



DATE: April 11, 2025

NAME: Candace Gale

ORGANIZATION: Vermont Foundation of Recovery and Recovery Partners of Vermont

LOCATION: Barre, VT

Good morning, Chair Lyons and members of the committee. My name is Candace Gale and I am from Barre, VT. I serve as the Director of Community Relations for the Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR), a member organization of Recovery Partners of Vermont (RPV). I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today about the critical need for sustained and increased funding for Vermont's certified recovery residences.

We are asking for your support of three FY26 budget items:

1. Preserve the \$300,000 in one-time funding currently included in the House budget.
2. Increase the allocation in H.218 from \$1.4 million to \$1.5 million to reflect the true need across certified homes.
3. Secure \$325,000 in scholarship funding, either in the budget or through H.218, to assist individuals who cannot afford first-month program fees.

This request is separate from the Governor's Recovery Campus proposal. It was developed and supported by Recovery Partners of Vermont (RPV), a coalition of certified recovery residences and recovery centers working together across the state to provide vital, community-based recovery supports.

Certified recovery residences are a critical part of Vermont's continuum of care. These are not treatment facilities and they are not shelters. They are homelike environments where people in recovery from substance use disorders can live with structure, accountability, and peer support. Certified recovery homes operate under national best practices and are certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences (VTARR) to ensure safety, transparency, and quality.

Members of these homes are held to recovery commitments. They participate in regular house meetings, drug testing, and service to their community. What makes these homes truly effective is the way they are embedded in local networks of support. Each certified residence partners closely with recovery centers, mental health providers, employers, and local organizations to help individuals build sustainable lives in recovery.

In 2024, certified recovery residences in Vermont served 226 individuals. All were connected to peer recovery coaches and local recovery centers for services and programming during their stay. This connection to community is essential. These homes are not just places to stay. They are places to heal, grow, and reintegrate into society with the tools and support needed to maintain sobriety.



As one of Vermont's certified providers, Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR) operates nine recovery homes in seven counties. Our homes serve both men and women, including mothers with children. At VFOR, we focus on connecting our members with resources like recovery pathways, employment services, mental health supports, and permanent housing options. We see firsthand the impact that certified recovery residences have when people are given structure and support in an environment designed for healing.

But rising costs are putting this system at risk. Insurance, staffing, rent, and utilities have all increased. Without stable and sufficient funding, operators across the state may be forced to reduce services, turn people away, or close beds entirely. That would be a loss not only to those individuals but to the broader health and justice systems that rely on recovery housing to reduce hospitalizations, prevent overdose, and support reentry.

The request before you is not about starting something new. It is about protecting what works. Certified recovery residences provide high-quality, cost-effective support to people at one of the most vulnerable points in their lives. With \$1.5 million to support operations through H.218, \$325,000 in scholarship funding for individuals who cannot afford first-month fees, and the preservation of the \$300,000 in one-time funding from the House budget, we can open new recovery homes and keep current homes open, fully staffed, and accessible to those who are ready to recover.

Thank you for your time and for your continued support of recovery in Vermont.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Candace", with a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Candace Gale, Director of Community Relations
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On behalf of Recovery Partners of Vermont
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