Amended Income Contribution Recommendation: Shelby Lebarron (Lived Experience Expert), Amy Johnson (Vermont Care Partners), Brenda Siegel (VCIL Representative & EHVT ED)

This recommendation both falls in eligibility as well as charge 7.

This amendment represents further research into the Section 8 process and after meeting with Section 8 case managers to ask their ideas and preferences.

There should be no income contribution due to the majority of people who are in the program having significantly low incomes. The income contribution is difficult to manage and prevents available resources for housing. The income contribution additionally disincentivizes income. It is managed in a complicated way and significant in proportion to the households income.

Instead we recommend an income savings contribution that will be matched when the household has found transitional or permanent housing. Households have the option to set up their own savings or escrow account with the navigational support of providers when needed. Households will show that they are adding up to 30% of their income to said account by providing documentation at each renewal as they do currently with their proof of income. The amount saved will be documented in their case notes. The amount saved, up to 30% of their income will be matched at the time of moving in to permanent or transitional housing. This will incentivise savings without creating a requirement that can have catastrophic outcomes. It encourages individual participation in their next steps in an empowering way that also lessons the burden when they are suddenly in the position of having to pay a lot of upfront costs of new household items, internet, phone and more.

We want to stress that income contribution is not the preferred model and we have heard from several housing case managers that the hotel income contributions are significantly disruptive to the process of achieving and being successful in permanent housing.

If the legislature chooses to use an income contribution, we recommend:

If there is a required income contribution it should still follow the above model of savings rather than being paid in to hotel and motel owners. Rather than using the HUD calculation for contribution which we understand may be too complicated for this program, it should create some standardized deductions and standardized income calculations keeping in the spirit of the HUD model:

a. In a new job, individuals will show their income after 30 days, 60 days and 90 days to create an average. After such time, unless income changes, that calculation shall be used to determine income contribution.
b. In an ongoing job, the 12 month average will be used, again at any time a household or individual can report and decrease in income and an increase of more than 10% will be reported.
c. There should be standard adjustment as follows:
   Aa. Disability of any kind: $480/year
   Bb. Experience of homelessness: $1200/year
   Cc. On Medicaid or Medicare: $500/year
   Dd. Transportation: $1200/year
e. At no time shall participants be required to renew for purposes of proof of of income more often than participants without income are required. Accommodations should be made to ensure that renewals do not disrupt participants job.