Vermont State Housing Authority
CoC Program Report: Permanent Supportive Housing ("Shelter+Care")

The Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) operates two HUD Continuum of Care Programs:
- **Permanent Supportive Housing** ("Shelter+Care") serves households which meet the HUD definition of Chronic Homelessness-**CH** (disabling condition + long-term literal homeless) with long-term rental assistance and robust services from local S+C providers.
- **Rapid Rehousing** (RRH) serves households experiencing literal homelessness, who have varying levels of service needs, with medium-term rental assistance (up to 24 months). RRH providers either deliver direct services or coordinate them with local partners.

Both CoC Programs operate with low barrier entry and implement housing first practices.

Chronic Homelessness (CH)
As a HUD CoC Program, Permanent Supportive Housing is intended as the primary resource to address general chronic homelessness in communities (VASH is also available to exclusively serve VA-eligible CH Veterans). After making significant headway in the past, *former S+C Bonus grants supported an initial 65% CH decrease in Rutland County*, January Point-in-Time count data shows a steady increase of CH persons within the entire VT BoS CoC during the past few years (**2015**=65; **2016**=59; **2017**=83; **2018**=118; **2019**=116). If not for a massive push (50+ subsidies) to utilize unspent S+C funds in the spring/summer of 2018, the number of persons experiencing chronic homelessness would have inevitably been much higher in 2019.

In response to these unsettling trends, VSHA has implemented new VT BoS CoC strategies to address chronic homelessness:
- Effective 6/1/19, VSHA Shelter+Care Programs will only serve households where at least one member meets the HUD definition of **Chronic Homelessness-DedicatedPLUS (CH+)**, see handout for details. Prior to this change, VSHA S+C subsidies were "prioritized".
- Ongoing service capacity challenges necessitated VSHA to voluntarily reallocate (reduce) the S+C Statewide grant in order to add case management funding. The result is a recently awarded new **S+C WWW** (Washington/Windsor/Windham) grant, in partnership with Pathways VT, to serve counties with the highest number of CH persons.
- As a result of last year's effective campaign to utilize S+C grant funds (reduce recapture by HUD), VSHA will continue the practice of **over-issuing subsidies**.
- In preparation for the upcoming FY19 CoC NOFA competition, VSHA (as an eligible project applicant) is considering the submission of a **new S+C project proposal**, for consideration by VCEH & HUD, to further reduce the number of persons experiencing chronic homelessness in Washington/Windsor/Windham; as well as Franklin & Addison.

Program Information
Eligible S+C households must: need assistance; not exceed 50% Area Median Income; meet HUD CoC-Permanent Supportive Housing homeless definition; agree to sign/comply with a one-year lease; and contribute 30% of their household's adjusted gross income towards rent.

All households must be prioritized & referred by the VT BoS CoC - Coordinated Entry.

All participating households are connected to a Shelter+Care Provider who assists with care coordination, which is comprised of: initial housing needs assessment, minimum monthly visits (more as needed), and individualized service plans tailored to the needs of each household to at least: search/secure/retain housing, access mainstream resources, and increase income.

The VSHA S+C Statewide grant serves the entire VT BoS CoC area (all VT counties, except Chittenden). The VSHA S+C WWW grant serves Washington, Windsor and Windham counties.

VSHA S+C Programs may serve any type of household & subpopulation, as long as at least one member of the household meets the CH+ definition (disability of long duration *and* 12+ months of literal homelessness), including, but not limited to: Individuals, Families, and Youth (eligible to sign a lease); persons fleeing domestic/sexual violence/human trafficking; persons with health conditions (mental health, substance use disorder, HIV/AIDS, physical health, etc.); Veterans ineligible for or averse to VA services; LGBTQ, etc.

Subject to funding availability, VSHA maintains a move-on strategy preference for eligible VSHA S+C households who need or want to transition to a Sect. 8 Housing Choice Voucher after receiving 36 months of rental assistance.

Challenges & Opportunities
Although VSHA's S+C projects have always served more households than required, the circumstances that led HUD to recapture some FFY2016 (as well as previous years) unused funds are primarily due to slow lease-ups of approved program participants as a result of:
- The VSHA S+C Program and CoC Coordinated Entry target and prioritize first serving households with extremely high needs and significant housing barriers.
- Participants of CoC Programs (low barrier/housing first) are in competition to access limited housing (<2% vacancy rates; poor housing stock; unaffordable/ineligible rent amounts) with Vermonters who have better credit/housing/criminal backgrounds.
- Due to service capacity & siloed funding, the majority of VSHA S+C Providers are limited to *only* serving persons with specific disabling conditions.

S+C Providers must access other (non-CoC) sources as match to support all or the majority of service provision and local program administration. The parameters and administrative burdens of the S+C Program may not be a good fit in all rural areas (i.e. fewer number of CH persons/shelters; long distances; fewer providers/funding/capacity; some towns/landlords unwilling to serve people in need).

Recently, two provider agencies have chosen to transition out of VSHA Shelter+Care:

- **VT CARES** clients rarely meet CH status so they chose to be a new VSHA RRH Provider.
- After several years of declining program participants served, new leadership at **NE Kingdom Human Services** evaluated organizational priorities in light of limited funds and voluntarily decided to transition out of the VSHA S+C Program. VSHA agrees with, and fully supports & respects, the decision of NKHS which remains actively involved in NE Kingdom strategic planning & partnerships to reduce homelessness.

To complement our recent efforts to reinvigorate the Rapid Rehousing Program, VSHA is evaluating the operation of our Shelter+Care Program to maximize limited resources and address service & program capacity issues of our dedicated & compassionate providers:

- Collaborated with providers, state partners and AHS to address service capacity issues
- Met with VT Legislators about lost voucher funds (CoC & Sect. 8), limited & restricted service capacity and low vacancy rates/poor housing stock
- Developing new VSHA CoC Program Policies & Procedures for both Shelter+Care & RRH
- Begin quarterly group meetings with S+C Providers
- Supported increased housing options (e.g. Housing Bond, Landlord Liaisons, Shared Housing, Sober Housing/Recovery Residences, etc.)
- Increased analysis of monthly budget to support over-issuance of S+C subsidies
- Developed/Awarded new S+C Pathways VT grant (Washington, Windsor, Windham)
- Continued support of S+C Providers to improve tenant retention, strengthen local partnerships (including CE), and improve service coordination
- Other improvements: RRH-CH participant eligibility for S+C; inquiries with local hospitals to understand non-CoC service funds (i.e. Blueprint for Health); evaluating S+C regulations

CoC-PSH ("Shelter+Care Statewide") - **FFY2016** Funds (6/1/17-5/31/18)

Rental Assistance:	$1,563,600 (*$1,228,259 expended = $1,178,386/HAP + $49,872/VSHA RA*)
Services:	$0
Project Admin:	$101,030 (*6.5% of RA budget*)
Total Awarded:	**$1,664,630** (expended *$1,329,289/80%*)
Services Match (non-HUD):	$450,000 reported to HUD (27%); $1,622,616 actual (97%)

CoC-PSH ("Shelter+Care Statewide") - **FFY2018** Funds (6/1/19-5/31/20)

Rental Assistance:	$1,462,548
Services:	$0
Project Admin:	$104,210 (*7% of RA budget*)
Total Awarded:	**$1,566,758**

NEW CoC-PSH ("Shelter+Care WWW") – **FFY2018** Funds (6/1/19-5/31/20)

Rental Assistance:	$128,064 (*includes VSHA RA Admin costs*)
Services:	$58,102
Project Administration:	$18,306
Total Awarded:	**$204,472**

VSHA COC PROGRAM – PSH: "Shelter+Care Statewide" (as of 5.17.19)

Addison (33):
- Counseling Service of Addison County (19)
- Helping to Overcome Poverty's Effects (5)
- Pathways Vermont (9)

Bennington (10):
- Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless (3)
- United Counseling Services (7)

Caledonia (5):
- Lamoille County Mental Health (1)
- NE Kingdom Human Services (4)

Franklin/Grand Isle (22):
- NW Counseling & Support Services (10)
- Pathways Vermont (7)
- Samaritan House (5)

Lamoille (14):
- Lamoille County Mental Health (14)

Orange (14):
- Clara Martin Center (14)

Orleans (2):
- NE Kingdom Human Services (1)
- Vermont CARES (1)

Rutland (20):
- Homeless Prevention Center (15)
- Rutland Mental Health Services (5)

Washington (21):
- Pathways Vermont (12)
- Vermont CARES (1)
- Washington County Mental Health (8)

Windham (15):
- Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (2)
- Pathways Vermont (13)

Brattleboro Housing Authority S+C: GroundWorks & HCRS (23-28)

Windsor (29):
- Clara Martin Center (1)
- Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (8)
- Pathways Vermont (11)
- Upper Valley Haven (9) – *service area includes Orange County*

HOUSEHOLDS SERVED - current
FFY2017 S+C SW grant: 6/1/18-5/31/19

Active Lease or Pending Lease (as of 5.17.19): 185*

FFY2018 S+C Statewide grant term: 6/1/19-5/31/20
Units Funded at 100% of Fair Market Rent Value: FFY2018 = 133
*139% subsidy utilization rate effective start of FFY2018 grant

HOUSEHOLDS SERVED - past
FFY2016 S+C SW grant: 6/1/17-5/31/18

Households/Units Funded: 148
Households/Units Served: 205 (average 171 households per quarter)

Persons/Beds Funded: 180
Total Persons/Beds Served: 238 (average 197 persons per quarter)

Average HAP = $582 per month/per household
*Housing Assistance Payment amount includes security deposits, property damage reimbursement and vacancy costs

TYPES OF PERSONS SERVED

Number of Adults (age 18 years and over):	219
Number of Children (under age 18):	19
Number of Veterans:	13
Number of Chronically Homeless Persons:	113
Number of Youth (under age 25):	4
Number of Parenting Youth (under age 18 with children):	0
Number of Adults by Gender:	**Male** = 99; **Female** = 117; **Other** = 3
Number of Children by Gender:	**Male** = 10; **Female** = 9; **Other** = 0
Age:	**<18** = 19; **18-24** = 9; **25-54** = 153; **55+** = 57
Race:	**White** = 213; **Black** = 6; **Other** = 19
Ethnicity:	**Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino** = 234; **Hispanic/Latino** = 4

Number of Health Conditions (at program start):　　　　**None** = 20; **1** = 123; **2** = 52; **3+** = 43

Health Conditions (at program start):

- Mental Health =　　　　202
- Alcohol Abuse =　　　　21
- Drug Abuse =　　　　24
- Chronic Health =　　　　21
- HIV/AIDS =　　　　9
- Developmental =　　　　21
- Physical =　　　　30

Persons Fleeing Domestic Violence (at program start):　　　　**Yes** = 18; **No** = 51

Persons with Domestic Violence History:　　　　**Yes** = 69; **No** = 150

Homeless Situation (at application submission):

- Places Not Meant for Habitation =　　　　68
- Emergency Shelter (or equivalent) =　　　　98
- Safe Haven =　　　　9
- Transitional Housing for Homeless Persons =　　　　23
- Other =　　　　22*

    Psychiatric Facility, RRH/Other PSH, Family/Friends, Subsidized/Non-Subsidized Housing

Adults at Annual Assessment (Stayers) or at Exit (Leavers) by Income Source:

Total Number of Adults =　　　　**219**

- Only Earned Income (i.e. Employment, etc.) =　　　　11
- Only Other Income (i.e. SSA, SSDI/SSI, VA, Pension, TANF/GA, etc.) =　　　　152
- Both Earned and Other Income =　　　　14
- Assessment Not Yet Required =　　　　33
- No Income (at Assessment or Exit) =　　　　9

Gained or Increased Income = 125 out of 186 Adults at Assessment/Exit (67%)

- Had income at start & did not have income at Assessment/Exit =　　　　0
- Retained income but had less at Assessment/Exit =　　　　11
- Retained income and had same at Assessment/Exit =　　　　41
- Retained and increased income =　　　　93
- Did not have income at start but gained income at Assessment/Exit =　　　　32
- Did not have income at start or Assessment/Exit =　　　　9

Non-Cash Benefit Sources (SNAP/WIC/TANF) at Exit: 1+ Source = 161; No Source = 24

Health Insurance (at Assessment/Exit): 1+ Source = 56; 1 Source = 144; No Source = 0

Destination (at Program Exit): Permanent = 17; Temporary = 8; Institution = 2; Other = 7

- Successful exit to permanent housing = 68%

ADMINISTRATION

Grant Recipient: VSHA must oversee & monitor the activities of each grant/S+C Provider to ensure compliance (to both HUD & VT BoS CoC), including –
- Develop project in partnership with RRH providers, local CoCs, State, and others
- Submit proposal for each CoC project to VCEH & HUD for review and approval
- Conducts all communications and execute each grant with HUD (Issues & Conditions, Environmental Review, Match Letters, Grant Agreement, Close-Out)
- Develop and enter into agreements with each Lead Agency and ongoing support
- Maintain each grant budget, financial record keeping, eLOCCS reimbursement, determine funds available for subsidy allocation (monthly/bi-monthly), etc.
- Adherence to HUD CoC Program Regulations/Interim Rule; Notices; State & Federal laws; CoC Policies & Procedures; etc.
- Ensure HMIS data entry/quality/completeness of each Annual Performance Report
- Review & address performance measure outcomes
- Conduct VSHA site visits/findings/correction action steps & CoC reporting

Program Administrator: In operation of the S+C Program (multiple grants), VSHA -
- Develops program policies & protocols
- Provides trainings & extensive technical assistance
- Conducts strategic planning (internal, state, local CoCs, providers, VCEH, etc.)
- Addresses issues & complaints
- Supports coordination & implementation at various levels (multiple staff at 16 S+C provider agencies, multiple partners; 10 Coordinated Entry staff; 11 local CoCs; VCEH & committees; multiple coalitions; State/Federal Agencies; and between VSHA staff)

Rental Assistance Administrator: VSHA staff –
- Answer eligibility and other inquiries, accepts & processes applications
- Communicates with S+C providers, other providers, households, landlords, other VSHA staff, employers/benefits programs, State employees, etc.
- Conducts HQS unit inspections, completes lease contracts (with household, RRH provider and landlord), addresses tenant-landlord issues, etc.
- Processes & sends monthly Housing Assistance Payments to landlords (including security deposits & vacancy costs), calculates income & household changes

S+C Providers: enter into VSHA provider agreements, provide match letters, develop agreements & coordinate with local partners, conduct make referrals to/receive from local Coordinated Entry, ensure HMIS data entry & quality, assist households with S+C applications and housing search & retention, provide case management to support households in the development & follow-thru on Individual Service Plans (service coordination with other providers, tenant-landlord issues, access mainstream resources, housing stability).