Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness

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2017 Local Continuum of Care Assessment Report

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Executive Summary

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness undertook this assessment in an effort to ascertain what strengths and challenges local regions are experiencing, in order to build local capacity and strengthen homelessness prevention and alleviation systems statewide. This assessment was conducted at local Continuum of Care (CoC) meetings across the state from October 2016 through April 2017.

This report consists of four main sections:
- CoC Best Practices,
- Local Perspectives on the Balance of State Continuum of Care,
- Common Areas for Improvement, and
- What We're Doing.

CoC Best Practices focuses primarily on what different regions are doing well around the state with regard to the everyday functioning of local organizations, including their decision-making processes, membership and attendance, as well as how CoCs are promoting their own sustainability and continuity. The decision-making processes at the local levels tend to be informal and consensus-based, though larger CoCs in some cases employ more formal voting structures so that the larger number of organizations in their communities can each be sure to have a say. Local CoCs must be able to act efficiently, promptly, and in a manner that promotes constructive dialogue in order for their voice to be adequately represented at the statewide meetings. It is important to recognize that local representatives to the Balance of State are a key piece here. A given CoC's level of engagement with statewide discussions and initiatives can vary greatly depending on whether or not they have a proactive and engaged representative. Similarly, if CoCs cannot regularly get important community organizations to the table to discuss systems-based issues in their CoC, this can have an impact on the CoC's ability to function properly. Every CoC should make it a priority to increase their membership. There is not one CoC across the state that has participation from every one of the groups listed below, and by including them, would be better positioned to mobilize community resources.

Local Perspectives on the Balance of State CoC examines the self-reported value that local CoCs place on the Balance of State's day-to-day work. Universally, CoCs praised the funding support that the VCEH provides for going through the NOFA process, as the requirements and applications are burdensome for folks operating at the local level while acting as service providers. CoCs presented a more fundamental question about the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness: what is its role in supporting local CoCs? While the VCEH functions as a funding body through which HUD-allocated funds can be directed to local CoCs, there have been some calls for a more direct and involved role in supporting local CoCs and their member organizations in the work that they do every day. Participants suggested that one potential role for the VCEH should be to provide technical support to local CoCs in advocating in their own communities, providing tools and training for messaging and public relations to mobilize public

support for their programs. Additionally, the VCEH can help to facilitate more direct means of information sharing across local CoCs on best practices that have worked in other areas.

Common Areas for Improvement: This report also looks at Common Areas for growth across various CoCs. It is not clear that there exists a common understanding of the importance of local Continuum of Care meetings around the state, particularly relating to how the statewide Continuum's work impacts local CoCs. There are only a small number of regions that have strategically laid out goals for their communities in terms of building new capacity to alleviate homelessness while minimizing service duplication and overlap. CoCs that do not have a strong representative to the VCEH board may further lack any strong sense of purpose at CoC meetings, as much of the business that may relate to local issues may get lost in translation. The VCEH should consider developing materials through common trainings or outreach that reinforce the importance of these meetings at the local level while preparing VCEH representatives to adequately provide sufficient flow of information to and from their respective CoCs.

What We're Doing: Finally, the VCEH is currently taking steps to address some of the local challenges that this report observes. Given the establishment of a new CoC Support Specialist staff position, housed at the Vermont State Housing Authority, the Balance of State currently has more capacity than ever to work towards addressing some of the needs and wants discussed in this report. This staff person has already developed a guide for local CoCs to take on strategic planning in order to identify individuals to serve in leadership roles and formalize goals for their communities in the coming years. The VCEH is currently planning on creating a Strategic Planning Committee, which will work on resolving many of the issues and challenges highlighted in this report. It has also begun to incorporate a "CoC Spotlight" agenda item into monthly statewide meetings. This provides a chance for different regions to present on projects and initiatives that they have been working on in their region in an effort to promote more collaboration between CoCs. The CoC Support Specialist also has been working with local CoCs to use data to provide a complete picture of homelessness in their communities. This includes a template that all local CoCs can use to compile data from multiple statewide sources, as well as work with the Lead Agency for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to support CoCs in better utilizing HMIS data. Importantly, the VCEH is developing a new training for VCEH Board representatives, which will include a Board Guidebook as well as an in-person orientation.

Introduction

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness performed this assessment to ascertain what strengths and challenges local regions are experiencing in order to strengthen homelessness prevention and alleviation systems statewide. This assessment was conducted at local Continuum of Care (CoC) meetings across the state from October 2016 through April 2017. Goals were to:

- Identify the value that the Balance of State Continuum of Care provides to local regions;
- Identify areas in which local CoCs are both highly functioning and challenged;
- Facilitate the process of information sharing; and
- Promote a greater level of systems-wide coordination with regard to common issues being faced around the state.

This report consists of four main sections:

- CoC Best Practices,
- Local Perspectives on the Balance of State Continuum of Care,
- Common Weaknesses, and
- What We're Doing.

CoC Best Practices focuses on what is being done well around the state with regard to the everyday functioning of local Continuums, including their decision-making processes, membership and attendance, as well as how CoCs are promoting their own sustainability and continuity.

Local Perspectives on the Balance of State Continuum of Care examines the value that local CoCs place on the Balance of State's day-to-day work. It also outlines where local CoCs are asking for more assistance from the statewide Continuum of Care.

Third, this report looks to **Common Areas for Improvement** that are evident in various CoCs.

Finally, this report outlines **What We Are Doing** to better meet the needs of local CoCs. Given the establishment of a new CoC Support Specialist staff position, housed at the Vermont State Housing Authority, the Balance of State currently has more capacity than ever to work towards addressing some of the needs and wants discussed in this report.

Also included is an **Appendix** with detailed observations from each local CoC based on a standardized set of questions discussed at the individual CoC meetings.

Best Practices

On balance, local Continuums of Care tend to be organic, consensus-based groups of organizations that have long-standing histories with one another. The close-knit relationships between many organizations in Vermont's local communities strengthen their ability to come to the table and discuss systems-based issues in a largely informal manner. This consensus-based decision making process allows for flexibility within the CoC to voice dissenting views which can then be brought back to the VCEH even when CoCs have chosen to approve a measure or policy. Meetings generally consist of reports from the Balance of State representative, updates from the different organizations at the table, and any new business that must be addressed such as upcoming development projects or notifications of funding availability.

Work Processes

Consensus-Based Work Process

Various local CoCs assessed that the informality of these meetings stem from a feeling of trust between organizations at the table. They often share and refer clients, attend Housing Review Team meetings together (also known as Housing Solutions meetings), and generally have a strong working relationship outside of their work through the CoC. Numerous parties at CoC meetings across the state cited the informality of these meetings as an asset, as it allows organizations to voice concerns about certain issues in ways that more formally structured meetings may not. All CoCs were comfortable conducting business via email when necessary, particularly for Balance of State-related business that requires a prompt response. The highest functioning CoCs have demonstrated a significant commitment to working in local committees and work groups between monthly CoC meetings in order to address specific local challenges being discussed by the broader CoC.

Formalized Work Process

There were several CoCs with slightly more formalized decision making procedures. One attendee at a meeting of the Franklin-Grand Isle CoC stated that there is "no real barrier to stating disagreement" at their meetings, but that there is an official voting process with dialogue. This is one of the more formal structures of decision making, along with Rutland, which also tends to take official votes, even on local issues. Larger Continua may find it useful to utilize more formal decision making processes, as they tend to be more orderly and enable groups with a large number of organizations to each have formal input into the decisions being made by the body. It is worth noting that across the board, CoCs generally have more formal procedures for voting on measures that must go back to the Balance of State Continuum of Care.

Recording of Meeting Minutes

Some CoCs consistently choose to take meeting minutes. This could be extremely helpful as it would allow for other CoCs to better understand the ways in which different localities may be grappling with common problems.

Broad Stakeholder Attendance

The diversity of organizations around the CoC table is important to its success. It's important that these are not just groups that receive HUD funds who are obligated to attend monthly meetings, but a broad array of community partners who have a stake in reducing homelessness and creating systems-level changes that can help to address community-wide issues. Having these diverse partners at the table is key to local advocacy in terms of promoting greater understanding of the importance of these programs and funds. Being able to bring external partners, such as law enforcement or municipal leaders, to the table when necessary is also important when issues like mental health or substance abuse that routinely involve law enforcement are being discussed. The CoC is the perfect setting for these discussions as it allows the discussion to be couched in the ultimate goal of homelessness prevention and can unite disparate actors around that common goal.

Attendance at different CoCs varies greatly, though the majority of Continuums have a stable and consistent membership that includes Community Action Agencies, shelter providers, transitional and supportive housing providers, non-profit housers, veterans' agencies, youth services, substance abuse service providers and, where applicable, housing authorities. CoCs in more heavily populated areas tend to draw a larger number of community organizations to the meetings. Those that have brought a wider array of stakeholders to the table have seen more success in terms of pursuing creative community solutions to alleviating homelessness and mobilizing community support. The table below shows an aggregated enumeration of stakeholders that generally attend or should attend CoC meetings on a regular or as-needed basis. This data was gathered from discussions with local CoCs regarding what organizations are generally at the table, and should be used as a template for local CoCs to conduct outreach to potential organizations in their area that may be able to contribute to the work of the local CoC. Every CoC should make it a priority to increase their membership. There is not one CoC across the state that has participation from every one of the groups listed below, and by including them, would be better positioned to mobilize community resources.

Other Community Organizations

CoCs that focus their energy on building relationships across their communities tend to see more success in terms of membership, accomplishing their goals, and mobilizing community support. There are three particular relationships that CoCs highlighted: collaborative relationships between CoC member organizations, relationships with legislators, and

relationships with the housing inspector. Collaborative relationships between organizations are dependent on a high level of communal trust. Some organizations have gone so far as to establish MOUs for the purpose of their collaboration on business relating to the CoC. These types of collaborations can help organizations identify service overlap in their communities and work together to maximize their own resource utilization while ensuring that clients are able to receive the services that they need. This is particularly important as Coordinated Entry is implemented, as the seamless referral system should eliminate any need for service overlap in the same community.

Attendance and Membership Trends at Local CoC Meetings

	Consistent Attendance	More Consistent Attendance Needed
Consistent Attendance Necessary for Local CoC Success	• 211/United Way • Community Action Agency • AHS Field Servicers Director • Economic Services Division • Homeless Shelters & Service Providers • Regional Housing Non-Profit • Local Housing Authority • Landlord Liaison (if applicable) • Health Care Providers • Pathways Vermont (if applicable) • Veterans Agencies • Substance Abuse Agencies • Youth Services Agencies • Domestic Violence Service Provider	• Consumers • Homelessness Education Liaison • Local Landlords • Community Mental Health Center • Workforce Development Agency
Should Attend as Needed	• Corrections • Colleges/Universities • Health Department • Vermont State Housing Authority	• Businesses • Faith Groups • Law enforcement • Local Government • Legal Service Providers • Philanthropic Community

Local Legislators

CoCs have also noted the importance of their relationships with their state legislators. Particularly over the next several years, when we are sure to see a more turbulence in the budget-making process due to changes occurring at the federal level, CoCs' abilities to contact and influence their legislators during the legislative session will be key to the mission of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness. The VCEH is most successful when local CoCs can act on statewide policy priorities and mobilize political capital and support in their region. Prompt and effective responses to rapid changes that happen during the legislative process can have a significant impact on the funds that are allocated towards homeless service providers, transitional housing, and other key programs that support the day-to-day operations of VCEH member organizations.

Local Housing Inspectors

Finally, one innovative relationship that CoCs have formed is with their community's housing inspector. CoCs have created new solutions for preventing homelessness as a result of these relationships, as their ability to work with both landlords and tenants to come to mutually agreeable solutions keeps people in their homes and helps to mitigate conflicts that otherwise may have escalated. This is one potential strategy that could easily be replicated across communities to intervene early in the eviction process and reduce the associated costs .

Sustainable Leadership

The strongest CoCs, as observed in this assessment, are those that have been able to develop sustainable local leadership in their CoC. By developing strong leaders, CoCs are easily able to recruit people to serve as co-chairs and representatives to the Balance of State Continuum of Care. Some CoCs have struggled to maintain people in each of these positions for a variety of reasons, which has inhibited their ability to benefit from key functions of the VCEH. CoCs with more consistent leadership can more easily and consistently benefit from things like information sharing at and between monthly meetings, legislative updates, and have input on policies and initiatives at the statewide level. The VCEH should focus more on ensuring that local CoCs are identifying and empowering local leaders to ensure the sustainability and efficacy of these local organizations.

Local Perspectives on the Balance of State Continuum of Care

The Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS CoC), its governing body referred to as the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH), covers all of Vermont except for Chittenden County. This section will focus on what different local CoCs value about the VCEH's work, as well as what different groups would like to see the statewide Continuum focus on more. For the most part, CoCs are content with the work currently being done by the VCEH, particularly the support provided to local CoCs for interpreting HUD funding requirements and applications. There are, however, a significant number of areas where local CoCs would like to see more attention focused and more resources dedicated, such as information sharing, technical assistance, and advocacy.

Areas of Value

Funding and Technical Support

In terms of the VCEH's current work, CoCs value the centralized discussion of what's happening around the state. They appreciate the body's willingness to listen to local input and adjust course accordingly and its role as a centralized voice for offering feedback to the state, legislators, and outside organizations. The Coalition's balanced structure of multidisciplinary professionals and consumers allows for a much higher level of collaboration between agencies and organizations to identify new pathways for people to find the resources that they need. Universally, CoCs praised the support that the VCEH provides for going through the NOFA funding process, as the requirements and applications are burdensome for folks operating at the local level while also acting as service providers. There was similar support for the various avenues for information sharing that currently exist, such as the monthly legislative updates, training webinars, and the website.

Point in Time Count

Many people also praised the organization of the Point in Time Count, though there were multiple qualifications surrounding the challenges and limitations associated with the count itself and the related requirements that HUD sets on states. In some cases, local CoCs urged greater advocacy with HUD concerning burdensome requirements that may not adequately reflect the conditions occurring on the ground.

Areas of Need

Greater Relevance to Work at the Local Level

The support for local groups comes with a need for a greater understanding of the VCEH's role as it relates to local CoCs. Many participants state that they only tune in to the information presented in monthly VCEH reports when there is something to vote on, as it often has no direct relation to their day-to-day work. Several CoCs voiced a need for greater attention to the local culture and process for the VCEH's work to have a greater impact at the local level. Another common concern was with the contrast between the bureaucratic statewide Continuum versus the consensus-based, more informal style of most local Continua.

Technical Assistance and Training

Participants commented that one potential role for the VCEH should be to provide technical support to local CoCs in advocating in their own communities, providing tools and training for messaging and public relations to mobilize public support for their programs. For the purposes of this report, training can be understood as hands on guidance on utilizing certain programs, conducting outreach, or other means by which communities can teach themselves ways to expand their own capacity. Technical assistance, in contrast, is direct assistance provided by an external body with expertise in specific facets of homelessness prevention, such as utilizing HMIS or minimizing overlapping services across organizations. Aiding in the creation of press releases, training for speaking to zoning committees, and statewide collaboration on these skills were all offered as potential ways that the VCEH could bridge the gap between their statewide work and the work happening in Vermont's local communities. By helping people tell their stories in their own areas, initiatives such as starting new shelters or lobbying legislators may be more easily carried out across the state. Local CoCs also requested additional technical support focused on utilizing community-level data. Anecdotal information such as where people are staying or that they are food insecure is valuable, and yet service providers don't have a clear idea of what they should do with it or where it could be stored for future community use. Similarly, individuals stressed the need for local systems that streamline housing and service applications between organizations.

Coordinated Advocacy: State and Federal

There is a clear desire for more coordinated advocacy by the VCEH. This applies to both the state and federal levels, each of which is seen by some local CoCs as burdensome and offering new mandates without the creation of additional funds to help meet those goals. Particularly given the uncertainty surrounding the impact that federal cuts may have in the coming years on the state budget, local CoCs are asking for advocacy with the state in terms of what regulations do and do not work, what additional resources are needed on the ground, and to educate lawmakers about the impact that their constrained housing markets have on finding safe, sustainable homes for individuals coming from homelessness.

Information Sharing Across Local CoCs

Local CoCs requested more direct means of sharing information among each other on best practices that have worked in other areas. Different communities want to know about innovative programs and initiatives that are working in other places that they can adapt to their own communities. There was an emphasis on allowing communities to form these programs for themselves without additional instruction or penalties for lack of compliance from the state. There is a universal sentiment against any one-size-fits-all solutions. Local CoCs want to be able to assess existing innovative programs for themselves and have the flexibility to experiment with similar programs in their communities.

Many CoCs voiced an interest in visiting other CoCs in a more organized or regular manner, such as annual visits to different regions to discuss common patterns and trends that they each may be experiencing. In the same vein, they would like to see the VCEH develop an inventory of strategies being used and activities happening at each CoC, something like a baseline for CoC-related activities. In addition to better training and orientation, there was a desire for more direct conversations with local co-chairs regarding different initiatives happening around the state and activities that local CoCs should consider investing resources in, such as ways for different CoCs to utilize their Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP) funds. One CoC specifically requested knowledge surrounding housing outcomes from across the state, comparing 28-day outcomes to 60- and 90-day outcomes that are not necessarily captured in HMIS data. Finally, sharing information on how CoCs build trust between their constituent organizations would widely benefit the vast majority of Vermont's CoCs.
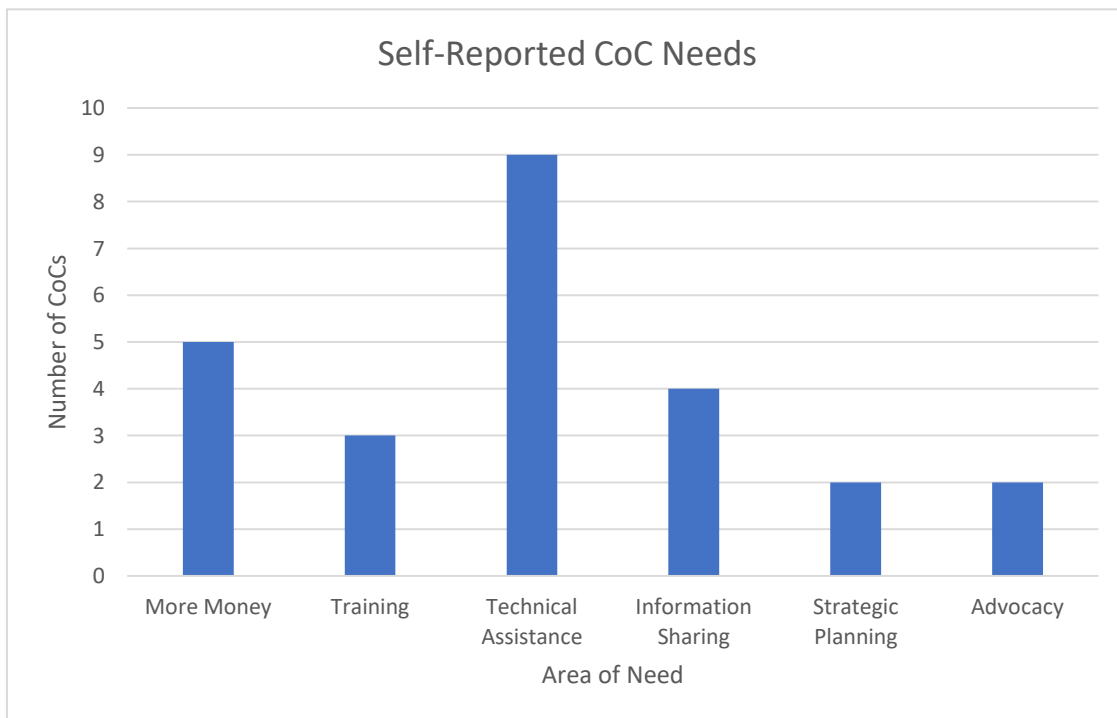
The VCEH needs to define its role in relation to local CoCs and its constituent organizations more clearly. Given its increased capacity for local CoC support, more hands-on trainings and information sharing sessions would directly speak to some of the key concerns raised by local CoCs. With regard to some of the concerns surrounding local advocacy, it seems that a more organized statewide effort to engage local areas in the types of advocacy discussed above may be necessary in order to coordinate statewide priorities with local goals. Funding limitations inhibit the CoC Support Specialist from engaging in advocacy, and so this is one specific area which there should be a broader discussion at the statewide level about making those local needs known at the statewide level and coordinating statewide and local advocacy.

Efforts are already underway to organize trainings for CoC co-chairs, though further trainings and coordination of annual or semi-regular meetings between regional Co-Chairs would go further towards promoting information sharing. It is important to note that CoCs are asking for both vertical and horizontal information sharing: they want continued efforts from the VCEH but also additional resources available for them to collaborate with other local CoCs. This is particularly true in areas with less overlap in terms of member organizations and personnel. Lamoille, Washington, Orleans, and Caledonia/Essex each see a smaller number of individuals at their meetings who also attend other local CoC meetings. These CoCs thus naturally suffer from a lower degree of organic information sharing simply due to their geography, and thus should receive a higher level of attention as the VCEH re-examines its relationship with local CoCs.

Common Areas for Improvement

A common sentiment among local CoC attendants across the state seemed to be the question, "Why do we need this meeting?" Given that similar groups of individuals meet regularly in other settings, such as Housing Review Teams or similar groups, there are often conversations that overlap, particularly when organizations are grappling with specific, hard-to-resolve cases. This is especially true in smaller regions where the number of organizations at the table may be limited. It is not clear that there exists a common understanding of the importance of Continuum of Care meetings around the state, particularly relating to how the statewide Continuum's work impacts local CoCs. These meetings contrast with Housing Review Team meetings in that they are focused on systems rather than case-oriented, though that is not always clear in practice. Some CoCs have chosen to consolidate the two meetings, which takes away from discussion of broader systems-level issues and can detract from discussions of things like service overlap, strategic planning, and other forward-looking topics that may be overlooked when discussions focus primarily on issues currently facing individual organizations. For CoCs that do not have strong representative to the VCEH board, this may further detract from any strong sense of purpose at CoC meetings, as much of the business that may relate to local issues may get lost in translation. The VCEH should consider developing materials through common trainings or outreach that reinforce the importance of these meetings at the local level while preparing VCEH representatives to adequately provide sufficient flow of information to and from their respective CoCs.

Strategic Planning

One common weakness that may contribute to this lack of purpose is inadequate attention to strategic planning across most local CoCs. There are only a small number of regions that have strategically laid out goals for their communities in terms of building new capacity to alleviate homelessness while minimizing service duplication and overlap. CoCs that have had these conversations year-to-year have been able to set and achieve attainable goals, including community economic development, the creation of new shelters, and improving collaboration between community organizations in order to make their homelessness prevention systems more efficient. Better information sharing between local CoCs may help certain regions to better visualize benchmarks for themselves and create plans that draw from the achievements of other communities across the state.

In a similar vein, a number of CoCs could stand to develop and formalize structures and responsibilities within their own CoC further. This is particularly important for communities that have struggled with leadership in the past several years, which has affected their capacity to advocate for funds, to voice issues facing their community, and to coordinate service provision across their community effectively. In some cases, CoCs have come to rely heavily on their AHS Field Director, as they represent a consistent leadership presence. This is not ideal, however, as local CoCs must be able to mobilize community resources in the face of state policies that may

adversely impact their region. Having an AHS Field Director in a significant leadership role could create a conflict of interest and limit the CoC's ability to act swiftly to protect its own priorities.

Membership and Outreach

A significant number of CoCs report challenges with outreach and organizational participation in their meetings. Numerous regions struggle in areas like landlord outreach and education, as well as in getting key community stakeholders, such as municipal leaders or law enforcement, involved in CoC meetings. Each community's landscape differs in terms of what organizations may become productive members of a local Continuum of Care. In some areas, positive relationships with law enforcement or local schools, for example, may produce more meaningful results than in other areas. The VCEH should help CoCs to develop a list of potential partners that could contribute to their mission of creating stronger homelessness prevention systems in their communities (see earlier chart). Having key players at the table is essential to the work that local CoCs are doing, and so it is important that local groups can mobilize those community assets, even if only for several meetings a year. Ultimately, it is up to the local CoC to create these kinds of sustainable community partnerships that can help to fill holes in their local homelessness prevention system.

Similarly, the VCEH must do more to help local CoCs establish productive relationships with local for-profit landlords. In some less populous regions, this is less of a challenge. The smaller number of landlords allows for closer personal relationships with service providers, reducing the need for significant landlord outreach. In more populous regions, however, where there are a larger number of landlords, many of them may not be familiar with the service providers that serve on the CoC. In areas where the Landlord Liaison program is available and properly utilized, they have seen significant progress on improving relationships and working with landlords to deal with difficult to place clients. Given the funds, the Landlord Liaison program should be expanded to as many communities around the state as possible. It has helped bridge large information gaps and bring landlords to the table, eliminating issues that CoCs without a Liaison face almost daily. Information sharing between CoCs could also go a long way towards bridging these gaps. The VCEH has begun taking steps in this direction: the June Coalition meeting featured a "CoC Spotlight" portion where representatives from the Franklin/Grand Isle CoC presented on their landlord education fair. While this certainly represents progress, the VCEH must do more to connect communities and promote the sharing of ideas and strategies around landlord outreach.

Inadequate Resources

Finally, CoCs almost universally complain of having inadequate resources. New mandates from the state to participate in the HMIS reporting system and to implement Coordinated Entry further tax local capacity without providing additional funds to alleviate the strain that the new programs place on community organizations. CoCs generally feel as though these decisions are

being made at the state level without adequate local input, and are interested in having more conversations about implementation at the local level. This speaks to what is certainly a broader theme throughout some of the challenges facing local CoCs: the solutions being discussed by the VCEH do not always filter down to the local level or adequately seek local input. This is, once again, related to ensuring that VCEH Board representatives are effectively reporting information from monthly statewide meetings to their local CoCs, but also points to the late stages at which the statewide body often seeks local input. The VCEH should go to greater lengths to make local organizations a part of the decision-making process, though it is not yet clear what forms that input should take.

What We're Doing

Since the creation of the new CoC Support Specialist (CoCSS) position earlier this year, the VCEH has taken steps to alleviate several of the issues discussed above. Support Specialist Laurel Chen has developed a guide for local CoCs to take on strategic planning in order to identify individuals to serve in leadership roles and formalize goals for their communities in the coming years. She has begun working in collaboration with several CoCs to develop these strategic plans as well as to train community leaders in growing the capacity of their local CoC.

The VCEH is currently planning on creating a Strategic Planning Committee, which will work on resolving many of the issues and challenges highlighted in this report. It will be important that this committee take significant local input into account in order to ensure not only that the VCEH's future goals are in line with local CoCs', but that local CoCs are able to play a larger role in terms of how the VCEH sets its own priorities. The VCEH should look to include representatives who are not necessarily involved as board representatives in order to ensure that the strategic planning process at the statewide level takes into account as wide a diversity of opinions and perspectives as possible.

The Support Specialist has also been working to update the website to provide Local CoCs with more information and tools to support their work. This includes a webpage called *Local CoC Tools*, which includes the following:

- Strategic planning guide and example,
- Action plan templates,
- A tool to guide CoCs in identifying potential CoC members, and
- Background information on the Continuum of Care System to educate new and current attendees.

The VCEH has also begun to incorporate the aforementioned "CoC Spotlight" agenda item into its monthly meetings. This provides a chance for different regions to present on projects and initiatives that they have been working on in their region in an effort to promote more collaboration between CoCs. This directly speaks to some of the concerns raised above about sharing information from different parts of the state. Some Local CoCs already have invited members of other CoCs to present at their meeting as a way to share information between regions, and the Support Specialist is working to increase these opportunities. VCEH should continue to look for new ways to promote information sharing and facilitate communication between CoCs as the strategic planning process moves forward.

The Support Specialist also has been working with local CoCs to use data to provide a full picture of homelessness in their communities. This includes a template that all local CoCs can use to compile data from multiple statewide sources, as well as work with the HMIS Lead Agency to support CoCs in better utilizing HMIS data. Despite a commitment to HMIS and extensive data reporting, communities lack an understanding of how to use that data to create

new and innovative solutions to ongoing problems related to homelessness. This technical assistance will help communities target resources more effectively and give a better snapshot of the scale of certain issues that their residents face.

Importantly, the VCEH is developing a new training for VCEH Board representatives, which will include a Board Guidebook as well as an in-person orientation. Many of the challenges discussed above relate to a disconnect in the flow of information from statewide meetings to local CoCs. The VCEH wants to ensure that the individuals responsible for carrying information about statewide policy updates are equipped to translate that information so that the impact on the local level is clear. The VCEH also must ensure that representatives are able to effectively voice the needs and interests of their respective CoC. The trainings will emphasize the importance of these roles as they relate to solving exactly the types of problems laid out above; proper communication from the local to statewide level is essential to finding solutions to local challenges.

Appendix

Addison CoC

1. What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of inter-organization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?
- Good participation, though not universal
  - Personal Relationships contribute to spirit of contribution
  - strong history of networking and adapting to changing landscape of service coordination,
    - weekly Housing Review Team meetings are the pivotal venue supporting broader communication beyond the participating agencies; great sense of collaboration,

2. What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?
- Resources are inadequate to meet all the expectations/ mandates of the State and HUD;
  - Organizational capacity to keep up with mandates of CE
    - Orgs have different ind systems that create challenges of sharing info
  - Seems like unfunded mandate
    - No process put out as to how orgs can become eligible for that funding
    - Nobody wants to do something that's not funded
      - Exacerbates capacity concerns
  - Need tech asst
- Decision making
  - lack of transparency on the part of some organizations;
    - a couple of organizations protect their own turf at the expense of the larger mission;
      - some do not seem to want to participate in the work, just to serve their own clients.

3. What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?
- Funding
- Sharing of information and ideas;
- Needs
  - Better understanding on the ground of what VSEH provides
    - Don't know what they're talking about unless there's something to vote on
  - People expected to abide by HUD guidelines without understanding/agreeing with their directives
    - Should be giving input into what regulations are bad
      - Ex: definition of homelessness
      - Go to HUD with solutions – proactive suggestions

4. What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?
- Due to lack of funds

- o outreach must be done as time permits by individual case managers
  - o Participation of ACCT in the COC business is valuable,
    - ▪ need more landlord participation but will not happen without funding for an outreach position;
- Need time and capacity to be able to identify landlords and orgs
  - o Look at landlords that we're currently working with
  - o Facing hesitation with landlords about vouchers, process, burdens placed on landlords
  - o Education for landlords about how subsidies work, how they can benefit you
  - o Education about housing law, what they can and can't do
- Landlord liaison
  - o Dependent on person being housed being willing to give access, input from service providers
    - ▪ Supports tend to be for shorter period of time than their tenancy
      - Need to follow up with people AFTER they're stably housed

5. To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?

- The length of time people remain homeless in Addison County is dictated by an extreme shortage of affordable housing, inadequate support services for those challenged by mental illness, and inadequate treatment facilities/programs for treating alcohol and drug addiction ;
  - o Shelter stays are affected by voucher availability and lack of housing, vouchers should include preferences for all HUD-identified target population,
  - o Need housing that meets the needs of various sub-populations, properly located and managed, with on-site supports.
    - ▪ More transitional housing with on-site support
    - ▪ Single-occupancy housing for people in recovery, disabilities
      - On-site manager
  - o Declare states of emergency sooner so that we can have more resources available
    - ▪ Most towns have emergency ops plan already in place
    - ▪ Raise temp that emergency shelters open at

7. How can the VCEH best support our local work and support us in the priorities we identify for housing and programs?

- Policy and expectations needs to be tailored to the resources available
- Support our local decision process and give feedback on how it goes for other CoCs
- Provide financial support to enable us to hire full time staff to search for new inventory, grant programs and inspections;
- Provide sufficient time for votes

Bennington CoC

1. **What process does this CoC use to make decisions? How are those decisions voices to the Balance of State?**
   a. Consensus
   b. Pass along comments to VCEH
2. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. Strong relationships, idea of what people do
      i. Consistent agency updates
      ii. Staff of member orgs often attend
      iii. Good working relationship with housing review team
   b. Strong communication
      i. Even if people aren't in attendance at meeting
3. **What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?**
   a. VCEH updates are often old news because of meeting times
      i. Makes voting on short notice easier
   b. Areas of improvement
      i. Utilizing Landlord Liaison
      ii. Need more engagement from housing authorities, corrections
4. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Need more attendance from:
      i. Education - Don't have full time liaison
      ii. Faith based orgs
      iii. Emergency Food and Fuel Fund
      iv. Municipalities -- Consistency is a challenge
      v. Businesses
      vi. Law enforcement
5. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. Money
   b. Communication from the state
   c. PIT
      i. Timeliness makes it difficult
         1. Could use more state coordination
      ii. Definition of homelessness needs refining
6. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
   a. Established landlord liaison to improve communications with landlords
7. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
   a. From HRT perspective
      i. Transitioning people with vouchers is really difficult
   b. Solution has to be more money, more affordable housing

Caledonia/Essex CoC

1. **What process does this CoC use to make decisions? How are those decisions voices to the Balance of State?**
   a. Consensus based
      i. Modified – folks who may be in opposition won't rise against majority, but don't call for formal votes
2. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. Collaboration among different partners
      i. Generally high level of trust between organizations
      ii. Collaboration around warming shelter
   b. CoC is systems-oriented
   c. Needs
      i. Technical support for press releases, speaking to zoning committees, collaboration needed to get things running smoothly in the community
         1. Public relations especially regarding warming shelter
            a. Impact on communities, finances for the state, etc.
      ii. Information sharing
         1. Ex: growth of DV population needing housing
3. **What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?**
   a. Increasing involvement with larger pool of landlords
   b. Get homeless people sent to Caledonia for homelessness services from Orleans county
4. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Should attend
      i. Lyndon Town Manager
      ii. Council on aging
      iii. Law enforcement
         1. See them at other meetings
5. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. Legislative updates and information sharing
      i. Not always clear where that information is coming from
   b. A lot of what happens at those meetings doesn't impact people at the local level
   c. Role is to help local CoCs advocate in their own communities
      i. Help people tell the local stories in their own areas
      ii. Let groups know when things are going well
   d. Would like to be able to visit other CoCs, have discussions on what other types of CoCs are doing
      i. Need more direct forms of information sharing
         1. Ex: Annual visits to talk about patterns and trends
      ii. Develop inventory of strategies and activities happening at each CoC
         1. Baseline for CoC-related activities

2. Schedule time with each of the co-chairs to talk with them about things that could be happening, should be happening around the state
   a. Look at ways HOP funding is being used
      i. Strategies around utilizing HOP funding
   e. Need better communication from state level
      i. Looking for advocacy from VCEH for expanding use of Selter+Care from just people with mental disabilities
   f. Data
      i. Don't have capacity to track trends and what's happening in the area of housing

6. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
   a. Talk to landlords way too late when they're already in the hole
      i. Created a group to involve service providers earlier on to mitigate harms done to landlords
      ii. Will be able to loan landlords money for repairs

7. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
   a. Regular shelters are becoming a holding tank
      i. Long waiting lists
   b. Need larger supply of affordable housing to transition people into
      i. Working on homeless preference list

Franklin/Grand-Isle CoC

1. **What process does this CoC use to make decisions? How are those decisions voices to the Balance of State?**
   a. No formal process
      i. Trust that the outcomes are going to be mostly consensus based
      ii. If not consensus then solid majority
         1. Have official voting with dialogue
2. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. Have local leadership in nonprofit and state sector
      i. Missing landlords
         1. Used to have them
      ii. Have a strong housing inspector
   b. Similar people as housing review team
      i. Carry conversations over to other meetings so that things can be addressed more immediately
      ii. Small size helps to facilitate relationships
         1. Makes it easy to refer people across programs
   c. Have sufficient resources, interagency communication – good collaboration across organizations
   d. Strong CoC leadership
      i. Clear leadership from AHS Field Rep
3. **What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?**
   a. Need to expand membership
   b. Don't always understand info coming from the state
      i. Don't always understand what they're supposed to do with that information
         1. Need sense of purpose for CoC meetings
   c. Don't really have formal administrative processes for meetings
      i. Don't always take minutes
      ii. Very different cultures
         1. State is very bureaucratic, local level is not
         2. No immediate sense that what the state is presenting is helpful to folks on the local level
4. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Need to attend
      i. More landlords
      ii. Spector
      iii. Housing Inspector
      iv. Business
      v. Hospital
      vi. Pathways
      vii. Municipal representation

        viii.   Probation and parole
         ix.   DOC
          x.   Turning Point

5. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. Dependent on good representative from BoS
   b. Centralized discussion of what's happening around the state, elsewhere
      i. Willing to listen and adjust course
         1. Ex: VRS advocacy
   c. Funds
      i. Valuable support to addressing homelessness on the local level

6. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
   a. Had an outreach fair in November
      i. Used to do landlord breakfasts
   b. Housing Review Team tries to leave landlords without damages, repairs to make
   c. Have contact with landlords through HOP grant
      i. Put money aside for damages
      ii. Call landlords to get ahold of clients
         1. Mostly happens at agency/case management level
            a. VRS and Rapid Rehousing
         2. Natural corollary process of communication
            a. Sustains healthy rental market – landlords don't transfer units into high income if they can maintain profitability with low income families

7. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
   a. Shelter stays are growing
      i. Nobody entering subsidies
      ii. Trying to get people to do home health if they can so that they can take care of someone who is disabled
      iii. DV shelter is full
         1. All transitional units are full as well – people aren't moving
         2. Vacant spots are usually filled within the day
      iv. Looking into Mental Health Crisis beds as option for people to go if they have substance abuse issues
   b. Need more subsidies
      i. Project based, not localized
         1. Not localized
   c. Lack of housing stock
   d. Nonprofit landlords have trouble keeping regulated rents low

Northern Windsor – Orange CoC

1. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. Need more conversation around Coordinated Entry (CE)
      i. Clearer picture of how big picture connects to local level
         1. Good communication at systems level
         2. Client level has challenges due to lack of understanding
   b. Need better understanding of what VCEH's role is
   c. Service Point
      i. Understanding of who is looking at data/what they are doing with it
         1. Need feedback directly to CoCs to improve services/care
         2. Statewide conversations about best practices, things that other CoCs are doing that may be helpful if applied elsewhere
            a. More regular distribution of best practices
      ii. Central collection of data
2. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Stakeholders that could be brought to the table
      i. Council on Aging
      ii. Faith-based organizations
      iii. Landlords
      iv. Law enforcement
         1. Police social workers
      v. Independent non-profits
      vi. Hospitals and health care providers
      vii. Youth Groups
         1. Windsor County Youth Services
      viii. Corrections
      ix. Headrest
   b. Should conduct outreach to new stakeholders as they begin the CE process
3. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. HUD grant funding
   b. Communication of HUD guidelines
   c. PIT
   d. Homelessness awareness day
4. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
   a. Agencies do more than CoC
      i. Less outreach to private landlords
         1. Not enough available housing stock to be a part of the conversation
   b. Potential: Landlord forums/summits
      i. Need a reason to come, like landlord education
      ii. Connecting landlords with caseworkers

   iii. Reach out to landlord groups/organizations
  c. Need to know what other CoCs are doing
5. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
  a. Need more affordable housing stock
  b. Voucher availability is an issue
   i. Rules too strict
    1. Shelter+ Care
     a. People who have needs don't qualify
      i. Need flexibility
     b. Need case management
    2. Relax eligibility standards
   ii. Money to be used for homelessness prevention
    1. Need to be able to fit resources to the clientele rather than fit clientele to resources
    2. HOP funds need to be more flexible locally
     a. Housing First model emphasizes this
     b. Need advocacy in favor of flexibility
   iii. Section 8 sanctions
    1. Creates barriers
    2. State housing needs to be less restrictive than private housing
   iv. Differentiation/clarification of ESG vs. HOP funds requirements
    1. State should follow HUD definitions
   v. Emergency Solutions Grants should be Emergency Shelter Grants
    1. Needs to be available for stabilized housing
  c. Want to know how long it is taking to house people around the state
   i. Need common definitions for housing stabilization around state
   ii. Want to know outcomes around the state
    1. Short-term vs. long-term outcomes
    2. Less emphasis on 28 days
     a. Seems arbitrary
     b. How do those outcomes compare to 60 days?
     c. To find out housing outcomes for longer time periods, have to reach out directly to clients
      i. Difficult to do, less effective
     d. What are peoples' outcomes 90 days after conclusion of services?
      i. Service point isn't capturing this
    3. Need more flexible options for people in difficult situations
    4. Need technical assistance to create new shelters

Orleans CoC

1. **What process does this CoC use to make decisions? How are those decisions voices to the Balance of State?**
   a. Informal – only a few community partners in NEK
   b. Attendance at statewide meetings has been lacking – less communication on that front recently
2. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. Small size facilitates creativity in terms of resource utilization
      i. Try to advocate to fix challenges they're faced with
         1. Ex: Warming shelters
   b. Good relationships with legislators
   c. Partnerships with hospital, Red Cross, churches
   d. Improving relationship with the City
      i. Community supports warming shelter
3. **What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?**
   a. Lack of resources
      i. Can't get warming shelter off the ground due to lack of funds
         1. Businesses are tapped out
   b. Not enough units
      i. Lost 70 affordable units several years ago
         1. Landlords are picky about who they rent to
            a. Means that shelter stays are longer because people can't find available units
4. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Should be attending
      i. Financiers
      ii. Voc Rehab
      iii. Rotary
      iv. Rural Edge
      v. Substance abuse
      vi. Farmers
   b. Consider making meeting topic oriented to promote attendance
5. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. Statewide advocacy
      i. Can do something with info from local communities
   b. Information sharing
6. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
   a. Landlords typically come to these meetings if tenants are on assistance
   b. Did a breakfast with them several years ago
      i. Many of them are frustrated with not getting paid, eviction process

    c.   Feel good about relationships with landlords
        i.   They've been in the area for a long time, have history with people
            1.   Can create problems because of family histories

7. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
    a.   Lack of available housing leads to longer shelter stays
    b.   Lack of funding to help people leave shelters

Rutland CoC

1. **What process does this CoC use to make decisions? How are those decisions voices to the Balance of State?**
   a. Vote
      i. If info required for the state, Ashley will submit to BoS
      ii. In person or via email
      iii. Generally majority
2. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. Highly skilled and knowledgeable professionals
   b. Diversity of agencies
   c. Willingness to brainstorm using knowledge of history of community
      i. Ability to think outside of the box
         1. Best case scenario and how do we build a bridge to get there
3. **What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?**
   a. Lack of formal communication structure
   b. Inconsistent participation
   c. Lack of knowledge about services provided by each participating organization
4. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Should potentially attend
      i. Rutland Mental Health
      ii. Open Door mission
      iii. More landlords
      iv. Mayor's Office
      v. DCF
      vi. Youth
      vii. Dodge House
      viii. Local representatives
      ix. Business owners
      x. Consumers
5. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. Collaboration
      i. Aligning efforts in order to reduce duplication
   b. Voicing local issues to state
      i. Conduit to state
      ii. Gives voice to state effort from local level
      iii. CoC offers balance of structure and independence
         1. Structure of multidisciplinary professionals and consumers that can put expertise together
         2. Allows for much higher level of collaboration between agencies and organizations to find new pathways for people to finds resources that they need

  c. Need more
    i. Training on what is expected of them as members of local CoC
    ii. Need to have greater understanding of role and value of what we are doing on local level
      1. Need to know what they can do with anecdotal info such as where people are staying, that they are food insecure, etc.

6. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
  a. Have had landlord fairs in the past
  b. Have landlord liaison
    i. Does extensive outreach
      1. Moms and pops with an extra room
    ii. Gets referrals from other landlords about open units
    iii. Foster personal relationships with landlords
      1. Emails
      2. Newsletter
      3. Attend landlord meeting
    iv. Support mediation services
      1. Attend inspections at request of landlord and/or tenant
      2. When they house someone, contact landlord once a month for first year to keep lines of communication open and make sure both parties know that they have supports beyond each other
    v. She is available to entire CoC
      1. Working with other agencies in Rutland as well

7. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
  a. Four shelter rooms throughout Rutland
    i. Meant to be longer term for high needs cases
  b. Extended periods of homelessness
    i. People use more than 84 days of emergency housing
  c. Small percentage of referrals received from ESD accept services
    i. Women's center provides on site services for victims of domestic violence

Washington CoC

1. **What process does this CoC use to make decisions? How are those decisions voices to the Balance of State?**
   a. Consensus based
      i. Will do official votes when called for from VCEH
2. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. Housing Review team meetings are strong
   b. Diversity, personal relationships facilitate service coordination
   c. Strong leadership
      i. Do it without pushing their own agenda but keep group on track
   d. Willingness to do committee work between CoC meetings
3. **What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?**
   a. Desire to achieve more measurable outcomes
      i. More challenging as we bring in more partners
      ii. Presenting data in compelling ways
         1. Need to do a better job of telling the story of our own community
   b. Implementing Coordinated Entry
      i. Already coordinated, but it's relational rather than formal
         1. Need to cement formal structures of coordination that are sustainable
   c. Increase housing stock
      i. Especially for people with criminal records, mental health, substance abuse, other supportive housing
         1. Need ability to stick with an individual or household for a longer period of time to ensure successful tenancy
            a. Through case management, etc.
         2. More standardized requirements for getting into housing across organizations
      ii. Knowledge of entities in the room that can stick with folks for the duration of their tenancy/transition
         1. Need greater capacity
            a. More $ to be able to stick with folks
      iii. More MOUs to understand how we're utilizing housing stock
4. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Should attend
      i. Barre Housing Authority
      ii. Municipalities
      iii. Landlords
      iv. Law enforcement
      v. Corrections
      vi. Court Diversion
      vii. Schools

      viii. Coalition of medical providers

      ix. Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice

      x. Consumers

5. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. Access to money, opportunities for funding
      i. Funding can get lost in distribution
   b. Need systems that make applications and access streamlined on local level for individuals to get into housing
      i. Universal application
   c. Legislative updates
   d. State vs local control
      i. Want as much autonomy and resources as they can possibly have
      ii. Need more control at local level

6. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
   a. Very robust landlord group that meets monthly
   b. Landlord liaison at Capstone
   c. History of street outreach to homeless folks

7. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
   a. Very difficult to move someone out within 90 days
      i. Takes months to move into supportive housing
      ii. Gap between shelter stays and housing is also an issue
   b. Need low barrier shelter, family shelter
   c. Still spending a lot of money on hotel stays
      i. $600k this FY in Washington County
      ii. Speaks to the fact that there's not enough subsidized housing
         1. If families don't get some kind of subsidy, there are very few avenues out of shelters
   d. Continuing to ensure that services are there for people who have high needs
      i. Services for housing retention, landlord relationships

Windham South CoC

1. **What process does this CoC use to make decisions? How are those decisions voices to the Balance of State?**
   a. Less formal – consensus based
      i. Discussion, information based
   b. Take votes when warranted
   c. Vote by email when necessary
2. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. People have built relationships over time, tend to share common goals if not priorities
      i. Strong collaborations between organizations as a result of strong relationships
         1. More people at the table than other CoCs, drives where the conversation can go
            a. Almost always has key players or representatives in the discussion
               i. More potential for service coordination, but can lead to people stepping on each other's toes
   b. Diverse range of groups that come
      i. Strength in participation
         1. Not just HUD-funded programs
      ii. Healthy subcommittees, strong task-force based organization
         1. Limited housing stock has forced stronger collaboration
         2. Strong sense of transparency between organizations
3. **What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?**
   a. Strategic planning
      i. Need to think more broadly as a system
   b. More discussion
      i. Often just reporting back – want to hear from more voices and make people feel like they can share/contribute
   c. Formalizing structures/responsibilities
      i. Want more clarity in how things are happening
   d. Frustrations around lack of resources and ways that it impacts their clients
      i. Folks who are excluded from available resources
         1. Ex: Released offenders
4. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Should Attend
      i. Bratt Retreat
      ii. Psych Hospital
      iii. Select Board
      iv. Hospital/Community Health Team
      v. Education Liaison
      vi. Consumer

        vii.   Businesses/Chamber of Commerce
        viii.   Law Enforcement

5. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. Having funding/compliance support for NOFA
      i. So many requirements, it's great that they don't have to think about it at the local level
   b. Point in Time
      i. Frustrating because it doesn't tell the whole story
   c. How can we improve ways that BoS provides support to local CoCs?
      i. Always looks for data that they don't have
         1. Want data specific to this region
      ii. Tech assistance around Coordinated Entry

6. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
   a. Had a forum a few years ago
      i. Invited them to discuss what they needed and what the CoC could provide
   b. Have had greater successes than failures
      i. Agencies are walking the walk
         1. Have a go-to person that can address landlords' concerns in a reasonable amount of time

7. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
   a. Seeing 12 month long shelter stays
      i. Significant challenges moving people out due to limited housing stock, lack of resources
         1. No vouchers available means that people are staying in place
      ii. Warming shelter won't exist next year if they don't get significant funding from the state
         1. Needs have become more extreme, can't run using volunteers anymore
            a. Used to have mostly people struggling with alcoholism, now having people overdose in shelter

Windsor-South/Windham North CoC

1. **What process does this CoC use to make decisions? How are those decisions voices to the Balance of State?**
   a. Modified consensus model
      i. Add qualifiers based on dissenting views
2. **What are your local CoC's greatest strengths in terms of interorganization communication, service coordination, and needs assessments?**
   a. Lots of trust in relationships
      i. Allows for more transparency
   b. Service coordination
      i. Easy to coordinate services because of external relationships
         1. Already have expectations of what people can offer
      ii. Relationships makes service coordination faster
   c. Good number of people that attend
      i. Less money to fight over
         1. Compared to Brattleboro, easier to coordinate
   d. Housing works in Springfield
      i. Shelter, transitional housing has always worked here because of the players
3. **What are your greatest weaknesses in the three aforementioned areas?**
   a. Not enough money from HUD
   b. Bellows falls strangely attached to the CoC
      i. Can change where resources are coming from
      ii. Feel disconnected from the district
      iii. County lines and AHS districts don't line up – creates challenges
4. **Which members of your CoC attend meetings regularly? Which members do not?**
   a. Should include
      i. Black River good neighbors
      ii. HCRS
      iii. Family services
      iv. Corrections
      v. Schools
      vi. Windsor/Windham Housing Trust
         1. Don't have too much of a presence here anymore
      vii. Stewart Properties
      viii. Police
      ix. Springfield Parent-Child Center
5. **What do you view as the greatest value of the Balance of State to your local CoC?**
   a. Provide now
      i. Help interpret things sometimes
      ii. PIT
         1. Frustrating because of what it doesn't count
            a. Shouldn't just be HUD definition

   b. Should provide
       i. More money
       ii. More local control
       iii. Training, best practices in things that have worked
           a. Meetings on best practices that people could attend on innovative programs that are working in other places that we can take what we want out of
           b. Housing First
       2. Don't need more instruction from the state
           a. Things that people have learned that are new that make a difference in how you can do your work
           b. Don't want one-size fits all
               i. No more 101 classes, less prescriptive trainings
           c. Don't tie money to best practice trainings
               i. Carrots instead of sticks

6. **What kinds of outreach are you doing to landlords? What kind of support/mitigation practices are you providing?**
   a. Have supportive housing who works with landlords on a daily basis
       i. Provide connection
   b. Some political support for landlords for ordinance
       i. Would make renting a room more difficult
   c. Able to build relationships with landlords, find housing for people
       i. Look inweards at needs

7. **To what extent are the length of shelter stays an issue in your area? What resources or policy changes do you need to reduce shelter stays in your area?**
   a. No shelters
   b. Youth shelter is 90 days
       i. Some people maxing out beyond 90 days
       ii. Same for BF shelter
   c. Needs
       i. Count couch surfers as homeless so that they're eligible for resources
           1. Moving people into shelters in order to make them eligible for resources
           2. Don't qualify for vouchers under current HUD/AHS rules
               a. VRS
       ii. Impact on disabled people
       iii. More advocacy on local level needed