



Date: March 11, 2026

To: Chair Theresea Wood & Members of the Committee House Human Services

From: Chad Simmons, Executive Director. Housing & Homelessness Alliance of Vermont (HHAV)

Just prior to Town Meeting break, HHAV was asked by the Chair to explore a few questions around regionally driven funding of homelessness response activities through entities such as the Continuum of Care (CoC) or Local Housing Coalitions (LHCs). While HHAV understands the desire to having communities direct resources towards homelessness response activities (through granting or awards), we do not see this as viable option to include in the committee bill at this time.

We agree with the proposal to have the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) administer the homelessness response activities and we welcome exploration of what innovations to funding mechanisms would look like. Here are several considerations when thinking about regional funding for homelessness response activities:

- Some states already do this or are exploring local/regional funding of homelessness response activities through non-governmental entities. Researching how these states approach these structures should be undertaken with numerous partners, such as OEO, BOS CoC, Chittenden CoC, participants of LHCs and HUD-funded TA consultants.
- If we were to move to a more regional/local funding system, there would need to be a significant investment in capacity (staffing, accounting/granting systems, etc). A granting/contracting system would need to be created (if one does not exist) or expanded (if one does exist). This would take would time and state resources.
- Defining outcomes, data collection and reporting. HHAV believes that improving our data collection and reporting systems, starting with more clarity on desired outcomes, is a good place to start when thinking about resource allocation. We encourage the committee to continue working with OEO in defining and improving these systems and that those outcomes and data reporting drive resource allocation.
- As we've stated before, we believe that adequately resourcing existing systems, providers and creating more flexibility to prevent and respond to homelessness, will achieve the outcomes we are seeking.
- Re: moving all homelessness response activities responsibilities to OEO, one consideration is that ESD provides individual benefits. Some contract/funding



mechanism between local communities and OEO will need to be created to ensure those individual benefits can still flow directly to people in need.

- Addressing the barriers (lack of case management/housing navigation, outreach, transportation, flexible financial assistance, etc) to serving people utilizing hotels/motels for shelter will dramatically improve outcomes.

We again thank the committee for the work being done to improve and resource Vermont's homelessness response system and HHAV continues to be committed to being a constructive partner in these endeavors.

Thank you!

Chad Simmons
Executive Director
Housing & Homelessness Alliance of Vermont (HHAV)