



DATE: February 20, 2025

NAME: John Rogers

ORGANIZATION: Vermont Foundation of Recovery and Recovery Partners of Vermont

LOCATION: Bennington, VT

SUBJECT: FY26 Budget Hearing

Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony. My name is John Rogers, and I am from Arlington, VT. I serve as the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR), a member of Recovery Partners of Vermont (RPV). I also serve as an Emergency Department Recovery Coach for Turning Point, Bennington. I am submitting this testimony to discuss VFOR's funding requests for FY26 to ensure Vermont's certified recovery residences remain accessible, sustainable, and able to meet the growing needs of individuals in recovery.

Recovery Partners of Vermont is requesting the following:

1. \$360,000 increase in base funding to address the operational funding gap for Vermont's certified recovery residences.
2. \$1,500,000 in Opioid Settlement Funds to support startup and ongoing operational costs of existing and new recovery residences. This represents a \$300,000 increase over FY25 to fund at least three additional residences.
3. \$325,000 in Opioid Settlement Funds to provide scholarships covering first-month fees for individuals entering recovery residences, ensuring financial hardship does not block access to housing.

Vermont has made progress in expanding access to recovery housing. In FY25, four new homes opened, adding 40 beds across Bennington, Barre, Springfield, and the Good Samaritan Haven. Yet, despite this expansion, many Vermonters in early recovery still lack access to stable, sober housing—especially in underserved areas like Brattleboro, Newport, and Middlebury.

The \$360,000 base funding increase is essential to maintaining current operations and keeping doors open in our existing homes. Meanwhile, the additional \$300,000 from the Opioid Settlement Fund will help bring new residences online to meet growing demand across the state.

Equally important is the \$325,000 in scholarship funding. Without this assistance, many individuals ready for recovery housing are forced to wait, couch surf, or return to unsafe environments—increasing the risk of relapse and overdose. This scholarship funding is a lifeline, ensuring equity and access to recovery housing for all who need it.



Every dollar invested in recovery residences leads to long-term cost savings by reducing emergency room visits, incarceration rates, and hospitalizations. More importantly, it saves lives. I urge you to support these requests in full and ensure that Vermont continues to expand its commitment to recovery housing.

Warm Regards,

John Rogers

On behalf of Recovery Partners of Vermont

Email: jssr1958@gmail.com | Phone #: (443) 255-4982