Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness
2018 State Legislative Priorities

BUDGET, TAX & REVENUE PRIORITIES

Affordable Housing Development
- Support full statutory funding for the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, estimated at $20.4 million for FY 19 (FY 18 funding = $16.3M, Governor’s budget proposes level funding)
- Support efforts to find funding source to replace $1.5M in annual VHCB base funding dedicated to servicing debt on $35M bond

Rental Assistance
- Seek increases to proven state programs that provide rental assistance and other housing financial supports to very low-income and vulnerable Vermonters, including Vermont Rental Subsidy, DMH Subsidy Plus Care & CRT Housing Support Fund, Housing Opportunity Program, and Corrections Supportive Housing
- Create state project based rental assistance program to help provide the additional subsidies needed to make housing affordable to the lowest income Vermonters

Supportive Services
- Increase funding for proven programs that provide supportive services to the homeless, seniors and people with disabilities, including the Housing Opportunity Program, Family Supportive Housing, Support & Services at Home, Assistive Community Care Services, Housing First, and Homeless and Runaway Youth Programs

New Revenues
- Seek new revenue sources dedicated for housing development, rental assistance and supportive services
- Advocate for $2 Occupancy Fee, which raises an estimated $7.3M annually; support dedicating a portion of the anticipated revenues for water quality improvement

Other Budget Issues
- Ensure adequate funding for GA Emergency Housing & monitor potential policy revisions
- Ensure at least level funding for all other housing related programs, seek increases where possible: Home Access Program, Homesharing programs, Municipal & Regional Planning, First Stop Mobile Home Program, Weatherization, LIHEAP and Crisis Fuel, and Legal Services for low-income Vermonters
- Seek renewed funding for statewide landlord-tenant training & technical assistance
- Monitor potential need for increased fuel tank replacement funding in light of new fuel tank regulations resulting in increased red-tagging and refusal to deliver fuel

Tax Credits
- Increase the state housing tax credit for down payment assistance to $250,000/year through FY 22 (currently $125,000/year). Without this increase, VHFA will likely have to start shutting down the program mid-way through the year, since they are facing double the demand anticipated. The average home buyer using the program has a median income well below the median for home owners, buys a house priced well below the median, and is 31 years old.
- Increase existing State Affordable Housing Tax Credit for Manufactured Housing Down Payment Loan Program, established in 2012, from $200,000 to $300,000 annually.
- Preserve all existing tax credits that support affordable housing, seek increases where possible.
- Support creation of a tax credit for home access modifications.

For further information, call 660-9484 or email erhardm@vtaffordablehousing.org
LEGISLATION

Rental Housing Habitability
- Increase rental housing health and safety, bring substandard apartments back online and create new housing
- Support creation of a tax credit and/or other resources for private for-profit landlords to rehabilitate substandard rental property, couple with increased state and local capacity to perform minimum housing inspections and anti-displacement safeguards such as short term rent stabilization and/or rental assistance
- Create low-interest loan and technical assistance program to help homeowners create Accessory Dwelling Units for rent at affordable prices
- Support possible legislative changes needed to create statewide rental housing data base
- Create Rental Housing Advisory Board to address rental housing issues, from habitability to landlord-tenant law and statewide data base
- Ensure town inspections occur when requested and orders are issued if there are violations
- Ensure rentals are not re-rented if there are serious outstanding health and safety orders
- Dedicate a position within the Health Department to provide technical assistance to Town Health Officers

Potential landlord-tenant law changes
- Support alternative approaches to the proposal in H.260 to reduce the notice period for evicting tenants who share living space with an owner-occupant landlord.

Mobile Home Parks
- Support potential change to Mobile Home law to trigger lot rent mediation at a lower threshold, currently at CPI plus 1 percent
- Monitor potential need for definitional changes to Mobile Home law to maintain resident rights and protections as older mobile homes are replaced with Vermods

Homeless Bill of Rights
- Support passage of bill protecting rights of Vermonters without housing (H.412)

Support:
- Increased investment in Vermont’s Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP)
- Increased funding for Micro Business Development Program and Individual Development Accounts; Vermont Matched Savings Account Program; adequate funding for financial education, credit building and repair
- $15 an hour minimum wage and measures to reduce benefits cliffs
- Increase Reach Up grants to meet basic needs. Continue to make progress on eliminating asset tests and increasing income disregards to make work pay. Restore full benefits to families receiving adult Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Monitor:
- Potential changes to Vermont tax law in reaction to federal changes; preserve progressivity and ensure positive impact on low-income Vermonters and affordable housing
- Potential changes to Education Finance to ensure low-income renters and affordable housing are not adversely affected; preserve income sensitivity; maintain the Renter Rebate
- Land use reform proposals for opportunities to make changes that ease the review process for affordable housing
- Possible lead safety law revisions proposed by the Health Department