

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)  
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026; 9:00am – 11:00am  
Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, Burlington

**Minutes**

**1. Moving Announcements Online**

The Spring Community Meeting will be split into two parts. The CCHA business items will take place on May 7<sup>th</sup> during the normally scheduled time for the Steering Committee meeting (9:00-11:00am). The Spring Community Meeting will be held the evening of May 14<sup>th</sup> and will focus on community feedback and problem-solving.

**2. Approves Minutes and Agenda**

**5 Minutes**

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

Travis Poulin motioned to approve the March Meeting Minutes. Meghan Masterson seconded the motion. The motion carried by a measure of 20 votes for, 0 votes opposed, and 0 abstentions.

**b. Approval of the April Meeting Agenda**

Taylor motioned to approve the April Meeting Agenda. Travis seconded the motion. The motion carried by a measure of 20 votes for, 0 votes opposed, and 0 abstentions.

**3. Housing Opportunity Program (HOP) Grant Award Presentations**

**40 Minutes**

**a. Steps to End Domestic Violence**

Ciara Kilburn presented the 2025 HOP Report for Steps to End Domestic.

HOP Funds Safehome, Shelter, partial funding for 4 Housing Advocates, a Shelter Coordinator, two emergency housing advocates who provide support services both to those in Safehome and in shelter. In fall of 2025 they officially purchased the building from CHT. Want to thank their partnership over the past 5 years. With the purchase HOP also funds an in house Facilities Manger, 40 hours CE assessment Hub, Prevention, essential services, housing navigation. Of their awarded amount over a million dollars for motel funds.

In 2025 they served 110 households in shelter. 195 people of which 85 were children. 32 entered into permanent housing from shelter. 33 households in homeless prevention. All but one remained in stable housing. They served 271 households in shelter. 372 people in Safehome 101 of which were children. 10 moved from Safehome into permanent housing. A majority of Safehome folks move from Safehome to shelter.

**b. Champlain Housing Trust**

Taylor Thibault presented the 2025 HOP Report for Champlain Housing Trust (CHT).

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)  
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026; 9:00am – 11:00am  
Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, Burlington

The Elmwood Community Shelter is a low-barrier, harm-reduction shelter located in Burlington, Vermont, designed to serve individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness who are often the most difficult to engage in traditional shelter settings. The program operates 30 units, consisting of Pallet shelters and larger “Up End This” structures, and prioritizes access for individuals who are chronically unsheltered, have significant behavioral health needs, or face barriers to accessing more traditional housing and shelter programs. The Housing Opportunity Program (HOP) grant that supports Elmwood has formally transitioned from the City of Burlington’s Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) to Champlain Housing Trust (CHT), ensuring continued program operations beyond its initial three-year period. While the shelter remains a critical component of the community’s response to homelessness, it is not intended to be a permanent structure. CHT, in partnership with the City of Burlington and the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO), will continue to evaluate the site annually to determine how best to meet evolving community needs, particularly as the unsheltered population continues to rise. Long-term, the shared goal is to develop permanent supportive housing on the Elmwood site.

Elmwood’s model is intentionally designed to reduce barriers to entry and increase engagement among individuals who have historically been underserved by the homelessness response system. The shelter does not require identification or background checks for entry, does not impose a curfew, and does not conduct searches of personal belongings. While substance use is not permitted on-site, the program utilizes a harm-reduction approach that recognizes the realities of addiction and prioritizes safety, dignity, and relationship-building over punitive enforcement. CHT partners closely with CVOEO to provide on-site case management and housing navigation services, ensuring that guests have access to coordinated support as they work toward stability. The program also collaborates with a broad network of community partners to meet residents’ basic and complex needs, including Feeding Chittenden (daily meals), Turning Point Center of Chittenden County, the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMCC) Outreach Recovery team, Community Health Centers of Burlington (CHC), local faith-based organizations, and additional service providers.

The average length of stay at Elmwood is approximately 306 days, reflecting both the high acuity of the population served and the ongoing challenges within the broader housing system. Many guests require intensive support, including assistance with daily living activities, behavioral health stabilization, and navigation of complex service systems. As a result, the shelter serves not only as an emergency intervention but also as a critical stabilization point for individuals working toward permanent housing outcomes. From July through December, Elmwood supported 12 exits, with 4 households successfully transitioning to permanent housing. Since

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)  
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026; 9:00am – 11:00am  
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opening, the program has served 248 unique individuals, with 20 individuals exiting to permanent housing, underscoring both the depth of need and the importance of sustained investment in housing-focused solutions.

The temporary zoning change to allow the Elmwood Shelter has been extended for another year by the City of Burlington. The HOP grant for the shelter has transitioned from CEDO to CHT.

**c. Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity**

[Travis Poulin](#) and [Adam Hall](#) presented reports on behalf of CVOEO.

Two HOP Grants were provided for the Foundations Family Shelter (FFS). Anyone experiencing homelessness with a child 17 years or younger are eligible. They have been in operation just over 10 months now. They were able to expand their bed availability after moving from Williston to Burlington. Women in their third trimester of pregnancy are also eligible.

They received additional gap funding from the state to ensure they can continue to fund 2-3 months back rent to keep folks housed through the grant term (June 30, 2026).

How many people are on the FFS waitlist? 30-35 families, most of whom are in hotels.

The average wait time for an assessment is about 2 months. They have 1.5 FTEs to process assessments, but the 0.5 FTE is now having to spend time on the increased administrative responsibilities of the CE team instead of on assessments.

A question was asked if volunteers could be trained to complete assessments. This hasn't been done before, but it could be possible. HomeShare was mentioned as a comparable model of using volunteers to support the program. Megan from United Way offered her support in strategizing how to coordinate volunteers. Megan was invited to join the next Coordinated Entry Committee meeting to continue the discussion.

Jessica Radbord from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) asked what would be needed to meet the need for case management. Stephanie said seven case managers would be needed to meet the need. Jessica mentioned there is some state Medicaid funding available. Molly Shriver-Blake and Jessica will continue the discussion afterwards.

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)  
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026; 9:00am – 11:00am  
Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, Burlington

**d. Community Health Centers of Burlington**

Julia Hawley provided the [2025 HOP Report](#) for Community Health Centers of Burlington.

There was a request for hard numbers regarding how many people they were able to connect with long-term care physicians.

The current state budget includes funding to continue the program, but the budget is not yet finalized.

**e. Institute for Community Alliances**

Meghan Morrow-Raferly presented the [2025 HOP Report](#) for the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA).

**4. Data Review**

**15 Minutes**

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

The goal is to ensure clients have all the documentation for them to take advantage of available housing when the opportunity comes available. The loss of access to Section 8 housing vouchers has impacted the Coordinated Entry (CE) system's ability to move homeless households into housing.

Less than 20 people on the CE list could be housed without subsidy.

Roommate situations are generally not encouraged; if they do exist, it is important ensure there are separate leases for every household.

It was mentioned that some state funds could be accessed to help expand the rental assistance programming.

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

Their service numbers are steadily increasing now that the winter season. They work with the owner of The Shop barber shop to provide free haircuts at the Community Resource Center (CRC) on a weekly basis. They have run out of tents and sleeping bags, but the requests have increased now that the winter weather motel program ended on April 1<sup>st</sup>. They will be going back to closing from 12-1 to allow staff a break each day.

Neil from the City of Burlington Parks Department may have access to some tents to help support the needs at the CRC.

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)  
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026; 9:00am – 11:00am  
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A question was asked if used camping gear has been a source of materials for the CRC. They do take donations, but they to be careful about what they accept as they often receive used gear that is not in working condition.

Safe Harbor also has access to some tents for folks until the CRC can order more.

A question was asked how community partners can advocate for further funding for the CRC. Please call your legislators to advocate for continued funding.

It was also recommended that camping gear orders be placed through local businesses to help support our community.

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

The DayStation has recovered from a COVID-19 outbreak that impacted services for short time in February.

The COTS Health and Wellness Fair will be hosted by COTS on April 8<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 at the DayStation.

**5. State Legislative Update**

**10 Minutes**

**a. Housing & Homeless Alliance of Vermont – Chad Simmons**

**[HHAV Legislative Report](#)**

The legislature has just passed the crossover period from the House to the Senate. The FY 27 state budget has passed the House. \$36.4 million is included in the budget. Additional one-time funding was requested to support VHCB, but no one-time funding was included in the current budget. The Governor's budget includes \$83 million as a response to homelessness. It includes funding for shelter development, HOP funding, and other programs.

\$1 million was allotted for VSHA.

H.938 is the state's homelessness response, which codifies Vermont's homelessness response in state statute. It includes a new level framework in which people experiencing homelessness would enter. It also codifies approaches for prevention, case management, etc.

The bill also includes language and asked the CoCs to discuss the possibility of a merger between CCHA and BOS.

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)  
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026; 9:00am – 11:00am  
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The current bill loosely transitions from our current systems to the proposed system over the next two years. The bill also includes language asking OEO to work with service providers to set pay rates for different types of shelter services.

HHAV continues to find ways to be constructive in the process of developing the bill.

The bill puts into state statute the caps of motels as a response to homelessness.

The landlord tenant bill H. 772 make significant changes to the state's landlord-tenant laws. There are some concerns these changes will create more barriers for people to stay housed. The bill lays out an expanded timeline for no-cause evictions from 30 days to 90 days. Many pieces of the bill will require additional funding than has been appropriated. The bill has moved on to the Senate Judiciary Committee. HHAV has not taken an official position on the bill yet.

S.328 is the Senate omnibus housing bill. It calls for a study for HOAs and changing some laws.

S.325 is a Senate bill that seeks to make some changes to Vermont's act 181.

HHAV has joined a campaign, "Fair Share Vermont", to find ways to raise state revenue through taxes on the highest income earners in the state.

The budget does include funding for mobile home parks and manufactured housing.

Taylor has been following H. 938 and is willing to talk through the basis of the bill with anyone who is interested.

A question was asked if H.772 will be able to operate with quicker eviction timelines as designed, considering the current backlog in our court systems for evictions.

Jess Radbord from ACLU mentioned the expedited eviction timeline will make it difficult for our partners to respond.

Will our local HMIS and CE funding be included in the H.938? It is not currently included, but advocacy continues to have it included in the final bill.

**b. Congresswoman Becca Balint's Office – Thomas Renner**

A lot of emphasis of course on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). They are in appropriations season, and the Congresswoman has signed on to multiple letters supporting funding for a variety of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)  
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026; 9:00am – 11:00am  
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of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing initiatives that support housing creation and rental assistance.

They have completed the Community Project Funding (CPF) process on the House side and of the 20 projects they are allowed to submit, 7 of those projects are either housing projects or are supportive of housing projects (i.e., wastewater).

**6. Breakout Groups – Spring Community Meeting Feedback** **20 Minutes**

- a. How can we increase community engagement during the Spring Community Meeting? What are different ways we can solicit feedback during the meeting?**

**7. Breakout Group Recap** **20 Minutes**

Posterboards with sticky notes posted around the room for folks who may not want to speak in front of the crowd. What do we mean by engagement?

Hard deadline for time in the open forum, which should occur after breakout groups.

We could break up the open forum topic themes to target the conversation.

We could host the open forum after breakout groups after people have a chance to brainstorm. We host panels for the specific themes.

Committee reports during the May 7<sup>th</sup> steering committee meeting.

Theme could be about a memorial for folks who passed over the winter. The panelist could be people who had close ties to them.

The Church Street association may want to have a voice at the table.

We could have some messaging in advance regarding the theme or purpose of the meeting. We want people to understand what to expect.

We could still have the induction of new CCHA committee leaders during the Fall meeting. We could ask folks how they feel about that on the survey.

We could offer a round table with direct service workers before or after the meeting.

We could shift the meeting to the Community Resource Center (CRC).

We need to ensure we have a mobile microphone system in place.

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)  
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026; 9:00am – 11:00am  
Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, Burlington

A themed structure was proposed, including an everything and anything section. KidSafe Collaborative has a guide for sharing stories, which could be a theme.

How can we make the room more welcoming?

We want to get to the ideas of the folks sharing, rather than encouraging a storytelling format.

We should advertise more broadly on social media with flyers in locations like shelters and the daystation. The flyers should mention that stipends are available for people with lived experience and food will be provided.

We need to clarify what the intent of the meeting is and what it is not.

If transportation is an issue for people attending the meeting, the City of Burlington Park's Department may be able to assist with transportation.

#### **8. Open Forum**

**10 Minutes**

Chelsea Alsofrom mentioned that dental billing has been an issue. Pathways has a [handout](#) to make sure dental care is being billed correctly.

Justin Graham announced UVM Health plans to host some trainings for the community's social service agencies in the coming months.

*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.*