



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Information on the supplement Healthy Homes Initiative funding can be found on [page 3](#).

### **What is the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP)?**

The Vermont Housing Improvement Program offers rental property owners grants to complete repairs needed to bring vacant rental units up to Vermont Rental Housing Health Code guidelines, or to add accessory dwelling units.

### **What are there grant funding limits for VHIP?**

Landlords can apply for grants of:

- Up to **\$30,000** for the rehabilitation of each **0-2 bedroom** unit.
- Up to **\$50,000** for the rehabilitation of each **3+ bedroom** unit.
- Up to **\$50,000** for the creation of **new units**, including the creation of **accessory dwelling units (ADUs)**.

### **What is considered an eligible unit?**

An eligible unit would be an existing rental unit that must be vacant for a minimum of 90 days before the property owner can apply to VHIP. It could be an apartment, single-family home, duplex, mobile home, or accessory apartment. VHIP grant funding can also be used to create new units – by converting existing space into code-compliant unit(s), restructuring an existing property into multiple, smaller units, or creating Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

### **What type of rehab work can be done with VHIP funds?**

There must be existing code violations or health and safety repairs that need to be addressed, for example, electrical/plumbing work, fire safety improvements, leaking roofs, or non-working heating systems. However, VHIP recipients can also make additional improvements to the unit if any funds remain after the necessary repairs are made.

- **Who determines the scope of work and selects the contractor?**  
The property owner should apply with a basic idea of the work that needs to be

completed to bring the unit in compliance with Vermont Rental Housing Health Code guidelines. The Homeownership Center, (see [last page](#) for contact info for the HOC serving your area) you are working with will conduct a site visit to verify that the scope of work meets program guidelines and identify any other items that may need to be addressed. The property owner must select the contractor and have a contract that ensures project completion within 18 months of signing grant agreement.

### **What role do building codes and local officials play in developing the scope of work and permitting for my project?**

Completed units must comply with the Vermont Rental Housing Health Code and local ordinances. The town health officer and regional Division of Fire Safety officer are willing to inspect your rental units to help make sure you don't overlook any provisions of the VT Rental Housing Health Code and other life-safety codes when you are developing the scope of work for your project. You should anticipate that these code officials will inspect your property when the project is complete and approve it for occupancy, so it will be to your benefit to work with them from the start on developing the scope of work and obtaining the proper permits.

### **Are there additional eligibility requirements?**

Yes. Additional requirements for the **property owner** include:

- Being current on their property taxes and mortgage payments;
- Matching at least 20% of the grant funds. An "in-kind" match or deferred match timeline may be approved at the discretion of the Homeownership Center overseeing project management.
  - For example, if the property owner receives \$30,000 in grant funds, they would need to contribute \$6,000. If they receive \$50,000 in grant funds, they would need to contribute \$10,000.

Additional requirements for the **rehabbed or new unit** include:

- Finding a suitable renter exiting homelessness through Coordinated Entry Lead Organization. This engagement shall continue at unit turnover for a minimum of 5 years.
  - Alternative tenant selection processes may be considered for approval by the Department of Housing and Community Development during the 5-year timeframe.
- Renting the unit at or below HUD Fair Market Rents (FMR) for the appropriate County (published annually) or at a rate allowed by a recognized housing assistance voucher. This must continue for at least five years, and the property owner must sign a Rent Stabilization Covenant outlining this.

**What is the deadline for construction?**

Repairs and construction should be completed, with the unit ready for occupancy, no later than 18 months from the date the VHIP grant agreement was signed.

**What happens if I don't meet this deadline?**

If construction is not completed by the deadline, you will forfeit the undisbursed remainder of the grant funds.

## Healthy Homes Initiative FAQ

### **What is the Vermont Housing Improvement Program - Healthy Homes Initiative?**

The Vermont Housing Improvement Program-Healthy Homes Initiative (VHIP-HHI) offers supplemental grants ranging from \$500 to \$30,00 to property owners with an approved VHIP project.

### **What type of work can the VHIP-HHI grant?**

The VHIP-HHI supplemental grant can fund water-related improvements; examples include:

- Updating leaking service lines, old plumbing and replacing outdated fixtures (sinks, toilets, dishwashers, laundry) with high-efficiency devices.
- Installation water system (wells and septic systems) and water efficiency improvements as part of housing rehabilitation projects.

### **Who is eligible to receive VHIP-HHI Supplemental Grant Funding?**

VHIP-HHI supplemental grants are available to property owners who have received approval for their VHIP project(s).

### **Will my VHIP project funding costs be impacted (i.e., reduced) if VHIP-HHI Supplemental funding is received?**

No, VHIP-HHI grants are a supplemental funding source, and the funding awarded does not impact the total per unit funding caps received for VHIP unit construction.

### **VHIP requires a 20% Match of the project grant funding, does the VHIP-HHI Supplemental Grant have a Match Requirement?**

No, there are no match requirements to receive VHIP-HHI supplemental grant funding.

### **How is the amount of VHIP-HHI Supplemental Grant Funding received by a property owner determined?**

Property owners are required to submit a detailed scope of work and budget with their application for VHIP-HHI supplemental grant funding.

### **What requirements must the property owner meet to receive reimbursements for VHIP-HHI work?**

Property owners must submit itemized invoices for eligible materials and completed work to be reimbursed for those costs.

### **What are the program compliance requirements?**

Property owners must comply with all guidelines and parameters of the Vermont Housing Improvement Program as contained in the VHIP Eligibility Application. Completed units must comply with the Vermont Rental Housing Health Code and local ordinances.

### **How Do I Apply for a VHIP-HHI Supplemental Grant?**

The VHIP Healthy Homes Initiative Supplemental Eligibility Application will be available from the HOC that approved/funded the property owner's VHIP project. The completed VHIP-HHI Supplemental Application can be attached as an addendum to applicant's original VHIP Application.

### **How do I apply to receive VHIP & VHIP-HHI Supplemental Grant Funding? Which Homeownership Center should I work with?**

Please contact your local Homeownership Center to learn more about VHIP-HHI and receive application assistance.

- **RuralEdge** - Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans Counties
- **Champlain Housing Trust** – Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle Counties
- **NeighborWorks of Western Vermont** – Addison, Bennington, and Rutland Counties
- **Downstreet Housing & Community Development** –Lamoille, Orange, and Washington Counties
- **Windham & Windsor Housing Trust** – Windham, and Windsor Counties