

Citizen Participation Survey Results

Survey Information

- ✓ Online survey conducted by Vermont DHCD from September 9, 2019 - April 30, 2020
- ✓ To gather input from Vermonters for the State's 2020-24 HUD Consolidated Plan

Who Responded Question 1

- ✓ 319 Vermonters took the survey.
- ✓ 151 (47%) identified as members of the General Public.
- ✓ Almost 15% were from an Advocacy Organization.
- ✓ Over 10% were from a Municipality.
- ✓ Over 10% were from a Human Service Provider.
- ✓ Others included affordable housing, business, regional organizations, economic development, health/mental health, education, and childcare.

Who Responded Question 2

- ✓ Responses came from all fourteen counties in Vermont.
- ✓ The most responses came from Chittenden (66), Washington (58), and Rutland (39) counties.
- ✓ Approximately 10% of respondents identified as a statewide organization.
- ✓ The fewest responses came from Lamoille (5), Grand Isle (6), and Essex (6) counties.

Most Important Activities Question 4

- ✓ The most important activity is housing. 95% of respondents ranked housing as very important or important.
- ✓ The next most important activities were Infrastructure (86% very important or important) and Economic Development (82% very important or important).
- ✓ Public services ranked next (79% very important or important) followed by public facilities and planning (75-77% very important or important).
- ✓ Accessibility modifications ranked lowest (69% very important or important).

Questions 5 through 11 related to the Vermont Community Development Program which administers Vermont's CDBG funds:

- ✓ Among housing activities (Question 5) that can be funded by VCDP, rehabilitating rental apartments, and building new rental apartments ranked first and second in importance. Other activities that scored highly¹ are weatherization, service enriched housing for homeless, elderly, and people with disabilities, and planning funds for housing.

¹ Respondents were asked if the activity is very important (score 4), important (score 3), somewhat important (score 2), or not important (score 1). Scores were weighted (by Survey Monkey) and ranked from highest to lowest. For this summary we are listing activities that scored greater than a 3 weighted average.

- ✓ Among public facility activities (Question 6) that can be funded by VCDP, childcare and afterschool childcare ranked first and second in importance. Other activities that scored highly are homeless shelters and food shelves or food banks.
- ✓ Among public service activities (Question 7) that can be funded by VCDP, funds for the operation of childcare facilities and funds to support job training ranked first and second in importance. Funds to support access to medical treatment scored equally as important as job training.
- ✓ Among economic development activities (Question 8) that can be funded by VCDP, support for small and micro-businesses ranked highest. Rehabilitating existing facilities to increase efficiency and support for agriculture and forestry related businesses also scored highly.
- ✓ Among accessibility modification projects (Question 9) that can be funded by VCDP, access to municipal buildings, public facilities, and municipal libraries were ranked nearly identically with 86% of respondents ranking them as very important or important. Funding accessibility projects for multi-family housing also scored highly.
- ✓ Among infrastructure projects (Question 10) that can be funded by VCDP, expanding water and sewer to support housing ranked highest. Other projects that ranked highly are expanding telecommunications access for housing, expanding water and sewer to support public facilities, expanding telecommunications access for business, and expanding telecommunications access for public facilities.
- ✓ Question 11 asked about the significance of barriers to fair housing. Among the choices, the most respondents felt that a significant barrier to fair housing is that the state's supply of decent, affordable housing is inadequate. Other barriers to fair housing are underemployment and lack of jobs paying a livable wage, lack of public transportation especially for low income Vermonters, lack of representation by members of protected categories on state boards and commissions dealing with housing, NIMBYism, barriers making it more difficult for minority households and new Americans to become homeowners, and lack of housing accessible to persons with disabilities. The only choice that did not score highly is actual discrimination based on disability, family status (e.g. presence of children), and other protected categories limiting housing choices.

Questions 12 and 13 related to the Emergency Solutions Grant which is administered by the State's Office of Economic Opportunity.

- ✓ Among six activities that can be funded by ESG (Question 12), homelessness prevention ranked by far the highest with 70% of respondents ranking it very important. Rapid re-housing, emergency shelter services (training), and emergency shelter operations all scored highly. Street outreach scored less highly, and emergency shelter renovation scored only slightly lower.
- ✓ Question 13 asked about the respondent's experience with homelessness. Among the respondents were 19 formerly homeless persons and one currently homeless person.

Questions 14 and 15 related to HOME funds which are administered by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

- ✓ Among the five specific uses that are eligible for HOME (Question 14), creating new affordable apartments, either by building new or rehabilitating existing properties, ranked by far the highest with 70% of respondents ranking it very important. Providing low income households with rental assistance, creating affordable single-family homes for sale, and assisting first-time homebuyers also ranked highly. Assisting existing single-family homeowners with rehabilitation scored slightly lower.
- ✓ Among programs HOME has been used for in the past (Question 15), purchasing and rehabilitation rental properties to make them affordable to low income households, building new affordable rental housing, and building new affordable rental housing for people with disabilities all ranked highly. Building new mobile home parks scored lowest with 72% of respondents ranking it only somewhat important or not important.

Question 16 related to the National Housing Trust Fund which is administered by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

- ✓ All five potential uses of HTF ranked highly with 80% or more ranking them very important or important. The highest score went to purchasing and rehabilitating rental properties to make them affordable to very-low income households.