

Citizen Participation for Vermont's HUD 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan

A Summary of the Outreach Process; Online Survey Results and Community Meetings

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Introduction

In order to ensure that the Consolidated Plan reflects the needs of Vermont's communities, substantial public outreach was conducted through several mediums. The outreach efforts that informed the drafting of the 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan met and exceeded the requirements of the 2005 Vermont Citizen Participation Plan.

In December 2014 and January 2015, seven regional meetings were held around the State of Vermont to gather input and comment from the general public about community development needs. These were advertised through local newspapers and outreach by "Partners" from local municipalities and nonprofits. Meetings were held in West Rutland, St. Albans, Bristol, St. Johnsbury, Bennington, Bellows Falls, and Randolph. In addition, the Department developed an online survey that was available from November 2014 through March 13, 2015.

In February and March the Department convened meetings of the Consolidated Plan Citizen Advisory Group. The meetings were held in addition to two Public Hearings. The Consolidated Plan Citizen Advisory Group was formed to guide the development and priorities of the State's Consolidated Plan. The Citizen Advisory Group encompasses a broad range of constituents including representation from organizations that are faith-based, serve the homeless and persons with disabilities, seniors, public housing tenants, economic development and other non-housing community development needs. Citizen Advisory Group members are encouraged to distribute information about the consolidated planning process to their constituents and people they serve. Members of this group assist in stimulating involvement from a wide constituency of people, especially participation from low and moderate income people, people living in slum and blighted areas, and in areas where CDBG, HOME and ESG funds are used.

Two public hearings were legally warned and publicized two weeks in advance in all major newspapers and by postings, email, and online. The first hearing was conducted on February 2, 2015 before development of the plan to obtain citizen's views about the needs and interests of the public in the areas of housing, public services, community development and economic development, development of proposed grant activities, and to review past performance related to the HUD Consolidated Plan. The second hearing was held on March 27, 2015 to hear comments on the draft plan, followed by a 30-day written comment period.

In addition to these meetings, the Department designed and broadly advertised an online survey to inquire about the needs in communities throughout the state. The survey was available throughout the Consolidated Plan drafting period and received nearly 600 responses.

The following is a compilation of the results from the online survey and the meeting notes of the seven community outreach meetings.

Online Survey for 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan

In order to inform the creation of the HUD 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan document, the Department of Housing and Community Development conducted a series of public outreach events to solicit input from Vermonters across the state and from many different sectors. As part of this effort an online survey was made available and advertised to a long list of stakeholders; a link to the survey was also available on the Department's website. The survey was available from December 2014 through March 13, 2015 and garnered 599 responses. The following is a summary of the survey responses, including both the pre-determined answer options as well as the optional, open ended comments.

All questions are shown here as they were asked on the survey, followed by the number of respondents. The table displaying the Answer Options and number and share of respondents displays all answer options as they were presented in the online survey. In some cases, however, the associated charts have had the title and responses edited for ease of viewing. When open ended responses are displayed, the Number column is merely a count of the open ended responses received and do not correspond to a particular survey respondent.

Question 1

Respondents: 599/599

Which best describes you or the organization that you represent? Please check all that apply.

| Which best describes you or the organization that you represent? Please check all that apply. | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Member of the general public | 29.7% | 178 |
| State Agency | 10.7% | 64 |
| Non-profit Organization | 41.4% | 248 |
| Affordable Housing Provider | 11.2% | 67 |
| Municipality | 3.3% | 20 |
| Regional Planning Commission | 2.5% | 15 |
| Regional Development Corporation | 1.2% | 7 |
| Business Owner | 4.3% | 26 |
| Economic Development Organization | 3.3% | 20 |
| Downtown Organization | 2.2% | 13 |
| Human Services Provider | 10.7% | 64 |
| Advocacy Organization | 7.3% | 44 |
| Other (please specify) | 10.0% | 60 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 599 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 0 |



| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|---|
| 1 | Homeless Education Liaison for a VT Supervisory Union |
| 2 | consumer |
| 3 | Efficiency Vermont |
| 4 | Badass |
| 5 | Consumer Advocate |
| 6 | Affordable housing tenant |
| 7 | developmentally disabled adult |
| 8 | Food Shelf operator |
| 9 | work with individuals with brain injury |
| 10 | Community college |
| 11 | Hospital CEO |
| 12 | peer recovery support worker |
| 13 | Elder support and services |
| 14 | Local Bank |
| 15 | Community Mental Health Agency |
| 16 | State Representative |
| 17 | Library |
| 18 | Higher Education |
| 19 | Real estate owner |
| 20 | nonprofit housing & community developer |
| 21 | Business |
| 22 | Financial institution |
| 23 | Financial institution that provides affordable housing financing |
| 24 | quasi Public |
| 25 | Peer-based Recovery Services Provider |
| 26 | Community Action Agency |
| 27 | Mad River Valley Planning District - sub-regional planning entity |
| 28 | Community Action |
| 29 | Credit Union |
| 30 | Chamber of Commerce |
| 31 | regional government authority |
| 32 | Local news provider |
| 33 | Previously a vt housing non profit employee |
| 34 | Non-profit housing and community development lender |
| 35 | Interfaith group |
| 36 | Employment |
| 37 | teacher |
| 38 | Federal Agency |
| 39 | hospital |
| 40 | Veterans Homeless Prevention and Assistance Org. |
| 41 | Hospital |
| 42 | Mental health |
| 43 | VA Supportive Services to Veteran Families |
| 44 | Educator |
| 45 | Mental Health Agency |

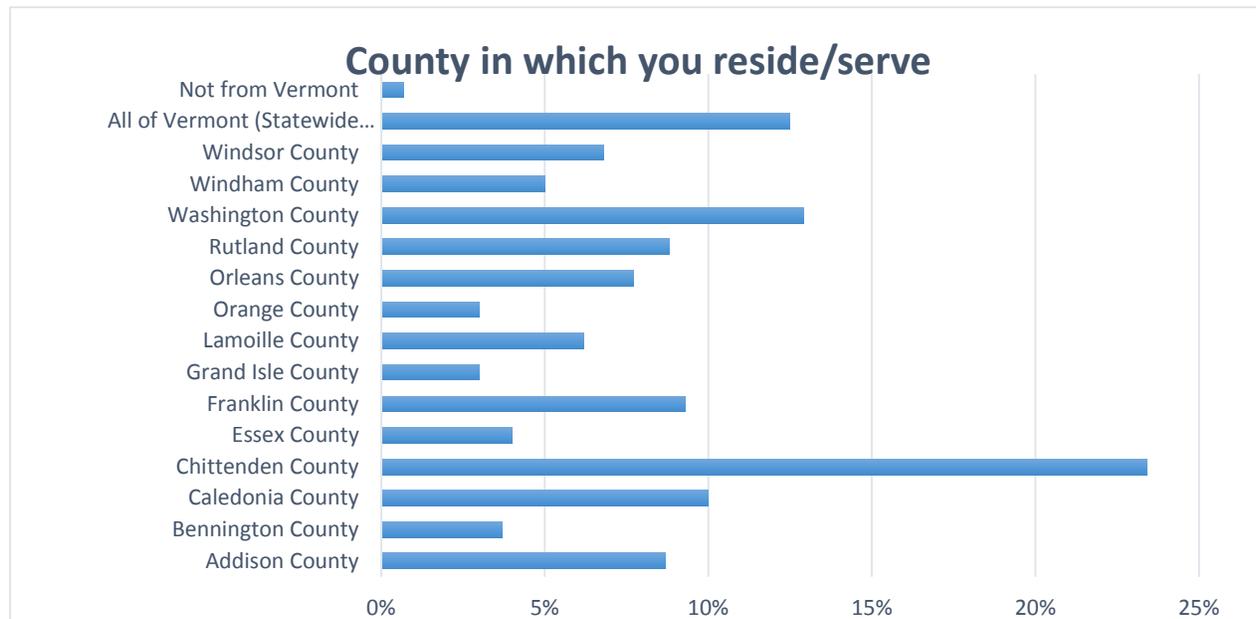
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|----|--|
| 46 | anonymous |
| 47 | Town Planning Commission |
| 48 | citizen activist |
| 49 | Legislative House Representative |
| 50 | community of faith |
| 51 | Federal Agency which works with rural communities and non-profit orgs. that serve them |
| 52 | general public & board member of non-profit |
| 53 | Public Transportation provider (State/Federal/Local) |
| 54 | sibling of a homeless person who died on the street, in the cold. |
| 55 | Resident Service Coordinator/ SASH Coordinator |
| 56 | vermont dept of labor/job service |
| 57 | Mortgage Lender |
| 58 | Public Instrumentality |
| 59 | quasi-state housing org |
| 60 | Chamber of Commerce |

Question 2

Respondents: 599/599

In order to help us better understand your responses and meet regional needs, please tell us the name of the county in which you reside. If you are taking this survey on behalf of a service provider, please tell us which counties are served by your organization. Please select all that apply.

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Addison County | 8.7% | 52 |
| Bennington County | 3.7% | 22 |
| Caledonia County | 10.0% | 60 |
| Chittenden County | 23.4% | 140 |
| Essex County | 4.0% | 24 |
| Franklin County | 9.3% | 56 |
| Grand Isle County | 3.0% | 18 |
| Lamoille County | 6.2% | 37 |
| Orange County | 3.0% | 18 |
| Orleans County | 7.7% | 46 |
| Rutland County | 8.8% | 53 |
| Washington County | 12.9% | 77 |
| Windham County | 5.0% | 30 |
| Windsor County | 6.8% | 41 |
| All of Vermont (Statewide Organization) | 12.5% | 75 |
| Not from Vermont | 0.7% | 4 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 599 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 0 |



Question 3

Respondents: 551/599

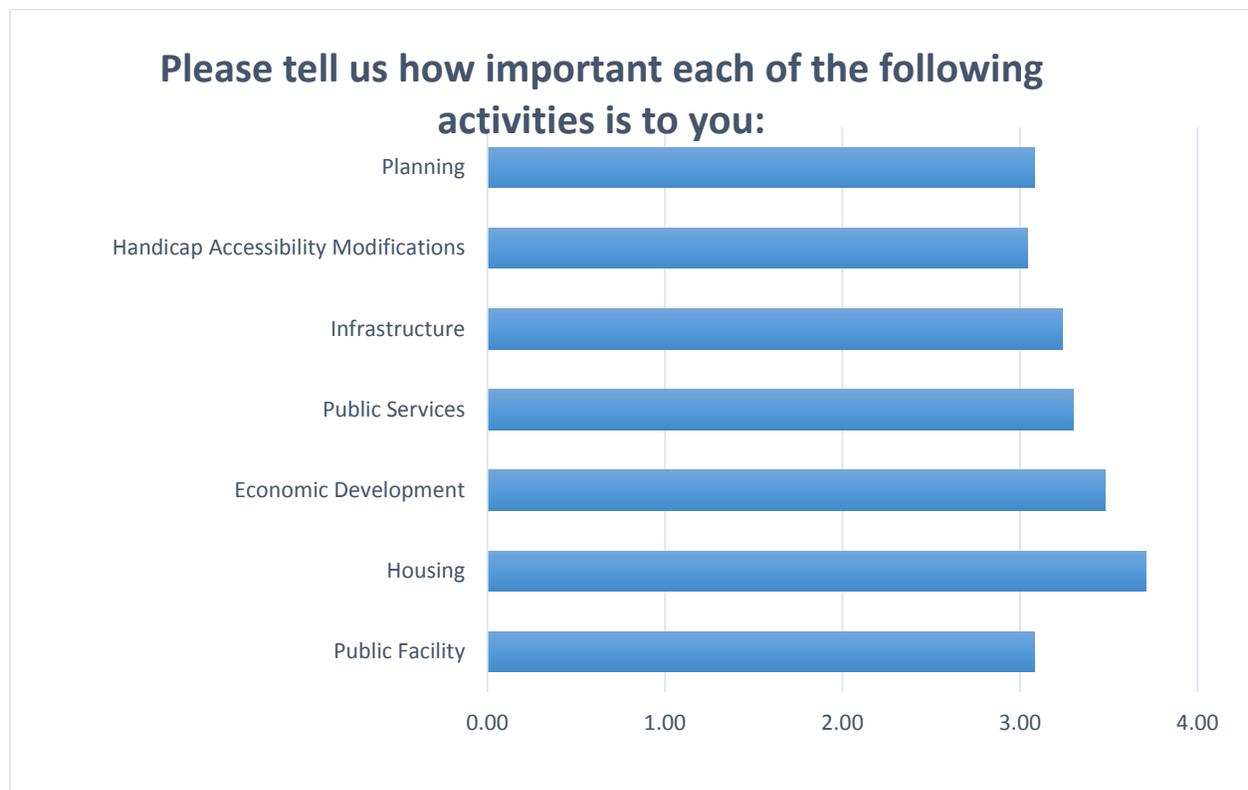
Please provide the zipcode of your current residence or your organization.

Question 4

Respondents: 551/599

Please tell us how important each of the following activities is to you:

| Please tell us how important each of the following activities is to you: | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
| Public Facility | 177 | 236 | 101 | 17 | 3.08 | 531 |
| Housing | 435 | 69 | 38 | 5 | 3.71 | 547 |
| Economic Development | 315 | 170 | 47 | 6 | 3.48 | 538 |
| Public Services | 250 | 201 | 77 | 7 | 3.30 | 535 |
| Infrastructure | 210 | 237 | 75 | 5 | 3.24 | 527 |
| Handicap Accessibility Modifications | 180 | 217 | 120 | 19 | 3.04 | 536 |
| Planning | 182 | 221 | 101 | 19 | 3.08 | 523 |
| Comments? | | | | | | 56 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 551 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 48 |



| Number | Comments? |
|--------|---|
| 1 | <p>I am currently living in Winchester Place. I do not understand why each year our rent increases by twenty some dollars. We get snow removal, trash, and lawn care nothing else is included in the rent and this is said to be affordable housing. I can not afford to live alone so I live with my daughter and son-in-law, they both work for very minimum pay. We all have bills accrued so they have to be met also. I do not believe that a thousand dollars a month is what you would cal affordable. If something was included like heat or electricity I could understand. Why is it people who are just making it have to turn to places that are in poor parts of the area or you have to travel a distance to get to work when it cost so much for gas wear and tear on your vehicle. We have been with Champlain Housing since May of 2007 and as of June will no longer be able to afford the rent here. I love my apartment and garden area as it gives me things to do in the summer. I do not want to live in a apartment with people on top of me.</p> |
| 2 | <p>In my role as the SU homeless education liaison my primary responsibilities are to make sure that children continue to attend school while they (and usually their families) are experiencing homelessness. In addition to the academic and social/emotional needs of the children, most families that are referred to me have no housing, no transportation, limited education and job skills and are not employed. Families need the short term plan (where am I staying tonight, how do I navigate Economic Service and services from other nonprofits) and the long term plan which will result in them being permanently housed.</p> |
| 3 | <p>This state should be more worried about the needy and the homeless. We as a state have too little resources for the need and homeless.</p> |
| 4 | <p>I feel that we spend a lot of time planning and talking and not enough time getting things done. I think we know what to do and don't need more studies. Let's get some housing going, lets get some job training and let's fix the infrasturcture.</p> |
| 5 | <p>finding affordable, accessible housing is a big challenge in Vermont.</p> |
| 6 | <p>We need to retain the jobs we have here and we need to bring business into Vermont.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Although the non-profit I work for serves all over the state, I went to the meeting representing the Bennington branch. Any sort of affordable housing is an issue for the Bennington area, so the competition for housing that is both affordable AND accessible is fierce.</p> |
| 8 | <p>I find we have a great need for senior aid in my area. Hosing, case management, activities, general welfare, nursing. Too many of our seniors are just falljnf through the cracks. I have an elderly gentleman neighbor who gets no help. First, he doesn't possess the necessary skills to find help for himself and left to his own defenses, he is helpless. He has nothing. He was in the hospitle having his toes amputated and BBC he had cancer at the smae time. All of his stuff was in storage and because he was incapacitated and could not pay, they sold all his stuff...everything. he lost his housing aswell. We need a system that defends and assists our elderly. They paid their dues. They raised r families. We, as a community, need to be better aware of our neighbors, especially th aged and infirm. Thankfully, i belong to a church that is community oriented. We were able to get him some assistance but if we weren't here, where would he be? Thank you.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Based on the descriptions given above it is difficult to separate these activities. They are all very important.</p> |

| | |
|----|--|
| 10 | I feel that affordable housing should be offered, but only to deserving clients that are willing to follow the rules (i.e. no smoking, quiet, clean, self supporting, controlling their children). I believe that people move to Vermont to get away from the inner city elements (i.e. drugs, second hand smoke, noise and pollution, bad behavior, crime, etc.) so it is important to stay on top of these problems, have preventative measures in place to avoid them from occurring from the start. For example, if someone rents into a non-smoking building, a heavy smoker promising not to smoke indoors should not be considered as this tenant will have difficulties and be challenged and will probably end up breaking the rules, which is upsetting to all of the other tenants who came to the non-smoking building for clean air. In other words, please don't have rules that you are not willing to enforce and use preventative measures so you do not have too much conflict from the start. |
| 11 | Everything is important. But given the immediate and perhaps overwhelming needs in housing, we have to plan for and build/convert more units. |
| 12 | Your definition of economic development is very limited. Most jobs are provided by smaller companies. Please broaden your definition of what projects can be funded under economic development. |
| 13 | The Greater Falls area (Bellows Falls) is a border town in desperate need of economic development. Living wage employment opportunities, childcare providers, affordable housing, and expanded public transportation to Keene and Claremont NH, are all needed to provide stability to the region. |
| 14 | There is a tremendous lack of housing for Vermonters with disabilities that have challenged financial means. |
| 15 | Had child care been listed separately I would have ranked it as very important. |
| 16 | Investment should be directed towards economic development activities (jobs), and affordable, professionally-staffed child care facilities that will allow parents to work knowing their child is well cared for. Attractive housing available to those in the workforce is also needed. Investment should also be directed towards cultural and educational facilities that provide a high quality of life (e.g., arts organizations, museums, libraries.) |
| 17 | The lack of affordable housing is at crisis level in Chittenden County. |
| 18 | A very important priority is assured sheltering of those without shelter during bitter winter weather. Orleans County lacks a "warming shelter" to help those in danger during bitter winter weather. |
| 19 | All are important for real people to live in communities |
| 20 | Tiny house movement!! |
| 21 | creating multi-age, multi-income housing for the NEK is a critical arena for growth. |
| 22 | We need senior housing that can go from an apartment, to assisted care, to nursing home care. It would be great if it could be in conjunction with the area hospi Possibly on land owned by the hospital with a community center, a chapel, access to a restaurant etc. |
| 23 | Any vehicle that raises the quality of the community-not necessarily growth. |
| 24 | We lack affordable housing options in our communities in the Upper Valley. The affordable housing is either outside of town (and any bus routes) or has long wait lists at this time. Without addressing the affordable/ subsidized housing shortage, other areas of development have less impact as our clients are sleeping in warming shelters or under bridges. They tend to care little about addressing other areas if community development while they are in these places, and I tend to agree with them that addressing the housing shortage is a priority in our community. That being said, we do lack some public services such as financial counseling and adult day care, which would be incredibly useful in our community. |
| 25 | We seem to have done a lot of planning recently; this cycle feels as if it should be about implementing the plans. |
| 26 | They are all related and interdependent. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 27 | It is not the State Governments job to create things and history shows that Government is the worst entity known to create anything good. If Government stops trying to improve things economically and reduce taxes and allow business and individuals the freedom to develop and finance their own projects our town and country will be better off. |
| 28 | The plan needs to reflect the mandate to address stormwater runoff in all development and infrastructure projects if Vermont is to reach its goals of fostering development in compact settlement areas surrounded by rural countryside. Make stormwater infrastructure projects eligible for CDBG grant dollars. |
| 29 | It's all important! |
| 30 | Childcare center, economic dev position, public space improvements, bike path, converting old historic bldgs to mixed use res, office, retail. |
| 31 | For planning it depends on what the planning is. Feasibility studies aren't so important if they are just going to sit on a shelf. Pre-development work (environmental phase I and II, architectural and engineering designs, etc) for a project that is feasible is pretty important. |
| 32 | When viewing the above list, most are dependent on having planning and infrastructure to allow for the housing, job creation and day care facilities for adults and children in a community. |
| 33 | These all are extremely important in Caledonia County. Most important is the availability of rentals for the low & moderate income population--low interest loan programs for the same & housing for the homeless, battered women & seniors. Housing that makes them feel like a valued human being. |
| 34 | As the Executive Director of Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) and President of the Vermont Community Action Partnership (VCAP), my priority, and that of these organizations, is primarily on how projects / programs benefit low-income Vermonters by helping them better cope with the hardships of poverty and take meaningful steps toward self-sufficiency. |
| 35 | Currently, Burlington is in a planning process for redesigning the current Building Code, transitioning to a Form Based Code. I am going to the public meetings. Housing Affordability is a huge issue. I am currently homeless and priced out of the current market for housing. There needs to be changes! I contribute to the local economy, I am an active advocate for facilitating community gatherings to discuss our current economic, social, governing and land use issues! I work hard, and I want to stay in Burlington! |
| 36 | This question implies that we can have it all! It's tempting to say "very important" to all seven options, but when it comes to budgeting, we'll have to make a choice to fund some areas over others. |
| 37 | It would be nice to have more shopping and entertainment (family) activities. |
| 38 | Serving low and moderate income people is most important use of this scarce resource that can alleviate poverty and create bridges out of poverty at this time of great wealth inequality |
| 39 | Senior housing, defined as 55 years or older, is a pressing need given the demographics of the state of Vermont. |
| 40 | More and higher quality rental housing opportunities and job opportunities |
| 41 | All are important! |
| 42 | Housing for young adults- specific housing programs/options for the 16-25 yo. |
| 43 | Local planning commissions need to be given an opportunity to engage in well-funded, community-based planning. Local infrastructure is crumbling. |
| 44 | Affordable housing and public transportation are our two most important needs. Manchester lacks a homeless shelter. |
| 45 | NO decent affordable housing on a bus line. |
| 46 | There appears to be a lot of housing project in the works and I support the concepts of low income housing however I think it is also important to educate and provide counseling to low income individual to help get them out of low housing and supporting the system vs the system supporting them. Job creating is also important however I'm not seeing a viable plan. |
| 47 | It seems like we feel if we don't see the people needing help we forget about them well its my opinion that they are our brothers and sisters not to be forgotten. |

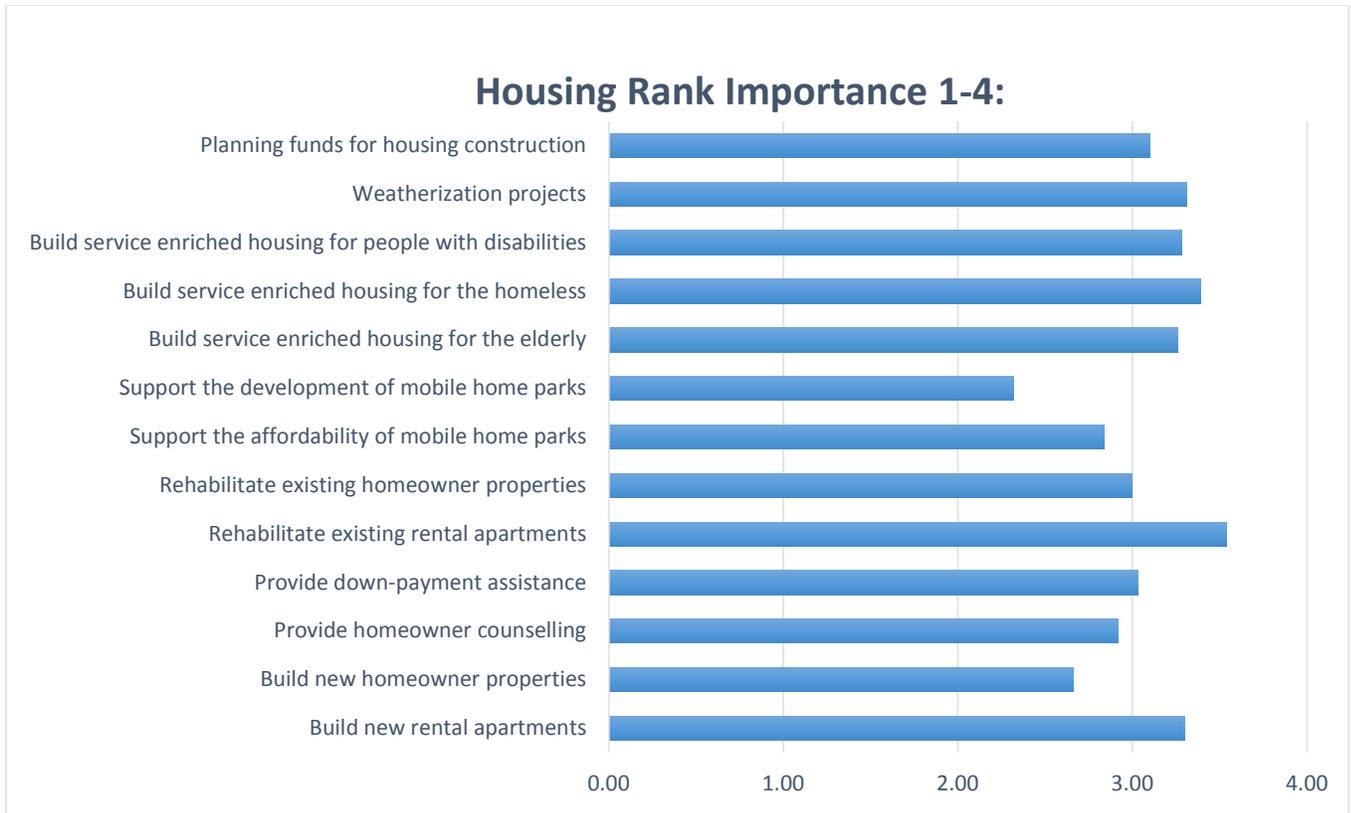
| | |
|----|---|
| 48 | Until we figure out how to lower the cost of education and taxes in Vermont, Vermonter's will continue to struggle. |
| 49 | <p>We need safe, clean, affordable housing options for persons earning under \$45,000/yr: both homeownership and rental options. It seems that new residential rental units are either targeted to low or very low income renters or to high income renters. Chittenden County needs more 1br rental units in the \$850-\$1050 range. We don't need studio apartments going for \$1200-\$1300/mth.</p> <p>Chittenden County also needs more homeownership opportunities for single persons earning \$45,000 or below--whether that be condo or tiny or small single family homes.</p> |
| 50 | I feel like economic development activities have a wider variety of funds to choose from, so should be lower priority. Non-transportation infrastructure, though - especially water and wastewater - has fewer funding sources, which I why I think it should be prioritized. This infrastructure will improve housing and transportation affordability by making it possible for people to live closer to jobs, services, schools, child care. Affordable housing that's actually close to things is essential for affordability. We've got to boost the supply of quality housing that's near things, rather than extremely spread out. |
| 51 | Economic justice and equity as in fair labor practices around wages, work-week, sick time and child care. |
| 52 | Housing is overwhelmingly critical in Vermont. As income inequity and crushing poverty overrun the United States, Housing has become increasingly expensive for those living in and close to poverty. And that's a large percentage of the State. |
| 53 | It is wishful thinking to say all of the above are important...which they are but in order for the money to be there we need to focus on jobs. Jobs create the needed tax dollars. |
| 54 | <p>I have family members and friends that have experienced homelessness due to substance issues and learning disabilities making it difficult to maintain work and find affordable housing.</p> <p>Being a single parent, personally I find the cost of healthcare and daycare very expensive.</p> |
| 55 | Hope that operational costs of running public services components would be based on sustainability and programs surviving without external infusions of grants-based funding to keep the doors open. |
| 56 | A new visitor's center locate somewhere off Exit 21 of I89 |

Question 5

Respondents: 517/599

The VCDP can provide funds for projects that address a variety of housing needs for low income and moderate income Vermonters. Within the area of housing, please tell us how important each of the following is to you:

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|---|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Build new rental apartments | 278 | 123 | 77 | 26 | 3.30 | 504 |
| Build new homeowner properties | 104 | 176 | 161 | 55 | 2.66 | 496 |
| Provide homeowner counselling | 142 | 213 | 112 | 35 | 2.92 | 502 |
| Provide down-payment assistance | 188 | 172 | 107 | 32 | 3.03 | 499 |
| Rehabilitate existing rental apartments | 329 | 134 | 36 | 9 | 3.54 | 508 |
| Rehabilitate existing homeowner properties | 181 | 172 | 124 | 29 | 3.00 | 506 |
| Support the affordability of existing mobile home parks | 153 | 181 | 111 | 61 | 2.84 | 506 |
| Support the development or expansion of mobile home parks | 73 | 139 | 168 | 122 | 2.32 | 502 |
| Build service enriched housing for the elderly | 238 | 182 | 66 | 21 | 3.26 | 507 |
| Build service enriched housing for the homeless | 288 | 138 | 70 | 10 | 3.39 | 506 |
| Build service enriched housing for people with disabilities | 235 | 188 | 70 | 12 | 3.28 | 505 |
| Funding for weatherization and energy improvements on low and moderate income housing | 246 | 183 | 67 | 12 | 3.31 | 508 |
| Planning funds to support the construction or improvement of housing | 192 | 200 | 93 | 24 | 3.10 | 509 |
| Comments? | | | | | | 50 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 517 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 82 |



| Number | Comments? |
|--------|--|
| 1 | Our community is out of balance with greater low/affordable housing versus market rate housing. |
| 2 | Rather than building service enriched housing for various groups, I would rather help people live wherever they want and spend monies to provide services in their homes (as in the SASH model.) I am not at all in favor of people segregated in housing because of income. I'd rather have properties have percentages of apartments set aside for low and moderate income people and have the remaining apartments rented at market rate. I would want it set up so that those paying a reduced rent could not be identified by other tenants (specific apartments not being identified as "reduced rent.") |
| 3 | They are mobile home communitites or manufactured home communities. Please adjust your language to give them more value and dignity. |
| 4 | I may be wrong, but I think it could be less expensive and time consuming to rehab existing housing rather than constructing new properties. |
| 5 | I think that state funding should go into making apartments quieter. It is a huge issue and door breakers should be placed on every door, even inside individual apartments. Also vent systems need to be cushioned and any type of repetitive noise needs to be eliminated, if possible. I also believe that some tenants need to be taught how to take care of their living quarters and the surrounding areas. Lastly, I believe that incense and any smoke producing product, including candles, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and pot should not be encouraged, as they pollute everybody's air. I thinking they should be banned in collective living areas. |
| 6 | Home ownership is key to aspirational concerns. |

| | |
|----|---|
| 7 | We need more low income rental housing that is ADA compliant. We also need to get the homeless population in transitional housing with supports! |
| 8 | Housing/apartment construction should be "scattered" and integrated into community housing and neighborhoods. We should not be putting \$ into segregated housing for anyone (homeless, elderly, people with disabilities). |
| 9 | Making available affordable housing to families and singles, especially young adults wanting to stay in the area and build a life, is one of the most important and pressing issues facing the Greater Falls area. |
| 10 | <p>Given the current issue with housing affordability and homelessness in Vermont, I would like to see federal funds</p> <p>go to support homelessness support facilities like the recent Safe Harbor project that has been developed on the</p> <p>Shelburne Road here in Burlington. Additional funds to develop similar projects in other counties around the state</p> <p>would probably be helpful. Putting funds toward the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of existing subsidized and</p> <p>other affordable housing projects would be next and then administrative programs that support access to housing</p> <p>and/or maintain existing housing such as counseling programs and providing rental and fuel assistance to</p> <p>low income and elderly residents.</p> |
| 11 | <p>There needs to be more housing with a sliding scale payment system to allow people of all means to pay a fair amount of their income.</p> <p>The needs of the non-disabled homeless would be better served by providing job training and employment to help them be self sufficient.</p> |
| 12 | Mostly I don't understand why mobile home parks are desirable. They seem like such vulnerable, inefficient, temporary structures. |
| 13 | In economically stagnant communities, often the only housing that is created or rehabilitated is restricted to low and moderate income occupants, leaving those making the median income or higher with few options for quality housing. If it were true that "affordable" housing simply meant that housing would cost no more than 30% of household income, then everyone would have the opportunity to benefit from publicly-funded affordable housing development. It would be good if a sliding scale were used to allow all people access to affordable rental housing, rather than rely on income thresholds that turns people away, or forces people whose economic situation improves to vacate their home. |
| 14 | Sustainable energy tiny houses!! |
| 15 | It is incredibly important to build additional rental housing that is accessible to re-entering offenders and ex-offenders. Housing organizations need to step out of their silos and work with DOC on this. The state's largest prison in Newport is just one facility that is going to empty out in order to bring people back from out of state prisons. We. Must. Have. Housing. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 16 | <p>I think the creation of more affordable housing and the improvement of the quality of affordable housing stock are major priorities. It is extremely difficult to find affordable housing in this state and when you do find it, the quality of the housing is not at all worth what you're paying for. I am currently paying \$900/month without utilities included for an apartment that hasn't been improved at all in 20+ years and has a number of major issues that I am too afraid to point out to my landlord in fear that they will jack up the rent. Additionally, it seems that units that had previously been "affordable" are receiving a number of superficial upgrades (such as putting in stone counter tops and belt sanding and refinishing wood floors) and being priced out of the "affordable" price range as a result - despite the fact that no real structural improvements have been made to the units - resulting in an even more competitive affordable housing market.</p> |
| 17 | <p>We lack wheelchair accessible apts in the area and our elderly housing programs either have a long waitlist or are no longer accepting applications. We do have several mobile home parks in the area that our low income cts live in. Many of these cts can no longer afford their homes due to cost of upkeep on poorly made homes (in the mobile home parks) and are finding that they may need to leave their homes in order to afford to live.</p> |
| 18 | <p>Rental housing stock, rather than any other type, is in shortest supply in our region of the state.</p> |
| 19 | <p>All of these things are important to a community but again it is not the State Governments problem to solve.</p> |
| 20 | <p>Build service enriched housing for people who are under the supervision of the Department of Corrections and released into the community.</p> |
| 21 | <p>We have enough low and moderate inc housing we actually need more high end stock to being more upper end fills to the area.</p> |
| 22 | <p>Smoke free house as well as housing for families in recovery.</p> |
| 23 | <p>We must continue to rehabilitate and develop the underutilized properties in St. Albans. For example, some of the upper floors above the stores on Main Street remain unused.</p> |
| 24 | <p>Nothing is LESS important in this area</p> |
| 25 | <p>Homeownership is important, but increasingly the need for any housing is rising vs. the option of buying. We should try to avoid having funding for these two options be in competition.</p> |
| 26 | <p>work with what we've got in the way of existing buildings.</p> <p>Encourage new policies that facilitate the implementation of Pilot Project Mobile Micro Housing Communities- there are many talented builders here in Vermont that can make beautiful Mobile Micro Homes, a low impact, affordable, home ownership strategy. This movement is growing for a real reason: The leap from rental to home ownership is too risky, unstable, long term feasibility is unreliable given the fluctuating job market and slow levels of income rise. I am on my 50th year. The only way I can see owning a home is to make a mobile micro home and rent, or co-purchase a bit of land, shared cooperatively. I would rather live in a small home and have close neighbors than in a large house and a less socially active setting. The time is ripe now to encourage this Micro Housing movement to grow, open up opportunities for a large and rapidly growing segment of the population. Encouraging us by implementing a new category and avenue for leveraging new local policy changes to allow for this will breathe new hope into a large and growing level of dismay about the cost of living and an antiquated sustainability equation. We need to update and acknowledge and support this new method to attain housing. Please, please consider what I am asking. Please reply to me with feedback. Thank you very much. Please forward my email briangoblik@gmail.com to your peers who do reach back and reply.</p> |

| | |
|----|---|
| 27 | Would love to see more cooperatively-owned mobile home parks and apartments throughout the state. |
| 28 | all housing investments, including downpayment assistance needs to be targeted to permanently affordable housing or else these just contribute to inflating the cost of homeownership. |
| 29 | It seems to me that there are plenty of apartment buildings in the area. I do not see a need for new apartment type complexes. I don't think the area could support that type of development. I do think that many of the big old houses that have been divided up into apartments could probably use some rehabbing?.....those houses are big, require maintenance, that many seem either unwilling to do, or just do not want to do.....I would guess there are many absentee owners, again not sure on this. Being a good landlord takes effort, time, money.....and a sense of pride in one's property, again this seems to be in short supply these days?....just my thoughts. |
| 30 | All of these housing needs are important. We must strive for a balanced funding allocation policy and take a more holistic view of the housing market rather than favoring one activity at the exclusion of others. |
| 31 | It appears that there may already be sufficient funds for weatherization i.e. VT Gas, Efficiency Vermont, USDA. I do think there is a need to provide renter counseling to reduce abuse of the system, impacts of not paying rent/utilities etc |
| 32 | I think that being a homeowner is very difficult and costly. We should put more funds into affordable rental properties for all Vermonters. Low income housing is hard to come by without having terrible landlords. There should be places to send homeless people to stay that does not cost almost \$100 a night. If we took that money and built a shelter I think that we as Vermonters would be better off also the people needing the shelter. |
| 33 | There is a definite lack of sufficient affordable housing in Manchester. Even The Shires (Regional Affordable Housing Corp) has guidelines for rent that many people cannot afford. If they can't afford The Shires, where can they rent--an unsafe, fire hazard that stretches their budgets beyond the breaking point? |
| 34 | WE need affordable housing on buslin |
| 35 | I stated Not Important for the categories "Build service enriched housing for ..." because it implies to me segregating these groups into separate "housing projects". While I believe the service component is important, I think a better approach is to provide subsidies for anyone who qualifies to live in an integrated community, and make services available as needed. I was a Service Coordinator at an apartment community for "low-income seniors and people with disabilities" in the 1990's, and even then we were discussing changing that model. |
| 36 | the need is so vast and so important to the economic well-being of Vermont that all categories are very important. housing is a crucial piece of the puzzle. |
| 37 | I know a number of young people who would love a home but don't have the money for the down payment but could afford a mortgage. With over two homes in the county for sale, and older homes which need rehab we're missing the opportunity to improve our communities. I would love to see old warehouses and barns turned into temporary housing for veterans, homeless and transitioning members of the community. |

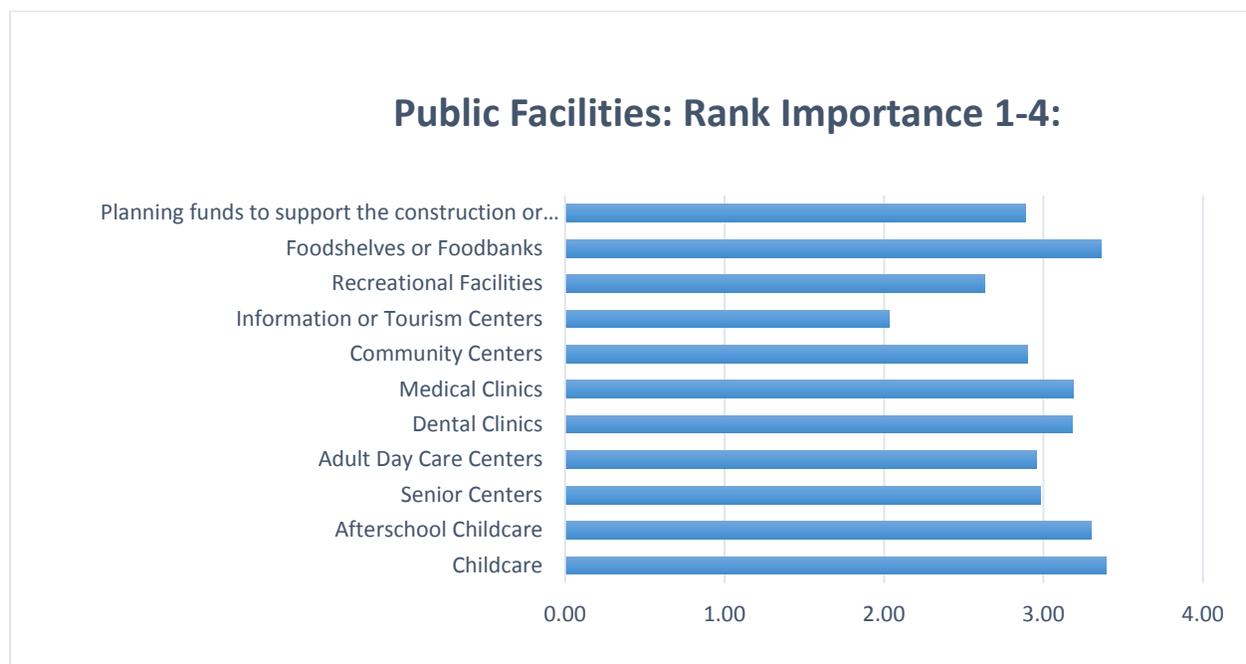
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|----|---|
| 38 | The vacancy rate in Vermont, and Chittenden County in particular, is way too tight. We need to build more housing of all kinds and sizes, rental and homeownership. In Chittenden County there's particular need for the following: 1) affordable large, multi-bedroom rental units for large families; 2) affordable 1br apartments for lower- to moderate-income single professionals (e.g., earning \$35K-\$45K per yr), 3) Tiny or small single family homes for lower- to moderate-income single professionals, and other affordable homeownership opportunities for this demographic such as condo units. |
| 39 | Very important to include green space and food production in housing developments. |
| 40 | It's very tempting to select "very important" for everything! It's all important, of course. Revitalizing existing housing stock is a strong priority and a good way to recycle what we have. Weatherization for low and moderate income housing would support that goal and should be prioritized. Building capacity and capital to convert mobile home parks to resident ownership also seems important. |
| 41 | Focus more on permanent housing to address homelessness than on expanding shelters and short-term fixes. Transitional housing is a missing rung for many and needs more investment. transfer capital and operating funds that have been going to corrections to housing opportunities for re-entry. |
| 42 | There needs to be more focus on homeless young adults as well. They are often forgotten about or are seen as people who have "caused their own problems", when in reality that is not the case whatsoever. Leaving abusive/drug-filled homes often means couch surfing with friends and/or relatives (if possible), which is not sustainable or safe, on many occasions. |
| 43 | There is also a critical need for adequate and affordable housing for those individuals who are rejoining the community after a term of incarceration. |
| 44 | Supporting down payment assistance through a program like the IDA would be excellent - and the only way I would support the use of CDBG funds for this purpose. IDA serves low income Vermonters who save their own funds, build credit and then purchase a home with match incentive. Win Win |
| 45 | Mobile homes encourage the discrimination against those living in or near poverty. As do mobile home parks. In addition, the desperate need for affordable housing that is efficient to live in trumps the need for enriched housing for the disabled and elderly. |
| 46 | We really need a family shelter in this area. There are many homeless families who are in need of supports and services. |
| 47 | <p>Again being single and wanting to provide a home I work a full-time and part-time job to support us. It took four years to save for closing costs and then I needed to raid my retirement account for the down payment. Now I have no money for weatherization to help keep down our heating costs.</p> <p>There needs to be more shelters that help bridge homeless people to work and learning to save and manage their resources.</p> |
| 48 | Again-- investment with added goals of long-term energy efficiencies (net energy cost savings and higher energy efficiency) over "spruce-up" projects with short term gains when completed. |
| 49 | Would be helpful to know exactly what is meant by "enriched" housing. Does it have a technical meaning, or is it simply substituted for "improved?" |
| 50 | Affordable housing options for first time home buyers and young professionals moving back into the area |

Question 6

Respondents: 500/599

The VCDP can provide funds for public facility projects that increase access for low and moderate income people to services such as childcare, senior centers and medical clinics. Please tell us how important each of the following is to you:

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Childcare | 274 | 153 | 54 | 14 | 3.39 | 495 |
| Afterschool Childcare | 252 | 159 | 64 | 19 | 3.30 | 494 |
| Senior Centers | 147 | 208 | 115 | 22 | 2.98 | 492 |
| Adult Day Care Centers | 148 | 199 | 119 | 25 | 2.96 | 491 |
| Dental Clinics | 213 | 176 | 88 | 18 | 3.18 | 495 |
| Medical Clinics | 211 | 184 | 78 | 19 | 3.19 | 492 |
| Community Centers | 142 | 182 | 142 | 24 | 2.90 | 490 |
| Information or Tourism Centers | 33 | 99 | 209 | 151 | 2.03 | 492 |
| Recreational Facilities | 92 | 178 | 157 | 58 | 2.63 | 485 |
| Foodshelves or Foodbanks | 252 | 175 | 51 | 13 | 3.36 | 491 |
| Planning funds to support the construction or improvement of public facilities | 125 | 217 | 116 | 32 | 2.89 | 490 |
| Comments | | | | | | 36 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 500 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 99 |



| Number | Comments |
|--------|--|
| 1 | Our community has strong options for medical and dental care. |
| 2 | Child care and after school care are very important for everyone but especially for the working poor. If a parent doesn't have a job they should not be able to have childcare provided by the state unless they are enrolled in classes that will help them get a degree or job. |
| 3 | There have been various plans for a teen/ community center in Bennington and expanding the recreation center to include more activities but they haven't moved forward due to a lack of funds/ resources for planning |
| 4 | We have to invest at the front end. Early Education Centers with allied parent improvement counseling is where our dollars should be invested. |
| 5 | Providing for families in the community so they can work, go to school, and receive support in their community is very important and key to promoting growth. |
| 6 | Most information and tourism centers seem pretty current. Some municipalities are finding creative ways to use their assets to raise monies for needed improvements privately. With Congressional cuts to food access programs to low income citizens and other trends in corporate giving, food shelves are in need of extra assistance. Also, many low income Vermonters have difficult accessing needed dental care. It seems to me the greatest need for federal assistance is in these two areas. The rest of the areas should be able to find other ways to raise needed monies through development. I do not have children so I cannot speak to child care. |
| 7 | Adult day care and child care needs to be available to families of all means. |
| 8 | Professionally-staffed, licensed childcare centers close to places of employment. |
| 9 | Chittenden County has more access to medical and dental services, particularly for those of low income, than the rest of the state. |
| 10 | Foodshelves themselves are important. But it's not where we need the most urgent funds in terms of space making. |
| 11 | We lack a senior ctr in our town and I am not aware of a community ctr or rec ctr either. We do have a free dental clinic and free medical clinic in town. The dental clinic has a long waitlist to be seen (6 months), even for cases that are critical. There is only one dental office in town that accepts Medicaid and no medical clinics in town that accept Medicaid. Our cts must either go to NH (if not on furlough from prison) or out of town and off the bus route to access medical care. To me, this is unacceptable. |
| 12 | Some of the areas are already fairly well served through a non-profit network that is supported by taxes and private donations. In the Woodstock Area the Thompson Center is very active and thriving, but there is a lack of available childcare, partially because of the older population in town. Again, it is all related. |
| 13 | Not the Government's problem to solve, let the community solve its own problems. Reduce taxes that are used for programs like this and allow the community to solve its problems. |

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| 14 | These are laudable objectives. Should they be funded from CDBG? Maybe not. For instance the medical establishment should do more to fund the construction of medical and dental clinics. Or just make those services more universally available and affordable. |
| 15 | Vergennes is an example of a community that has no public childcare facility. All child care happens in-home or at one of two existing private centers. The needs for affordable (quality) childcare is great. |
| 16 | The number of homeless and hungry in our community continues to grow. Given the current economy, it doesn't appear that the numbers will decline in the near future. This is a problem that needs to be addressed in a fair and equitable way. |
| 17 | Public facilities that enhance our sense of community is very important. In many cases above we should first look to co locating child care and other facilities in schools that have a surplus of space. In most cases medical dental services ought not to need CDBG assistance but there may be exceptions. |
| 18 | All of the above are needed |
| 19 | Medical/dental clinics are important, but these are supported by the higher reimbursement that FQHCs can receive. Dental should be covered better by these facilities as well. Housing, childcare, and adult day/senior centers are funded pretty close to the bone and need to continue to be supported as many of elders are struggling with food insecurity, transportation, and demands by their families to be a greater part of childcare resource. |
| 20 | Quebec subsidizes in-home daycares to make it affordable (\$7/day) for all parents, which actually seems to support the economy since parents are able to work and not depend on other kinds of assistance. I don't think we could accomplish the same thing without drastically increasing taxes, but it's worth thinking about. |
| 21 | priority must be to those facilities serving low and moderate income people |
| 22 | It isn't a matter of what is important. But some projects have alternative funding sources such as medical clinics particularly those funded as FQHCs. While those federal funding sources are increasing, federal funding for housing is diminishing significantly. |
| 23 | Again I believe that we need to do more to help out Vermonters. Afterschool care so that parents are able to work the hours needed and affordable daycare centers that are safe and have appropriate hours to accommodate our working parents |
| 24 | WE need affordable housing FIRST!!!! |
| 25 | I've rated as Very Important the facilities I see as lacking or limited in our communities. For instance, good quality subsidized child care that is available outside "normal business hours/weekdays" would provide opportunities for employment for young parents who don't have a lot of work experience and therefore would initially be looking for entry-level jobs that often require working some evening or weekend hours. After school programs that provide transportation would also be valuable, and again provide parents with limited transportation options the opportunity to work past 2:00 or 3:00 pm. |

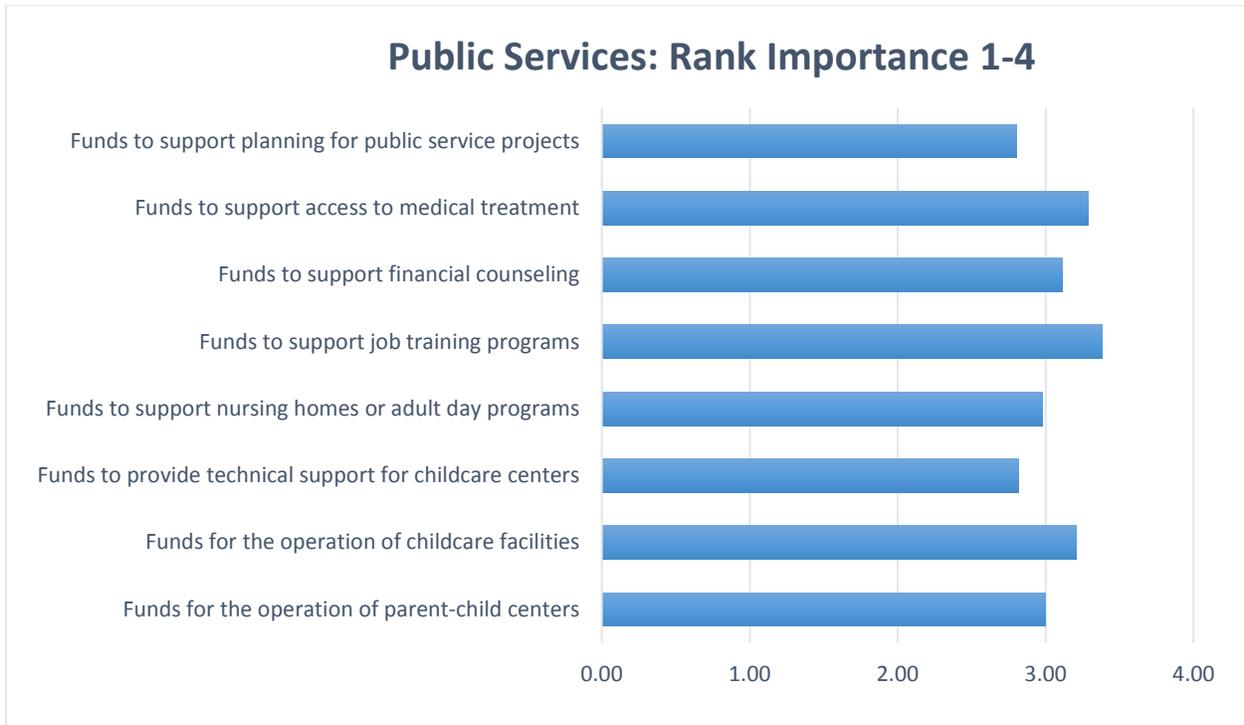
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| 26 | Obama care robbed middle class working people of reasonably priced health care. We need to find away to support everyone in the community. A number of these objectives are supported by other funds and programs so I scored them lower for that reason. |
| 27 | <p>Health care and dental care are inaccessible and unaffordable for many people throughout the state. Anything we can do to provide accessible and affordable care would be an improvement to the current norm.</p> <p>We should grow access to affordable childcare to accommodate working parents who may work various shifts, not just the standard Monday thru Friday, 9am-5pm, work schedule. Need to accommodate parents who work 2nd and 3rd shifts and who have unpredictable work hours.</p> |
| 28 | Foodshelves/foodbanks are important now, but funds should go toward facilities and services that are focused on food education and self-sufficiency, not food aid - such as community gardens, school gardens, garden education for all income groups, etc. |
| 29 | <p>We have food shelves; they need money, we don't need new construction, just more support for those that exist.</p> <p>We live in the most rural state in the union; there is plenty of natural recreation - woods, parks, streams, lakes. Building these is a waste of money.</p> <p>Parent need to take more responsibility for their children; it is not the public's responsibility to provide childcare.</p> |
| 30 | Instead of (or in addition to) recreational facilities, what about using funds to improve people's access to the existing recreational assets Vermont has, like state parks? Leverage what we have. |
| 31 | Adding even one or two more low-income dental clinics in this state would help the crises in dental care immeasurably- very few dentists take Medicaid and I assume this is a problem for working class Vermonters as well. |
| 32 | use of funds to support rehab of existing homeless shelters |
| 33 | We need to have more affordable and accessible recreational facilities in smaller, more rural communities. During the winter months, many low-income families cannot afford outdoor activities, i.e. skiing, due to the cost. |
| 34 | 73% of Vermont's children have all of their parents in the workforce. Because of poverty. Many Vermonters cannot afford dental care. Many Vermonters in Lamoille County are hungry. These are the key issues of our time. |
| 35 | The 'Information or Tourism Centers' is a little puzzling as they would seem likely to have very different community users. One audience would be people seeking community or state resource information; the other would be . . . visitors? |
| 36 | Again Visitor's Center off exit 21 on I89 |

Question 7

Respondents: 485/599

The VCDP can provide funds for public service projects that increase access for low and moderate income people to services that support job retention or creation, access to childcare, senior centers or medical clinics and family self sufficiency. Please tell us how important each of the following is to you:

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Funds for the operation of parent-child centers | 155 | 192 | 101 | 28 | 3.00 | 476 |
| Funds for the operation of childcare facilities | 212 | 170 | 76 | 18 | 3.21 | 476 |
| Funds to provide technical support for childcare centers | 124 | 175 | 138 | 36 | 2.82 | 473 |
| Funds to support nursing homes or adult day programs | 141 | 206 | 106 | 22 | 2.98 | 475 |
| Funds to support job training programs | 253 | 162 | 51 | 11 | 3.38 | 477 |
| Funds to support financial counseling | 171 | 201 | 83 | 19 | 3.11 | 474 |
| Funds to support access to medical treatment | 232 | 170 | 56 | 18 | 3.29 | 476 |
| Funds to support planning for public service projects | 101 | 213 | 126 | 36 | 2.80 | 476 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 21 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 485 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 114 |



| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|--|
| 1 | People need skill training. Out of work people do not make a viable workforce. Skilled, motivated people make a workforce. |
| 2 | I tried to access psychiatric services in Bennington and was told no one at the hospital or United Counseling Services was accepting new patients so I drive to Manchester once a week, which while not unreasonable, does require more commuting tie than if I had been able to see someone in Bennington. There is a need to more access to medical treatment of all kinds but especially mental health. |
| 3 | Funds should be used to help those that do not drive get to stores and hospitals when needed. Perhaps there should be a shuttle that takes non drivers to the health food stores and department stores when necessary. Once a week would be terrific! |
| 4 | Social service needs(probation offices, homeless shelters, methadone treatment) are important but should not be met at in the downtown/ business area of a community. Public transportation to these facilities needs to be used. The business area should be attractive to the general public and provide employment for the community. |
| 5 | Peer recovery support services. |

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| 6 | We need expanded public transportation options to the communities outside of White River Jct that have affordable housing options. Our cts must often choose whether to seek unaffordable or overcrowded housing in order to get to work, or affordable housing w/out the means to get to work. |
| 7 | Not the Governments job to fix. |
| 8 | Funding for substance use recovery programs |
| 9 | What about funding to support home health care for seniors and disabled? |
| 10 | Because of the economy, children seem to be the ones that suffer the most. Often times it is because the parents make bad choices at the expense of their children. Cell phones, tattoos, body piercings, drugs, etc. are chosen over providing for their children. Children show up for school hungry and poorly dressed for the weather. Our elderly are forced to make tough choices due to limited income as to whether to pay for heating fuel, purchasing food, or obtaining needed medicine. |
| 11 | As previously noted the first priority should be to more fully utilize under utilized space and for resources from the medical world to fill gaps. |
| 12 | Job training programs are especially important |
| 13 | Again, the healthcare issue is huge, but this is an issue that should be dealt with via healthcare funds. |
| 14 | I think the State should have a written priority of using other federal and state dollars for these uses before using VCDP funds. There should be criteria developed for the investment of VCDP funds in these areas, and the criteria could state that the project does not have access to other state and/or federal funds. I would not support seeing VCDP funds used for programs and services funded by the Department of Aging & Independent Living and Medicaid waivers. |
| 15 | I think that all of these things are important however I think that when we put so much money in so that we have state of the ark stuff then it makes the cost so high to maintain or the cost to Vermonters is too high. I know that we have to meet certain criteria but we need to remember that it still needs to be affordable and safe. If you are building a childcare center for vermonters it would be nice to have great and expensive things but reality is good caring people, a safe and affordable building are the most important thing. |
| 16 | Affordable housing! |
| 17 | self sufficiency |
| 18 | Also projects that increase food access and self-sufficiency - such as community gardens, school gardens, housing site gardens, garden education for all income groups, etc. |

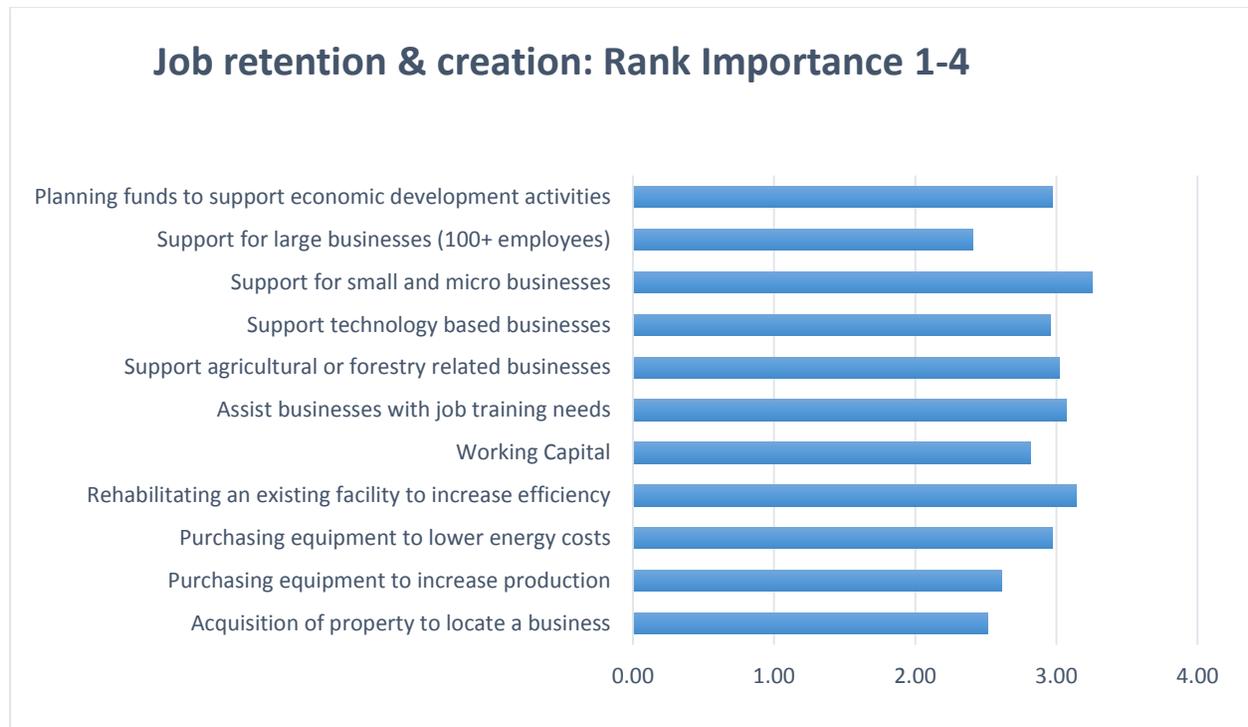
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| 19 | Parent Child Centers in my opinion are not utilized well, and create opportunities to warehouse our low income Reach Up recipients. They have a great potential, but are not generally well thought out in terms of creating real job skills/educational opportunities and a transition plan to help participants move on in a timely fashion to sustainable, livable wage jobs. They seem to become a catchall for ESD. |
| 20 | Part of the formula for resilience - to protect against poverty, child abuse and homelessness, is the strength of community individuals feel. Belonging to something bigger, finding help and resources. This is super important as income inequity drives more people to towards a sense of desperation. |
| 21 | Seems some redundancy in funding for job training (already at Labor, VocRehab, Education (K-12 and college/tech programs) Similar duplication in funding for financial literacy-- perhaps your funding supports what is in existence at Community Action agencies? |

Question 8

Respondents: /599

The VCDP can provide funds for projects that support businesses in Vermont to create or retain jobs. Within the area of economic development please tell us how important each of the following is to you:

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Acquisition of property to locate a business | 70 | 160 | 174 | 61 | 2.51 | 465 |
| Purchasing equipment to increase production | 76 | 183 | 151 | 54 | 2.61 | 464 |
| Purchasing equipment to lower energy costs | 143 | 199 | 93 | 31 | 2.97 | 466 |
| Rehabilitating an existing facility to increase efficiency | 189 | 172 | 80 | 23 | 3.14 | 464 |
| Working Capital | 122 | 179 | 114 | 45 | 2.82 | 460 |
| Assist businesses with job training needs | 164 | 193 | 88 | 21 | 3.07 | 466 |
| Support agricultural or forestry related businesses | 158 | 187 | 95 | 26 | 3.02 | 466 |
| Support technology based businesses | 138 | 195 | 109 | 23 | 2.96 | 465 |
| Support for small and micro businesses | 216 | 167 | 73 | 13 | 3.25 | 469 |
| Support for large businesses (100+ employees) | 74 | 125 | 182 | 83 | 2.41 | 464 |
| Planning funds to support economic development activities | 148 | 191 | 94 | 34 | 2.97 | 467 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 26 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 474 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 125 |



| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|---|
| 1 | Specifically I am looking for programs for people coming out of either correctional facilities or rehabilitation programs to find employment. If people in these positions are not given the training and opportunity to prove themselves productive members of society we will all suffer the consequences of the crimes committed. Access for addiction counseling and related services may be the one thing that would benefit our community the most. |
| 2 | It would be nice to have more social and cultural events available, so people can meet and also enrich their circles and better themselves. It would be nice to have evening shuttle services to and from Burlington, Vt. for those who don't have a car. |
| 3 | We need more jobs that pay a livable wage! |
| 4 | Low interest loans to businesses rather than grants should be used. |
| 5 | With the passage of Act 77 secondary schools could use help in creating apprenticeship opportunities. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 6 | <p>To elaborate on the first and last bullets, funding is needed to assist with acquiring poorly-utilized properties, to create redevelopment plans, and to seek potential developers who would invest and create jobs in the community.</p> <p>To elaborate on the question regarding small businesses, preference should be given to businesses that will create and sustain higher numbers of jobs.</p> |
| 7 | <p>LG business owners obviously don't need help and need to invest some of the profit line into their own business and community</p> |
| 8 | <p>I do not really feel qualified to identify what intervention gets the best results, particularly in this region. This should be a question answered from data, in terms of outcome predictability.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Again not the Governments problem to solve using tax payer money.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Resources to reach how to keep young grads from leaving, luring 5 year post grads to come back to work or start a biz.</p> |
| 11 | <p>Supporting School age youth with on the job training while still in High School.</p> |
| 12 | <p>Don't assume that all 100+ employee business have sufficient resources themselves! These businesses may have different needs, particularly in workforce training and technical assistance, but they are the major employers in our state (who provide livable wages) . We need to encourage their growth and financial stability in order to maintain and improve the financial stability to all.</p> |
| 13 | <p>Much of the "industrial" areas within the City are already built up. I feel the direction to go in is to increase efficiencies and support existing business in their efforts. Nothing wrong with attracting small and micro businesses to the area. There is plenty of room for them to expand in the surrounding areas. Swanton, Sheldon, Enosburg and Richford are prime areas for development.</p> |
| 14 | <p>Cooperatives (especially worker-owned co-ops) as a successful business model are a growing part of the economy and make business ownership possible for people who might not be able to invest the capital on their own. I'd like to see institutions that provide legal & technical assistance to small businesses and agricultural businesses include the cooperative model more in their training and education.</p> |
| 15 | <p>Again, I believe there needs to be criteria that takes into account all other sources of funds available for these uses. Businesses can also afford debt and have multiple financing options including VEDA, Rural Development, VCLF, VT Sustainable Jobs Fund, and Small Business Programs. Similarly, energy improvements & related equipment save operating costs and the savings can be used to repay debt.</p> |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| <p>16</p> | <p>there are numerous sources for business development and tax incentives. Each year there s much less from government for the people struggling day-to-day so these funds need to be targeted</p> <p>to programs and products for low and moderate income people.</p> <p>Only businesses committing to local job training and livable wage should have any access to VCDP funds. All the low paying jobs being created in the service economy create needs that government is no longer able to meet- principally due to the political power of business lobbies like the Chamber who oppose all taxes, regulations (like minimum wage increases) and public spending.</p> |
| <p>17</p> | <p>How about some program that could let a small business buy an vacant home to use as its offices?.....obviously not a huge company, but something like a lawyer's office, doctor's office, insurance agency, etc. Many vacant properties are scattered around the region, just sitting, and waiting to fall into disrepair, due to negligence, and lack of upkeep. It would be better to have a small business use it, and generate revenue, and tax monies, rather than let it sit empty, and fall apart. I know, I have several vacant houses around me, I see it happening.</p> |
| <p>18</p> | <p>Funding for work force housing including using funds to correct the mismatch between housing supply and housing occupants specifically allowing seniors to downsize and capturing those homes for work force families.</p> |
| <p>19</p> | <p>These are important however there are so many tax breaks for large companies that I fell living in Vermont we need to also look out for the small business owners. I know of businesses in Addison county that hire out of state people or have a lot of their work done out of the country. These are not the people we should be helping.</p> |
| <p>20</p> | <p>I think these are important areas of support for businesses, as long as it is tied in to creating/retaining jobs that pay a livable wage. I wouldn't support simply subsidizing businesses for the benefits of a few key people involved in the business. I think receipt of public funds to develop or expand a business should require demonstrated benefit to the business' workforce and the community as a whole, including the requirement to recruit and hire individuals who have been unemployed, have disabilities, have been receiving economic assistance with the goal of reducing reliance on public benefits and more opportunity for self-reliance.</p> |

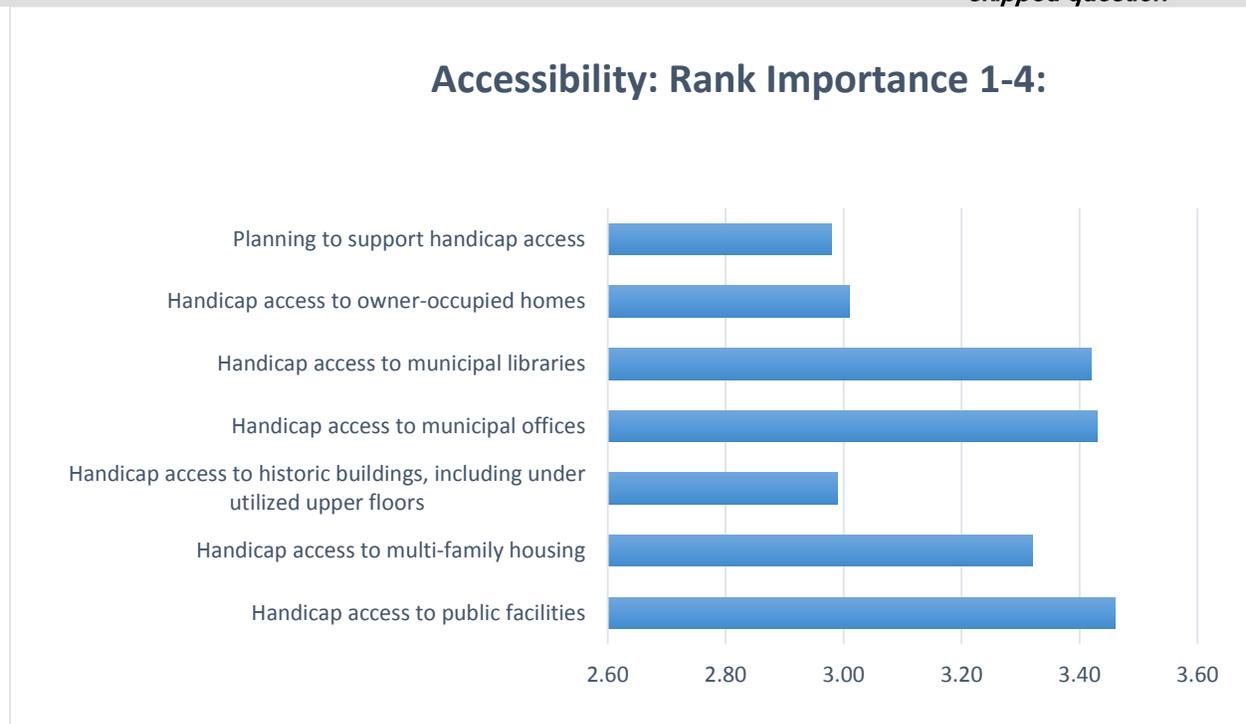
| | |
|----|--|
| 21 | Regarding assisting businesses with job training needs, I would like businesses to take more responsibility for investing in training and other retention efforts, in addition to working with the state on this. Regarding "planning funds to support economic development activities," I support identifying available property, ways to develop existing businesses through marketing/accessing new markets; I am much less supportive of "smokestack chasing" that recruits businesses here with excessive tax credits, and of throwing money at big companies that we know are going to leave anyway. |
| 22 | Only invest with assurance of creating jobs that pay a livable wage and require repayment when targets not met. |
| 23 | Supporting ag and forestry businesses is important simply because these jobs are open to those without higher education. Supporting tech businesses is important in the long run. |
| 24 | These services often are utilized by people with more resources, and more wherewithal to find similar assets, so they are all less important than the issues that more directly address inequity and poverty. |
| 25 | ESOP options should require a HIGH DEGREE of education of and participation by current employees beyond signing a piece of paper. Several NEK businesses that have gone ESOP have done little more than allow owners to suck the money out of businesses to pay owners tax-free, cripple operating expenses and LOWER wages of experienced and skilled workers--in particular, machine operators. None of the employees I know feel like ESOP has benefited them in ANY way. If VCDP is not a part of these unscrupulous practices, perhaps you should be as guardians of the employees best interest. |
| 26 | Again question the redundancies involved. Where is private enterprise and their own risk to grow and be successful? If a business in receipt of VCDP funding "strikes it rich" is there any payback of earlier assistance required? |

Question 9

Respondents: 474/599

The VCDP can provide funds to make municipally owned buildings, community facilities and owner occupied homes accessible for people with limited mobility. Please tell us how important each of the following is to you:

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Handicap access to public facilities | 270 | 148 | 43 | 7 | 3.46 | 468 |
| Handicap access to multi-family housing | 233 | 164 | 63 | 9 | 3.32 | 469 |
| Handicap access to historic buildings, including under utilized upper floors | 171 | 149 | 116 | 30 | 2.99 | 466 |
| Handicap access to municipal offices | 266 | 145 | 45 | 10 | 3.43 | 466 |
| Handicap access to municipal libraries | 262 | 147 | 46 | 11 | 3.42 | 466 |
| Handicap access to owner-occupied homes | 167 | 171 | 92 | 35 | 3.01 | 465 |
| Planning to support handicap access | 163 | 161 | 114 | 30 | 2.98 | 468 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 16 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 474 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 125 |



| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|---|
| 1 | t's a law that people with disabilities have access to pubic buildings and think people should be held responsible for providing that access. I don't believe VCDP funds should be used for those purposes. |
| 2 | As a handicapped person myself, I do not find this to be as high a priority as it once was. We have made great progress. |
| 3 | Accessibility in this state is a major issue across the board. |
| 4 | I believe that our public building are mostly accessible. We lack handicap accessible family and disabled housing in the area. |
| 5 | The library is already handicapped accessible. The historic buildings in Woodstock pose particular difficulties to accessibility. Need longer term solution here. |
| 6 | Again not the Governments problem to solve with tax payer money. |
| 7 | Many buildings in our area are not, or easily, handicap accessible. This needs to be addressed. |
| 8 | The survey doesn't indicate whether the multi-family housing is new or existing - presumably it means existing since new is required by code. The historic buildings question is tricky since it depends on the purpose. Most uses fall under Equal Employment Opportunity laws if they are not housing, which would require the business to create accessibility. Any housing retrofit in an historic building would require handicap accessibility for a certain number of units (maybe any units at all?) under the code, so this cost should be built into the redevelopment costs. I believe the cost of retrofitting municipal buildings, including libraries, for accessibility should be paid by the municipal residents through a half-penny on their tax for a year or something like that. |
| 9 | Plowing of sidewalks/ walkways in downtown so alterabled people can get places in the winter |

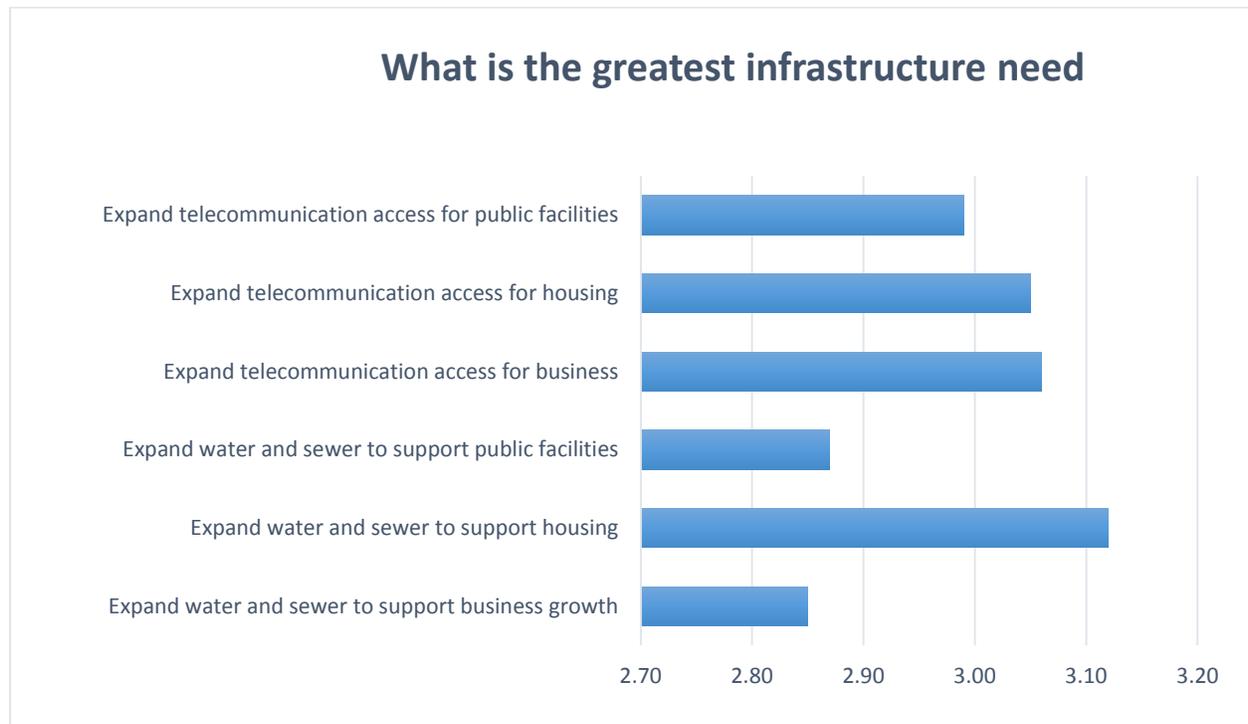
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|----|---|
| 10 | <p>More should be done to support handicap access to trails and recreational areas throughout Vermont.</p> <p>Vermont should become a first in the nation providing access to the many areas within its borders to the Handicap in a professional manner well advertised and promoted. They should find ways to attract people that are handicap to the great outdoors while teaching them of ways to save the environment for use by the many not the only a few who are physically fit to use it.</p> <p>Getting old or being disabled should not stop one from enjoying the forest and the many trails available in Vermont. Even if decision was for seasonal or limited time periods with the weather permitting within certain periods of the year others should be able to enjoy such areas via a handicap accessible vehicle specially equipped for such use. turf tires, safety equipped for handicap people and etc. designed to do little or no harm to environment but keep people safe for the journey of a life time.</p> |
| 11 | I would worry about damaging the historic building. |
| 12 | Access for persons with mobility impairments is a big challenge in Vermont. Much of our housing stock is older, built well before the ADA and other disability rights legislation was enacted. Our harsh winter weather makes accessibility even more difficult. I think all new development, whether it be residential, commercial, etc., should have accessibility in mind. |
| 13 | The ADA requires municipalities to address these issues. They are not overwhelmingly expensive, nor burdensome. HUD funds should not be used to support these. |
| 14 | simialr public/private ownership concerns |
| 15 | While this is important, in some regards I think the state is further along in this goal than some of the others listed in this survey. |
| 16 | <p>This is a larger issue as there are many places that are not accessible for those with mobility issues.</p> <p>There is a need to have funding available to make homes wheelchair accessible etc.</p> |

Question 10

Respondents: 469/599

Please tell us what you think the greatest infrastructure needs are as they relate to housing, economic development, public facilities and public services:

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|---|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Expand water and sewer to support business growth | 130 | 169 | 127 | 37 | 2.85 | 463 |
| Expand water and sewer to support housing | 186 | 177 | 71 | 30 | 3.12 | 464 |
| Expand water and sewer to support public facilities | 117 | 199 | 113 | 31 | 2.87 | 460 |
| Expand telecommunication access for business | 182 | 155 | 98 | 28 | 3.06 | 463 |
| Expand telecommunication access for housing | 172 | 170 | 96 | 27 | 3.05 | 465 |
| Expand telecommunication access for public facilities | 157 | 175 | 105 | 29 | 2.99 | 466 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 17 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 469 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 130 |



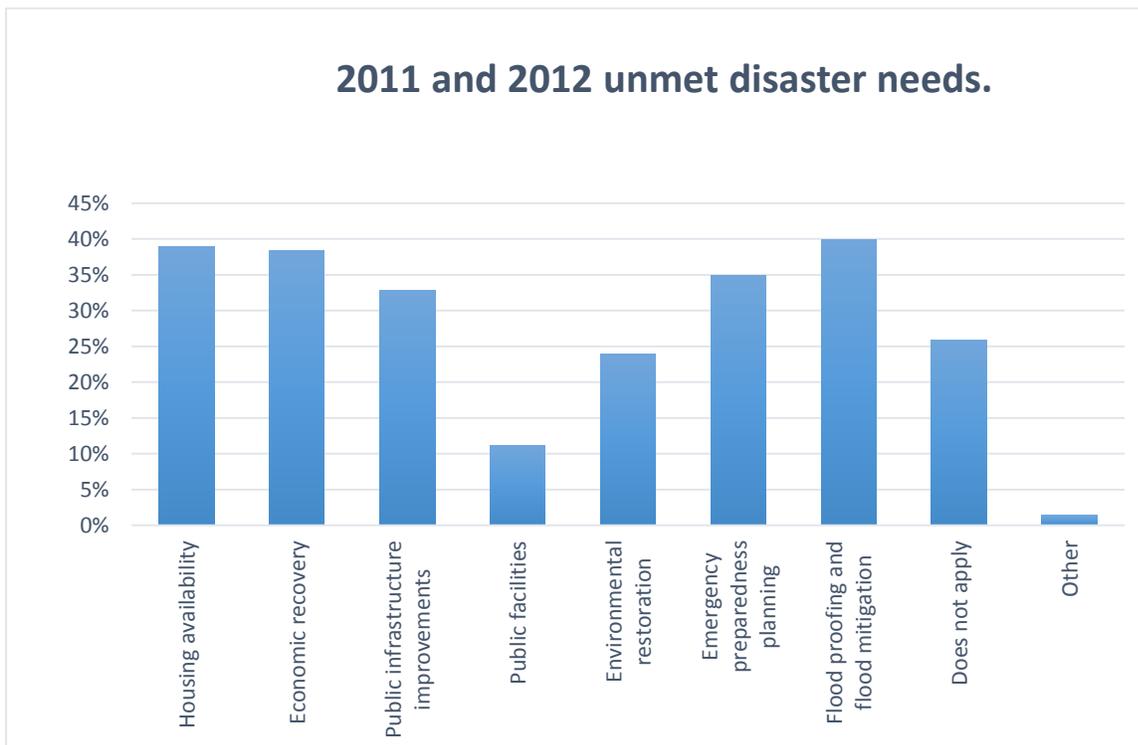
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|----|---|
| 1 | In Bennington some homes are not allowed to hook on to the municipal water system - even when it is nearby. This is a hardship for older residents who must maintain wells which do not provide good water. |
| 2 | Fairpoint's lack of a quick resolution has left many students without a means to access their online courses. |
| 3 | Telecommunication access is critical to Vermont and it's success in the market place and for each citizen. |
| 4 | I am not aware of infrastructure needs. |
| 5 | These public infrastructure elements seem critical universally. |
| 6 | Much has been already been invested in water and sewer projects. To attract more "clean" technological companies we need to invest in high speed telecommunication technology. |
| 7 | I do not support use of VCDP funds for these purposes. I believe Rural Development can pay for the majority of these and because VCDP funds are so scarce, these uses are not the most urgent compared to the needs of homeless people and low income seniors and families. |
| 8 | priority should go to well planned areas where all components can be located: housing, jobs, community amenities |
| 9 | Regarding telecommunication services, the worst thing that could happen to Burlington for individuals and businesses would be that Comcast and Fairpoint become the only available internet, cable, and phone options. Any publicly-financed alternative would be better. |
| 10 | Expanding water and sewer can be a double edged sword. Are you referring to developing new greenfields, outside the central downtown or built up area? Or are you referring to expanding water and sewer capacity within existing built up areas? I would support the latter. |
| 11 | I think that it is important to have these things however I think that basic needs should be out at the top of the list and that helping low income people should be at the top and big businesses should not be at the top of the list as they can do more on their own. |
| 12 | Public facilities should be located in the main downtown area of a municipality. Constructing a public facility outside of a downtown creates a situation where access is made difficult for many types of citizens. This is not an appropriate use of public funds. |
| 13 | Also be sure to expand water and sewer in ways that encourages housing growth in the right places - i.e. not into prime agricultural soils - and in the right ways - i.e. dense urban development and clustered suburban development |
| 14 | Vermont has enough housing; each downtown has nearly endless space that could be rehabilitated for apartments. We don't need |
| 15 | I'm not necessarily in favor of expanding housing and businesses into rural lands. I am in favor of upgrading existing infrastructure and building within existing systems. |
| 16 | Telecommunications are well funded and nearly ubiquitous. Business growth can't go on forever. Sustainability is the important thing. Why do we insist on measuring well being by constant growth? Resources and time are limited, not constantly growing. We should behave as if they are as well. |
| 17 | Where is private business investment? profit motive? Not sure how much access you have to \$ but these seem like "big ticket" items... |

Question 11

Respondents: 436/599

Please help us identify remaining unmet disaster recovery needs in your region related to the 2011 and 2012 federally declared disasters. Please choose all that apply.

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Housing availability | 39.0% | 170 |
| Economic recovery | 38.3% | 167 |
| Public infrastructure improvements | 32.8% | 143 |
| Public facilities | 11.2% | 49 |
| Environmental restoration | 23.9% | 104 |
| Emergency preparedness planning | 34.9% | 152 |
| Flood proofing and flood mitigation | 39.9% | 174 |
| Does not apply | 25.9% | 113 |
| Other | 1.4% | 6 |
| Other (please specify) | | 21 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 436 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 163 |



| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|------------------------|
| 1 | not sure |

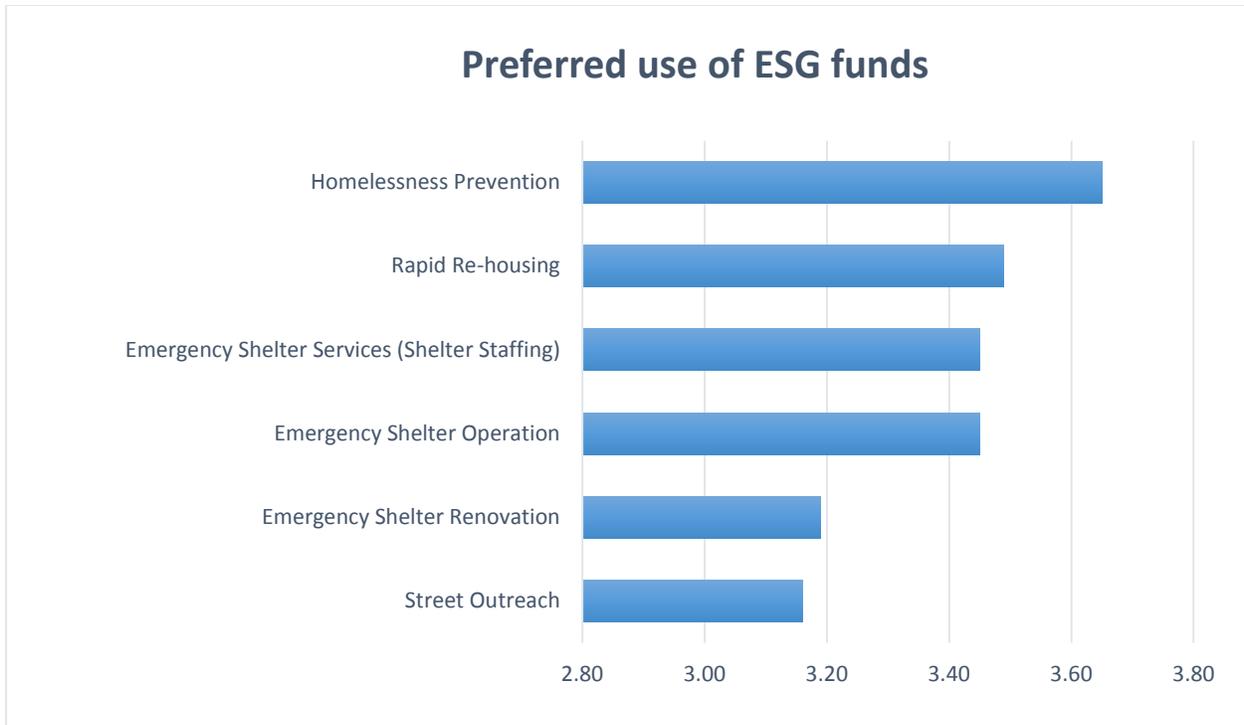
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| 2 | There is no help for homeowners who do not have generators. If a power outage occurs during the winter it will cause large loss due to property damage - and also maybe the loss of lives. |
| 3 | I do not know. |
| 4 | help individuals pay for flood insurance |
| 5 | So far as we can tell, there are a tiny number of individual situations still unresolved but not ones with systemic issues. E.G. on mitigation buy-out from 2011 just occurred this week. |
| 6 | The town has recovered very well. |
| 7 | N/A |
| 8 | Yes, there is something in place, but it all can be improved |
| 9 | bike path repair, bridges |
| 10 | Addison county was not as hard hit as other regions, as far as I know. |
| 11 | Chittenden county was lucky but I believe Burlington has old and outdated CSS (combined stormwater and sewer) facilities which need upgrading. |
| 12 | I am unsure of what is needed |
| 13 | Transportation assistance |
| 14 | Even though I think the disaster recovery needs have been met in our region I do think there is always the need to improve flood resiliency. |
| 15 | Roads, bridges and the loss of land due to Irene and flooding |
| 16 | Vermont needs to replace it very small culverts, because those were the primary problems in many instances. Flooding will recur if these improvements are not made. |
| 17 | emergency preparedness for renters |
| 18 | I just want to say I'm not in favor of helping people rebuild in flood prone areas. |
| 19 | Things are pretty good in Lamoille County. |
| 20 | There maybe other issues that I am unaware of-however there are roads that ahave been overlooked and need permanent repairs. Especially the connecting roads ie: Rte 9. |
| 21 | I don't have much information about what has been accomplished to improve emergency preparedness. |

Question 12

Respondents: /599

The Vermont Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds are used to support a variety of activities aimed at helping individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis. Funds can be directed to:* Engage homeless individuals and families living on the street (Street Outreach)* Improve the number and quality of shelters for homeless individuals and families (Shelter Renovation)* Help operate emergency shelters (Shelter Operation)* Provide essential services to shelter residents (Services and Shelter Staffing)* Rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families (Rapid Re-housing)* Prevent families and individuals who are at risk of becoming homeless (Prevention)Knowing that all of these activities work together to provide a continuum of care, please tell us how important each of the following is to you.

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|---|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Street Outreach | 184 | 189 | 65 | 22 | 3.16 | 460 |
| Emergency Shelter Renovation | 194 | 183 | 58 | 25 | 3.19 | 460 |
| Emergency Shelter Operation | 267 | 149 | 35 | 11 | 3.45 | 462 |
| Emergency Shelter Services (Shelter Staffing) | 268 | 143 | 35 | 13 | 3.45 | 459 |
| Rapid Re-housing | 285 | 131 | 36 | 11 | 3.49 | 463 |
| Homelessness Prevention | 343 | 89 | 21 | 11 | 3.65 | 464 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 30 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 467 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 132 |



| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|--|
| 1 | Please consider the housing first initiative. The easiest and most cost effective way to end homelessness is to provide housing with no pre-conditions. |
| 2 | Rescind the Bennington anti-panhandler law which deprives some of First Amendment rights. |
| 3 | Need more shelters and need more experienced housing search staff, and the money to get into apartments |
| 4 | Support before you loose your home. Money for homeowners to divide homes for the opportunity to have a rental properties. |
| 5 | This is critical in our area. We have agencies working on this but nothing has happened as yet. It is the same as everywhere, "not in my backyard." |
| 6 | While I think Emergency shelters are necessary, the cost of operating them should be kept as low as possible to make sure as much funding as possible goes towards supporting individuals and families to access permanent, independent housing in the community as quickly as possible or stave off preventable episodes of homelessness (assistance with back rent, emergency repairs etc) |
| 7 | We need a permanent location for the warming shelter that was created last yr to address the increasing number of homeless people in the community and the lack of shelter space at our local shelter. |
| 8 | For Woodstock, this is not a large issue. However, it is in neighboring communities and the Upper Valley Haven has provided indispensable help. |
| 9 | Not the Governments job. |
| 10 | Prevention first!! |

| | |
|----|---|
| 11 | It seems like people who are on the verge of becoming homeless often don't get the help or services they need until they are evicted or file bankruptcy. It would be better if they could access the services sooner so that they can stay in their housing. |
| 12 | homeless veterans in particular |
| 13 | We need to house people permanently and stop expanding the shelter 'industry'. |
| 14 | Supported Employment services. |
| 15 | This is what we do. The problem is that everything is important and there are limited resources. |
| 16 | While supporting existing facilities, and perhaps expanding the number of facilities that exist, is important, I think the best use of funds would be to reduce the number of people who rely on emergency shelters, by addressing prevention and providing permanent housing options. |
| 17 | Homelessness has been on the rise in Vermont, particularly Chittenden County. Addressing the homelessness issue takes a multifaceted approach involving all of the topics listed above. I think Vermont needs to grow and improve its housing first policy. I have significant concerns about the condition and safety of some of Vermont's temporary housing units. Many are in very poor condition with many health code violations as well as other health and safety issues. If the state is providing funds for this type of housing, it should have more oversight as to the condition/state of repair of the units and buildings that they are funding for temporary housing. |
| 18 | without housing' vermont residents do not have the ability to gain employment.....however it is important that they "system" not support those who want to "do nothing" to improve their lives and become a burden on the tax payers and hard working people who do have employment. If housing assistance is provided, it should be time limited with a "graduated" payment schedule and mandatory employment as a condition of housing, |
| 19 | Shelters are an antiquated idea and the state needs to be looking at other, more permanent solutions to help people get housed and stayed housed. We should not be growing the shelter system in this state. We should be looking at options like transitional housing programs, permanent supportive housing, and short-term rental assistance for people who are precariously housed. We should also be funding programs that put an emphasis on retaining people in their existing housing as much as possible. |
| 20 | We have a serious homeless problem in VT. There are more and more youth who are homeless in Franklin county. |
| 21 | All shelters should be moving toward a "low-barrier" model that meets our homeless neighbors where they are and engages them with a more "client-centered", trauma informed approach. The goal of the shelter would be to put itself out of business. |
| 22 | Homelessness prevention is an interesting term that begs clarification. I have mixed feelings about how money is appropriated for eviction prevention. |

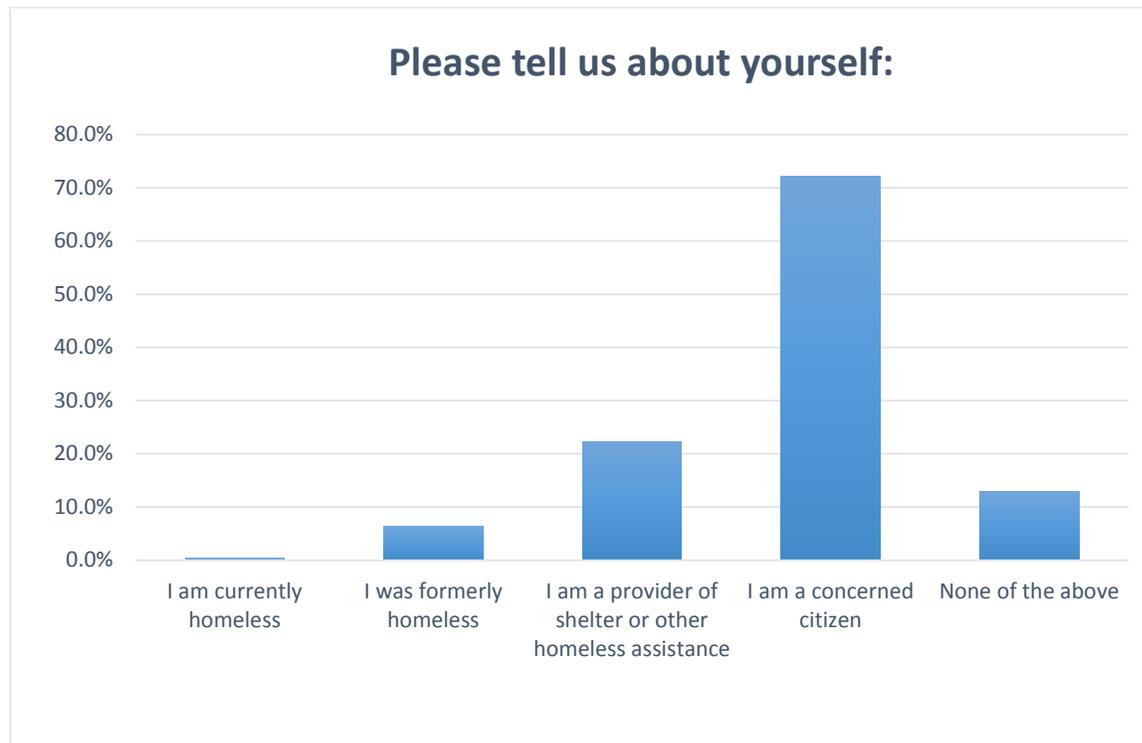
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|----|---|
| 23 | This is where I should have put the comments on the need for a family shelter with support services attached. |
| 24 | Very important to look at underlying causes of homelessness--mental health & substance abuse issues especially. Lack of job training and education. |
| 25 | We need more shelters and shelters that can take people that have "violence" attached to their name, and places that can still take people that use substances (especially marijuana) without leaving them on the street for a month hoping they will stay clean. |
| 26 | Homelessness is a huge issue and concern |
| 27 | A Family Shelter with case management services is much needed in Washington County. |
| 28 | When addressing the issues what is important is looking at soft skills of individuals, employment opportunities and the creation of better paying jobs. Many people do not have or lack the skills needed to become employed-job creation along with education or reeducation opportunities is poorly missing. However, the state should not be responsible for every aspect of this-agencies need to work together to create opportunities for the above to happen! |
| 29 | Shelters are a waste of money. Rather than transitional, and shelter housing we should put money into a housing first model and permanent housing. It has a higher success rate, it has less upheaval and it stops homelessness by housing the homeless. |
| 30 | Without having the context of how much resource is available, it's difficult to weigh the priorities among these. Clearly homelessness prevention is the most effective investment. |

Question 13

Respondents: 460/599

Please tell us about yourself:

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| I am currently homeless | 0.4% | 2 |
| I was formerly homeless | 6.3% | 29 |
| I am a provider of shelter or other homeless assistance | 22.2% | 102 |
| I am a concerned citizen | 72.2% | 332 |
| None of the above | 13.0% | 60 |
| Other (please specify) | | 39 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 460 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 139 |



| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|--|
| 1 | I am a Homeless Education Liaison for a Supervisory Union. |
| 2 | Advocate for persons with disabilities |
| 3 | I work as an advocate for people with disabilities. Some of the people that I've worked with over the past two years were homeless. It was difficult to assist them with locating housing. |
| 4 | We need the state to lower rental cost and reduce property taxes!!! All landlords should cut rebtak prices by 40% |

| | |
|----|--|
| 5 | Many of the individuals we work with have been or are homeless. We do not actually identify as providing homeless assistance, but having housing is so fundamental to dealing with any other issue that we often find ourselves doing housing advocacy. |
| 6 | I work for a non-profit organization which helps people experiencing chronic homelessness to find housing and continues to support them once they are off the streets. |
| 7 | I have a family member who was formerly homeless. |
| 8 | I am a municipal employee and I am answering this survey from the point of view of the Towns I serve |
| 9 | Former housing advocate. |
| 10 | I was not homeless, but nearly was homeless as a result of job loss, and I had 3 kids under age 12 at the time. The only thing that prevented me from going into a shelter was a friend who had a small apartment I could live in for a reasonable rent. Housing is as important to survival as food and should be available to all. |
| 11 | I provide case management services to people affected by mental illness and/or substance use disorders. |
| 12 | I'm a conservative, male, business owner, who is tired of the government getting involved in things that are out side of the duties of the Government based on the powers given to it by the constitution. I believe in personal responsibility and the free market, but every time Government sticks their nose into something it turns to crap. |
| 13 | I also work for a non-profit agency that sees individuals seeking to improve their lives but having to overcome significant barriers. |
| 14 | Active participant with Martha's Kitchen which provides daily meals for people that are hungry. |
| 15 | Member of Town Selectboard concerned about providing emergency services to our community. |
| 16 | My organization has provided AmeriCorp support to homeless service providers and provided capital funding to most of the shelters in Vermont |
| 17 | I often see the homeless in my place of business--they all need better services |
| 18 | I do work and have a day studio. Friends are letting me stay in their shop for now. I am working to attain a better more innovative way to live. Mobile Micro Housing Community in Burlington, VT. |
| 19 | I am on the board of the Thelma Maple co-op in Burlington (an affordable housing co-op) and have witnessed people who are struggling financially go through the eviction process and end up homeless or filing bankruptcy. It's really hard to balance the long-term financial sustainability of the co-op with the desire to support people who are in a tough place. |
| 20 | I teach in an independent school. For the last 2 years, so many of my students have been homeless! |

| | |
|----|---|
| 21 | 80% of our area's chronically homeless could be permanently housed and investments should go into such facilities and their operations and end the cruelty of shuffling people around temporary facilities. |
| 22 | I work for local mental health agency in the Early Childhood Division |
| 23 | It makes sense to me to provide services to prevent potentially homeless individuals and families from falling further into homelessness. I have never been homeless but I've been in situations where I could see that as a possibility. |
| 24 | I work on emergency management, part of which is working with towns to identify and maintain emergency shelters in the event of disasters. |
| 25 | As a case manager with a Mental Health Agency, I work with many people who are living in substandard conditions or are totally homeless. We have a lot of people slipping through the cracks. |
| 26 | Homelessness is not appropriate for anyone. However we need to empower not enable. |
| 27 | Many Vermonters and Americans live paycheck to paycheck and are but one disaster away from homelessness. |
| 28 | I also work with people who are couch surfing, can't afford housing, and can't get into low income housing because of criminal histories or |
| 29 | Participant in regional housing coalition; involved in planning for housing (including affordable housing) |
| 30 | I work in the area of economic development and homelessness is a serious concern. |
| 31 | I am not familiar with this topic. |
| 32 | Provider of housing for the homeless |
| 33 | I work with transitional youth who are frequently homeless and have no transportation-central locations in towns are essential |
| 34 | My organization works with consumers who are homeless/close to being homeless |
| 35 | I work with clients who access these funds. |
| 36 | In my work as a case manager, I work with many homeless individuals. They are unable to concentrate on much until they have a safe place to sleep. This is particularly difficult when they refuse to use homeless shelters due to anxiety or other issues. There are few options available for these clients (usually due to mental illness), and their medical problems are often huge. |
| 37 | I am the sibling of someone who died on the street in the cold due to massive system failures. |
| 38 | As I mentioned I have a son that is currently couch serving because of being turned away from shelters. I also have an exhusband with substance issues that has been homeless and currently in a facility for detox and not sure where he will go next. |

39

As a concerned citizen, I also see the increase of people coming to this state because it is easy to get benefits. Perhaps this is an issues that needs to be taken into consideration. As the various issues increase in our communities, it puts a greater demand on services both state and local. As a result, taxes increase which then becomes a burden for those of us who are working and trying to survive.

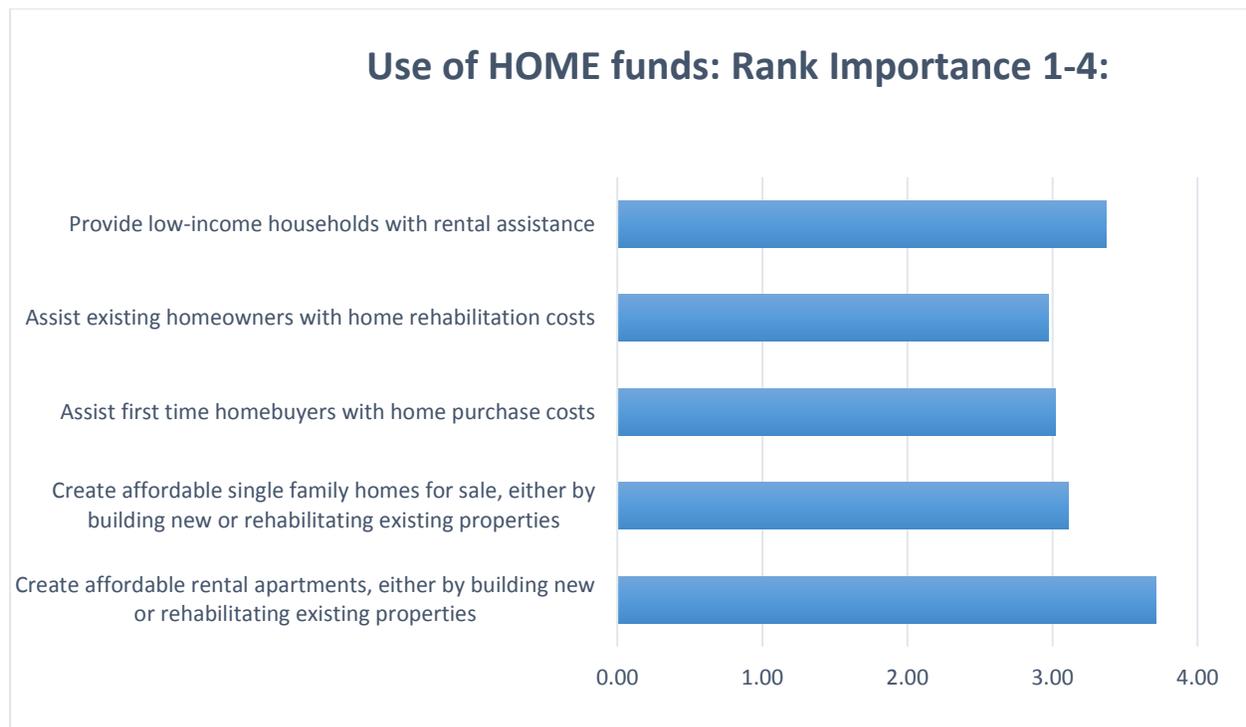
Perhaps the state should think about a "residency requirement" for those who continue to come in state to receive benefits and continue to put a strain on many resources.

Question 14

Respondents: 465/599

The following specific uses are eligible according to the rules of the HOME Program. Please tell us how important each of the following is to you:

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Create affordable rental apartments, either by building new or rehabilitating existing properties | 367 | 68 | 21 | 9 | 3.71 | 465 |
| Create affordable single family homes for sale, either by building new or rehabilitating existing properties | 194 | 148 | 94 | 25 | 3.11 | 461 |
| Assist first time homebuyers with home purchase costs | 180 | 140 | 105 | 33 | 3.02 | 458 |
| Assist existing homeowners with home rehabilitation costs | 153 | 168 | 111 | 27 | 2.97 | 459 |
| Provide low-income households with rental assistance | 277 | 100 | 53 | 28 | 3.37 | 458 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 22 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 465 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 134 |



| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|---|
| 1 | The use of rental assistance is more useful than the creation of permanent low income housing. Residents can remain in their homes when their situation improves. |
| 2 | Provide affordable housing options for all income levels, including those making more than the median income. |
| 3 | Our only "low income" housing options are either slums (private slumlord) or run by a non-profit. The non-profit will not house people with really low incomes eg less \$800 per month!! We need real, quality low income housing. |
| 4 | Sustainable tiny houses!!☺ |
| 5 | We desperately need rental assistance programs and more affordable and subsidized housing. |
| 6 | <p>Windsor county desperately needs housing vouchers / rental assistance programs. The Hartford community action agency SEVCA Cannot provide emergency assistance or services to homeless because the office has ONE employee. Clients are sent to other agencies while waiting two weeks for their appointment at SEVCA.</p> <p>My crisis took one half hour for the worker to assist me. She stopped the eviction but it took FOUR WEEKS for her to meet with me and I only had one day left in my house. I was lucky to have a month to wait, but most people are not so lucky and end up homeless and no shelter.</p> <p>Hire people to work in that office until that happens families will continue to suffer</p> |
| 7 | Not the Governments job. |
| 8 | There is plenty of housing stock for sale now in Vermont and I do not see the need to create new homes or apartments. |
| 9 | HOME should only be used for permanently affordable homeownership and should remain a capita program. |
| 10 | I think any program that can assist people become home owners is worth something. One of the best ways to make neighborhoods better is to have the majority of people living in that neighborhood own their own homes. It is not a guarantee, but rather a fairly good predictor of stability. Most people who own their own homes take pride in ownership, again not all, but most. I don't mean to disparage people who rent. I have rented and owned. I grew up in the military, so renting was usually easier, but owning one's home provides more stability to a given area. Owning a home provides the possibility of increased value, (not a guarantee either), but building some equity is generally a given. |
| 11 | There is potential for duplication of services from other organizations. Lets find those areas where there are no other programs and focus on those areas. |
| 12 | The availability of rental housing, particularly in Burlington, for lower income individuals and families who don't qualify for rental assistance or restricted-income housing is atrocious. There are very few options for those who are working class. |
| 13 | I do not understand the emphasis on affordable single family homes. Apartments, condos, townhouses etc are by definition more affordable and can provide excellent housing solutions. Why emphasize an expensive solution that is uses more land and is potentially farther away from services and transportation? |

| | |
|----|--|
| 14 | My daughter is currently living in subsidized housing and improvements are needed. The cost of heating is killing us! The owner's abuse the system and the families. They are not responsive to concerns such as heating. They hire Blue Flame who is increasing prices, generating inaccurate bills and frauding in the residents. But the residents are stuck because of the deal the owners have made with Blue Flame. Apartments have mold, water leaks in the spring inside the apartments due to the water table and drainage issues. The bitter cold cement floors with heat in the ceiling makes the situation worse, washers and driers don't work and they blame the tenants. It's just wrong. |
| 15 | I think these are the areas of most importance. Housing is a huge cost burden for many Vermonters, especially those living in Chittenden County. Anything we can do to increase clean, safe, and affordable housing options, we should do. |
| 16 | I'm trusting that there will continue to be other means of accomplishing or providing some of the assistance needed and hence, those are less important on the list. |
| 17 | As long as they are working a full time job |
| 18 | The primary problem with housing is economic - housing issues are symptomatic of a state with high home prices, soaring taxes and a weak economy. Until these issues are resolved, residents will struggle with housing. And focus is much more important to place on the middle class - if Vermont loses these taxpayers, there will be more economic and community collapse. |
| 19 | Public funds should only go to permanently affordable homeownership- otherwise it just fuels real estate inflation and the housing-wage gap here is already too big |
| 20 | Use HOME to help with security deposits for renters and IDA homepurchase match. |
| 21 | I dont qualify for any services listed above because I make "too much" and it angers me. Often times people who are low income purposefully stay that way to continue receiving all the benefits they currently get. This state caters to low income far too much and the middle class are the ones who really struggle. Income levels mean nothing when you have to pay outrageous rent, full childcare, full lunch at school and food at the grocery store. |
| 22 | getting and keeping people housed more important than fixing up private homes |

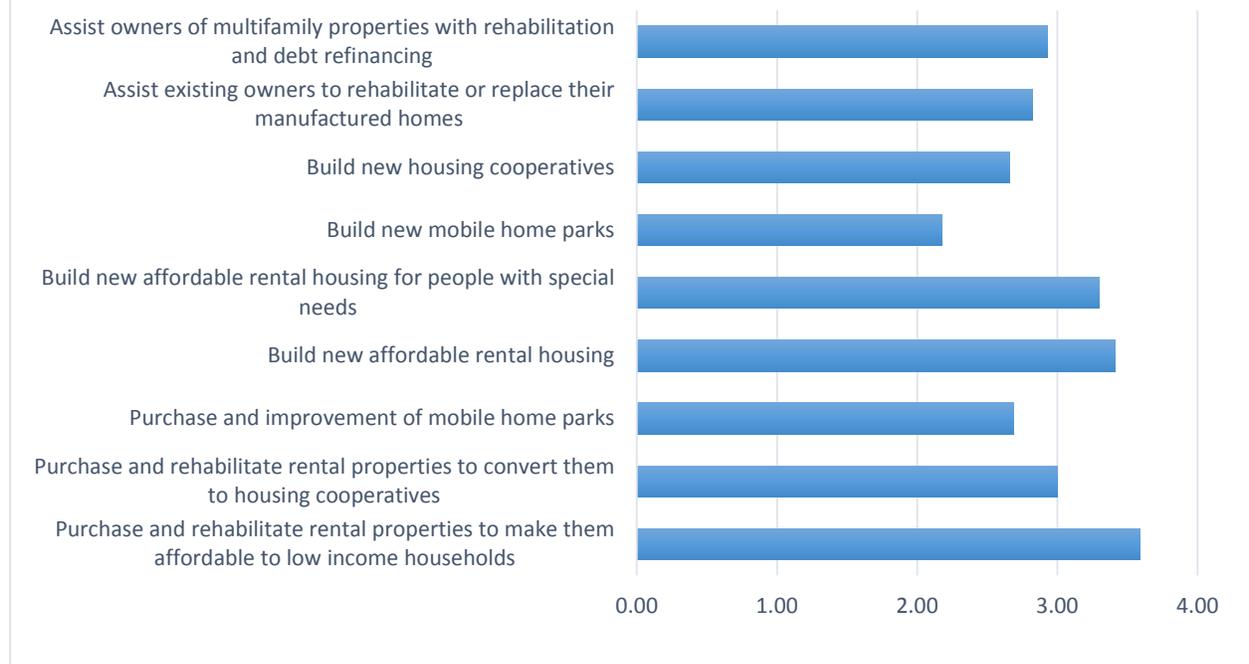
Question 15

Respondents: 463/599

According to guidelines established by the Vermont Legislature, HOME funds must be used to support perpetually affordable housing. In past years, the State has used HOME funds for the following programs within the eligible uses. Please tell us how important each of the following is to you:

| Answer Options | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Purchase and rehabilitate rental properties to make them affordable to low income households | 324 | 97 | 26 | 13 | 3.59 | 460 |
| Purchase and rehabilitate rental properties to convert them to housing cooperatives | 163 | 166 | 96 | 33 | 3.00 | 458 |
| Purchase and improvement of mobile home parks | 111 | 161 | 112 | 71 | 2.69 | 455 |
| Build new affordable rental housing | 277 | 110 | 47 | 22 | 3.41 | 456 |
| Build new affordable rental housing for people with special needs | 234 | 149 | 53 | 22 | 3.30 | 458 |
| Build new mobile home parks | 54 | 106 | 162 | 132 | 2.18 | 454 |
| Build new housing cooperatives | 97 | 165 | 127 | 61 | 2.66 | 450 |
| Assist existing owners to rehabilitate or replace their manufactured homes | 122 | 167 | 127 | 39 | 2.82 | 455 |
| Assist owners of multifamily properties with rehabilitation and debt refinancing | 143 | 171 | 105 | 35 | 2.93 | 454 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 24 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | 463 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | 136 |

Use of HOME funds - VT criteria: Rank Importance 1-4

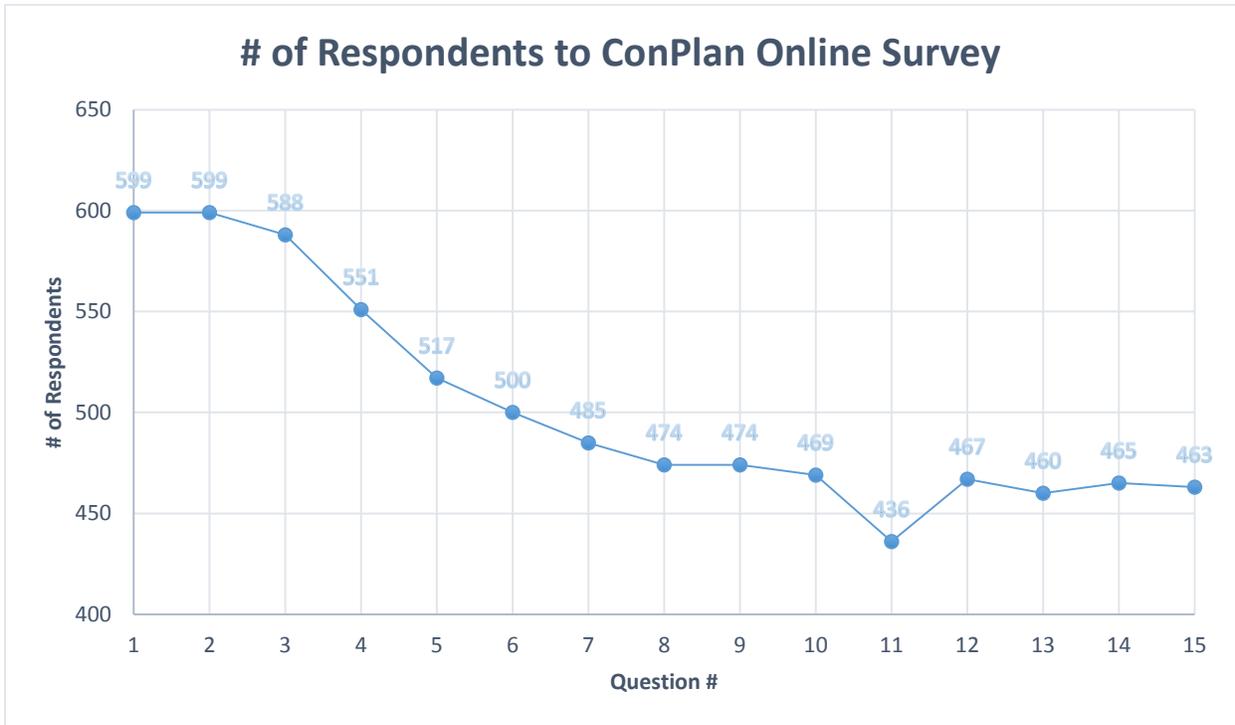


| Number | Other (please specify) |
|--------|---|
| 1 | I think we should move away from putting money into mobile homes and parks. In VT, many of these mobile homes do not meet housing standards and it's not an effective use of dollars to rehab and try to make these trailers energy efficient when they depreciate very quickly. There are effective designs for affordable, energy efficient housing, but very few units are being built in VT. Why is this? We need to work with builders and contractors around the affordable housing issue. Many families would prefer to rehab and retrofit the family farmhouse but end up putting a trailer on the land and letting the house decay. There is also a need for affordable housing - built new or rehab existing housing stock. |
| 2 | We also need to keep in mind whether or not the communities tax base can support another affordable housing complex, coop etc. These units tend to not add revenue to the community and tax base. |
| 3 | many owners of mobile homes in parks could benefit from funding to update and rehab or upgrade their homes |
| 4 | Bennington has a lot of older housing stock that needs rehabilitating before building new homes |
| 5 | What's the difference between manufactured housing and mobile homes? |
| 6 | This suggests that "Home" purchases! I'm responding to this as if this addresses private ownership access to funds that help keep rentals affordable to low income households. |
| 7 | More coop housing |
| 8 | The homeless need assistance Now! Provide housings Vouchers and rental assistance and RAPID RE HOMING funds |
| 9 | Not the Governments job. |

| | |
|----|---|
| 10 | Regarding "Purchase and improvement of mobile home parks", and " Build new mobile home parks and Build new housing cooperative" these all can be united with a new program for building Micro Mobile Home Communities. Built with local, carpentry talent and home-owner learn to build your own home Technical/Construction Assistance Grants. |
| 11 | My responses assume that all of these categories except the last one refer to housing that is owned and operated by nonprofit organizations. I do not think VCDP funds should be used in for-profit owned/operated housing. I also do not support using the funds for debt refinancing. |
| 12 | Build new comprehensive service enriched housing for the elderly. |
| 13 | The rehabilitation of existing vacant homes would be a great first step and then sell to a first time homeowner, don't rent. If we are talking low/moderate income why not let them invest in something instead of paying continual rent. |
| 14 | It makes more sense financially to rehabilitate existing properties for affordable housing than to create new housing, which is usually more costly. The exception might be in Burlington, where more housing is needed to relieve a 1% vacancy rate. |
| 15 | Reiterate previous comments about "housing for people with special needs"; we really should get away from the concept of segregated housing. I'm also not thinking that we necessarily want to encourage more mobile home parks. They seem to create their own "enclaves". I would support assistance to owners of multi-family properties if they are then required to really provide rental apartments in decent condition at a reasonable rent. I've seen some rental properties that are in very poor condition and heard about deplorable conditions in others for which landlords are being paid subsidies. |
| 16 | Vermont's rental housing stock is old and in very poor condition. We need to rehabilitate these old units: mold remediation, lead paint removal, energy efficiency, etc. Mobile home parks are money suckers. Why would the state ever support the expansion of new parks. As far as investment and value of purchase, a homeowner would be far better off purchasing a small or tiny constructed home rather than a mobile home. A small but normally constructed home can build value and the homeowner can expand onto the house as his/her income permits. The value of a mobile home simply deteriorates over time and is an extremely poor investment. |
| 17 | I notice there are no hearings/meetings scheduled in the Central VT area. Randolph is not very central to Washington County. |
| 18 | Vermont needs to conserve open land, not build housing projects on it. There is more than enough existing infrastructure that can be converted to affordable housing. No ground needs to be broken, and ruin the rural nature of the state. |
| 19 | HOME funds should continue to fund permanently affordable housing. |
| 20 | Helping the "worthy poor" with housing co-ops is nice, but the problem of homelessness and poor housing conditions for the truly desperate is a greater need. |
| 21 | Again this is all for low income people. Not middle class. |
| 22 | Mobile homes increase discrimination. They help to keep people in poverty. They are gated communities for the poor. The priority should be getting rid of them. |
| 23 | Landlords must have their own skin in the game-- they stand to profit, they need to take the risks... |

24 However, there are slum lords in many areas and they need to be responsible for safe and update housing. It may be considered "cheap rent" because the home/apartment is not update to meet state requirments. It is the ll's responsibility to keep the home/apartment in good repair and keep up with regulations. No tenant should be at risj due to a poor LL.

Number of Respondents to ConPlan Online Survey



Average # of Responses per question: **503**

Average # of responses to questions 4-15: **480**

Community Outreach meetings

In addition to the online survey and two public hearings, held in Montpelier, the DHCD team conducted seven community outreach meetings throughout the state to solicit feedback. In coordination with community partners, these meetings were advertised through multiple media including advertisements in local, weekly papers. The gatherings served as a forum for interested parties to learn about the Consolidated Planning process and speak about community development needs and priorities. The host communities selected for these meetings were: Bellows Falls, Bennington, Bristol, Randolph, St. Albans, St. Johnsbury and West Rutland. All told, there were approximately 150 participants at these forums representing multiple stakeholder groups.

The following are notes taken at each community outreach meeting.

Bellows Falls

Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan Public Outreach meeting
Bellows Falls Opera House, the Lower Theater, 7 the Square
Bellows Falls, Vermont
Thursday, January 15, 2015

There were 13 attendees at this meeting in addition to DHCD staff. The Greater Falls Warming Shelter and Southeast Vermont Community Action were widely represented.

After introductions from DHCD staff, Josh Hanford provided an overview of the function of the Consolidated Plan, the various funding sources and an outline of the current public outreach process. The floor was then open for public comments and discussion.

Connie Snow: Windham-Windsor Housing Trust

- Extremely Low Income (ELI) renters are increasing in number in Windham and Windsor
- There is a growing need for units with deep subsidy in order to maintain affordability.
- In addition, an expansion of the Vermont Rental Subsidy Program is needed. North Carolina and Virginia have successful examples of this sort of “shallow subsidy”.
- Support for first-time homebuyers is an important tool – owning a home can be less expensive than renting.
 - Provide down payment assistance
 - fund Housing Counseling programs to ensure homebuyers are successful
- The need for enhanced building rehabilitation programs is essential
 - Rehab programs help improve the existing housing stock and allow people to age in place.

Louise Luring: Greater Falls Warming Shelter

- A major barrier to getting people housed is coming up with 1st and last month’s rent and security deposit.
 - Programs that provide these funds should also support funding services to help ensure people maintain their housing
- Moving homeless people straight into housing (Housing First Model) may be more successful than transitional housing or shelters.

Lisa Pitcher: Our Place Drop-In Center

- Funds needed for support staff and counselors. A lot of ‘legwork’ goes into successfully housing someone who is homeless – Locating units, landlord outreach, assistance getting utilities on (esp. if there’s unpaid bills); all require a lot of staff time and often can’t be completed by the client.

Pat Burke: SEVCA

- Emergency Solutions Grant money seems to be becoming more ‘silo-ed’. Increased number of parameters limiting use of funds making it difficult to help people. More flexibility of funds is needed for creative solutions.

-Creative Community Housing Program in Brattleboro is a good example of using creative solutions to house people in need.

Best to let people on the ground determine how best to use funds to get and keep someone housed; especially important to allow case workers to help people maintain housing rather than wait until they're homeless to assist.

Josh – questioned whether there should be more coordination or consolidation of assistance services? Should assistance be more centralized so people aren't being sent to different organizations and agencies for services?

Steve Geller: SEVCA

- Ditto Connie Snow's earlier comments
- There is a tremendous and growing need for more housing.
- The shrinkage of buying power is increasing the number of people who are considered to be impoverished and have difficulty making ends meet. Hence the coining of the term "working poor"
- Consolidation of services can lead to a "Catch 22" → the best level of service happens at the local level, so avoid centralization. It would be better to increase collaboration and integration/networking between agencies and organizations.
- Encourage a "No Wrong Door" strategy, whereby a client can access many types of service and assistance from whatever agency they approach first.

As an example of what's not working, a story was shared about a couple that became temporarily homeless due to a no-cause eviction. They needed help getting a security deposit and had to take a bus to Springfield in order to get that type of assistance (rather than it being able to be granted by the community action agency they were already at). This seemingly small requirement caused for a lot of unnecessary stress for the couple and was needlessly burdensome.

- Example of the wrong direction to move towards is in recent changes to the Crisis Fuel program. SEVCA used to have access to the state's system for seasonal fuel assistance and could therefore work with clients in need of this directly. They now have to send clients to a district office run by the state. A system that was working has been made less functional → the clients were already at a caseworker, don't require that they be sent elsewhere for other services.
- Many partner organizations are beginning to collaborate more, encourage this.

Connie Snow – Case management funding needs to be associated with deep subsidies for housing

- Currently, the warming shelter is in a church that may be closing, the food shelf is located at another site: has there been thought of combining these services into a single, community space? (Perhaps with supportive housing incorporated?).
- SRO/Boarding House model of transitional housing still a valuable tool.

Jon Hoover: Morningside Shelter

- While scattered site housing for homeless individuals is nice, it's not the only solution. There is benefit to have permanent, supportive housing at a single site. Services can be on-site, there wouldn't be need for lots of landlord outreach.

Beth Shrader: Windham Sheriff's Department

- High need in the region for transitional housing for ex-offenders. The Sheriff's Department is interested in a 'central' facility that includes Transitional Housing, Food Shelf, Drop-In Center, and other services. Considering who could be a rent-paying partner to sustain such a space (could service providers consolidate their space needs and share resources?).

Lisa Pitcher – Rehab of existing shelter and service centers is needed – the space is approaching substandard status.

- There have recently been efforts between regional service providers to discuss opportunities for opening coordinated service centers. Having a variety of services in one place would help clients (food shelf, transitional housing, SROs, job training). Multiple Agencies sharing space.

Beth Shrader – consider who could pay rent for such a space → perhaps having dispatch service located in the facility; many towns pay for dispatch services.

Josh – pointed out that, in addition to funding facilities, CDBG Planning Grants exist to help people continue this sort of investigation → capital needs planning for such a facility would be an eligible use.

Beth Shrader – it's important to acknowledge the job-creation potential of such a facility. It would need to be managed, and framing the issue as a job creation tool is important.

Lisa Pitcher – Long-term planning is important, but there is a short-term, acute need that should not be forgotten.

Ann DiBernardo: Greater Falls Warming Shelter, Bellows Falls Select board

- Current public sentiment is to move away from dividing of large, Victorian homes into smaller units or multi-use → rather, there is a desire to return some of these homes to single-family, single-use structures.

- If proposals are made to convert Victorian homes into multi-use service centers, there will be public pushback.

Josh – questioned whether prioritizing re-habilitating these homes and converting back to single family should be a focus – perhaps a homeownership opportunity that would be less expensive than renting.

Ann DiBernardo – Bellows Falls is a relatively inexpensive place to live. It's important not to site all services and affordable housing in one place – surrounding communities need to be discouraged from denying the construction of affordable housing.

Josh – pointed out that there have been several affordable housing projects approved in various, higher income municipalities throughout the state and that Fair Housing law prohibits the discrimination of housing for low-income households.

Steve Geller – Moral vs. Legal Responsibility to allow for affordable housing development → while there may be laws against denying affordable housing projects from occurring within a municipality, since the muni is the applicant for CDBG, such developments could effectively be denied simply by a muni refusing to apply for the funds.

- there are models for inclusionary zoning practices that could be more widely implemented throughout the state

Lisa Pitcher – homes could be made affordable by doing renovations and keeping purchase prices down for new homebuyers (shared equity model)

Josh mentioned the redevelopment project happening in the NW neighborhood of Rutland City → this could be a model for other communities who see a similar need.

Beth Shrader – Jobs are also a great need in the area. The Vermont Yankee development funds caused some stir in the community, but a whole strata of jobs needs to be created, not just high-skilled jobs to replace VY.

- There is a need for more training job training options.
- Frustration that policy priorities don't often adequately align with potential job creation: e.g. big push for solar development has brought in many out-of-state workers and firms doing projects that could have been contracted to in-state firms that hire in-state labor.

Lisa Pitcher – a major problem at the moment is an apparent lack of upward mobility from available entry level positions. One used to be able to work their way up from an entry level job to a higher paying one – this no longer seems to be the case.

- It's important to create job training opportunities that connect existing employers looking to expand to the under-employed

Josh – Tourism is a major industry in VT – are there strategies to promote more tourism in this area?

Ann DiBernardo – bypasses are a problem for Bellows Falls, the level of traffic passing through town needs to be greater.

- There is a need for Hospitality Training opportunities – some restaurants/inns have closed for lack of trained workforce availability.
- The train station in town could be utilized as a tourist attraction – provide access to NYC

Tourism/Hospitality can truly lead to careers as attractions and destinations expand – it's not just low-paying jobs in this service industry.

Other thoughts?

Beth Shrader – Interested in share of economy related to forestry and wood processing – more forestry products could be processed in this area; currently many trees logged are shipped to NH to be turned into wood pellets.

Lisa Pitcher – Lack of public transportation, particularly 'off-hours' (not for 9-5 commuters) is a major barrier to low-income people getting and maintaining employment. Owning a car is an expensive proposition.

Ann DiBernardo – Low Medicaid reimbursement for transporting patients to and from the methadone clinic is causing deficits for substance abuse recovery programs (more public transport would alleviate this)

- The VT Brand and Food hubs are a major asset and attraction and should be promoted more.
- VT has a history of entrepreneurship that should also be promoted.

Steve Geller – Reiterating the need for home repair program. SEVCA started a home repair program with ARRA funds that had great leveraging capacity – however, USDA funding is being pulled and a replacement has yet to be found.

Lisa Pitcher – several food pantries in the area have partnered on a project to process and freeze food gleaned from farmers’ fields or otherwise captured before it is lost. This project could use support for more freezer space and storage facilities. Last year they processed between 3,000 and 4,000 pounds of vegetables.

Bennington

Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan - Bennington Outreach Meeting
Bennington Fire Station – Third Floor Meeting Room
130 River Street, Bennington VT
January 13, 2015

There were 21 attendees at this meeting in addition to 3 DHCD staff. Complete listing of attendees attached.

Prior to the meeting, Rose Marie Pelletier with Hour for Our Community Time Exchange, a community time bank program which provides an exchange of services, inquired about CDBG/VCDP as potential funding for part-time personnel to help grow and sustain their program. She also provided comments on the need and benefit for this type of program and suggested it should be considered for inclusion in the Consolidated Plan.

After introductions from DHCD staff, Josh Hanford provided an overview of the function of the Consolidated Plan, the various funding sources that the plan covers, and an outline of the current public outreach process. The floor was then open for public comments and discussion.

Sam Rosino stated a need for assistance for food pantries and suggested funding a project for a downtown hockey rink, which would help with loss of business as well as give activity for the local youth. He said the multi-use recreational facility could help with tourism and recreation and it would get people involved as well as a maybe provide rebirth to downtown.

Charlie Murphy stated a need for more accessible affordable housing, the lack of accessible housing limits where people can live. He said there's a need for more Section 8 vouchers or subsidized housing for low income people.

Sue Andrews stated the need for low income services – more than just food pantries services in support of housing. She said LMI people need a food distribution site where there's opportunity to learn about the abundance of what we have and assistance with how to cook/manage food and nutrition. Some of the barriers are a lack of funding (cost for food), education and infrastructure. She said these food centers are happening all over the country and in Canada. She said culture evolves around food.

Michael Harrington stated the need for infrastructure (waste/wastewater). He also mentioned the need for redevelopment in downtown of underutilized properties that is a priority for Bennington, especially commercial re-development.

Jeannie Jenkin suggested a program to work with landlords of rental units downtown to add community solar panels and to assist LMI homeowners to purchase solar panels.

Richard Dunda mentioned the need for centralization and coordination of social services. Food/Healthcare opportunity to unite services. He said the current delivery system of services is too complex.

Sue Andrews provided an example of the complexity and lack of integration of the social service delivery system– homeless person stopped at the homeless shelter but was told they needed go to state's AHS economic services office, had trouble getting there because of limited transportation and then when she was able to get there was told to come back after 4 pm to get a hotel stay voucher. The process is not efficient. There needs to be a consolidation of services.

John Broderick stated the greatest housing needs are for the lowest income, below 30%, and the resources available don't meet the needs. He said there's a need for housing in all income areas. He said people that are 80-100% AMI are staying in the rental market and not becoming 1st time homebuyers which is putting more pressure on the rental market. Need to emphasize homeownership. He said more senior housing is needed, and resources for senior population to age/stay in place. He said the majority of affordable housing in area is mobile home parks, but many are deteriorating, have aging infrastructure and there are replacement/rehabilitation needs.

He said they need to invest more in these, but suggests moving people out of mobile home parks and into homeownership.

Charlie Murphy suggested the need for more services to help people stay in and maintain their homes, with limited income he has to keep his house at 55 degrees to help with costs.

Bill Colvin stated the need for housing funds all income levels. He said there's a need for economic development – job creation. He mentioned mobile home parks have been an issue for 20 years. He said there needs to be a creative program to help mobile home owners move into homeownership.

Josh Hanford mentioned the Department received an email prior to the meeting commenting on the lack of public transportation in the Bennington area especially for people with disabilities, the lack of public transportation creates serious issue and barriers for people.

Bill Colvin stated a need for workforce development and education for economic development there is limited resources at the local level. Opportunities for local businesses to expand. There's a gap. Recently unemployed and mid-career persons, local entities can identify workforce training.

Sue Andrews said it's hard to apply for CDBG funding, and sometimes steers projects away from the source. She sometimes wonders if it is worth applying. She suggested streamlining the process and reducing requirements.

Michael Harrington wondered if the Town should share any numbers from economic development/housing plans or studies done by the community. Josh said they could and should as part of the ConPlan process. He said they should absolutely should share any data that conflicts with what the Draft Consolidated Plan concludes.

Michael Harrington stated the need to assist young, single professionals. Homeownership is difficult with current financing process. It's difficult to make improvements/maintain a home with single income.

Sam Rosino stated aging baby boomers want to stay at home. There's needs for ADA improvements and fuel assistance. He noted medical facilities need improvements.

Bill Colvin mentioned the need for funding for opiate addiction. He said there's some handle on enforcement but less on prevention. He asked if this was discussed at other meetings.

Josh Hanford said we have heard in other meetings the need for more services and consolidation, with a strong need for in case management, but not specifically for drug addiction. He said CDBG can help with service programs to get the program started or increase services, but cannot fund ongoing programs.

Sam Rosino questioned if there has been any discussion on veterans.

Josh Hanford said not specifically through this process, but we have funded transitional housing for veterans in the past.

Bristol

Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan Public Outreach meeting
Holley Hall, 1 South Main Street
Bristol, Vermont
Monday, January 5, 2015

There were 12 attendees at this meeting in addition to DHCD staff. Representatives from regional partners in attendance included:

- Adam Lougee – Addison County Regional Planning Commission
- Robin Sheu – Addison County Economic Development Corporation
- Jeanne Montross – Addison County Community Action (HOPE)

After introductions from DHCD staff, Josh Hanford provided an overview of the function of the Consolidated Plan, the various funding sources and an outline of the current public outreach process. The floor was then open for public comments and discussion.

Jeanne Montross: Addison County Community Action

- Need more flexibility in design and creation of affordable housing, particularly housing with supportive services to address chronically homeless individuals and those dealing with substance abuse.
- Consideration should be given to a Boarding House-style project or Single Room Occupancy. Having small rooms for occupants with shared facilities would lower development costs and provide for more social and community interaction for occupants – a benefit to those needing supportive service.
- The HOPE group has been trying to find funding and support for a Boarding-House type project and indicated there is a need for both initial capital as well as ongoing funding for services.
- It is important not to focus all affordable housing development in downtown areas. Low income families should have the option of living outside of village centers and reap the benefits of rural living (outdoor recreation, yards, privacy, etc.)

Stephen Pilcher: Town of Monkton, Select board

- Most affordable housing in Monkton and surrounding towns is in the form of mobile homes
- In many cases, quality of mobile homes is deteriorating and abandonment is an issue. The cost of removing an abandoned home is not insignificant.
- Energy Efficiency is also a problem in many mobile homes and efforts to improve the efficiency of new mobile homes should be continued.

Rep. Dave Sharpe: D – Bristol, Addison 4

- It is difficult for smaller towns that lack paid staff to complete CDBG applications or become Designated Downtowns. Expanding resources and technical assistance to

communities without capacity to achieve designation status and compete for competitive & targeted funding would be desirable.

- Need to continue efforts to improve energy efficiency in mobile homes, VerMod homes a good example. Incentivize manufacture and purchase of energy efficient mobile homes
- Bristol successfully created a Revolving Loan Fund with CDBG dollars about 20 years ago. This has been a successfully utilized resource that encourages local 'micro-lending', particularly for things the banks are unlikely to finance. Local control contributed to the success.

Donna Gile: Bristol

- Need more affordable senior housing in Bristol and surrounding area. Develop close to services and amenities (Doctors, Grocery, Shopping, etc.)

Adam Lougee: Addison County regional Planning Commission

- Aging or non-existent community infrastructure represents a major need and presents a bottleneck for business development (particularly water and wastewater systems)
- Need more loans and grants for planning and creation of community infrastructure.

Question regarding Emergency Solutions Grants – Josh Hanford explains

Jeanne Montross

- Frustrations among the homelessness service provider community with low income limits for ESG assistance.
- ESG funds could go farther if clients could be served before their assets are reduced to the level required by ESG parameters. It's less costly to help an at-risk household before they are in crisis and additional flexibility in the use of these funds is desired.

Lorraine Abramson: Resident of Eastview senior housing in Middlebury

- Funds needed for improvements to sound systems that will accommodate hearing aids. Many problems with senior community spaces and public buildings not being able to accommodate hearing aid technology, resulting in less senior connectivity to community and cultural activities.
- Specific systems exist but have limitations, more attention needs to be given to this type of 'accessibility' improvement

Robin Sheu: Addison County Economic Development Corporation

- ACEDC helped develop Eastview senior housing by establishing a letter of credit. This type of creative/innovative approach should be encouraged.
- Continued use of funds for Revolving Loan Funds is essential to continued encouragement of economic development. Consider tourism and recreation when reviewing economic development proposals.

Bill Brocon: Bristol Planning Commission

- What are the impediments to businesses siting in VT? Can CDBG be used to incentivize businesses to establish in VT – lowering tax burdens?

Josh Explains CDBG can be used for:

*Infrastructure grants that improve municipal capacity
Repurpose old buildings/properties
Gap funding*

- How does VT compare to economic incentives provided by NY state?

Greater focus in VT on “Economic Gardening” – i.e. fostering growth of existing businesses/entrepreneurs vs. “Economic Hunting” – incentivizing large businesses to locate here

- Disappearing Enterprises (e.g. Timber) are a growing concerns. Global forces likely also at play, making it more important that VT protect the industry in the state.

Rep. Dave Sharpe:

- Vermont spent millions to incent Dealer.com, MyWebGrocer and others to grow in VT, which was a successful move and Vermont currently ranks high nationally as a place that is attracting in-migration due to quality of life. This should not be overlooked.

Jeanne Montross:

- The CDBG application process is reasonable, staff is great at assisting, but it is not without difficulties and smaller communities could use greater assistance in completing applications.

Kate Selby: Bristol Downtown Community Partnership

- Generally pleased with comments voiced so far, many of her concerns have been addressed.

- What is the benefit of being a Designated area?

Designated Downtown and other designated areas are intended to encourage Smart Growth (anti-sprawl) development. Designated areas receive ‘extra credit’ in CDBG applications, making the proposed projects in these areas compete more favorably in the application process. Designated areas also have access to Technical Assistance from the Downtown Program and receive other incentives to encourage development in the designated areas.

Lorraine Abramson:

- Wondered if there was interest in grant writing courses or who provides this type of training to communities? Such courses could be provided around the state and allow for more citizen participation and understanding in CDBG process and possibilities.

- Make sure outreach regarding such opportunities is sufficient.

Josh explained CDBG- Disaster Recovery funding stream and inquired if there are disaster-related needs in the area.

Adam Lougee commented that culverts throughout Addison County are still in need of improvement to prevent future flooding. Many bridges also in need of repair/improvement. Dilapidated infrastructure a problem throughout the region. Most all recent damage caused by natural disasters in Addison County was relating to transportation infrastructure.

Randolph

Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan Community Meeting
Chandler Music Hall, Upper Gallery, Randolph, Vermont
Friday, January 16, 2015
MEETING NOTES

Twenty-six people, in addition to staff from the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Vermont Housing Conservation Board, attended the meeting. Partners participating in the meeting included Mel Adams from the Town of Randolph, Julie Iffland and four members of her Board from Randolph Area Community Development Corporation, Ramsey Papp and Linda Anderson from Capstone Community Action, Martha Englert and Cara Hansen from Central Vermont Community Land Trust, and Pollaidh Major from Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission.

Consolidated Plan Advisory members were Angus Chaney from the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Kenn Sassorossi from Housing Vermont, and Cindy Reid from Cathedral Square Corporation.

Program staff were Deputy Commissioner Jennifer Hollar and Carl Bohlen from the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) and Willa Davidian and Beth Schwarz from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board HOME Investment Partnership Program.

Jennifer Hollar welcomed participants and provided an overview of the purpose of the Consolidated Plan community meeting and introduced Carl, Willa, and Beth and then had attendees introduce themselves. She then opened up the meeting to public comments.

Public Comments:

Ramsey Papp (Capstone Community Action)

- ✓ Orange County is spread out and has no homeless shelters and no easy transportation.
- ✓ More subsidized housing and more housing stock in general are needed.
- ✓ Suggested creation of a risk pool of funds for landlords willing to rent to tenants who have difficulty finding housing due to their past. Would like to come up with ways to support landlords if rent is not paid.

Sandra Paritz (Vermont Legal Aid)

- ✓ Interested in the Housing First model and asked if there is a way to increase its use- are there additional resources to expand this program? The biggest barrier to housing is having the funds to pay rent.

Maria Puglisi (no affiliation)

- ✓ Asked how someone would get subsidized housing.

Jennifer Hollar: *apply to housing projects managed by various non-profits around the state, Section 8 vouchers that are project based and tenant based.*

Kenn Sassorossi: *provided more information on Section 8 vouchers and cited how waiting lists are very long and some projects have closed their waiting lists.*

Julie Iffland: *stated that Randolph House has a 3 year waiting list.*

Jennifer Hollar: *added that only 1 in 4 nationally who are eligible for housing assistance are able to obtain it.*

Linda Anderson (Capstone Community Action)

- ✓ There are a lack of SRO's (single room occupancy units) for single persons and very little help for single persons in need.
- ✓ There also is a lack of employment that pays sufficient wages to cover housing rent.

Pam Stafford (RACDC Board)

- ✓ Elders also are in need of housing and the Joslyn House is a unique model.

Julie Iffland (RACDC)

- ✓ Described Joslyn House and the need it is trying to fill. It is a congregate living model with supportive services. Average age of residents is high. Allows independence at a lower cost. Most residents are 30-50 LMI and don't have ability to pay for services needed to be independent, and Joslyn House is the "marriage" of services and housing which is very important as the services are critical.
- ✓ Many tenants need life skills training. Landlords cannot incur the cost of a "bad" tenant and the costs resulting from property turnover and the accompanying repairs to ready property for new tenant- this is not sustainable.

Jennifer Hollar: *added that the high rent burden leads to inability to afford food.*

Mark Kelley (no affiliation)

- ✓ Asked if a system model for housing in the state exists?

Jennifer Hollar: *described the local and state wide non-profit delivery system, emergency shelters noting that there are not enough of them, and the state entities such as DHCD, VHCB, VSHA and VHFA.*

- ✓ Mark Kelley further clarified he was looking for a model flow chart.

Angus Chaney: *there is not one for the whole state but there is the Continuum of Care model for addressing homelessness with a diagram. Vermont has a decentralized system with local parties being the driving force so the model varies community to community.*

Kenn Sassorossi: *added that housing delivery system is not a top down structure but more a grassroots up one. In addition, needs also vary by region. There is not enough money to support a state top down model with only \$7 million in state funds which are allocated to VHCB.*

- ✓ Mark Kelley added that efficiencies could be achieved with a systems model in place.

Cindy Reid: *there was an evaluation of the Vermont Housing system by a national firm and it found that the current system worked well.*

Mel Adams (Randolph Town Manager)

- ✓ Voiced concern with the environmental review changes citing the impact on a recent project if it had been under the new changes. \$26,000 was expended on the environmental review, and under the new requirements, this cost would have been a pre-application cost. Communities cannot afford to cover this magnitude of pre-application costs and so community projects will be limited.

Jennifer Hollar: the Department shares your concern and frustration as does Vermont's congressional delegation. Senator Leahy raised concerns directly with HUD but was told it was not possible to change the environmental review requirements. Jen also indicated that maybe a different process for environmental review planning might make sense such as dedicating some funds to this. Also asked if the Department needed to provide more technical assistance for environmental requirements.

Julie Iffland (RACDC)

- ✓ Suggested more flexible funding upfront for environmental review which can be reimbursed later. Also wondered if there are thresholds that would allow HUD to relax some of the requirements. Would like to see more factual basis for environmental review requirements rather than so speculative. Cited example of the possibility that there was a gas station nearby.

Mel Adams (Randolph Town Manager)

- ✓ Raised issue of the environmental review on economic development. The Town's last project involved a business with a tight window for expanding and under the new environmental review requirements, the project might not have fit into that window and the business may have left Randolph or the state.

Jennifer Hollar: wondered if providing money to do the environmental review on a site that would have a future project could be beneficial.

Angus Chaney: the Housing Needs Assessment talked about pre-development work being important.

Willa Davidian: cautioned that she believes environmental review has to be for a specific project.

Jennifer Hollar: thought maybe a tiered environmental review might be allowed.

Linda Anderson (Capstone Community Action)

- ✓ Important to understand what jobs are being brought to a community. What salaries will be paid and do they provide living wage/sustainability?

Julie Iffland (RACDC)

- ✓ Thanked the programs (VCDP and VHCB) as most of the projects in Randolph and the region have funding from them.

Martha Englert (Central Vermont Community Land Trust)

- ✓ Noted that the environmental review for one of CVCLT's projects cost \$500,000.

- ✓ Access to the regional and state players is so open and easy as there is much sharing between everyone. The state and players are very responsive.

Jennifer Hollar: *named some of the recent projects in Randolph- Chandler Hall ADA, Freedom Foods, Red Lion Inn, Randolph House Planning, Salisbury Square, Vt SBDC and Dubois and King in former school.*

Pat French (RACDC Board)

- ✓ Echoed Ramsey's Papp's idea to develop a landlord risk fund.
- ✓ Noted that Joslyn House has 6 vacancies while Randolph House and Red Lion Inn have waiting lists. In response to question from Jen, said that more operating funds for Joslyn House would be biggest help. Right now it costs \$1350/month (including all meals) but this does not cover true costs.

Jennifer Hollar: *asked for any thoughts on private landlord units*

Linda Anderson (Capstone Community Action)

- ✓ Capstone requires units to be inspected for any of their clients and if there are code issues, they cannot rent the unit. There is a need to assist landlords in addressing the code issues.

Martha Englert (Central Vermont Community Land Trust)

- ✓ Noted that CVCLT could assist owner occupied and landlords of buildings up to four units with the Green Mountain Loan Fund (GMLF) and the fund is not tapped out. In response to a question from Jennifer Hollar, she said she thought marketing and awareness problems were why more people did not access the GMLF.

Mel Adams (Randolph Town Manager)

- ✓ Randolph has some large houses converted into apartment buildings and now they look rundown on the outside. Is there funding for exterior work on these type buildings?

Martha Englert (Central Vermont Community Land Trust)

- ✓ The GMLF can help.

Willa Davidian: *Local non-profit housing developers have accessed funding from these programs to do scattered site rehabilitation projects for those kinds of buildings. It's typically substantial rehab work that's done. Once the repairs are complete, the owners are required to put money aside monthly and have a plan in place to address ongoing repair needs, to ensure the buildings can continue to be affordable housing in perpetuity.*

Jennifer Hollar: *VHCB has a lead paint program also that might be able to help.*

Julie Iffland (RACDC)

- ✓ Downtown tax credits help with code improvements.
- ✓ Having to meet all code requirements for rehab programs prevents doing projects that address a lesser but critical project such as furnace replacement.

Jennifer Hollar: *asked if any comments on the VCDP accessibility modifications grants*

Tyler Sweeten (Vermont Center for Independent Living)

- ✓ They are seeing an increase in homelessness and there is a lack of homes, especially ones without accessibility issues.

Pat French (RACDC Board)

- ✓ Private homes are still not accessible

Maria Puglisi (no affiliation)

- ✓ Suggested that a booklet be put together that describes all the housing organizations and the resources to help get the word out.

Mark Kelley (no affiliation)

- ✓ Websites should be set up so you can search by goals, such as need a ramp.

Mel Adams (Randolph Town Manager)

- ✓ Suggested that there be a guide to rental housing which focused on rules and rights. Expand the guide to include options for landlords for resources for rehab funding.

Jennifer Hollar: *asked about best way to get information to landlords since getting information to landlords is difficult.*

Response from various persons: no outreach to landlords happening in Randolph; some larger communities have landlord associations; one advantage of being smaller is no building codes exist, many landlords do not want the state to know where there rental units are and listers do not want to be responsible for identifying them.

Kenn Sassorossi: *asked Pat French as the Town assessor if there is a way as an assessor to get info to landlords. One data base on landlord is lead paint info provided to the Health Dept. Also possible data base from Tax Dept based on rebates.*

Pat French (RACDC Board)

- ✓ Newly constructed homes need more thought in advance about accessibility issues so they are built into the construction initially rather than needing to be added later. Wonder if public service announcements might be a way to increase awareness.

Mark Kelley (no affiliation)

- ✓ Adding accessibility fixes later is more expensive.

Jennifer Hollar: *noted that the Housing Needs Assessment suggested more money for accessibility work.*

Julie Iffland (RACDC)

- ✓ Suggested abating property taxes for a period of time for those who improve their property.
- ✓ Shared that RACDC is working with the Town on properties that are in trouble and are possibly beyond repair and might qualify in the VCDP under the Slums and Blight national objective as hoping this might lead to funding to help these properties.

Jennifer Hollar: *responded that there are not many Slums and Blight projects, but described the Rutland City and Neighborworks of Western Vermont project that was funded recently partially under Slums & Blight to address vacant properties and other property-related issues in one city neighborhood.*

Mel Adams (Randolph Town Manager)

- ✓ Wanted to make sure we understand that all comments are in response to the fact the Town has been able to utilize the funds and town is appreciative of the past support from the funding partners.

Emilie Daniel (Randolph Senior Center)

- ✓ Sidewalks need to be in good shape- sidewalk in front of Red Lion is broken up and impossible for a motorized wheelchair to use it. Some sidewalks are not even safe for walking.

Pat French (RACDC Board)

- ✓ Randolph was lucky not to have anyone injured in the community fire disasters when they happened years ago.

Kenn Sassorossi: *asked if there were ideas from the prior six community meetings not discussed yet at this meeting where folks here could weigh in.*

Jennifer Hollar: *responded that similar issues had been raised- transitional housing, SRO's, emergency shelters, and homelessness. Transportation issues also were raised.*

Carl Bohlen: *only was at one prior meeting, but two issues raised there and not here were housing for those being treated for substance abuse and job training.*

Response from various persons: SRO's, shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing are all needed.

Ramsey Papp (Capstone Community Action)

- ✓ Mental health issues are a barrier to housing. Persons with mental health issues find decision making to be difficult to do.
- ✓ Transportation in Orange County is a major barrier, and if you can live in Randolph itself, it is less of an issue.
- ✓ Other than Randolph, other towns in Orange County have no housing available.

Mel Adams (Randolph Town Manager)

- ✓ Randolph does have transportation issues too.

Pam Stafford (RACDC Board)

- ✓ Would love to see more discretionary funds for needs that don't fit easily into project funding parameters.

Linda Anderson (Capstone Community Action)

- ✓ Apprenticeship programs are one way to tackle job training.
- ✓ Community connections are important and they are being lost when persons need to be moved to another community that has the necessary facilities and support.
- ✓ Housing to serve sex offenders, addicts and persons just out of corrections is an issue.

Mel Adams (Randolph Town Manager)

- ✓ Transitional housing is very important- towns are being asked to house persons leaving the Springfield corrections facility and there are housing needs for homeless teens.

Julie Iffland (RACDC)

- ✓ The state cannot afford transitional housing that is created for all the different causes in small communities. Frequently there is legal opposition to transitional housing.
- ✓ The region's bus service (Stagecoach) just can't serve everywhere and so desert areas exist in the county. Volunteer drivers help in some communities.

***Jennifer Hollar:** Disaster Recovery is also a part of the work of DHCD and wondered if Randolph felt whole at this time.*

Mel Adams (Randolph Town Manager)

- ✓ Others might disagree, but he felt Randolph was spared by Irene compared to communities such as Bethel. Randolph fared fairly well during Irene due to infrastructure improvements that resulted after flooding in town 15 years prior to Irene.

Ramsey Papp (Capstone Community Action)

- ✓ Knows some small businesses that never recovered from Irene.

***Jennifer Hollar:** encouraged everyone to complete the online survey and explained that the meeting notes would be sent to everyone who attended today's meeting. Also said there would be a draft Consolidated Plan to review and two public hearings on the Consolidated Plan. Closed the meeting thanking everyone for attending.*

St. Albans

Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan Community Meeting
St. Albans City Hall, Vermont
Thursday, December 18, 2014

Fourteen people attended the meeting. Regional partners participating in the meeting included Amanda Hollard from Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), Tim Smith from Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation (NCIDC), Robert Ostermeyer from Franklin/Grand Isle Community Action (FGICA), and Michael Monte from Champlain Housing Trust. Program staff included Carl Bohlen and Claire Forbes from the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) and Willa Davidian from Vermont Housing and Conservation Board HOME Investment Partnership Program.

Chip Sawyer from the City of St. Albans welcomed participants and provided introductions about the purpose of the Consolidated Plan community meeting. Carl, Willa, and Claire introduced themselves. Carl introduced the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) and asked the attendees to share their challenges and issues related to housing, public services, community development, and economic development.

Public Comments:

Chip Sawyer (City of St. Albans) shared the challenges that St. Albans faces including higher costs with infill development because of brownfields cleanup, historic buildings, and stormwater runoff. He said that in order to work with private developers, the timeline must be quick including access to grant funding. It is difficult for infill sites to be marketable due to these limitations, therefore these properties are not as attractive to businesses. He also said the Consolidated Plan should mention stormwater (TMDL requirements and MS4 permits). Chip later added that tax-exempt projects located in the City's TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district decrease the City's revenues.

Jim Coutts (Franklin County Senior Center) expressed his concerns and challenges with senior housing. These included affordability, accessibility, and transportation. He would like to see more "complete streets," additional higher quality senior housing, and more rental assistance. He believes the Support and Services at Home (SASH) program should be expanded because it allows seniors to stay at home while the services come to them. He said more rental housing is needed overall because millennials are choosing to rent, making it more difficult for others to rent.

Jeff Young (citizen of St. Albans and former St Albans city council member) reiterated the importance of senior housing in the area. He mentioned the senior housing development, Hawks Nest, as an example of a successful project. He would like to see more of these housing developments since there is currently a two-year waiting list at Hawks Nest. He talked about the importance of integrating low-income housing into all areas of the community. He said housing rehabilitation transforms communities. He said the Scattered Sites project (Shared Equity Program) with Champlain Housing Trust was a great project that cleaned up the area

and this should continue annually by picking one or two homes to repair. He later added that there is a lack of foster care services and the safety of children should be the primary focus.

Robert Ostermeyer (Franklin/Grand Isle Community Action) said that affordable housing is critical. He said the single-room occupancy (SRO) units are needed to serve single, disabled and elderly populations. He said the Vermont rental subsidy program works very well because it stabilizes families and it should be expanded. He said many families are on the verge of being homeless every day and more temporary assistance is needed for them. The definition of homeless and the eligibility criteria for seeking assistance is becoming stricter. In addition, he said more permanent housing and services are needed for the mental health population.

Michael Monte (Champlain Housing Trust) said the 2010 Consolidated Plan was a good plan. He said keeping affordable housing as a priority to this region and permanent affordability is critical. Focusing on permanent housing options for the homeless should also be a priority. He feels home ownership opportunities are also important. Michael said that the HOME program is the biggest funding source for multi-family housing that Champlain Housing Trust uses and this should not be changed to rental assistance. He feels that building housing has an economic benefit. He said that Champlain Housing Trust completed a study that concluded that tax generation on a per acre basis is higher for affordable restricted housing versus private housing. He would like the VCDP to continue their loan program. He finished by saying the increased regulations for federal programs make the process more difficult and anything the state can do to assist with this would be very helpful. He later added how expensive new construction can be and said rehab is more cost effective. He said efficiencies are often a better alternative to multi-bedroom apartments, especially for non-elderly people with disabilities.

Mariah Murphy (Northwestern Counseling and Support Services) talked about the increasing number of homeless youth and how important affordable housing is to this population. She said that HUD is phasing out funding for transitional housing, and this will only intensify the problem.

Lee Anne Billings (Vermont Foundation of Recovery) would like to see more permanent housing with support services for people recovering from substance abuse. She said this type of housing is more prevalent in the Burlington area, but has been more difficult to incorporate in Franklin County due to zoning issues.

Melinda Lussier (Turning Point of Franklin County) feels that inclusionary zoning (requiring a certain percentage of housing to be affordable) works well, but "NIMBY" is a barrier preventing this.

Loli Berard (Franklin/Grand Isle Building Bright Futures) said that childcare issues need to be part of the planning process. Safe, family-friendly neighborhoods and quality childcare should be a priority.

Evelyn LaVallee said that she currently lives in transitional housing (Shelter Plus Care) and said it is a great program that helps. She is concerned about HUD cutting funds for transitional housing.

Tim Smith (Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation) would like to see VCDP funding earlier in the economic development project process by not being the last dollar in and by funding projects such as constructing spec buildings without a company identified since businesses cannot wait for a building to be built before making a move. He said the HUD requirement for job creation is difficult to get committed. He also said there is not enough state funding for the demand for workforce development. He would like to see a statewide grant to fund Small Business Development Center (SBDC) counselors more than one day a week in Franklin County. He reminded the group that the USDA has funding available for community facilities.

Carl Bohlen (VCDP) explained the importance of the Consolidated Plan process because it helps to prioritize Vermont's \$10 million budget for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Home Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG). VCDP has grant funding for income eligible housing, public facilities, public services, infrastructure, handicapped accessibility modifications, economic development, and planning.

Willa Davidian (VHCB HOME) explained that HOME funding has been used in Vermont for new construction, rehabilitation of existing housing, and adaptive reuse. The Vermont legislature requires that HOME be used for permanently affordable housing. She added that it is a flexible program that can be used for many different things as long as it results in affordable housing and meets the income targeting of the program: at or below 60% area median income with a certain percentage at or below 50% AMI. Private developers and non-profits are eligible to apply.

Questions:

1. Jeff Young asked if a group home model similar to what Michigan is doing where a married couple assists with foster care would be permitted here in Vermont?
 - Carl responded and said community development funding can be used to serve income eligible families and a child in crisis might be automatically eligible. He said a good place to start is looking at support from other agencies that are experts in this subject.
2. Evelyn LaVallee asked if it's true that HUD is no longer supporting transitional housing?
 - Mariah Murphy said that HUD wants to get rid of funding transitional housing.
3. Evelyn LaVallee asked if CDBG funding can be used for transportation?
 - Carl said CDBG funds can be used for seed money in the creation of a new public services or an expanding public service. A transportation project must show continuous funding and be self-sufficient in the long-term to qualify.

St. Johnsbury

Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan Public Outreach Meeting
St. Johnsbury Academy, Black Box Theater
1000 Main Street, St. Johnsbury, Vermont
Wednesday, January 7, 2015

There were 37 attendees at this meeting in addition to DHCD staff. Representatives from regional partners in attendance included:

- Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action
- Rural Edge
- St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce

After introductions from DHCD staff, Deputy Commissioner Jennifer Hollar provided an overview of the function of the Consolidated Plan, the various funding sources that the plan covers, and an outline of the current public outreach process. The floor was then open for public comments and discussion.

Susan Cherry: St. Johnsbury Planning Commission Chairwoman, asked if this is a State-wide plan that is being developed, and in what other communities has the State held meetings.

Deputy Commissioner Jennifer Hollar noted that the Consolidated is State-wide with the exception of the City of Burlington which receives funding directly from HUD as what is known as an “entitlement community”

John Hall: St. Johnsbury Town Manager, asked how Low and Moderate Income (LMI) benefit works with the programs that are being discussed.

Jennifer Hollar provided an overview of the program and noted that with CDBG funding 70% of the funds must benefit LMI individuals. She noted examples of projects that were funded with CDBG such as job creation, rental housing, and revolving loan funds for home repair loans to LMI households and financial counseling to LMI individuals.

Pam Smart: Northeast Regional Hospital

- There is a need for more mixed income housing in housing units rather than placing only low income individuals in the same housing location. Is there an effort to encourage mixed income housing?
- There is a need for more moderate to high income housing that is safe and in reasonably good condition.

Chris Holden: Rural Edge

- Mixed income housing developments work better in larger state where economies of scale can be achieved. It is difficult in Vermont to achieve this economies of scale with projects that only involve a small number of rental units.

Pam Smart

- There is a need for rental housing for individuals that are nearing retirement. Many people in her age group are moving out of state because their rental options are not available or they are not in good condition.

Irene Nagle: Northeast Vermont Development Association

- Is it possible that rent can be capped at 30% of an individual's income **on** developments? She is concerned that if an individual is eligible for subsidized housing and they improve their financial situation that individual may be forced out of decent and affordable housing.

Willa Davidian: VHCB

- Noted that with HOME funding, an individual's income level is verified prior to the rental unit being occupied and that individual would not be forced to move out, rather the income restrictions would shift from one unit to another within the development.

Susan Cherry: St. Johnsbury Planning Commission Chair

- Need to regulate development in a way that encourages more market rate housing in downtown St. Johnsbury
- The town has re-zoned to encourage residential and retail
- Need incentives to get developers to recognize the need for more market rate housing.

Jennifer Hollar

- Noted that there are State incentives that recently were implemented to improve the permitting process for developments that are planned for Neighborhood designations, the Designated Downtown and Village Center Designation Programs.

St. Johnsbury Resident (unidentified)

- There is a need for a housing program for the elderly which allows the individuals to be independent while still being able to coordinate with nursing care.
- Need assistance for private landlords to increase the number of units and to renovate existing privately held rental units.

Darlana Smith: St. Johnsbury Resident

- Noted that there is a need for programs to assist single men who struggle with financial or legal problems find housing and services to improve their situations.

Dan Higgins: Rural Edge

- Noted that there is a lack of affordable housing based on the large number of individuals on the current waiting list maintained by Rural Edge (an affordable housing organization).
- There is also a gap for young professional adults who can't afford market rate housing but do not qualify for affordable housing either.
- Need to continue to help the economy grow to provide well-paying jobs in the region.

Irene Nagle

- Economic Development is an issue; it is difficult to encourage new business startups.
- Need to encourage and seek new businesses that provide well-paying jobs

- Economic Development should be the first priority.

Steve Klein: Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital

- There is not enough housing available for those who are considered above 80% of area median income, and young adults.
- Economic development would benefit young adults.

Abigail Josey: Client of NEKCA and resident of Newport

- Ms. Josey shared her experience as being at risk of being homeless; she receives income based assistance.
- She noted that there is a need for funding that is structured to assist individuals to maintain existing housing, and a need for more resources for those that are considered to be at risk of being homeless.
- Need for lifestyle training opportunities

Barbara Hatch: St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce

- St. Johnsbury has six empty storefronts, and there is no assistance from the building owners to improve the situation and make the properties attractive to businesses.
- This creates a “dead zone” in the downtown.

Mary Ellen Griffin: Vermont Legal Aid

- More funding is needed for transitional housing
- more supportive housing (with social services available to residents)
- More funding for code enforcement

Peg Hale: Rural Edge, Director, Home

- Financial education, counseling in the form of one on one, as well as additional classes are available through Rural Edge

Jaimie Murphy: St. Johnsbury Selectboard member

- There is a need in town for increased code enforcement to maintain existing housing in a safe condition.
- Is funding available for a code enforcement position with the town?

Troy Ruggles: St. Johnsbury Fire Department

- Code enforcement is lacking in town.
- Funding has been reactionary to disasters caused by fire in structures in St. Johnsbury.
- Money should be available up front to be proactive and reduce the need for financial assistance after a preventable event such as a fire (sprinkler, fire alarms, etc.).
- Incentives for private property owners is needed to improve building conditions.
- Education of tenants is needed so they understand that taking care of the rental units that they are in is a responsibility.

Jaimie Murphy

- Is any data available on the investment of private landlords' re-investment into their properties?

Jennifer Hollar noted she is not aware of any data that shows the reinvestment of rental income into private property by landlords.

Peg Hale

- Need incentives to encourage private landlords to improve units if they maintain low rental rates in their buildings.

Chris Holden

- Noted that workforce housing is popular in New Hampshire, and may be a way to address housing needs in Vermont
- Noted that some private landlords are reluctant to make improvements to their properties due to the potential property tax increases associated with the improvements.
- Would like to see tax abatement at the local level over a three year period if the improvements are made or re-investment made to private rentals.

Irene Nagle

- Inquired if any funding could be utilized for private rental assistance, and if there is any time restriction to which the landlord must adhere.
- Would like to see planning funds for market studies and more research money for issues that relate to economic development.

Dan Higgin

- Wondered what is the best way to attract businesses to the area?

Jennifer Hollar noted that funding is available through the CDBG program for planning, and that a new State-wide housing assessment is scheduled to be presented to State Officials and the Legislature in the near future.

Steve Klein

- Assistance is needed to help address substance abuse issues.

Shaun Donahue: VT Agency of Human Services

- Who is eligible for planning grants?
- He noted that there are currently no homeless shelters North of White River Junction; additionally there are no "Full-Time" shelters east of Franklin County.

Angala Nevoid: NEK Neighbors Helping Neighbors

- There is a need for increased public transportation.
- Need services that educate residents of the need for homeless shelters and transitional housing.

Brooke Brittell: NEK Community Action

- There are not enough hotels and motels in the area to accommodate the homeless population that could take advantage of hotel vouchers.

Mary Ellen Griffin

- The “Housing First” model is a very successful way of addressing homelessness; more funding is needed to increase these services.
- Need more financial assistance to help those with mental health and legal issues.

Connie Sandahl: Executive Director NEK Youth Services

- Noted that it is very difficult for her program to work with private landlords. She has one staff member charged with contacting all the private landlords in an effort to find housing for their clients.

Darlena Smith

- Shared her experience that resulted in her losing her housing, her vehicle, and work. She has experienced landlords that are very weary of the tenants who caused issues in the past (mostly related to drug abuse problems).

Pam Smart

- Expressed her support for the “Housing First Model” and the need for additional transitional housing that also provides services to the residents

Susan Cherry

- Need more housing that has supportive services.
- There is a need for more frequent service by the local public transportation company.

Barbra Hatch

- There is a need for more funding to promote personal health and wellness in the community through connecting recreational trails, and other healthy living options.
- She asked for suggestions for St. Johnsbury to continue to build upon improvements already made.

Jennifer Hollar noted that with ever decreasing funding from the Federal Government, it is important for citizens to contact our Congressional Delegates and express their support for the organizations that receive funding to provide the essential services.

Irene Nagle

- Noted that the allocation plan requires mixed income requirements which are often waived by VHFA. She would like not to see these types of requirements waived in an effort to encourage more mixed income developments.

West Rutland

Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan
Citizen Participation Meeting
West Rutland, Vermont
Wednesday, December 17, 2014
* **DRAFT*** Comments –

Ten people, in addition to DHCD staff, attended the meeting. Partner organizations and area service providers were well represented. Regional partners included the host Town of West Rutland, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, BROCC Community Action in Southwestern VT, Rutland Regional Planning Commission, Rutland Economic Development Corporation, and Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce. DHCD staff Josh Hanford, Lisa Ryan, Claire Forbes, and Arthur Hamlin facilitated the meeting.

Jamie Stewart, Rutland Economic Development Corporation

- VCDP is not the best funding source for economic development due to issues of timing (application cycle).
- The aging workforce means up to 1/3 of employees are nearing retirement. Companies can't find people with the skills to fill jobs. There is a need for funding for workforce training and education for the existing pool of low income, underemployed people to fill up to 1,000 jobs.
- Lisa: What skills are needed? Skills like machinist, electrical are needed. Not necessarily a degree or engineering.
- Would like to see Stafford Technical Center bring back a program that used to exist, CCV, Vermont Technical College, others could provide training programs. There are existing programs but these are not meeting the need. Programs that exist train current employees of the company.
- Training programs need to have a guaranteed job upon completion. People who have basic competency may be underemployed, piecing together part time jobs, or have a lot of barriers to work.

Elizabeth Eddy, BROCC Community Action in Southwestern VT

- More transitional housing options are needed. It takes time, people can't move from shelter housing to permanent housing easily.
- Need more case management, support. In particular for ex-offenders, people with substance abuse or disabilities.
- Private housing is better than motels. Jen's Motel is somewhat unique.
- Lack of income is a barrier to getting into permanent housing so more subsidies are needed, employment is needed. In Rutland a lot of money is spent on emergency housing.
- SRO (Single Room Occupancy) with shared kitchens are better than a motel room. Jen's Motel is a modified model.
- Josh: Are they concerned about long term maintenance, capital needs? They need funds for operating costs because their clients have no income. Most of the funding comes from Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and General/Emergency Assistance.

Donna Stearns, Jen's Motel

- One year Jen's Motel got \$3,000 in Rapid Rehousing funds from HPRP. More funds like this are needed. This allowed them to help people who could move within 28 days from a motel into permanent housing.

Pamela Merrill, Jen's Motel

- It's difficult to get into permanent housing. First and last month's rent and a deposit is \$2,300. When making minimum wage it takes a lot of people helping. Can only save a little at a time.
- Section 8 wait list are too long. More section 8 vouchers are needed. She got on a wait list three years ago.
- Homelessness takes a toll emotionally because of not being able to support your family.
- Lack of public transportation (frequency, and cost) is a problem.
- Lack of access to dental care. State dental assistance only pays \$495/year. Clinics will not take people with State dental assistance.

Josh: Is part of problem that services are available but there are multiple applications?

Deborah Hall, Homeless Prevention Center

- There is a need for more case management to help people navigate the services available. The need for families is great. They need to have a professional to help.
- Her agency is limited to providing 3 months of rent assistance. Caseloads are double what the maximum should be.
- Families can be destabilized by any number of things, health incidents, car problems, etc. but they will work with BROCC to try to find assistance.
- There is a need for longer term rent subsidies, other than Section 8 because of the long wait lists. Rentals are too expensive compared to wages. The person's income determines the type of housing they can get into.

Lisa: Are there any concerns about fair housing issues?

Elizabeth Eddy, BROCC Community Action in Southwestern VT

- It goes both ways. They have encountered some issues with motels, but often it's just a matter of people not understanding their obligations.
- Both tenants and landlords need education.

Jamie Stewart, Rutland Economic Development Corporation

- The Rutland area has houses available for sale but people can't qualify to buy them, and rents are even more expensive.
- One area of Rutland has a lot of transient tenants. The homes there are deteriorating.

Ludy Biddle, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont

- They need help to get the message across that for sale housing is available that is affordable.

Josh: Down payment assistance, rehab assistance, and education are available. Capacity is greater than what we've been able to do.

Lisa: Is there a way to get vacant homes under control faster? Is there an affordability gap where people can afford to buy, but not to maintain/repair?

Jamie Stewart, Rutland Economic Development Corporation

- Banks are holding onto them and most have a mortgage. If the loan has a government guarantee the bank and lawyer are getting paid anyway. HUD regulations prevent a faster resolution.
- There are houses that are affordable but there aren't enough programs for people to buy. Banks aren't lending or will only lend the price but not rehab.
- NeighborWorks can do rehab but people need to be directed toward their programs.

Elizabeth Eddy, BROCC Community Action in Southwestern VT

- Buildings aren't lacking but they are empty. There are vacant 2nd and 3rd floors.
- Some apartments cost more than owning, but on the other hand owning means needing to have enough money to fix any problems.

Josh: What municipal needs are there? Brownfield properties can also be done with VCDP.

Mary Ann Goulette, Town of West Rutland

- Need funds to help property owners connect to municipal water and sewer due to overcapacity of septic systems.

Jamie Stewart, Rutland Economic Development Corporation

- The state is rapidly running out of available commercial space for development.
- Market value "as built" often less than cost to build, therefore, unable to finance.
- Libraries are being asked to do a lot more and need to be better supported, played an important role during tropical storm Irene.

Lisa: Thinks that since Irene FEMA considers libraries essential community organizations, which allows them to be funded differently or eligible for relocation assistance immediately following a disaster.

Pamela Merrill, Jen's Motel Resident

- Sometimes apartments are affordable but they are not safe, or located in unsafe neighborhoods, but the motel is not "home" and other places are too expensive.
- Unable to get into a mobile home due to down payment required.