

Please allocate \$800,000 for the Fair Housing Program and Landlord Liaisons at all 5 Community Action Agencies

Fair Housing:

This funding was previously a federal grant, but unfortunately, the new terms do not allow the work to be done in a way that the Community Action Agencies can agree to. Thus, the request is to replace the federal funding with state funds. **Strengthening fair housing capacity allows:**

- Reduction in homelessness
- Reduction of costly evictions
- More community stability
- Investigation and resolution of discrimination complaints
- Education for landlords and tenants
- Systemic correction of discriminatory practices
- Greater access to existing housing inventory

The Community Action Agencies offer workshops and trainings for housing and service providers, municipal officials, and the public. The interactive sessions are held via Zoom and we have a new online, self-paced training for landlords. Also, free Renters Workshops provide participants the skills, materials, and confidence necessary to find and maintain stable housing. Workshops are offered as 60-90 minute webinars and as fully self-paced, online classes, and can be taken in any order.

Participants who complete all three workshops (Tenant Skills, Finding Housing, and Sustaining the Rent) and attend a one-on-one financial coaching session receive a Preferred Renter Certificate. This certificate shows a landlord that the applicant or current tenant is invested in being a successful renter, knowledgeable about resources, and connected to service providers, such as a financial coach.

Landlord Liaisons:

This is for the Landlord Liaisons at all 5 Community Action Agencies (BROC, Capstone, CVOEO, NEKCA & SEVCA). The request is for 6 FTEs because there is very high demand in Central Vermont, so Capstone would get 2 FTEs for this if the request is funded at \$600k. **Landlord Liaison programs serve as structured partnerships between property owners and Community Action Agencies.** These programs:

- Provide education and the Preferred Renter Certificate Program
- Mediate tenant–landlord disputes
- Support lease compliance and communication
- Connect tenants to rental assistance and supportive services
- Reduce evictions and unit loss
- Incentivize landlords to continue renting to higher-need households

Without landlord engagement, prevention programs cannot succeed. Landlords must have a reliable partner when renting to households using vouchers or emerging from homelessness. ***Embedding landlord liaisons within Community Action Agencies ensures that mediation, rental assistance, and service coordination operate as a seamless system rather than fragmented interventions.***



- ❖ Vicki Loomis, BROC Community Action (BROC)
- ❖ Alison Calderara, Capstone Community Action
- ❖ Paul Dragon Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)
- ❖ Jenna O'Farrell, Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA)
- ❖ Joshua Davis, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)