

VT-500 BoS CoC Inclusion of Persons with Lived Experience

Individuals with lived experience are experts in homeless services. VT BoS does not require that people divulge their experience, but also supports people who are willing to speak from their experience and offer critical perspectives on the user experience of the system. For purposes of this policy, VT BoS defines “lived experience” as having experienced homelessness in any of HUD’s four definitional categories within one’s lifetime, with a preference for those with experiences within the past five years, and for those with experiences within the state of Vermont or adjacent states.

VT BoS will maintain an active Lived Expertise Subcommittee that is dedicated to amplifying the voices of individuals with lived experiences of homelessness throughout Vermont to shape an informed, effective, and responsive approach to the needs of our unhoused neighbors. Members will be compensated at industry standards, currently set at the mean wage for labor code 21-1099 (Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other), rounded to the nearest whole dollar amount. VT BoS will review the wage rates found at <http://www.vtlmi.info/occupation.cfm> annually to ensure the rate remains at industry standards. Members will also be able to receive stipends for other participation-related costs, including phone minutes/data costs, transportation to a site with stable internet for virtual meetings, childcare costs, and other anticipated costs not listed here. Members are encouraged to participate in at least one VT BoS Committee in addition to the Lived Expertise Subcommittee.

The Lived Expertise Subcommittee operates under the umbrella of the Membership Committee and consists of individuals who have experienced homelessness, along with supportive allies and facilitators.

VT BoS will provide an annual training for CoC members on cultivating a welcoming environment for perspectives from lived experience.