

I am writing today to urge you to continue funding HomeShare Vermont's expansion and \$235,000 appropriation request to include the Northeast Kingdom, Southern Windsor County and Windham County in their service area.

**What is HomeShare?**

The HomeShare model is found in many states and effectively addresses the need for affordable housing while nurturing healthy communities.

HomeShare Vermont is a matching and screening program that for more than 40 years, has served older Vermonters, Vermonters with disabilities and any Vermonter who has extra space in their home (hosts), by pairing them with folks looking for an affordable place to live (guests). Guests usually provide help in exchange for reduced rent in the form of household tasks like; meal planning, snow shoveling, transportation and by being a supportive presence.

HomeShare Vermont runs six background checks and three reference checks on all participants before they can be considered for a match.

Too many older Vermonters struggle financially to remain in their homes, in their communities, and even in the state. Assisted or supportive housing is often out of reach financially, even if any is available locally, and the idea of leaving a familiar place can be devastating.

Federal cuts to social welfare programs are exacerbating this situation, but fortunately HomeShare Vermont can be part of the solution for more Vermonters than ever before. I currently share my home with a family of four who had been living in a tent in a relative's backyard before they connected with HomeShare Vermont and were able to move here.

When my youngest daughter chose to attend an out of state college that didn't provide housing, a home sharing arrangement provided a safe place for her to live in the big city and was a big relief to me!

HomeShare Vermont has the capacity to serve a larger portion of the state all while bolstering two critical partner organizations (Windham-Windsor Housing Trust and the Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging.)

Living an independent, vibrant life should not be reserved for those with means.

A community thrives most when all members can engage in the social bonds that connect them. HomeShare provides an affordable and simple way for Vermonters to nourish connections, remain independent and thrive at home. This independence is what all of us want and deserve in our lives.

Thank you for your help to make this a reality by supporting HomeShare Vermont's efforts!

Thank you,

*Jo Oliver  
Danville, VT*