

Testimony to Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee

April 15, 2025

Molly Dugan, Cathedral Square

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on housing related appropriations this morning. I will specifically focus on a request for much needed funding for the SASH for All program, but I want to start off by asking that you prioritize additional one-time funding for VHCB beyond the statutorily required funding via the Property Transfer Tax and the \$5M that is currently in the House passed budget.

Cathedral Square relies on VHCB funds. We just opened a 24-unit addition to our existing Kelley's Field affordable housing community for older adults in the center of Hinesburg, we are in the end phases of construction of 33-units of permanently affordable housing in downtown St. Albans (to open this summer) and in the throes of development work for a site in the village of Highgate, VT. Juggling multiple projects in varying stages of completion is how Cathedral Square and the rest of our partner non-profit housing organizations in all corners of the state have been working to end the housing crisis in Vermont. Our projects create housing for mixed income households- at Reid Commons, six apartments will be reserved for those coming out of homelessness and we will house people who have been waiting to transition out of their single-family homes- opening the home-ownership market to others in the community. We need to keep the momentum going to create more housing, affordable to a variety of income levels, across the state so I hope you will consider what was included by the House General and Housing Committee in their housing bill- **\$25 M in one-time for VHCB.**

SASH For All Request

At a minimum, we are requesting **\$400K** to continue the successful pilot program operating in Southwestern, Vermont for the past 3 years. An additional \$2M would allow the expansion of the SFA program across the state. We have a comprehensive plan for expansion, and housing providers are eager to operate this program to bring stability, better health, and homelessness prevention to their residents.

SASH for All is built off the foundation of the SASH model that has been operating for 13 years now- which primarily serves older adults and those with disabilities. SASH has been proven over many years to improve the health and well-being of those participating and

significantly slow the growth in health care spending – both Medicare and Medicaid. SASH for All brings the successful model to a younger population- adults and families with children living in affordable housing. I will show a few slides that show the effectiveness of SASH for All and how it has impacted the lives of the participants and their families over the past three years.

Both the House General and Housing and Health Care committees recommended the SASH For All program funding in their budget memos to the House Appropriations Committee, but it did not make it in the final House approved budget. Please support the continuation of SASH for All as you consider the appropriations to move forward.