

Minutes
Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan Public Hearing
April 3, 2023
1:30 p.m.

DHCD, 1 National Life Dr
Dean Davis Bldg., 6th Floor Calvin Coolidge Mtg. Room, Montpelier VT
and by virtual Teams Meeting

Public Hearing Attendees: Ron Rupp (VHCB, in person), Adam Grinold (BDCC/Advisory Board Member) Megan Roush (VHFA/Advisory Board Member), Ari Kisler (AHS, Office of Economic Opportunity, virtual), Jayme Bauer (DHCD, virtual), Julie Curtin (CHT/NeighborWorks Alliance of VT), Debbie Ingram (Exc. Director VT Interfaith Action, Virtual),

DHCD Staff: Arthur Hamlin (DHCD/Housing, in person), Nathan Cleveland (DHCD/VCDP, in person), Ann Karlene Kroll (DHCD/VCDP)

Arthur opened the Public Hearing at 1:30 p.m.

He made introductions and allowed those joining remotely to also introduce themselves. He noted the public hearing is the second hearing and this will be followed by the advisory board meeting to consider public comments received on the annual update of the State's HUD Consolidated Plan (Con Plan). May 3, 2023 is the deadline for written comments.

The plan guides the State's use of approximately \$11 million in funding that is provided annually to the state by HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development for the Community Development Block Grants (CBDG), Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), and \$3 million from the National Housing Trust Fund (HTF). The plan covers a five-year period and is updated annually.

The priority needs identified in the plan establishes goals for meeting these needs over a five-year period that reflect anticipated resources and past performance. Each goal is accompanied by an estimate of resources that will be used to meet it as well as outcome indicators that will be used to evaluate the State's performance. Increasing number of affordable housing units, community facilities and services, accessibility, and planning grants. Numerical goals are laid out in the plan.

The purpose of the hearing was to get input from Vermonters about the state's most pressing needs in those areas, and ideas for any programs or priorities they wish the State to consider funding with the Consolidated Plan money and get feedback on the programs funded this year.

Arthur reviewed the proposed changes (also on the handout)

Increase Access Modification Grants (AM) up to \$600,000 for CDBG, increase total Scattered Site (SS) homeowner rehab RLF set-aside from 25% to 35%. HUD also has Recovery Housing Program (RHP) through a separate action plan, potential for up to \$500,000 to support RHP projects with regular CDBG funding. Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) goal of 250 people/households served, is a decrease from 400. Arthur asked Ari to explain the change for ESG funding. Ari explained that the ESG is bundled into the Housing Opportunity (HOP) grant Program that supports rapid rehousing, housing retention, etc. ESG program restrictions make this funding best serve rapid rehousing and emergency shelter needs. Therefore, ESG funding is being proposed to prioritize emergency shelter needs. Vermont's allocation of ESG is about \$700,000. HOP totals roughly \$17 million largely from additional sources.

Julie Curtin from CHT and NeighborWorks testified on behalf of the NeighborWorks Alliance of Vermont in favor of DHCD's proposed increase in the SS set-aside. Written comments were provided to the DHCD commissioner. The five HOC's administer low-cost home repair loans to low-income Vermonters. In the past 5 years 2018-2022 CHT has supported 135 projects in 34 municipalities. 50% of the projects served households at or below 50% AMI. VCDP/CDBG is the largest source of funding that also supports operating cost for the HOC staff. Need to increase supported by VHFA data: nearly 1/3 are cost burdened and 11% of these are paying more than 50% of their income to housing costs. 75% of VT homes are over 30 years old, 1/4 is over 80 years old, est. 57,000 are at or below 80% AMI. Funding helps with roof, heating, and electrical, mold remediation, as interest rates increase there has been increased applications. See the HOC's as key to keeping Vermonters housed. Limited and expensive rental options support the need for more HOC support.

Arthur asked for additional public comments; none were made.

Arthur and Ron - Funding for Manufactured Housing Communities (mobile home parks) is being set up and administered by DHCD with funding support from VHCB that will add \$2.5 million in Congressionally Directed Spending request. Infill, replacement homes, infrastructure.

AKK – commented that some rehab projects are too far gone to rehab and really needed replacement of homes, and asked whether a manufactured home could work as an option and can programs through HOC's be coordinated with the MHC program, as HOC max is \$25,000 loan/grant to provide to low income homeowners.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:02 p.m.