

H.91

Senators Clarkson, Major, and White move that the Senate propose to the House that the report of the Committee on Health and Welfare be amended by inserting a new section to be Sec. 8a to read as follows:

Sec. 8a. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSITIONING THE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM TO THE VERMONT HOMELESS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND RESPONSIVE TRANSITION TO HOUSING PROGRAM

(a) Creation. There is created the Advisory Committee on Transitioning the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP) to the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program (VHEARTH) established in 33 V.S.A. chapter 22 to determine whether HOP should transition to VHEARTH on July 1, 2027.

(b) Membership. The Advisory Committee's membership shall reflect, to the extent possible, the growing diversity among Vermonters, including individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color, as well as with regards to socioeconomic status, geographic location, gender, sexual identity, and disability status. It shall be composed of the following members:

(1) five representatives with lived experience of homelessness, appointed jointly by the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance and the Balance of State Continuum of Care;

1           (2) five representatives, one appointed by each of the community action  
2           agencies;

3           (3) one representative, appointed by the Chittenden County Homeless  
4           Alliance;

5           (4) one representative, appointed by the Balance of State Continuum of  
6           Care;

7           (5) five representatives of local housing coalitions, including at least  
8           three of whom are shelter providers, representing diverse regions and program  
9           services, appointed jointly by the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance and  
10          the Balance of State Continuum of Care;

11          (6) the Deputy Commissioner of the Department for Children and  
12          Families' Economic Services Division or designee; and

13          (7) the Director of the Department for Children and Families' Office of  
14          Economic Opportunity or designee.

15          (c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Committee shall address:

16           (1) whether transitioning HOP funding and duties to VHEARTH would  
17           reduce administrative costs connected with administering HOP;

18           (2) whether the community action agencies would more effectively and  
19           efficiently administer HOP than the Department for Children and Families'  
20           Office of Economic Opportunity;

1           (3) how transitioning HOP funding and duties to VHEARTH would  
2           impact the ability of VHEARTH to provide consistent and effective technical  
3           assistance and monitoring across all Vermont regions;

4           (4) how transitioning HOP funding and duties to VHEARTH would  
5           effectively integrate with the existing homelessness response infrastructure  
6           coordinated through the continuums of care and local housing coalitions; and

7           (5) the impacts of potential reductions in federal spending for affordable  
8           housing and homeless response and prevention on the proposed transition of  
9           HOP to VHEARTH.

10          (d) Assistance. The Advisory Committee shall have the administrative,  
11          technical, and legal assistance of the Department for Children and Families.

12          (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2027, the Advisory Committee shall  
13          submit a written report to the House Committee on Human Services, to the  
14          Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, and to the Commissioner for  
15          Children and Families with its findings and any recommendations for  
16          legislative action.

17          (f) Meetings.

18               (1) The Deputy Commissioner or designee shall call the first meeting of  
19               the Advisory Committee to occur on or before July 1, 2026.

20               (2) The Advisory Committee shall select co-chairs from among its first  
21               meeting, at least one of whom is not a State employee.

1           (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

2           (4) The Advisory Committee may divide into subcommittee to carry out  
3           its duties under this section. Subcommittees may include individuals not  
4           appointed to the Advisory Committee pursuant to this section, including  
5           representation of individuals who are older Vermonters; individuals who have  
6           disabilities, substance use disorder, or a mental health condition; individuals  
7           reentering the community after incarceration; individuals transitioning from  
8           the care and custody of the Commissioner for Children and Families; and  
9           families with children.

10           (5) The Advisory Committee shall cease to exist on February 1, 2027.

11           (g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Advisory  
12           Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of  
13           expenses permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 12 meetings.  
14           These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Department for  
15           Children and Families.