

HUD Consolidated Plan Public Hearing

Montpelier, Vermont

February 1, 2019

The purpose of the hearing was to listen to residents' views about the state's housing, homelessness, public facility and service, and non-housing community development needs, as well as ideas for grant activities the State should consider funding in the 2019 program year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020), and hear feedback on how the programs funded by HUD under past plans performed in meeting the State's goals:

John Snyder-White testified based on his experience working at a shelter in Middlebury for several years to the importance of having day stations as an option under the Emergency Solutions Grant during cold weather, particularly in rural areas of Vermont.

Alison Friedkin from Downstreet Housing and Community Development testified on behalf of Downstreet and the statewide network of affordable and public housing providers that there is a critical need for additional recovery residences in Vermont and hopes the State will consider funding a proposal for recovery residences.

In support of this view Ms. Friedkin stated that:

- There are currently 11,000 Vermonters receiving treatment for substance use disorders, but only 205 beds in existing recovery homes.
- Seventy-six percent of the beds are reserved for men, while women make up 42% of people in treatment.
- There are no recovery homes for single mothers with children, however, they made up 30% of new admissions in 2017.
- More recovery beds are needed in all eight hubs, with Rutland being a priority.
- More beds are specifically needed for women with dependent children in Burlington, Rutland, St. Albans, and White River Jct.
- Recovery housing addresses all four goals of the Consolidated Plan.

Laura Mistretta from the CVOEO Mobile Home Program testified that Vermont's laws that protect the rights of park residents and encourage park owners to sell to residents or non-profit organizations are beneficial, but the biggest barrier to nonprofit and resident ownership is deferred maintenance by private for-profit owners. Inherited infrastructure problems can undermine the residents' ability to close on the sale in a timely manner and keep rents affordable. Therefore, the State should make it easier for residents and nonprofits to access available financial resources. In addition, the State should consider providing low interest loans for infrastructure, repair, and maintenance to private for-profit park owners who agree to keep rents affordable.

Ms. Mistretta also testified that the State should consider providing resources to help residents and park owners replace old or abandoned homes and upgrade lots, including installing

foundations because these costs can add \$20,000 to the cost of getting into a park and typically fall on the resident or park owner.

In support of this view, Ms. Mistretta stated that currently there is no funding available specifically for removal of homes or foundations. Although the Champlain Housing Trust's Manufactured Housing Down Payment Assistance Program is available for residents who are purchasing new homes and may be able to help fill the gap in funding for removal of old homes and pouring foundations, that is not its purpose at the current time, and more funding is needed to go to this program which at times has run out of funds. Foundation costs can get covered by a mortgage from USDA-RD, but only if the appraised value is high enough to cover the final purchase price of a home including the foundation costs.

Hearing adjourned at 4:00 PM.