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Consolidated Plan Public Hearing

February 8, 2016

A public hearing was convened at 4:00 PM on February 8, 2016 to hear citizens' views about the housing, public services, community development, and economic development needs of the state; listen to any ideas or proposals for activities/priorities the state should consider for the period covered by the 2016 Action Plan; and receive comments on the state's performance under this year's (2015) Action Plan.

The hearing was convened by Arthur Hamlin, Housing Program Coordinator for the Department of Housing and Community Development, and included several members of the Department's Citizen Advisory Group who remained following their own meeting to listen to the testimony provided at the hearing. Arthur distributed a handout with a summary of the programs and funding covered by the Consolidated Plan and NHTF and reviewed this information.

Three individuals attended the hearing with two of these people giving testimony.

Christina Goodwin, Executive Director of [Home Share Now](#) spoke representing Home Share Now and Home Share Vermont. Goodwin testified that Home Share covers 60% of the state. Home Share Now accessed two Community Development Block Grants for their initial start-up, and expansion into Lamoille and Orange County, and hopes to reach full statewide coverage. Goodwin testified that Home Share is looked at as a model program across the nation. In 2015, they secured housing for 350 people and expect demand will increase as long as there are people who are "over housed" in their single family home.

Goodwin suggested that the state consider adding home sharing as a priority in the Consolidated Plan, specifically for CDBG funding, for single people and seniors, and those with lower income in general. A majority of their home owners are single women averaging age 72 and a majority of the matches are also single women looking for affordable housing. Home Share serves people who are homeless and hidden homeless.

Goodwin testified that Home Share works with DAIL (Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living). DAIL would like to see these services expanded, but more funding is not available from the state. CDBG funds could help them expand, and specifically they want to expand into Southern Vermont.

Finally, Goodwin stated that although they are different than SASH or other programs, in essence they provide in home services. They provided 10,000 hours of home care services just in Central Vermont in 2015, and close to 35,000 statewide.

Sarah Carpenter, Executive Director of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, and a member of the Citizen Advisory Group, asked if DHCD or Goodwin could explain what the CDBG funds were

used for. Jen Hollar, former Deputy Commissioner of DHCD, recalled that the grants came under the Public Services category in CDBG and funded start-up costs, as they can't be used for ongoing operations. 51% of the people served have to be low income.

Lori Hunt identified herself as a real estate agent locally and had received an email about the hearing. She stated that she was familiar with Home Share and generally interested in anything to do with housing. Hunt had no particular concerns or testimony to provide.

Richard Williams, Executive Director of the Vermont State Housing Authority asked Goodwin to clarify where they were interested in expanding. Goodwin stated they serve Washington, Orange and Lamoille Counties, plus nine adjacent towns in northern Windsor, Caledonia and Orleans Counties, plus Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. They are interested in Rutland County, Bennington and Brattleboro.

Sarah Carpenter suggested that Goodwin could contact these towns about any local revolving loan funds from previous CDBG grants they received.

Deborah Hall, Executive Director of the [Homeless Prevention Center](#) in Rutland County, testified that employment and sustainable incomes are a big need in Rutland County. Hall spoke about how apprenticeship programs and mentorship programs are no longer available. There used to be a lot of industry in Rutland, i.e. GE, but there isn't now. There needs to be local businesses willing to invest and train people in the community.

Arthur explained that economic development and job creation are priorities of the Consolidated Plan. In 2015, the state proposed using 12% of CDBG funds for this. Any suggestions or programs or ideas for how this could work better are welcome. Suggestions and comments on the homelessness priorities are also welcome.

Sarah Phillips, Community Services Program Administrator with the State Office of Economic Opportunity noted that the Homeless Prevention Center had received Emergency Solutions Grant funding in the past. OEO is about to conduct a survey to solicit feedback on ESG and their input is welcome. The survey is also incorporated in the Consolidated Plan.

The hearing adjourned at 4:30 p.m.