

Protect Vermont's Housing Infrastructure

Vermont State Housing Authority's 2026 Legislative Priorities

Vermont stands at a critical crossroads in housing policy. The Housing Choice Voucher program—one of our most effective tools for ensuring safe, affordable housing—is in a state of decline. Despite being federally funded, a chronic underinvestment and rapidly rising rents have combined to create a structural gap that threatens thousands of Vermont families. Today, VSHA is authorized to serve nearly 4,500 households, yet hundreds of vouchers remain unfunded, and more are at risk of permanent loss. Each voucher lost represents not only a family pushed closer to homelessness but also millions of federal dollars slipping away from Vermont communities.

This is not a management issue—it is a systemic funding problem. Without immediate state action, the downward spiral will accelerate, waiting lists will grow, landlord participation will shrink, and housing instability will deepen across the state. The Legislature has the power to interrupt this trend. Strategic, targeted investments now can preserve existing federal resources, stabilize vulnerable households, and prevent far greater costs for emergency housing, healthcare, and public systems later.

Our message is simple: a modest state investment today will save millions tomorrow and protect Vermont's housing infrastructure for years to come.

VSHA 2026 Legislative Priorities

VSHA respectfully requests the Legislature's partnership on the following priorities to stabilize housing for Vermont families and prevent further erosion of critical rental assistance programs:

1. Voucher Contingency Fund

Establish a voucher contingency fund in the amount of \$5 million to prevent the involuntary termination of households from Public Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher programs due to funding shortfalls.

2. Rental Arrears Assistance Fund

Maintain the Rental Arrears Assistance Fund through Fiscal Year 2027 to prevent avoidable evictions, stabilize households, and reduce downstream costs to communities and state systems. Funding Request \$1 million dollars.

3. Statewide Bridge Rental Assistance Program

Create a statewide, flexible rental assistance program inclusive of all special populations served by the Agency of Human Services. The program should include both tenant-based and project-based rental assistance to respond to urgent gaps and prevent homelessness. Funding Request \$3 million dollars.

Priority	Real-Life Example
Voucher Contingency Fund	Last year, a senior in Barre faced losing her voucher due to rising rents. Without intervention, she would have been displaced into a motel at \$100/night—over \$3,000/month compared to her \$400 subsidized rent.
Rental Arrears Assistance Fund	A single mother in Rutland fell behind on rent after medical bills. A one-time \$1,200 payment kept her housed and avoided costly eviction and shelter placement.
Statewide Bridge Rental Assistance Program	A family displaced by flooding in Lamoille County spent 3 months in a motel at \$9,000. A bridge program could have secured an apartment for half that cost.

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