

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

POLICY **SERVICE SUPPORTED AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

VHCB has made a significant investment in service supported housing, having financed more than a thousand units designated for persons with special service needs. Some examples include service supported apartments for persons with psychiatric disorders, transitional housing for offenders eligible for discharge from the correctional system, and assisted living for frail elders. Community based alternatives of this type result in positive outcomes for residents and savings to the State of Vermont for costs related to corrections, human services and health care.

VHCB recognizes that affordable housing is essential for the full participation and integration of people with disabilities in the community, and lack of an affordable place to live can be a major factor related to people becoming institutionalized or remaining institutionalized. Affordable housing, located near transportation and employment, is key to long-term economic security and ability to participate in the workforce to one's potential.

VHCB promotes fair and open access to all of the housing it finances and seeks ways to integrate needy and disadvantaged populations into non-specialized settings. However, it recognizes that a variety of housing models and types are needed including specialized housing options that may be targeted to specific populations such as emergency shelters, congregate facilities, and single-room occupancy housing arrangements.

VHCB intends to continue to work in collaboration with the Agency of Human Services, local communities, and others to support efforts to meet service supported housing needs and to consider funding for projects that aim to provide service supported housing.

Threshold Requirements and Priorities for Funding

Housing applications that include service supports (counseling, case management, assistance with daily living skills, etc) shall be considered with respect to the thresholds, priorities, and factors adopted by the Board as part of the VHCB Policy Position on Funding for Affordable Housing whenever they are applicable. The following thresholds and priorities specific to service supported housing shall also apply;

A. Threshold Requirements

1. The applicant demonstrates that it has sufficient expertise and capacity to develop and manage the proposed housing as well as to provide the needed support services .
Alternatively, the applicant has entered into partnership with housing or support service

providers who will provide such expertise and capacity. The partnership arrangement must be documented in an agreement acceptable to VHCB;

2. There is confirmation of both short-term need and anticipated continuing need for the proposed housing for at least 10 years by the Vermont Agency of Human Services or in other ways acceptable to VHCB. For proposals addressing homelessness, the applicant shall demonstrate the project will be integrated with the regional homelessness Continuum of Care and fill an identified gap in services or capacity;
3. There is confirmation in a manner acceptable to VHCB of the availability or likelihood of funding for services on an ongoing basis. For proposals incorporating service supports funded by the Vermont Agency of Human Services , there is confirmation from the AHS Secretary's Office of the current availability and likelihood of ongoing funding, contingent upon the provider's attainment of performance measures and adherence to provisions outlined in agreements with AHS. In such cases, AHS shall confirm its commitment to VHCB to assist the service provider in correcting any performance deficiencies and to assist VHCB in identifying another use for the property if necessary;
4. Building or rehabilitation plans will result in a facility that is durable, attractive and cost effective to operate. Operating plans address the long-term capital needs of the building;
5. Prior to consideration of proposals for specialized facilities targeted to a specific population, the applicant shall address to the satisfaction of VHCB why the proposed approach is best suited to meet the need and why integration of the target population into a non-specialized setting is not appropriate.

B. Priorities for Funding

1. Projects to preserve service supported housing previously funded by VHCB or with other public financing sources and for which there is still a demonstrated need;
2. Projects in which service supported housing is integrated into non-specialized residential buildings or settings, e.g master leasing of a portion of the units in a building to service providers, arrangements for support services for designated units, and other approaches to provide needed services in the most integrated setting desired ;

Other Key Factors to Be Considered By VHCB

VHCB will consider the following factors in its analysis of service supported housing:

- VHCB shall consider the back-up plan for reuse of the proposed housing in the event that the need or service funding changes and the suitability of the location for other housing

uses. VHCB shall assess the overall feasibility of the backup plan and the difficulty in converting to another use;

- The suitability of the location to meet resident needs and efficiently provide services.

Amount and Form of VHCB Assistance

Projects that seek to provide service-supported housing may apply for funds through VHCB's standard application process.