



INDEX

VCEH Mission Statement..... 2

Overview 3

Goals

- Coalition..... 5
- Legislative 9
- Emergency Shelter..... 10
- Transitional Housing..... 12
- Permanent Supportive Housing..... 14
- Technology and Reporting 16

DRAFT

2009 Community Plan

MISSION STATEMENT

Mission:

To end homelessness in Vermont through sharing information, developing resources, and providing a forum for decision making and to promote decent, safe, fair, affordable housing for all.

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness will achieve this mission by:

- ◆ Creating a network of organizations, service providers, advocates, consumers, concerned citizens and policy makers committed to ending homelessness.
- ◆ Fostering communication and building local Continuums and developing collaborative partnerships.
- ◆ Ensuring that all Vermonters, particularly low and moderate income persons, people with disabilities, homeless people, elders, families with children and others, have safe, adequate, physically accessible and affordable housing.
- ◆ Encouraging resident participation and control in their housing.
- ◆ Advocating for the preservation of existing housing, protection of renters, and the development of new, perpetually affordable low and moderate income housing.
- ◆ Promoting the recognition of housing as a basic right for all Vermonters through education of the public and elected officials.
- ◆ Acting as a catalyst in the exploration and development of innovative means of preserving and increasing Vermont's affordable housing stock.

2009 Community Plan

OVERVIEW

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH) is one of two Continuums of Care (CoC) in Vermont: Chittenden County Homeless Alliance CoC and the Balance of State CoC. Continuum of Care is a concept rooted in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and originates from its Special Needs Assistance Programs Office (SNAPS). The idealism behind the CoC is that homeless clients within a community would traverse a “continuum of care” from outreach until they reached stability in permanent housing.

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness is another name for the Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care and is indicative of the adoption of a more community based planning body concept than a response mechanism for HUD funding. A fundamental difference is that the HUD funding is only one funding source through which the VCEH can be responsive to the overall community needs and goals. The VCEH is a primary community planning board for homeless services for Vermont except for the territory covered by the Chittenden Homeless Alliance. The VCEH has a structure that utilizes local continuums of care to support ongoing homeless prevention, housing development, and service delivery. This allows the VCEH to provide local service structures with data, system administration, advocacy support, and coordination for the over-arching plan to prevent and end homelessness while accommodating flexibility for locally appropriate program design and delivery.

This structure is advantageous as it allows for responsiveness to local needs across a large, rural geographic area while providing guidance and coordination. VCEH provides a vehicle through which the statewide 10-yr Plan to End Homelessness can be implemented as well as provide feedback to the Vermont Interagency Council on Homelessness on continuing needs, activities that are not effective, and best practices that should be duplicated.

The VCEH's Community Plan is a collaborative effort that present goals, action steps, outcomes, timeline, and the responsible coalition member. The goals included in this plan incorporated requirements of various funding sources, program requirements, and the over arching goal to end homelessness in Vermont.

In addition, By Executive Order dated August 31, 2006, Governor James H. Douglas re-established and re-constituted the Vermont Interagency Council on Homelessness (VICH) for the purpose of improving the well-being of Vermont's most vulnerable citizens' lives.

The Council consists of Commissioner's and Director's from State agencies, service providers and private non-profit representatives.

2009 Community Plan

The Council was charged with:

1. To serve as the single statewide homelessness planning and policy development resource for the State of Vermont; and
2. To review and revise by December 31, 2006 the ten-year plan to end homelessness in the State of Vermont; and
3. Thereafter, to review the plan annually and recommend changes to the Governor annually by December 31st; and
4. To develop a strategy to implement the ten-year plan and to recommend resource, policy and regulatory changes necessary to accomplish the goals of the plan by December 31, 2016; and
5. To monitor and oversee implementation of the plan to ensure accountability and results consistent with the plan.

The Council identified five priorities:

1. Stay attentive to influences and affects of new legislation, policies and program changes that may precipitate homelessness, reduce resources required to address homelessness or otherwise exacerbate the homeless condition in Vermont.
2. Prevent Homelessness.
3. Expand and maximize housing and supportive services.
4. Implement cross-system change for planning, development, implementation and evaluation.
5. Develop and conduct an outreach and public education campaign.

Finally, as a coordinated effort this Community Plan incorporates the VICH goals, community comments and goals, takes into consideration the various funding streams and provides for obtainable measurable outcomes for the VCEH.

As can be seen throughout this document, the VCEH is a Community of partners dedicated to ending homelessness in Vermont.

2009 Community Plan

COALITION GOALS

C1. Foster and facilitate communication amongst all housing and service stakeholders, building local CoC capacity, and assisting in the development of collaborative partnerships.

C1.1 Action: Continually outreach to community stakeholders (public, private, and citizens) to encourage involvement in homeless prevention, housing development, and service delivery decision making processes.

Outcome: Increase attendance and diversity at the Coalition meetings and subcommittee meetings.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C1.2 Action: Develop and implement communication methods for CoC membership, housing and service providers.

Outcomes: Create a procedure for disseminating information to the CoC membership, housing and service providers.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C1.3 Action: Create a Frequently Asked Questions sheet for new members and an orientation packet for newly elected Board members.

Outcome: A Frequently Asked Question sheet and an orientation packet.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C2. Advocate that all Vermonters, particularly low and moderate income persons, people with disabilities, homeless people, elders, families with children and others, have access to safe, adequate, physically accessible and affordable housing.



2009 Community Plan

C2.1 Action: Discuss housing access issues and identify potential solutions.

Outcome: Discussion is recorded in the meeting minutes and a follow-up committee is formed to identify potential solutions.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C2.2 Action: Implement a communication plan to educate public and policy decision makers on housing barriers and the benefits, both cost and physiological, of ensuring housing and services to disadvantaged Vermont citizens.

Outcome: A communication plan that will be utilized to support the goals and to educate the public and policy decision makers.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C2.3 Action: Increase the number of programs at the local and state level who implement a consumer choice process in determining client goals.

Outcome: A report listing programs that have a consumer choice process for determining client goals.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C2.4 Action: To research options for developing new, perpetually affordable low and moderate income housing.

Outcome: A plan that partners with Vermont Housing Finance Agency and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and develops new, perpetually affordable low and moderate income housing in partnership with .

Timeline:

2009 Community Plan

Responsible member:

C3. Adopt and support the CoCs HMIS as the primary information management system for data collection, data analysis and reporting.

C3.1 Action: Work with the CoC membership to identify and resolve barriers to the adoption of one HMIS system.

Outcome: Adoption of one HMIS system to ensure the best possible data quality.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C4. Be a leader of information resources and action surrounding homelessness.

C4.1 Action: Increase participation in and confidence in data collection and analysis from the HMIS.

Outcome: Improved data quality.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C4.2 Action: Develop an ongoing media and public relations strategy including, but not limited to, the annual PIT count and Homeless Awareness week.

Outcome: Heightened awareness and public support.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

C4.3 Action: Develop and publish an Annual Report on Homelessness.

Outcome: A yearly report on Vermont's homelessness.

Timeline:

2009 Community Plan

C4.4 Action: To educate the CoC membership with regards to available mainstream resources, application processes and best practice models.

Outcome: On a quarterly basis schedule informational sessions that will educate the CoC membership in these areas and ultimately will provide homeless individuals and families with increased resources, income and self-sufficiency.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

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2009 Community Plan

LEGISLATIVE GOALS

L1. Advocate for the civil rights of homeless persons and public policies that benefit the homeless.

L1.1 Action: Conduct a legislative day at the State House.

Outcome: To educate lawmakers about the CoC and present a copy of the current Annual Report on Homelessness.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

L1.2 Action: Develop a broad legislative framework that would end homelessness in Vermont.

Outcome:

Timeline:

Responsible member:

L1.3 Action: Collaborate with the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition to gain thorough understanding of the issues and leverage greater weight in our advocacy activities.

Outcome:

Timeline:

Responsible member:

2009 Community Plan

EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAM GOALS

E1. To establish a continuum of care for individuals and families that enter Emergency Shelters.

E1.1 Action: To evaluate the process currently utilized within the emergency shelters for assisting individuals and families move to transitional or permanent housing.

Outcome: A shared understanding of the best practices for assisting individuals and families to move into transitional or permanent housing.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

E1.2 Action: Advocate for streamlining emergency housing service provider data collection and reporting requirements.

Outcome:

Timeline:

Responsible member:

E1.3 Action: Analysis of HMIS “zip code of last permanent address” to assess availability of emergency housing to geographic areas of need.

Outcome:

Timeline:

Responsible member:

2009 Community Plan

E2. Improve data collection, analysis and reporting for the Emergency Shelter program.

E2.1 Action: Provide ongoing support and technical assistance to emergency shelter programs with regard to data collection, analysis and reporting.

Outcome: Improved data quality to support local, regional CoC and VCEH reporting and analysis needs.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

E2.2 Action: Explore potential for implementing a bed reservation process and/or centralized intake process.

Outcome: Presentation regarding the benefits and pitfalls of a bed reservation process and/or a centralized intake process.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

2009 Community Plan

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING GOALS

T1. Increase the number of individuals and families moving to permanent supportive housing.

T1.1 Action: Apply for new project funding through the Rapid Re-Housing Initiative.

Outcome: To receive award for Rapid Re-Housing funding.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

T1.2 Action: To discuss issues effecting individuals and families in Transitional Housing identifying barriers to permanent housing and employment.

Outcome: Develop and implement a plan to remove barriers to housing and employment.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

T1.3 Action: Evaluate all transitional housing programs to determine if there are individuals and families close to or beyond the 24 month limit.

Outcome: A report of the number of individuals and families close to or beyond the 24 month limit with locations where permanent housing is needed.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

2009 Community Plan

T2. Improve data collection, analysis and reporting for the Transitional Housing program.

T2.1 Action: Provide ongoing support and technical assistance to transitional housing providers.

Outcome: Improved data quality to support local, regional CoC and VCEH reporting and analysis needs.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

T2.2 Action: Streamline data collection and increase efficiency through new processes, for example, exploring a bed reservation process.

Outcome:

Timeline:

Responsible member:

2009 Community Plan

PERMANENT HOUSING GOALS

P1. Create new permanent housing beds for chronically homeless persons.

P1.1 Action: To apply for new Shelter Plus Care Project Based permanent supportive housing vouchers for the chronically homeless.

Outcome: To receive 3 new Shelter Plus Care Project Based vouchers.

Timeline: December 31, 2008

Responsible member:

P1.2 Action: Evaluate the Point in Time data to determine areas in need of permanent supportive housing.

Outcome: A listing of potential areas in need based upon the information obtained during the Point-In-Time.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

P2. Improve data collection, analysis and reporting for the Permanent Housing program.

P2.1 Action: Provide ongoing support and technical assistance to permanent housing programs.

Outcome: Improved data quality to support local, regional CoC and VCEH reporting and analysis needs.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

2009 Community Plan

P2.2 Action: Explore potential for implementing a bed reservation process and/or centralized intake process.

Outcome: Presentation regarding the benefits and pitfalls of a bed reservation process and/or a centralized intake process.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

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2009 Community Plan

TECHNOLOGY AND REPORTING GOALS

R1. To fully participate in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) 6: data collection for the period of October 2009—September 2010.

R1.1 Action: Train the CoC membership on the requirements and expectations for AHAR participation.

Outcome: Increased membership understanding and agreement to participation in AHAR 6.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

R1.2 Action: HMIS Data Quality Management Council will provide the CoC membership with quarterly updates regarding data quality and accomplishments.

Outcome: Review HMIS reports monthly and provide membership with quarterly reports.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

R1.3 Action: Establish a mechanism (bridge) for organizations not able to directly enter data into the CoC HMIS.

Outcome: A process/procedure for ensuring data quality and data integration into the CoC HMIS.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

R2. Ensure data quality in the HMIS for reporting and analysis purposes.

R2.1 Action: Develop a formal, written data quality plan.

Outcome: A written and implemented data quality plan.

2009 Community Plan

R3. Be a leader of information resources and action surrounding homelessness.

R3.1 Action: To increase participation in and confidence of data collection and analysis from the HMIS.

Outcome: Increased participation in HMIS data quality to 95% of null values.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

R3.2 Action: Conduct an assessment of all program funding for homeless service providers to determine common areas of data collection/reporting.

Outcome: Identified areas where system changes are necessary for a single unified HMIS.

Timeline:

Responsible member:

R4. To have access to timely, accurate and complete data around homelessness in Vermont in order to achieve other CoC goals related to service quality, advocacy and gaining resources.

R4.1 Action: Work with membership and local CoCs to gather quantitative and qualitative data regarding the current landscape of homelessness.