including the need for  
8 health services, nutritious food, housing, and unemployment-related assistance;

9 (7) to remove obstacles and solve personal and family problems which  
10 that block achievement of self-sufficiency;

11 (8) to achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community;

12 (9) to make more frequent and effective use of other programs related to  
13 the purposes of this chapter;

14 (10) to coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and  
15 other social service programs to assure ensure the effective delivery of such  
16 services to low-income persons with low-income; and to encourage the use of  
17 entities in the private sector of the community in efforts to ameliorate poverty  
18 in the community.

19 (c) The Director is authorized to adopt rules pursuant to chapter 25 of this  
20 title appropriate to the carrying out of this chapter and the purposes thereof.

1 § 3903. DESIGNATION OF AGENCIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND  
2 ACTIVITIES TO AMELIORATE OR ELIMINATE POVERTY

3 ~~The Director~~ Commissioner shall designate private nonprofit community  
4 based organizations who have demonstrated or who can demonstrate the ability  
5 to provide services and activities as defined in subsection 3902(b) of this title  
6 as community services agencies.

7 § 3904. COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY PLAN

8 Each designated community services agency shall determine the need for  
9 activities and services within the area served by the agency and shall thereafter  
10 prepare a community services plan ~~which~~ that describes the method by which  
11 the agency will provide those services. The plan shall include a schedule for  
12 the anticipated provision of new or additional services and shall specify the  
13 resources ~~which~~ that are needed by and available to the agency to implement  
14 the plan. The community services plan shall be updated ~~annually~~ at least every  
15 three years. For those community services agencies, authorized as a regional  
16 resource organization pursuant to 33 V.S.A. chapter 22, the plan shall include  
17 the regional needs assessment required under 33 V.S.A. § 2209.

18 § 3905. COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCIES; ADMINISTRATION

19 (a) Each community services agency shall administer its programs as set  
20 out in the community services plan and as approved by its board of directors.

1 (b) Each board of a nonprofit community based organization that is  
2 designated a community services agency under section 3903 of this chapter  
3 shall have an executive committee of not more than seven members who shall  
4 be representative of the composition of the board and the board shall be so  
5 constituted that:

6 \* \* \*

7 (2) one-third of the members of the board are persons chosen in  
8 accordance with election procedures adequate to ~~assure~~ ensure that they are  
9 representative of ~~the poor~~ individuals with low-income in the area served; and

10 (3) the remainder of the members of the board are officials or members  
11 of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare, education, or other major  
12 groups and interests in the community.

13 (c) Each member of the board selected to represent a specific geographic  
14 area within a community shall reside in the area ~~he or she~~ the member  
15 represents. No person selected under ~~subdivisions~~ subdivision (b)(2) or (3) of  
16 ~~subsection (b)~~ this section as a member of a board shall serve on such board for  
17 more than five consecutive years, or more than a total of 10 years.

18 \* \* \* Appropriations \* \* \*

19 Sec. 7. APPROPRIATION; TRANSITION PLANNING

20 In fiscal year 2026, \$10,000,000.00 of one-time funding is appropriated  
21 from the General Fund as follows:



1           and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act  
2 relating to the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive  
3 Transition to Housing Program”

4

5           (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

6

\_\_\_\_\_

7

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

8

FOR THE COMMITTEE