
**Report to
The Vermont Legislature**

**Development of Emergency Shelter and Permanent Supportive Housing
Capacity**

In Accordance with Act 113 of 2024

Submitted to: Joint Fiscal Committee

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Department for Children and Families

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Report Date: November 1, 2024



Legislative Charge

This report is submitted in accordance with Act 113 of 2024 (H.883) Sec. E321.1(b)(2) that requires the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to submit a report by November 1, 2024 to the Joint Fiscal Committee on the plan to continue to develop emergency shelters for the provision of lodging between December 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025 to households that do not meet the eligibility criteria for General Assistance (GA) Emergency Housing:

“The Department shall continue to develop emergency shelters for the provision of lodging between December 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025 to households that do not meet the eligibility criteria ... or are otherwise in need of emergency shelter.”

“In fiscal year 2025, \$10,000,000 allocated from the General Fund in Sec. B 1102(b)(9) of this act to expand shelter bed and permanent supportive housing shall be used by the Department to first develop emergency shelters as required in subsection (a) of this section. Any allocated funds that are not needed for emergency shelters may be used to expand permanent shelter bed and permanent supportive housing capacity.”

Executive Summary

The Department for Children and Families (DCF) is continuing to develop emergency shelter capacity to serve households. DCF issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity to continue the development of emergency shelters on May 31, 2024, and by the deadline of July 10 received fourteen applications totaling \$34,925,732. DCF reviewed and prioritized applications and continues to issue awards on a rolling basis. Although the funding was aimed at populations ineligible during adverse weather, the Department is also planning to open family shelters in Chittenden and Washington counties. It is possible some funding for these shelters will come from the \$10,000,000 allocation.

Background & Review

Over the past year, emergency shelter capacity has increased. In September 2023, the state-funded emergency shelter household capacity totaled 436. As of today, there is capacity for 560 households. Capacity will continue to grow in the year ahead.¹

Vermont has a network of shelter providers, engaged community organizations, and strong cities and towns familiar with their local housing needs and are well-positioned to address them. DCF supports the development of local, customized solutions to the housing and homelessness challenges faced by each community. On May 31, 2024, DCF issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity to expand shelter bed and permanent supportive housing capacity across Vermont, reaching out to providers and municipal partners to invite projects that could create emergency shelter capacity for the winter of 2024-2025. In addition to the public release the Notice was also specifically distributed to the Chittenden County Homelessness Alliance and the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont, the League of Cities & Towns, the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Agency of Human Services Field Services Directors, and more. DCF’s Office of Economic Opportunity

¹ Housing Opportunity Grant Program Award Summaries

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/oeo/resources/awards>.

hosted an online overview of the Notice on June 4, 2024, and office hours on June 13, 2024, and July 2, 2024. AHS and DCF leadership also arranged calls with several of the most heavily impacted communities to emphasize the intent of the legislation and funding and the need for shelter capacity on December 1, and to answer questions. Applications were due July 10, 2024, in order to comply with the intent of the legislation to create as much new shelter capacity by December 2024. In total, DCF received fourteen applications totaling \$34,925,732. The applications represent communities in seven counties.

Summary of Applications & Progress

As noted in the last report, DCF prioritized six applications based on the following criteria: eligibility of the proposed activities, ability to meet the needs of the local community, experience of the applicant, program design, and the ability to create capacity as quickly as possible. DCF is grateful for a partnership with the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board on projects that involve funding for property acquisition. Awards have been finalized with five of the six projects; close collaboration remains ongoing with one project to determine its ultimate viability.

Emergency Shelter Capacity:

- Year-Round Shelter – Operates on an ongoing basis throughout the year.
- Seasonal Shelter – Operates only during specific seasons, most often through cold weather, year to year.

County	Provider(s)	Year-Round Shelter Opening in Winter 2024-2025	Seasonal Winter 2024-2025 Shelter	Project Status
Chittenden County	Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS)	N/A ²	30 beds/households	Award made – pending acquisition of the building.
Franklin County	Champlain Housing Trust & CVOEO Voices Against Violence	9 households = 15 beds	N/A	Award made – aim to open December 2024
Franklin County	Champlain Housing Trust & Spectrum Youth Services	10 beds/households	N/A	Award made – aim to open January 2025

² COTS has plan to renovate the space to expand their Waystation capacity from 36 to 56 beds/households by Fall/Winter 2025. Additional funding is needed to complete phase two of this project and COTS has been referred to VHCB, although the State understands there is intense pressure on those funds.

County	Provider(s)	Year-Round Shelter Opening in Winter 2024-2025	Seasonal Winter 2024-2025 Shelter	Project Status
Rutland County	Rutland Housing Trust	21 beds/households ³	N/A	Missing Shelter Operator
Washington County	Good Samaritan Haven	N/A	5 beds/households	Opened in October
Windsor County	Upper Valley Haven	N/A	5 beds/households ⁴	Award made – aim to open November 2024

The total application costs for these projects totaled over \$10,000,000. The Department can utilize base funding from the Housing Opportunity Grant Program to help address a portion of operational costs requested through this process. The Department is also working with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to explore opportunities to leverage funding.

The shelter capacity developed under these proposals are an important investment in Vermont’s emergency shelter network in both the short and long term. The Notice of Funding and associated outreach efforts were intentional and specific about the goals for the funding, with the priority for emergency shelter on December 1, 2024. This approach will allow these shelters to be operational during the winter of 2024-2025. Consideration was given to re-issuing the RFP to identify new or different opportunities. Timing, cost, and the legislative mandate for operations to begin this winter made this option unfeasible considering these shared goals. These projects reflect the average, or lower, costs of investing in this type of work and the Department is grateful for the work done by the applicants to develop these projects.

Next Steps

DCF will continue to provide shelter capacity updates, including progress on the family shelters, in the Act 113 Monthly Housing Report.

³ 21 rooms that may be divided up between capacity for individuals and households with multiple family members and may create more bed capacity.

⁴ This is a joint Vermont and New Hampshire project. The funds support approximately 5 beds of a 14 bed projects in NH based on projected utilization of Vermonters.