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Vermont League of Cities and Towns 2025 Legislative Priorities



Josh Hanford
Director, Intergovernmental Affairs
jhanford@vlct.org

Samantha Sheehan
Municipal Policy and Advocacy Specialist
ssheehan@vlct.org

What is VLCT?

Every city and town in Vermont, including yours, is a member of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that was founded in 1967 to serve and strengthen Vermont local government. In addition to legislative advocacy, VLCT provides:

- Educational workshops for local officials
- Comprehensive insurance coverage for municipalities
- Confidential legal guidance from experienced municipal attorneys
- The Vermont Municipal Data Project
- Help for state agencies and legislative working groups



NEW Our Municipal Operations Support Team is funded by a \$1 million USDA RD grant to assist local officials with financial management, grant funding, ARPA, project development, and more

The Homelessness Crisis

VLCT acknowledges the only way to bring a lasting, functional end to homelessness in Vermont is to dramatically increase the rate of home construction in Vermont.

Vermont are facing a stark, urgent crisis of unsheltered homelessness and the existing patchwork of non-profit, municipal, and state systems that support homeless households are overburdened and under resourced.

For over 50 years, the State has assumed primary responsibility for social services and care for those in need. The State created the Agency of Human Services, (the largest state agency) and its network of non-profit service providers. We believe, however well-intentioned, that this system is breaking.

Managing the impact of rising homelessness has fallen on the shoulders of local governments and local service providers. Municipalities do not have the capacity, the expertise, the resources, or the formal authority to address many of the associated problems.



To respond to unsheltered homelessness municipalities are working rapidly to:

- Expanding basic needs services including food access, public access for basic hygiene, managing waste removal, purchasing and distributing camping supplies, and more
- Responding to the unprecedented need for emergency cold weather shelter
- Responding to the unprecedented need for new family shelters appropriate for young children
- Managing life safety and public safety issues at multiple, dispersed camps
- Experiencing increased demands and expenses on emergency medical and public safety services



In Addition to Emergency Shelter Provisions:

To continue the urgent and necessary local response to unsheltered homelessness municipalities and non-profit service providers need support and capacity.

- Create state operated shelters, including the opening of State buildings, sufficient to double the total shelter bed capacity statewide up to 1200 beds.
- Provide direct funding to municipalities to increase public capacity and compensate municipal services that support unsheltered Vermonters.
- Create and prioritize funding for providers of field-based services.
- Work to eliminate waitlists for CE enrollment and housing navigation by requiring AHS division staff (including ESD) to engage in CE, conduct assessments, and participate in HMIS, providing interim case management.
- Utilize surplus and uncommitted Opioid Settlement Funds for the expansion of recovery housing and stabilization beds.

H.91 Emergency Temporary Shelter Program:

Vermont Cities and Towns have long advocated for many of the provisions in bill h.91 that:

- Prioritize community-based based shelter over motel shelter
- Maintain households within the districts where they live, fostering connection to services, schools, and community networks
- Controls costs
- Enforces livability and safety standards within participating motels
- Require agencies to provide timely and transparent reporting and data



VLCT would support Amendment to:

- Lower the vacancy rate trigger
- And/or localize vacancy rate triggers to district level
- Require (rather than allow) contractual agreements with motel providers
- Provide PILOT like payments or other direct support to municipalities in acknowledgement of lost consumption tax revenues and state services within local communities
- Reforms to GA Motel/Hotel program that ensures equitable & proportionate impact on municipalities and requires the State to lead homeless prevention and response



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Questions???



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