



October 30, 2019



Matt Krasnow, Selectboard Chair
 Town of Charlotte
 PO Box 119
 Charlotte, VT 05445

Dear Mr. Krasnow:

Established 1982

The Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) would like to submit a request for \$750 from the Town of Charlotte for fiscal year 2020-2021.



While the number of persons staying in publicly-funded emergency shelters decreased slightly last year, the number of children increased, and the average length of stay in shelters increased significantly. The lack of affordable housing is one of the most significant factors contributing to the incidence of family homelessness in Chittenden County. Although the rental landscape in our area is evolving, the vast majority of rentals remain unaffordable for many workers, not only for those earning minimum wage, but also for skilled middle-income workers.

The 2019 Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Chittenden County is \$1,341 a month, which requires a renter to earn \$53,123 annually (\$25.54/hourly) to pay the recommended 30% or less on housing. The majority of households particularly working families with young children allocate more than 50% of their income to housing costs, putting them one paycheck away from financial disaster.

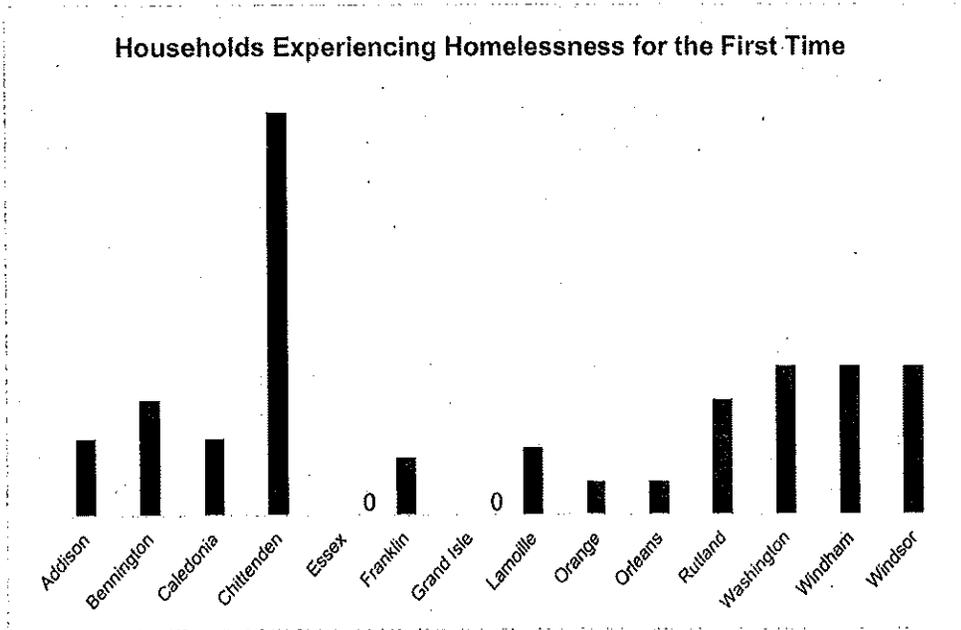
- 95 NORTH AVENUE
- CANAL STREET VETERANS HOUSING
- THE DAYSTATION
- FIREHOUSE FAMILY SHELTER
- HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER
- MAIN STREET FAMILY SHELTER
- ST. JOHN'S HALL
- THE SMITH HOUSE
- THE WAYSTATION
- THE WILSON

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Households Experiencing Homelessness for the First Time

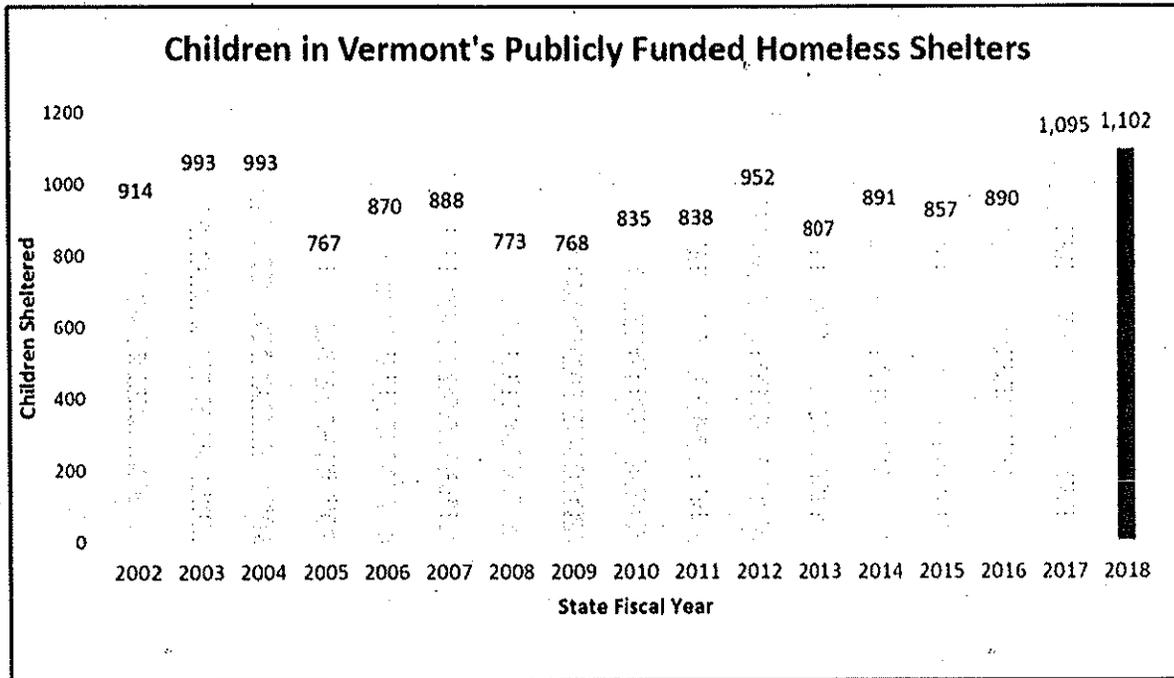


Source: Balance of State Continuum of Care 2019 Point in Time Count Report

Last year's increase of children and families in shelter means that now one in four Vermonters experiencing the crisis of homelessness is a child under 18. Studies show that the stress and instability of homelessness can affect a child's health, behavioral



development, and educational achievement. For parents, homelessness can be profoundly disorienting. It exacerbates existing challenges, further destabilizing a family. The trend of seeing more children in shelter may correlate to the impact of the opiate crisis. These families have more complex needs requiring additional supports and services often resulting in longer than average shelter stays.



Source: State of Vermont Department for Children and Families, Office of Economic Opportunity

In 2008, COTS established the Housing Resource Center (HRC), the largest homelessness prevention initiative in Vermont to help families avert the crisis of homelessness altogether. The program is a centralized place to help prevent at-risk households from losing their existing housing due to unforeseen circumstances and to assist those who are without permanent shelter to move more quickly into stable and sustainable housing.

Over the past decade through our prevention and rapid re-housing services, COTS HRC has helped 4,657 households in our community avoid eviction or foreclosure to avert the crisis of homelessness entirely or to move more quickly from shelter to permanent housing. This translates to 10,675 individuals, including 4,468 children, who are spared from experiencing the trauma of homelessness or have safe, stable housing. Interventions through this program are truly making a difference, as the following story demonstrates:

“Karen” owned and operated a small family-style restaurant with her husband “Mark.” Unfortunately, the business struggled and ended up closing at the end of the calendar year. On top of the massive debt her family owed due to their business failing, they had lost their family’s source of income and their ability to make a living. Both “Karen” and “Mark” worked hard to find employment while taking care of their two small children. When they were unable to make rent, they worked closely with their landlord to pay everything they could, but it ultimately was not enough and they quickly fell way behind. Eventually, they both found steady employment and could once again afford their housing, but they were still struggling to make a dent in the back rent they owed and were facing eviction. COTS was able to provide “Karen” and “Mark” with enough financial assistance to stop the eviction and prevent their family from falling into homelessness for the first time.

In addition to our prevention programs COTS provides emergency shelter, outreach, and transitional and permanent housing to people in need. During our most recent fiscal year (10.1.18 – 9.30.19) COTS provided help and hope to two households living in Charlotte through our homelessness prevention program. Across all of our programs and services, we assisted 2,303 individuals, including 766 children and had the following outputs:

- COTS provided a safe, warm place for 52 families (including 97 children) at our emergency family shelters;
- Our Housing Resource Center helped 318 low-income households (310 of whom were children) experiencing financial crisis avert homelessness and stay in their housing or become rapidly rehoused;
- Our housing navigation team provided housing search assistance for 209 individuals and 69 families in shelter and the community;
- We served approximately 471 unduplicated individuals at our Daystation, a daytime shelter offering a free daily meal and access to additional support services;
- COTS provided overnight emergency shelter and a refuge from the streets for 281 men and women;
- COTS provided overnight 98 units of affordable housing to meet the needs of individuals and families, as well as special populations such as senior, veterans and those with disabilities.

We greatly appreciate the support we received from the Town of Charlotte last year and in years past, which helps ensure that our programs remain open and available to everyone who needs help. We respectfully request your support once again as we continue to serve those in our community who are homeless or who are at great risk of becoming homeless.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tamira Martel
Corporate and Foundations Relationship Manager