



# Department of Mental Health (DMH)

Samantha Sweet, Deputy Commissioner

# The Department of Mental Health: Mission & Vision

The **Mission** of the Department of Mental Health is to promote and improve the health of Vermonters. The Department resides under the Agency of Human Services and has the same critical mission: to improve the conditions and well-being of Vermonters and protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Our **Vision**: Mental health will be a cornerstone of health in Vermont. People will live in caring communities with compassion for and a determination to respond effectively and respectfully to the mental health needs of all citizens. Vermonters will have access to effective prevention, early intervention, and mental health treatment and supports as needed to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.



# DMH Housing Support Programs

DMH provides housing support services through multiple programs, providing mental health and case management services for individuals who are unhoused or experiencing housing instability as well as direct financial assistance.



## Services include:

- Pre-Tenancy and Tenancy Sustaining Supports
- Provided through Designated Agencies, Pathways Vermont, and SAMHSA's PATH program
- Direct Financial Assistance
- Provided through the CRT Housing Support Fund and the DMH Subsidy + Care Voucher program

# Pre-Tenancy and Tenancy Sustaining Supports

## Pre-Tenancy Supports

- Help with identifying and assessing housing barriers for clients, such as credit challenges, criminal history, and rental debt.
- Individualized support to help clients secure necessary documentation, such as IDs, proof of income, and rental applications.
- Assistance with obtaining housing vouchers and finding units for voucher use.

## Tenancy-Sustaining Supports

- Collaboration with landlords to negotiate lease terms and address concerns, ensuring that tenants remain stably housed.
- Ongoing case management, including partnering with community organizations and healthcare providers to deliver wraparound services such as mental health support, substance abuse counseling, and disability accommodations.
- Check-ins with tenants and landlords to proactively address issues such as late rent payments, neighbor disputes, or maintenance concerns.
- Facilitation of connections to rental subsidies and emergency financial assistance programs to support households at risk of eviction.
- Life skills training to tenants focusing on household management, financial literacy, and conflict resolution.

## Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)



Administered by DCF.



PSH services are determined by DCF case managers and are offered to clients based on their housing needs.



Applicants are evaluated from the Coordinated Entry list and case managers develop treatment plans for individuals that they accept into their program..

## Housing Supports through DAs/SSA



Provided to DA /SSA enrollees based on service plan and medical necessity.



Services are offered in support of the individual's MH/SUD treatment. The housing supports are part of their overall treatment plan.

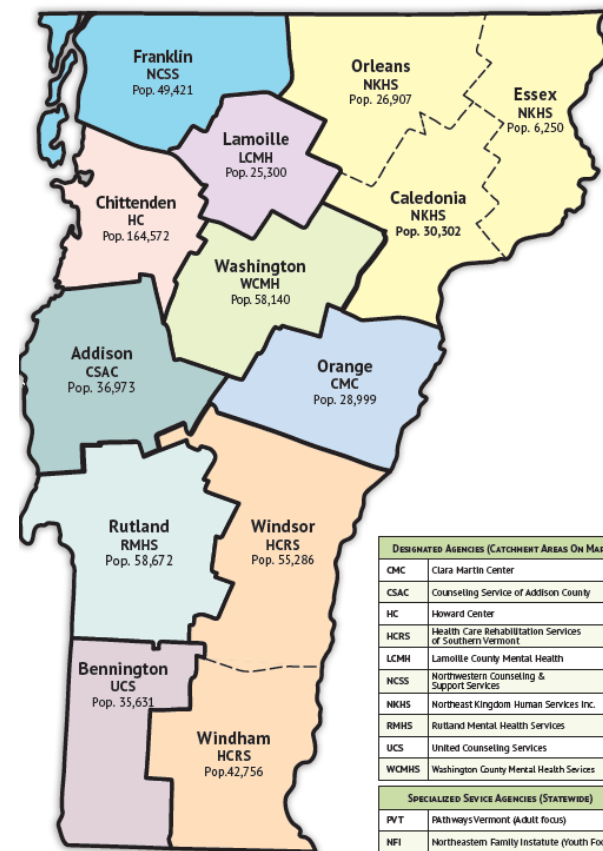


The population served by the DA/SSA is limited to individuals needing treatment for MH or co-occurring MH and Substance Use conditions.

DAs/SSA will not be offering PSH services, as these services overlap with the DA/SSA Community Supports and Service Planning & Coordination (case management) services offered through the adult case rate.

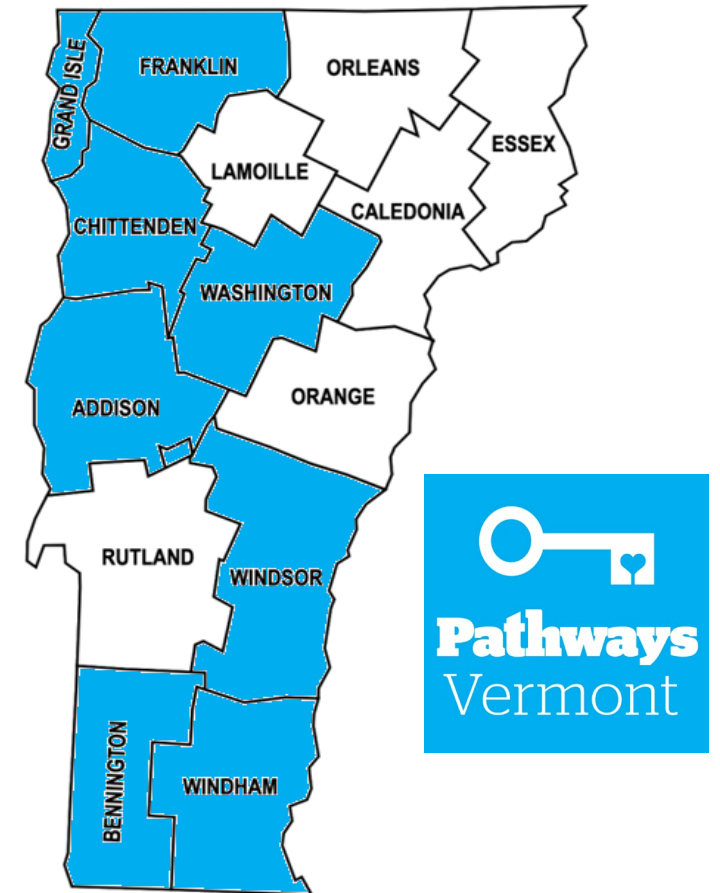
# Community-Based Housing Supports through Designated Agencies

- Case Management
  - For DA clients with high mental health needs (CRT population), case management may include intensive housing supports.
  - DA clients with lower mental health needs and housing instability will be referred to housing supports provided by other state agencies or community organizations.
- Supports include Pre-Tenancy and Tenancy Sustaining Supports. These supports do not directly provide housing or financial support for housing to clients.
- All services, including housing supports, are provided dependent on treatment plan and medical necessity.



# Housing First – Pathways Vermont

- Serves those with high mental health needs who are homeless by HUD definition
- Individuals are served through the Specialized Service Agency – individuals may be referred from DAs, hospitals, community partners, or through self-referral. Clients may be identified for referral using the Coordinated Entry system.
- Services provided are similar to those provided through High Needs (CRT) Community Supports and include Pre-Tenancy and Tenancy Sustaining Supports. Funding does not directly support provision of housing.
- There are minimal service requirements to be in the program, in order to preserve individual choice & self-determination for clients.
- Pathways Housing First program is funded by DMH to serve the following counties: Franklin, Grand Isle, Addison, Chittenden, Washington, Windsor, Windham, and Bennington.



# Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)

- SAMHSA provides funding for services for people with serious mental illness (SMI) experiencing homelessness.
- PATH providers provide services to individuals with SMI experiencing homelessness who typically avoid the mental health system of care.
- Services include outreach, screening and diagnosis, habilitation and rehabilitation, community mental health and substance use disorder treatment, referrals for primary care, job training, education services and housing, and housing services as specified in Section 522(b)(10) of the Public Health Service Act.
- Once engaged, the PATH provider agency refers the person to community affordable housing opportunities and long-term supportive services.



Six DMH community partner grantees provide PATH services in Vermont.



# CRT (High Needs) Housing Support Fund

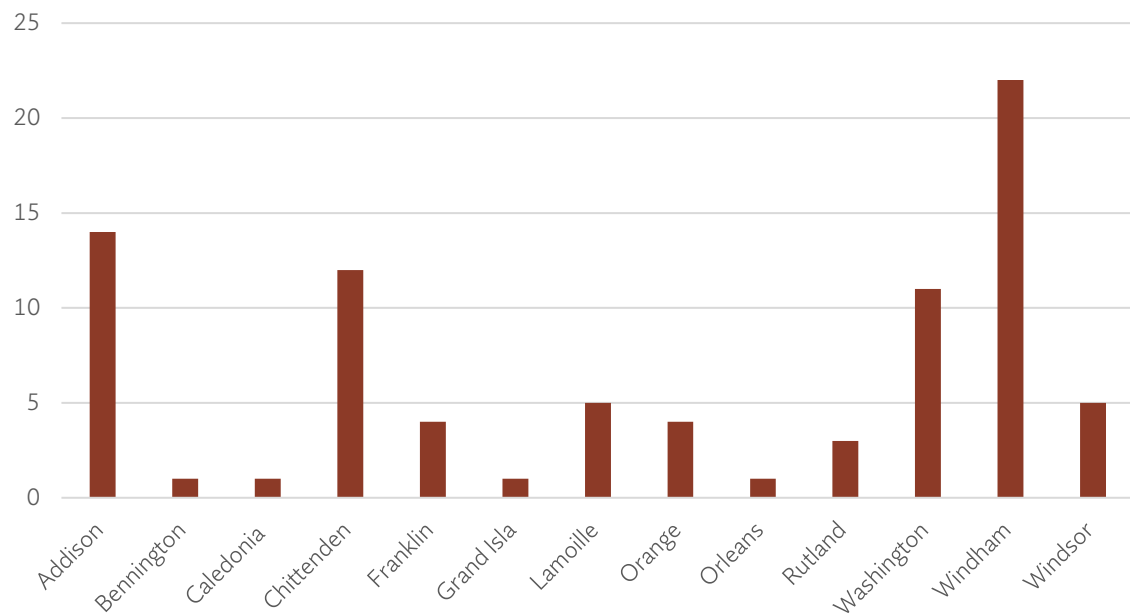
- These funds are used to provide housing subsidies to clients with high mental health needs waiting for HUD Section 8 or other subsidized housing.
  - Priority is given to individuals with severe mental health illness who are paying 50% or more of their income on housing, living in sub-standard housing, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- The Housing Support Fund is managed by Designated Agency CRT program.
- Funds can be used for:
  - Temporary rental assistance,
  - Security and apartment set-up costs
  - Ongoing rental subsidy while on Section 8 subsidy waiting list
  - Utilities
  - Hospital prevention
  - Hospital step down

# DMH Subsidy + Care Voucher

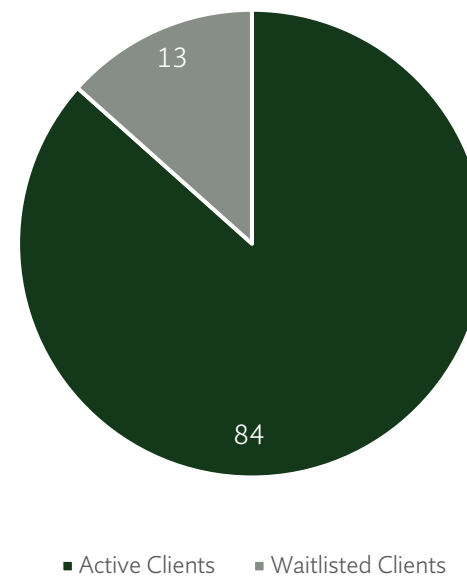
- Modeled after the Federal Shelter + Care Model, first implemented in Vermont after Hurricane Irene
- DMH funds housing vouchers via the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) to individuals with high mental health needs who are ready to leave an acute care setting and are experiencing homelessness.
- The voucher application is completed by a Designated Agency or Pathways Vermont with the individual and must include a service plan as well as eligibility documentation.
- Eligibility is determined based on mental health diagnosis, homeless, and low-income status. Due to funding constraints, DMH priority is given to those in a hospital bed or acute care setting.
- If not a current client of the DA/SSA and an individual is hospitalized, the hospital may connect to DAs/SSA, which commits to sponsor the voucher, provide ongoing treatment, and assist individuals with applying for a voucher and locating an available unit.
- DMH determines individual applicant eligibility and VSHA administers the funds that are used to pay rents to landlords. VSHA field staff assist with housing search and perform housing quality standard reviews.

# DMH Subsidy + Care Vouchers

DMH Subsidy + Care Distribution by County



DMH Subsidy + Care Program Clients



Thank you!