

Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness' Legislative Agenda 2007
(Approved, 11/21/06)

1. **Problem:** Shelters are struggling to serve increasing numbers of homeless men, women, children and those suffering with mental health challenges. State support for shelters and homeless services has remained nearly stagnant for over a decade. Applications for shelter funding have consistently exceeded available funds by \$400,000. Shelters are coming up short in their ability to
 - a. Cover rising costs of rents, utilities, and other operating costs,
 - b. Offer comprehensive supportive services for homeless families with children and people with mental health challenges,
 - c. Provide emergency assistance with rent, security deposits and utility expenses, and
 - d. Provide adequate transitional housing.

The Coalition supports a general fund appropriation of \$1 million for Homeless Shelters and Services to be funded through the Office of Economic Opportunity. This represents an increase of \$458,000 from last years funding level.

2. **Problem:** Homeless people with adequate incomes and/or Section 8 vouchers are often not eligible for vacant, publicly subsidized units managed by non-profits because they have poor credit, bad reputations or unsatisfactory rental histories.

The Coalition supports pilot projects to designate units of publicly funded housing for those with barriers to housing. Pilot project strategies could include revised tenant selection criterion; a risk pool for deposits, utilities and repairs; comprehensive case management and support services; and increased capacity funding for participating non-profits.

The Coalition also encourages housing funders to prioritize and/or set aside development funding and rental assistance for those who are difficult to house.