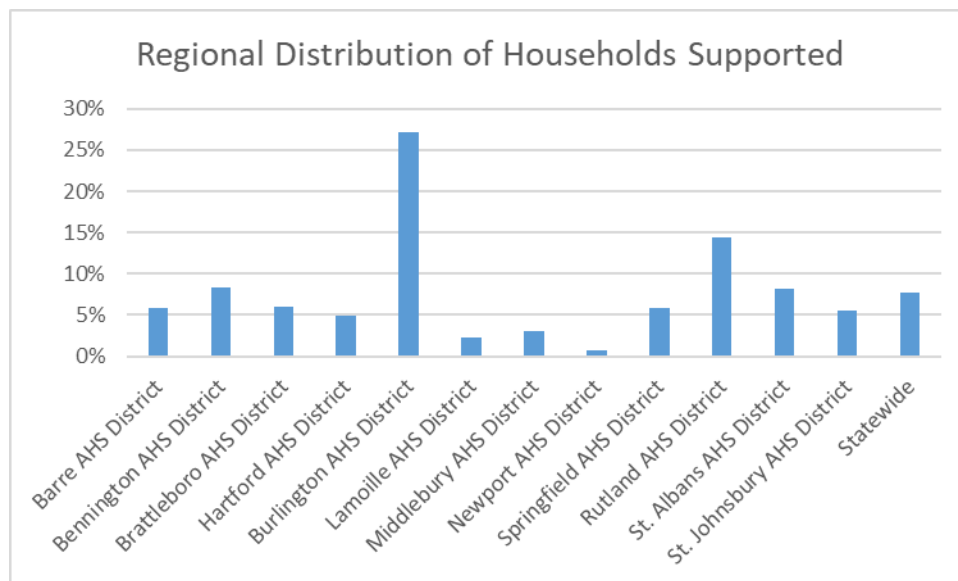


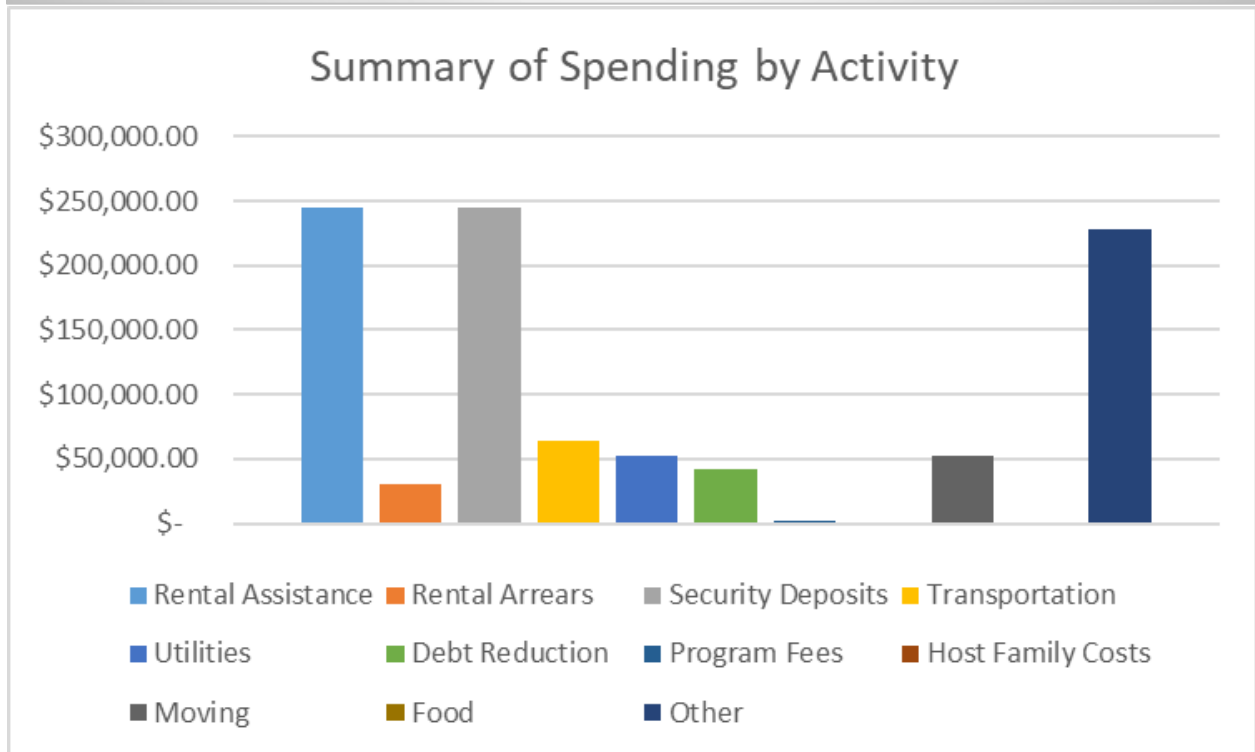
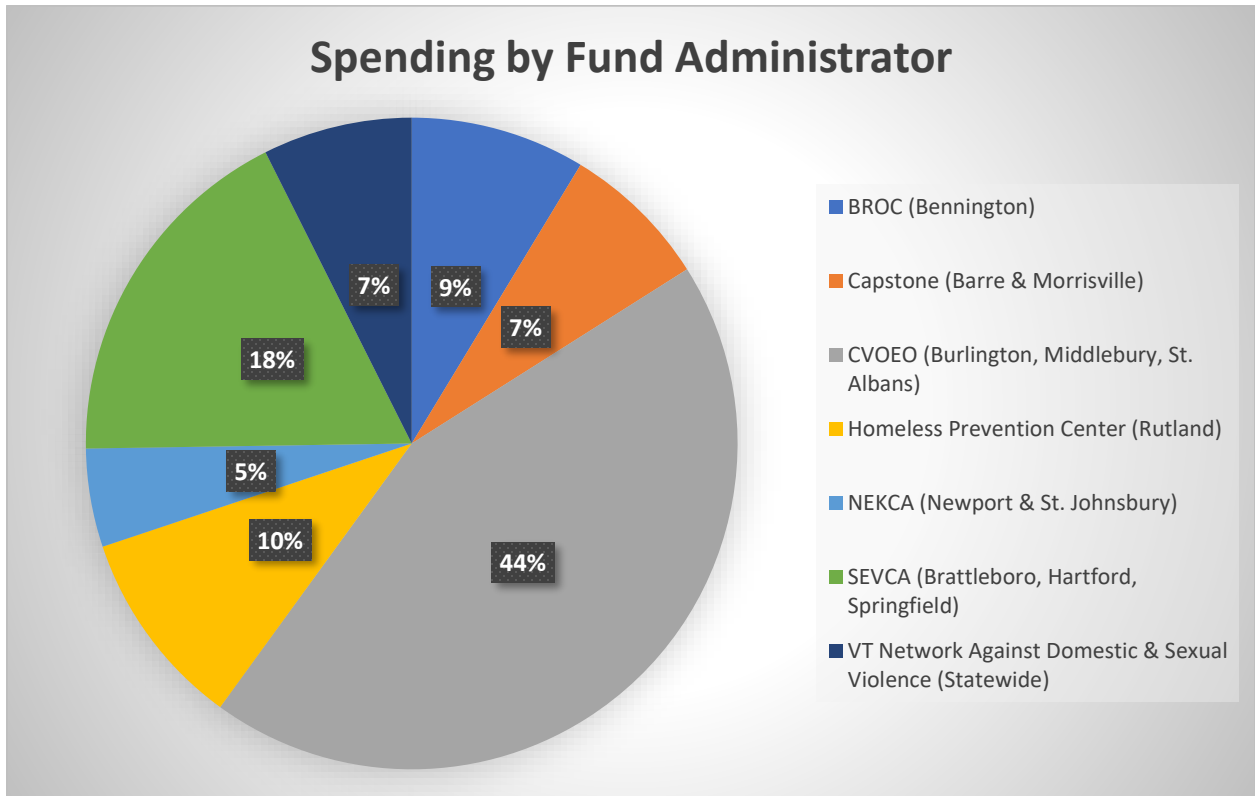
COVID-19 Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative
Round One – Final Report
July 10, 2020-December 30, 2020

The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) awarded over \$3.3 million through the COVID-19 Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative (RRHI) to help local Homeless Continuum of Care partners to reduce homelessness, particularly in motels, by providing one-time/short-term flexible financial assistance to help households exit quickly to safe housing. The Rapid Resolution Housing Funds focused on meeting the immediate financial need of individuals and families experiencing homelessness due to the COVID-19 public health crisis. Six non-profit agencies administered funds on behalf of their local Continuum of Care(s) and the VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence managed funds statewide for survivors. These funds supported a wide array of housing options for eligible households, so long as the funding was used to meet an identified need in the household’s individualized housing plan.

430 households were served through this program with 76% (326 households) living in motels at time of referral. Referrals came from traditional housing and homelessness providers as well as from Parent Child Centers, Area Agencies on Aging, Restorative Justice Centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Designated Agencies, and DCF Economic Services/Reach Up. 86% of households served (368 households) exited to safe housing. The most common safe exits were to rental units with a subsidy (approximately 53%) and rental units without an ongoing housing subsidy (approximately 23%).



Approximately \$1 million of Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative funds were expended to support these households.



Rapid Resolution is a practice promoted by the US Interagency Council on Homelessness to provide client-centered problem solving and flexible financial assistance to aid quick, safe exits from homelessness. Vermont's CRF-funded RRHI initiative was the first rapid resolution program at statewide scale. As the new initiative progressed, the rate of spending increased greatly. Rapid Resolution funds must be used to eliminate housing barriers or support individualized housing plans that could result in quick safe housing options. Fund administrators shared challenges such as a lack affordable housing and overcoming rental histories as barriers for fund utilization.

"The positive feedback this administrator received was almost exclusively around the flexibility the fund allowed. Relaxed (not eliminated but relaxed) regulations around inspections and "rent reasonableness" requirements helped ease some of the difficulty in helping to get into places. The ability to erase the debt one worker ran up when she lost employment because of the pandemic allowed her to be able to afford the rent on her new home until she gets back on her feet with recent re-employment." Capstone Community Action

"This grant provided a much-needed opportunity to address the diverse needs of the homeless in Bennington County. Best part – the flexibility; although we primarily provided rental and financial assistance, partners were energized because other needs could be addressed, so were very active participants. RRHI assistance was well understood by the Coordinated Entry partners, so any client that could benefit from these funds did so." BROC Community Action

"One particular success of the RRHI funding in the Franklin Grand Isle region was a collaboration we were able to create with our local Habitat for Humanity branch. Due to COVID-19 ... they had to close their retail store to the public. We were able to work out a program where RRHI eligible households were able to schedule appointments to shop at their retail warehouse for needed household items ... Habitat for Humanity staff gave us feedback that the ... funding that they received allowed them to keep current with all of their bills and expenses during the pandemic. We all just really appreciated that this money could be used to not only help individuals experiencing homelessness but also vicariously an organization whose mission is also to address housing issues." CVOEO Franklin Grant Isle

OEO has granted \$1 million for a second round of the Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative, beginning on February 1, 2021, to continue to support homeless individuals and families as they move to safe housing.