

FY26 Budget Joint Public Hearing

February 13, 2025

Good afternoon and thank you very much for the opportunity to present my testimony today. For the record, I am **Liz Genge, the SASH Director at Cathedral Square**. <https://cathedralsquare.org/>

Cathedral Square is a nonprofit housing developer serving older adults and individuals with diverse needs in Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle. We have twenty-seven communities including two assisted living residences. We created Support And Services at Home in 2009 and administer the model statewide in 140 affordable housing communities.

SASH embeds a full-time Community Health Worker (CHW) and a part-time Wellness Nurse where people live.

**I urge you to support the gap year funding for SASH that is included in the Governor's recommended budget-** this is necessary because the All-Payer Model ends at the end of this year.

Today I am here to seek the addition of funding for the successful pilot program based on SASH but translated to include families and their children, called "SASH for All" (SFA). We are currently in year three of this pilot with the Brattleboro Housing Partnership and the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust, impacting 250 Vermonters and their families.

The key benefits of SFA are:

1. **Preventing Homelessness:**
2. **Improving Health:**
3. **Reducing social isolation: and**
4. **Fostering positive neighbor to neighbor connections**

Some outcomes include improved preventative health and nineteen prevented evictions.

**Unfortunately**, the Governor's budget did not include funding to continue or expand SFA, despite these positive outcomes.

We are ready to expand the pilot to serve approximately 1,200 people across Vermont, including the areas of highest need in Bennington, Brattleboro, Rutland, Central Vermont, Burlington, and the Northeast Kingdom (NEK). It will cost \$400K to continue the existing pilot and \$2M to expand SFA across the state.

**Importantly, without the \$400K, the pilot will end and participants in Brattleboro will lose their services.**

Thank you, I extend my gratitude to the legislature for your time, your work and for supporting SASH and its innovative extensions like SASH for All.