



Testimony to the Human Services Committee

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Thursday, January 8, 2026

Thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Suzie Walker, and I am the Executive Director of the Recovery Partners of Vermont, an organization that represents 14 peer recovery organizations across the state. Today, I'm advocating for the needs of six of our recovery centers, asking the legislature to use the Budget Adjustment process to increase the one-time funding for recovery centers in fiscal year 2026 by \$420,000 to help support six recovery centers with budget constraints. All of our centers are facing increasing demands due to the systemic constraints caused by lost funding and shuttered local service providers, the federal changes that are impacting so many aspects of our work, and the increasingly complex barriers our program participants face as they lose SNAP, Medicaid, or other essential supports.

To complicate matters, recovery organizations have seen a significant increase in demand for our services, and we expect this trend to continue as federal actions make it harder for individuals who are struggling with substance use to access resources and services.

Last year, RPV requested \$1.6 million on behalf of our recovery center members, and we thank the Legislature for finding \$800,000 in one-time funding from the Prevention Fund to partially meet that request. Six recovery organizations across Vermont have identified a need for an additional \$420,000 in one-time funding in the FY26 Budget Adjustment Act to maintain services and avoid significant budget deficits.

The six centers I'll discuss today were hit particularly hard with unexpected distribution issues. These centers are:

- Turning Point Center of Springfield
- Journey to Recovery (Newport)
- Turning Point Center of Chittenden County
- Turning Point Center of Addison County
- Turning Point of Bennington
- Turning Point of Windham County

RPV's FY26 budget request for recovery centers was built from individual member's organizational and community needs, with requests ranging among members partly due to differences in how previous funding requests and sources have impacted different centers.



As I've mentioned, we are super grateful to this committee for finding \$800,000 in one-time dollars to support recovery centers in the FY26 Budget. RPV submitted recommendations for distributing the \$800,000, but the funds were awarded at a flat rate of \$50,000 across all recovery organizations, with \$200,000 set aside to be allocated per Medicaid population maps. While the Medicaid maps helped bolster a few recovery organizations, the distribution of funds left six recovery organizations in need of additional funding to preserve current services and avoid significant deficits.

We're asking that the legislature appropriate \$420,000 in one-time funding in the FY26 Budget Adjustment Act, which is half the "remaining request" for FY2026 so to speak. This appropriation would help preserve current services and avoid significant budget deficits at a time when the recovery system is already strained and our friends and neighbors are facing daunting hardships, needing our services more than ever.

Thank you for your time.