

STATE OF VERMONT AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS	Title: Transitional Housing		Page 1 of 15
Chapter: Restorative Justice	# 503.01	Supersedes: NEW	
Attachments, Forms & Companion Documents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transitional Housing Program Referral Process (flow chart) 2. Transitional Housing Program Referral Checklist 3. Memorandum of Understanding Template 4. Performance Measure Reporting 			
Local Procedure(s) Required: No Applicability: All staff (including contractors and volunteers) Security Level: "B" – Anyone may have access to this document.			
Approved: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <hr style="width: 100%;"/> Andrew Pallito, Commissioner </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <hr style="width: 100%;"/> Date Signed </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> 1/1/2015 <hr style="width: 100%;"/> Date Effective </div> </div>			

PURPOSE

The purpose of this administrative directive is to provide guidance to Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) facility and field staff related to the referral process and on-going expectations associated with supervising offenders who reside at and participate in DOC funded transitional housing programs.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Vermont Department of Corrections to support offenders in a successful transition from incarceration to the community, while also maintaining public safety. DOC recognizes that many offenders may not have suitable housing in the community and benefit from safe, stable and structured transitional housing with support services as they return to the community from incarceration.

AUTHORITY

28 VSA Chapter 12 §911.

REFERENCE

DOC Administrative Directive #371.02 Facility Case Management; DOC Administrative Directive #371.05 Offender Case Planning.

DEFINITIONS

Co-Case Management: The process by which an assigned facility Caseworker and field Probation/Parole Officer engage in collaborative decision-making about an offender's case from their detention to discharge.

Case Plan Compliant: An inmate is case plan compliant when he/she (1) articulates the risks and needs correlated with his/her offense behavior and articulates some capacity to comprehend the impact of that behavior on the victims and community; (2) is actively engaged in the activities and behavioral expectations contained within his/her case plan; and (3) is demonstrating an ongoing and sustained effort to achieve the stated case plan goals.

Case Planning: The process by which case co-managers, working collaboratively with the offender and associated stakeholders, make decisions about activities designed to reduce criminogenic needs, promote responsibility-taking, repair harm and support offender reintegration into the community.

Correctional Services Specialist (CSS): A staff role both in facilities and field offices; also referred to as Caseworker (facility) or Probation/Parole Officer (PO, in the field). Field and facility Correctional Service Specialists share responsibility for case co-management for offenders assigned to their caseload.

Criminogenic Need Areas: Offender need areas, which are related to criminal conduct and which, when addressed in correctional treatment, reduce the overall or specific risk of recidivism.

Housing Coordinator(s): A DOC staff person who administers all DOC funded offender transitional housing programs, including approval of release money.

Housing First Model: An approach based on the concept that a homeless individual's or household's primary need is to obtain stable housing, and that other issues that may affect the household can and should be addressed once housing is obtained.

Offender Case Plan (OCP): The DOC internal document that covers offender case planning, case management and reparative responsibilities. OCP is also the process focused on preparing an offender to re-enter the community, and be successful while under community supervision.

Projected Movement Date (PMD): The date that is projected that an incarcerated offender will be released to the community.

Reentry Coordinator(s): A DOC staff person with shared responsibility for coordinating, planning, and case work within facility transition units or services involving offender re-entry services.

Service Plan: A DOC approved form that documents the services to be provided or coordinated by the transitional housing program.

Support Services: Including, but not limited to, case management, community referrals, transportation, employment support/training, and life skills education.

Transitional Housing Program: A DOC funded program that provides temporary (generally up to twenty-four (24) months) housing for offenders in need of a stable living environment and provides services which support a transition to independent living.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

The Department of Corrections recognizes the need to develop community partnerships in order for men and women leaving its facilities to successfully transition back to the community. The Department, through grants to community-based providers, subsidizes the provision of transitional housing and other supportive services for eligible offenders released to the community from correctional facilities.

Program Eligibility

In an effort to ease overcrowding, inmates being released from prison are the priority target population for DOC funded transitional housing programs. However, DOC may consider offenders who are supervised in the community at the time of referral and are at risk of being (re)incarcerated due to lack of appropriate and stable housing.

Program Duration

Length of stay in transitional housing programs will depend upon individual offender needs and program structure, but generally should not exceed twenty-four (24) months. Certain high need populations may require housing and support services for greater than 24 months, and possibly for the duration of their time under DOC supervision. When making a referral to a transitional housing provider, the offender's sentence must be structured so that he or she will be under supervision for the duration of his or her participation in transitional housing programming.

Program Determination

Housing Coordinator(s) will provide an updated listing of all available DOC-funded transitional housing programs to all DOC staff at the onset of each fiscal year and at the commencement of a new grant agreement. This listing will be distributed to provide information about available housing options, the type of housing provided (shelter, shared or single rooms or apartments), staffing patterns, length of stay and the services provided at each site.

Using the table below as a guideline, Housing Coordinator(s) will categorize each transitional housing program:

Level	1	2	3
Housing Type <i>(defined below)</i>	Scattered Site	Supportive Housing	Structured Housing
Staffing Pattern	Minimum of one home visit per week	Daytime required	Day and evening required, 24/7 preferred
Certified/ Licensed Staff	Optional	Preferred	Required
On-site programming	Optional	Regular organized activities	Daily Schedule
Case Management	Required	Required	Required
Independent Living Skills Education	Required	Required	Required
Length of Stay	Up to 24 months	6 to 24 months	9 to 24 months
Offender Demographics	Moderately self-sufficient, willing and able to work, in need of short-term assistance to get "back on their feet," or as a step down from supportive/structured housing	Limited employment history, mental health and/or substance abuse challenges, limited family/social support	Significant substance abuse, mental health and/or developmental challenges, in need of longer-term services

Scattered Site

Single or shared apartments located in the community with full or partial rental assistance. Generally, the grantee is the leaseholder and sublets to the offender who may eventually take over the lease. Regular case management shall occur, with at least weekly visits made to the apartment by grantee staff. Offenders may participate in programming within the community.

Supportive Housing

Single or shared rooms within a transitional housing site or emergency shelter. The house must be staffed during regular business hours, with optional overnight staff. Regular activities shall occur onsite (house dinners, AA meetings, life skills education, etc.), with an emphasis on a peer led community.

Structured Housing

Single or shared rooms within a transitional housing site or treatment program. The house should be staffed through the evening, and weekends with overnight staffing preferred. There should be an organized daily schedule which includes mental health and/or substance abuse treatment.

While most transitional housing programs will fit into the levels identified above, programs which utilize a *Housing First* model, or those designed to serve special populations (for example, people with severe mental health or developmental challenges) may span multiple levels.

Prior to making a referral to a Department-funded transitional housing program, facility and field CSS should be familiar with the services and structure provided by each transitional housing program to ensure that a referred inmate's criminogenic needs, as outlined in the Offender Case Plan (OCP), match the support services provided.

In accordance with directives #371.02 *Facility Case Management* and #371.05 *Offender Case Planning*, case co-managers will discuss residence/housing options and barriers with each inmate at least six (6) months prior to the projected movement date. If it's determined by the case co-managers and the inmate that a DOC-funded transitional housing program is the most appropriate residence option, the facility caseworker will assist the inmate in completing the appropriate program application. Inmates must only apply to one DOC funded transitional housing program at a time.

An inmate should have no record of violence against a person or property within the six (6) months prior to their projected movement date.

Program Priority

Inmates that have actively participated in needs reducing programs, a Transition Unit/Services program, and/or in-facility employment will be given priority for transitional housing. DOC Reentry Coordinator(s) will maintain a list of individuals that are participating in a Transition Unit/Services program and will share inmate names with the local P&P transitional housing program contact person(s) (the District Manager or designee).

All inmates referred to a transitional housing program must be case plan compliant.

Standard Referral Process

See Attachment #1- Transitional Housing Program Referral Process

A completed program application (electronic or hardcopy) shall be sent by the caseworker to the PO who will complete the *Transitional Housing Program Referral Checklist* and attach required corresponding documents (if applicable). The PO will communicate with the local P&P contact for the transitional housing program and upon his or her approval send the completed packet to the appropriate contact person at the transitional housing program. A copy of all transitional housing referral documents shall be kept in the DOC's inmate file.

The transitional housing program shall provide a written response to the application within ten (10) business days of receipt. Such response may be one of the following: denial, approval or a request for more information. Based on the response received from the transitional housing program, the Department will proceed as follows:

- (1) **Denial-** Co-case managers will communicate with the inmate about other housing options.
- (2) **Approval-** release planning will proceed per existing Department policies and directives.
- (3) **Request for More Information-** If more information is requested, the caseworker will communicate with the program to determine next steps including additional paperwork, scheduling an interview, etc.

Co-Case Managers shall document, in electronic case notes, all correspondence and planning related to transitional housing programs. Documentation shall include dates of application submission and response, scheduled inmate interviews, etc.

Field Referral Process

In the case of an offender supervised in the community who is referred to a transitional housing program, the facility CSS will be omitted from the above process.

Release Planning and Program Entry

If an offender is approved to participate in a DOC funded transitional housing program that provides rental assistance and support to offenders in community-based apartments, then directive #371.14 *Furlough Residence Approval* shall apply and a residence check review should be completed within ninety (90) days of release.

In accordance with directive #371.02 *Facility Case Management*, within thirty (30) days of release, the facility and field CSS will communicate with the inmate (via phone or in-person meeting) to review the case plan and DOC expectations upon release. Staff from the transitional housing program should be invited by the caseworker to participate whenever possible and appropriate.

Within two (2) weeks of release/program entry the Caseworker will communicate with the transitional housing program to coordinate and confirm transportation for the day of release.

In an effort to facilitate open communication, the PO shall invite a staff member from the transitional housing program to attend the first scheduled post-release meeting with the offender.

For offenders not coming directly from incarceration, the PO shall invite the transitional housing program staff person to the first meeting with the offender after acceptance into the transitional housing program.

Based on the information provided by DOC at the time of referral, a Service Plan shall be developed by transitional housing program within five (5) days of program entry, if not prior to move in. A copy of the Service Plan will be provided to the offender's PO for final approval and signature. The PO should keep a copy in the DOC's offender file.

On-Going Communication

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

At the onset of a new transitional housing grant and each fiscal year thereafter, the corresponding District Manager and transitional housing program director will update and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (within two weeks of the commencement of the grant or fiscal year). The finalized MOU should be sent to the DOC Commissioner for final signature. A signed copy shall be sent to the Housing Coordinator(s) by the transitional housing program staff.

The District Manager (or designee) associated with each transitional housing program will meet with program staff at least monthly to discuss offender progress and program operations. Meeting notes shall be kept as documentation by the transitional housing program, and pertinent details should be included in DOC electronic case notes by the P&P transitional housing program contact person(s). More frequent communication by phone and email is encouraged and all significant correspondence should be documented in DOC case notes.

On a quarterly basis, the Housing Coordinator(s) will coordinate meetings with each transitional housing program and the appropriate local Department staff to discuss general program operations, communication and adherence to the Grant Agreement.

TRAINING

1. The Director of Field Services will train the District Managers in this directive prior to the effective date.
2. District Managers or designee(s) will train appropriate field staff in this directive prior to its effective date.
3. The Director of Facilities will train the Facility Superintendents in this directive prior to the effective date.

4. Facility Superintendents or designee(s) will train appropriate facility staff in this directive prior to its effective date.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Each District Manager/ Facility Superintendent is responsible for ensuring the following:

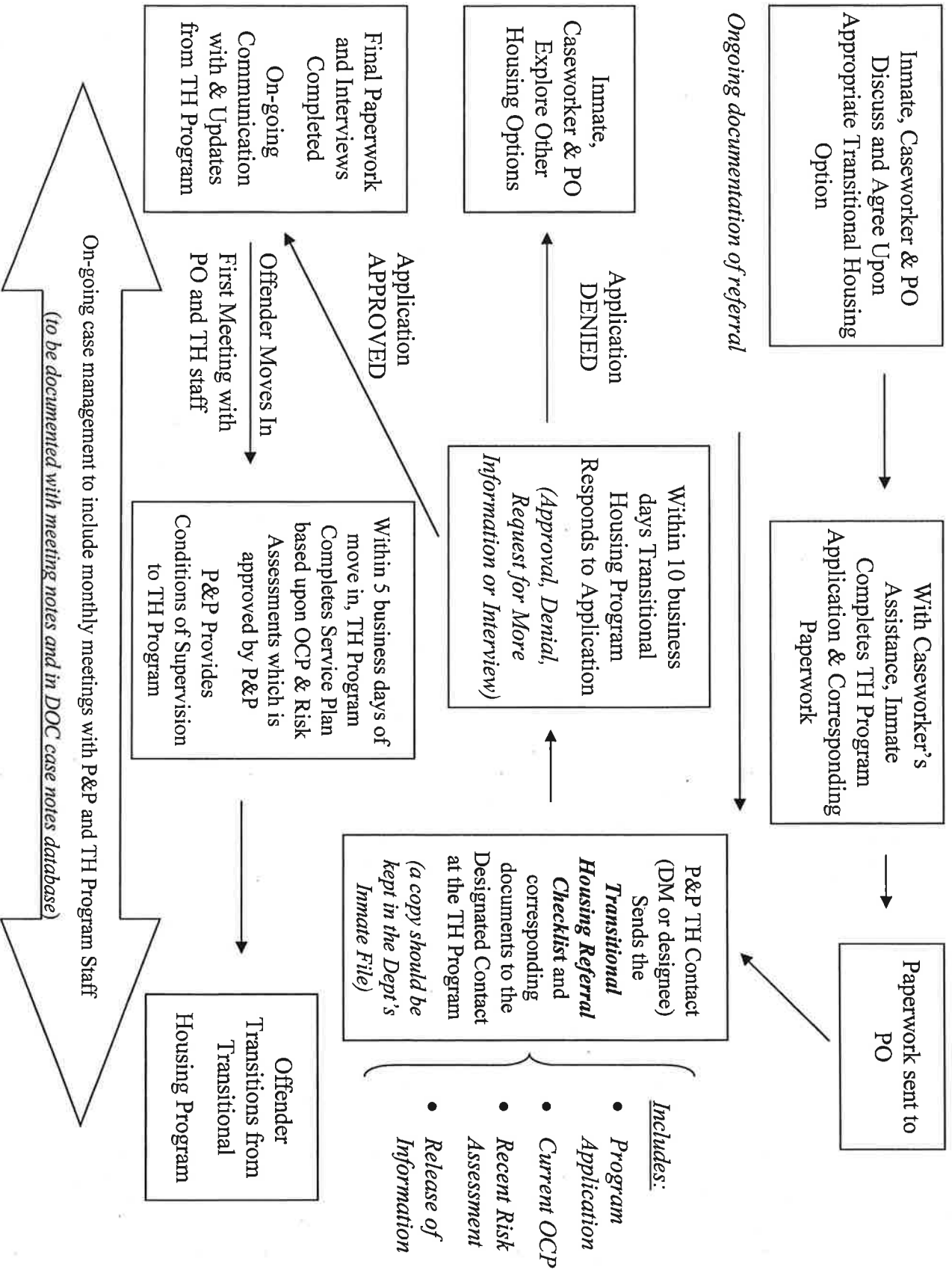
1. Each site will be in compliance with this directive.
2. Documentation is correctly entered into the centralized DOC electronic database.
3. Transitional housing program grantees are adhering to the terms of the grant agreement.

The Housing Coordinators will:

1. Provide clear instruction to transitional housing program grantees related to the type of data to be collected and the manner in which it shall be submitted. (*See Performance Measure Reporting Attachment #4*)
2. Compile collected data on at least a quarterly basis
3. Review key performance measures on an annual basis and make changes as necessary.

*Within six months of
projected release date*

Transitional Housing Program Referral Process



Attachment #2

Transitional Housing Program Referral Checklist

Applicant's Name: _____ PID: _____ Facility: _____

Caseworker: _____ PO: _____

The following documents are attached:

- Program Application and Required Documents
- Current Offender Case Plan (OCP)
- Most Recent Risk Assessment Summary
- Signed Release of Information
- Other: _____

After consulting with the offender's Caseworker, we both support an application to reside at _____
(DOC funded transitional housing program)

PO Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Conditions of Supervision will be provided as soon as available

For use by transitional housing program:

Date Received: _____ Date of Decision: _____

Accepted Denied

Reason for Denial (if applicable):

Memorandum of Understanding

Vermont Department of Corrections: Transitional Housing Programs

This Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by and between the Vermont Department of Corrections, Community Justice Division (Housing Coordinator(s), the _____ Probation and Parole office (P&P) and _____ (Program). This MOU shall be reviewed and signed annually.

Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to define the roles and responsibilities of the parties in relation to the operation of a DOC funded Transitional Housing Program. The primary goals of DOC funded Transitional Housing Programs are to support offenders in community reintegration/reentry, to maintain public safety and to reduce offender recidivism. These goals will be addressed with the following activities:

- Providing safe, sober, supportive and structured transitional housing for offenders returning to the community from incarceration, or in some cases offenders in the community at risk of incarceration
- Serving a wide range of offender needs including mental health, substance abuse, education and employment
- Providing supportive services- including, but not limited to, case management, community referrals, transportation, employment support/training, and life skills education.

Referral Process

The Housing Coordinator(s) will:

Share information about Program opportunities and availability with DOC staff at the onset of each fiscal year, the commencement of a new grant agreement, and/or as appropriate.

P&P will:

Maintain a list of eligible offenders by release date to maximize bed utilization.

Ensure that offenders referred are appropriate and have an ability to live independently with the level of services provided by the Program.

Provide a *Transitional Housing Program Referral Packet* to the Program at the time of each referral which includes the following documents: program application and any corresponding required documents, a current Offender Case Plan (OCP), the most recent risk assessment summary, a signed DOC Release of Information prior to offender release. The offender's Conditions of Supervision will be provided to the Program as soon as they are available.

The Program will:

Develop, in collaboration with P&P, a communication protocol.

Respond to P&P referrals (in writing) within ten (10) business days. The response may be approval, denial or a request for more information. *A request for more information may include an interview, additional documentation, involvement of a local re-entry advisory committee/panel, etc.* Interviews, document reviews, etc. will be completed in a timely manner.

Maintain documentation of offender eligibility and acceptance/denial.

Program Implementation and Services

The Housing Coordinator(s) will:

Coordinate quarterly meetings with P&P and Program staff (on-site when possible).

Facilitate communication and problem solving as needed.

P&P will:

Designate a contact person(s) for each transitional housing program.

Meet with Program staff at least monthly to discuss offender progress, program operations, and to support open communication. Details should be included in DOC case notes as appropriate.

Provide updated copies of each offender's OCP and Conditions of Release to the Program.

Maintain a copy of each offender's service plan, and assure that the plan is consistent with the need and risk areas identified in the OCP.

Report knowledge or suspicion of offender violation of Program policies to Program staff within 24 hours.

Notify the Program within 24 hours if an offender has been (re)incarcerated.

The Program will:

Create an initial service plan within five (5) business days of program entry/release date, if not prior to release/move in. A copy should be shared with and approved by the appropriate PO.

Maintain organized offender files which include the following: DOC Offender Case Plan, service plan, documentation of services provided, and releases of information.

Take meeting notes at monthly meetings with P&P which should be shared with P&P and available to Housing Coordinator(s) (if requested).

Provide supportive services as outlined in the Grant Agreement and this MOU.

Ensure that all Program staff members are properly trained and that any incidents of staff misconduct are immediately reported to P&P and the Housing Coordinator(s).

Report knowledge or suspicion of offender violation of Conditions of Supervision or criminal activity to P&P immediately.

Report knowledge or suspicion of sexual abuse or harassment where an offender is involved (as alleged victim or perpetrator) **immediately** to P&P (in accordance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)).

Enter the offender's room/apartment at least weekly to ensure program/lease violations are not occurring (i.e. damage, unreported guests, housekeeping issues, etc.).

Data Collection and Reporting

The Housing Coordinator(s) will:

Regularly monitor data entered into the DOC provided database and provide feedback to Program staff.

Share data with P&P regularly to confirm accuracy.

Furnish copies of DOC generated reports to P&P and the Program as needed.

P&P will:

Respond to requests for data in a timely manner.

The Program will:

Maintain records of referrals made, acceptance or denial, offender move in and exit dates, and any other information pertaining to the offender's participation in the Program.

Utilize DOC provided database and reporting form(s) to enter information about services provided, offender demographics, program outcomes, and other information as requested. Data should be entered/submitted in a timely manner as outlined in the grant agreement.

Respond to requests for data in a timely manner.

Program Definitions and Guidelines (to be completed by the Program)

Case Management: Strengths based assessment, identification of risks and barriers to community integration, planning to address barriers to independent living, stabilization of risk factors, and linkages to ongoing supports and additional services

Eligible Offender:

Excluded Offender (if applicable):

Duration of the Program:

Program Fees/ Rent (if applicable):

Services Provided:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Search/Employment Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Search and Retention | <input type="checkbox"/> Meals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Support Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COSA | <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse Support Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Rental Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Successful Completion: Achievement of goals outlined in the offender's Service Plan.

Points of Contact

Housing Coordinators:

Karen Lawson- (802)951-5027 or Karen.Lawson@state.vt.us

Liz Whitmore- (802)951-5023 or Elizabeth.Whitmore@state.vt.us

P&P

Program

Volunteer Coordinator (to conduct Volunteer Training for current direct service staff and all new staff)

Insert/Attach Additional Information if Necessary:

Signatures:

District Manager, Probation and Parole

Date

Transitional Housing Program Director/ Coordinator

Date

Approved By:

Andrew Pallito, Commissioner, Department of Corrections

Date

