



## Community Action Agencies Current Services for Unsheltered and At-Risk Vermonters

This year, 43,000 low-income Vermonters will seek services and support for many issues through our statewide network. As CAP agencies, *our mission is to break the cycle of poverty for Vermonters who meet us in crisis.* We bring this mission to life with a continuum of services designed to lift vulnerable residents into lives of security and stability.

**At its heart, homelessness is a condition of poverty.** The Vermonters we serve struggle to cover basic needs like housing, food and healthcare. When people cannot afford stable housing, they are at a higher risk of homelessness. Poverty also adversely impacts health. Limited access to healthy foods, health insurance and prescriptions contribute to poor health outcomes. Poverty also significantly impacts mental health status and raises the incidence of substance abuse and addiction. As highly skilled anti-poverty strategists, the foundational expertise of VCAP agencies is to help clients exit poverty and address barriers to long term stability and prosperity.



### *Our Current Services Include the Following:*

#### **Transitional Housing Units**

We operate transitional housing units that house unsheltered families. As part of the program, case managers provide support such as tenant education, housing plans, application assistance, financial coaching, connection to health resources and other services designed for long term stability.

#### **Shelters**

We operate shelters for families and adults, including low barrier, semi congregate shelters.

- **Low-barrier shelters** are an important component of homelessness response systems, providing immediate, accessible, and supportive environments that help individuals transition to permanent housing and stability.
- **Family shelters** provide immediate relief and long-term solutions for families experiencing homelessness. We offer comprehensive support systems that address both the immediate needs and future stability of families.
- **Domestic Violence Survivor Shelters** provide emergency and transitional housing, legal services, outreach and education and supervised visitation.



#### **Community Resource Center**

CVOEO, Vermont's largest CAP agency, offers a Community Resource Center as a daytime warming and resource center providing services to people experiencing homelessness and other community members in need. This is a highly successful model of community-based engagement and support that can be replicated across different regions.



### Housing Case Management and Support Services

All the CAP agencies provide staff to both prevent homelessness and provide systemic and benchmarked support services to unsheltered Vermonters. Our case managers help with application assistance, tenant education, budgeting and removing the barriers Vermonters face to sustainable, long-term housing. Our housing retention counselors work to prevent evictions and stabilize housing.

- In two service regions, Landlord Liaisons work with private landlords to expand housing opportunities for clients, provide tenant education and mediation and help connect landlords to state programs, such as VHIP.



### Motel Case Management and Support

All the CAP agencies provide support services to guests of the motels. We've been in the motels since the pandemic began and remain a critical resource to enroll guests into coordinated entry. We engage guests, provide housing plans and facilitate connections to support services, such as addiction treatment, mental health services, job training supports and household budgeting. All five CAPs represent an important connection to antipoverty programs for guests, such as Head Start or our financial capabilities programs.

### Coordinated Entry

Four of the five CAP agencies are the established leaders for coordinated entry in their service regions. We maintain the lists and provide eligibility and enrollment within our community. We also function as community leaders in prioritizing housing placements, care coordination with other nonprofit agencies and review and recommendation for housing placements.

### Head Start

Four CAP agencies provide Head Start programs and essential support to homeless families to improve long term outcomes for at risk families. For some Vermont Head Start programs, 30% of families come into the program unsheltered. Homeless families are given priority enrollment to ensure children can access early education, health, nutrition, and family support. We conduct outreach and engagement to find families at risk to more quickly help to mitigate the trauma and instability associated with homelessness. By addressing both immediate needs and long-term goals, Head Start plays a crucial role in supporting homeless families and helping them move towards stability and self-sufficiency.

