

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda
Thursday, December 4th, 2025; 9:00am – 11:00am
Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, Burlington

Minutes

1. Open Forum

10 Minutes

KidSafe has opened nominations for their Outstanding Service Award.

Housing Retention Committee hosted their Housing Retention Resource Series in November.

CVOEO is hosting a Christmas Tree Sale.

Stephanie Bixby announced that the Burlington Housing Authority (BHA) has been awarded backfill funding for their Mainstream Program. They don't have to terminate folks since they don't have funding any longer. HUD says funding will be tight for next year as well. BHA has not been able to issue any tenant-based vouchers since January 1st, 2025.

Jason Brill announced the VA has been able to exceed their goals and housed over 53,000 veterans.

The White River Junction office achieved 107 permanent housing placements locally.

Their goal is to have over 95% of the veterans remain in housing. They achieved a rate of 97%.

They have a new goal to engage 64 veterans who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. They have already engaged 73 unsheltered veterans locally.

Jason shared a [news report](#) from VermontBiz.

Street Cats Burlington is hosting supply drives at Fletcher Free Library, King Street Laundry, and the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV).

Elaine Soto is retiring from the Howard Center next week and Lisa Martiny will be replacing her as the Steering Committee voting representative.

Kiah Morris, from the Land Use and Opportunity Board (LAOB), mentioned they will be opening their Resilience Hub Grant program for grants up to \$50,000. They will be supporting folks who are most marginalized. They hope to distribute the grant funds by February. Contact Kiah at Kiah@vhcb.org for any questions.

The Elmwood Shelter is no longer able to serve double occupancies. Anyone who is on their double-occupancy list will be asked if they would like to switch to the top of the individual unit waitlist. They will be refreshing their lists and reaching out to folks in the coming

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weeks. Folks have seven days to respond to outreach letters. Reach out to [Taylor Thibault](#) if you have any questions.

On February 13th the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board will be advocating for solutions for homelessness at the statehouse in Montpelier.

2. Approves Minutes and Agenda **5 Minutes**

a. Approval of the [November Meeting Minutes](#)

Travis motioned . Jane seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 14 yes, 0 no, no abstentions.

b. Approval of the December Meeting Agenda

The Data Reports will switch places with the CCHA Co-Chair Vacancy Agenda. The Scoring Rubric Vote will not occur during this meeting; there will be an e-vote called for the Scoring Rubric Updates on December 16th after the CoC NOFO application is submitted to HUD. Senator Welch's

3. Data Review **15 Minutes**

a. [Coordinated Entry](#) – Stephanie Smith

There has been an increase in youth experiencing homelessness in Chittenden County. The 62+ category is used to match HUD's definition of elderly that makes them eligible for senior housing projects.

b. [Unsheltered Data – Community Resource Center](#) - Brenna Bedard

The construction deadline for their space has been pushed back to February. The CRC is closing on Friday afternoons to prioritize outreach efforts in the community.

c. [Unsheltered Data](#) – COTS Daystation - Jonathan Farrell

The COTS Daystation is hosting a Health & Wellness Fair on Wednesday December 10th from 1:00-4:00pm.

Jonathan shared a report regarding the [Daystation Utilization](#).

A member of the public spoke about their experience being homeless for the last three years. They have experienced violence on the street, without legal recourse.

4. CCHA Co-Chair Vacancy **10 Minutes**

Taylor Thibault has been looking for another Co-Chair to join here for the CCHA.

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Taylor nominated Travis Poulin. Jane seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 17 for, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.

Travis nominated Jonathan Farrell to replace him as CCHA Treasurer. Who seconded? 17 for, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.

5. Legislative Updates

20 Minutes

a. Housing & Homeless Alliance of Vermont – Erhard Mahnke

He is working for the Interim Policy Advisor for HHAV now that Frank Knaack has moved on. He previously worked on Senator Sanders' Housing Policy Advisory Team. The Vermont legislative session will be fraught with contention. The education policy debate is ongoing, and property taxes are expected to increase in 2026. Mandatory redistricting will not be required for Vermont school districts. The session will also focus on health insurance costs and housing. The state of Vermont has lost over 1200 housing unit vouchers. HHAV will be advocating to ask HUD to backfill the loss of vouchers in Vermont. They will also be advocating for additional funding in the amount of \$45 million for the construction of additional affordable housing units. They will also be asking for \$5 million to rehabilitate existing properties. They are also asking for increased HOP funding. He encourages everyone to attend the statehouse meetings to advocate to our legislators. They may also be advocating for additional funding to backfill losses from the HUD NOFO process.

b. Senator Sanders' Office – James Paradissis

They are tracking what the changes in the HUD NOFO process means for Vermont. HUD has been communicative with their office. It is possible there will be another continuing resolution for the national budget to fund the government through January 30th. Senator Sanders is most concerned with lack of access to healthcare with the massive cuts to Medicaid that have been made and have yet to come. They recommend that everyone stay engaged in the healthcare conversations as they evolve.

c. Congresswoman Balint's Office – Thomas Renner

The republican House doesn't seem to have the appetite to have another government shutdown. Congresswoman Balint also signed onto a letter to HUD Secretary Turner that retorted against the changes in the HUD NOFO process. The National Low-Income Council has also filed a lawsuit in response to the HUD NOFO; their hope is to trigger a pause and potential change of the NOFO process.

There is one lawsuit that the state of Vermont has signed onto to ask to continue the HUD NOFO process from 2024.

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Both lawsuits intend to make a change before the end of the year, and they intend to avoid making the major policy shift that has been presented by HUD this year.

CCHA does not have the capacity to meet current demands. The proposed HUD NOFO policy changes will only exacerbate the problem.

d. Senator Welch's Office – Miles McGuriman

There is hope that a T-HUD appropriation bill will be passed. The Road to Housing Act is with the House now. The bill includes provisions for the Choice and Affordable Housing Act and the Reducing Homelessness Reforms Act.

Senator Sanders and Welch both signed onto a letter that condemns the changes in the HUD NOFO process. There may be a partial government shutdown on January 30th; however, SNAP would still be funded during this next potential shutdown.

6. NOFO Update

a. Scoring Rubric Update - VOTE WARNED 15 Minutes

Maggie Callaghan is the new Housing Program Manager for CEDO and is working as our Collaborative Applicant Representative. The vote will not occur in this meeting, but it will occur virtually on December 16th after the NOFO application is submitted on December 15th. Email all applications to Maggie at mcallaghan@burlingtonvt.gov

Even if you have not submitted a Letter of Interest, your organization is still eligible to include an application from your organization for the collaborative application.

There may be a perceived conflict with the Scoring Rubric being updated after the applications have been submitted. This will be overcome through a firewall that will prevent the ranking committee from viewing the applications before the scoring rubric is updated.

Bryce will share that information when he asks for the e-vote from Steering Committee voting members.

NOFO Ranking Committee members will have to abstain from that vote.

7. Breakout Groups

20 Minutes

a. How can the CCHA support advocacy efforts in Vermont?

Contois is not conducive for breakout groups. The courthouse space may also work. We should have more representation at the statehouse. Even the subcommittees could be present, especially Coordinated Entry. We shouldn't have to lean on HHAV for advocacy.

We should be advocating for pre-release planning for people exiting the corrections system.

b. What legislative efforts should we prioritize?

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)
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c. What CCHA resources do you most value?

It is great that we provide a space for those with lived experience to share their perspective.

One that used to be on the agenda was a set time for each shelter program to offer updates in Steering Committee meetings. It may say that everyone is full, but that is still a message that we need to face regularly. This will help catch mid-year updates and changes.

Could Spectrum offer updates on their drop-in center, along with the data reports from CE, CRC, and COTS.

8. Cold Weather Capacity and Preparation – Sarah Russell

10 Minutes

Sarah is now the Emergency Services Director at CVOEO.

They will be operating the Extreme Cold Weather Shelter (ECWS) at the Miller Center at 130 Gosse Court in Burlington this winter. They have capacity of up to 100 guests. They received funds from Vermont Interfaith Action to host the shelter. CVOEO can pay staff 1.5 times their payrate to work at the ECWS. The shelter will open with temperatures reaching -10 degrees for a period of more than four hours.

Miller Center cannot be opened until it reaches -10 degrees due to the City of Burlington Emergency Management Plan. There is a lack of staff capacity as well.

The ECWS cannot open due to snow events.

Community members used to cook meals for the ECWS. Jane Helmstetter asked if that is something that is still possible. With the capacity of the Miller Center, food preparation would not be an easy feat onsite. The site is also confidential and those who are not employed as staff are not able to attend.

ANew Place does offer meals at their shelter.

Advocacy efforts should be focused on increased staffing levels to allow the community to respond with a year-round shelter instead of an emergency shelter.

Chittenden County increased our seasonal bed capacity by 46 beds. The spaces are all full at this point. CVOEO is also opening a Recovery Shelter in the former Act One space on Pearl Street.

The Foundations Family Center will be relocating from Williston to 204 Pearl Street in Burlington. They will be increasing their capacity to 10 families. They will move the last week of January.

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The CVOEO Recovery Shelter will hopefully open February 1st at 184 Pearl Street in Burlington. They are hiring staff and a director now. Howard Center will hire a full-time clinician for the shelter. The shelter will have 12 beds and operate on a 24/7 basis.

9. [CACH Funding Update](#) - Travis Poulin **5 Minutes**

Travis presented an update on how the CACH funding has been distributed to this point. They have spent the majority of the bulk supplies budget.

10. **Standing Sub-Committee Updates** **10 Minutes**

- a. **Strategic Planning**
- b. **Coordinated Entry**
- c. **Housing Retention**
- d. **Outreach & Membership**
- e. **Data, PIT, & HMIS**

We encourage questions and participation in discussion and place great emphasis on hearing from people with lived experience of homelessness and/or housing insecurity. If you are a person who has lived experience, you will be provided with a stipend for attending; please let us know after the meeting concludes. Please reach out to us prior or let us know when you arrive at the meeting should you need any accommodation(s).

Thank you so much for joining us.