

# Vermont Department of Corrections



## Request for Proposals

**Project Title:** Transitional Housing for Individuals Re-entering the Community after Incarceration

**Anticipated Grant Period:** July 1, 2021- June 30, 2023

**Date RFP Issued:** January 8, 2021

**Applicant Information Session:** January 29, 2021

**Date Applications Due:** March 12, 2021

**Single Point of Contact:** Emily Higgins, Corrections Housing Administrator

**Contact Address:** Vermont Department of Corrections  
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## **SECTION I: Overview, Background & Objectives**

### **A) REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

The Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) is seeking proposals for programs that provide transitional housing for individuals reentering the community from incarceration. The anticipated grant period will be for State Fiscal Years 2022 & 2023 (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023), with the option to renew for an additional two-year period. The option to renew will be based upon performance of the grantee and continued funding availability.

Grantees will be expected to work closely with local Department staff to integrate the housing and services outlined in the proposal with the local Probation and Parole office (P&P).

This Request for Proposals consist of the following:

- Section I: Overview, Background, and Objectives of the DOC Transitional Housing Program; RFP Submission Requirements and Selection Process
- Section II: Application
- Budget (Excel template)
- Appendices A & B– Resource Links & Standard AHS Grant Provisions

### **B) BACKGROUND & NEED STATEMENT**

The Community and Restorative Justice Unit of the Vermont Department of Corrections has funded transitional housing program for those re-entering the community from incarceration since 2005.

The portfolio of DOC-funded Transitional Housing currently consists of partnerships with 18 community providers, including non-profits, community justice centers, and municipalities. These grantees are funded to provide the capacity approximately 250 beds/apartments statewide, and typically provide housing and support services to over 500 unique individuals per year.

As of 12/16/20, there are approximately 1,344 individuals incarcerated in Vermont correctional facilities and through out-of-state contracts. Many individuals who are eligible for release lack appropriate housing to return to the community and could benefit from services that support successful reintegration and provide links to permanent housing opportunities. The DOC recognizes the need to develop community partnerships for the men and women leaving its facilities to successfully transition back to the community and avoid homelessness.

Individuals returning to the community from incarceration are the target population. Grantees must serve moderate to high-risk offenders as determined by DOC risk assessment tools, including, but not limited to those who have been convicted of violent and sexual crimes. All providers are encouraged to partner with local restorative justice programs to prevent and address conflicts and challenges. The Department seeks proposals for programs that provide transitional housing, as well as a bridge to housing stability, for those reentering the community from incarceration. DOC cannot fund permanent housing itself, but seeks to fund proposals that demonstrate experience in providing housing and services (e.g. transitional housing, apartments, vouchers, housing search and retention, service coordination, etc.). Programs should have a focus on housing planning, and relationships with permanent housing providers

to help residents attain stability.

The DOC transitional housing program tracks outcomes according to a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework. The Measures, Targets, and Actuals from SFY 2020 are pasted below. We have seen good outcomes regarding referrals, housing plans, and those in transitional housing not being charged with a new crime. However, the data indicate a strong need to improve utilization of programs and successful exits to stable housing.

	Measure	Target	Actual
How Much?	Individuals Served	357	523
	Bed Days Utilized- (TH only)	75206	56,823
	Months of Rental Assistance	528	343
	Individuals Housed (Search and Retention Services)	42	17
How Well?	% Referrals Accepted (# accepted in FY/# referrals in FY)	80%	80%
	% of Housing Plans Reviewed Monthly (self reported)	80%	86%
	% of Housing Plans Created within 30 Days (self reported)	90%	88%
	% Utilization	80%	76%
Better Off?	% not charged with a new crime while in Program (escape charges not in count)	60%	97%
	# exits with income/total exits		283/490
	% of participants who were employed, enrolled in an educational or training program or receiving benefits out of all exiters	80%	58%
	# exits to permanent housing/total exits		198/490
	% who exited to permanent housing out of all exiters.	60%	40%

According to the research of the Council of State Government’s (CSG) work on Justice Reinvestment in Vermont, we have a high rate of recidivism, and racial disparities in our criminal justice system. An excerpt from a CSG publication states the following: “Like other states, each year Vermont grapples with high rates of people being removed from community supervision and sent to prison. Nearly 80 percent of all prison admissions in Vermont were for violations of terms of furlough, probation, or parole supervision from 2017 to 2019. The majority of people who returned to prison for violating the terms of their furlough release did so due to technical violations, which frequently consist of minor offenses, such as a lack of housing, failed drug tests, or missed appointments and curfews.”

**Explainer: The Significance of Vermont's Justice Reinvestment Legislation** (CSG July 2020: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/2020/07/16/explainer-the-significance-of-vermonts-justice-reinvestment-legislation/> See footnote <sup>1</sup>.

Based on a detailed needs assessment and data analysis conducted recently, it is clear that returns to incarceration from our transitional housing programs are happening at a fairly high rate. Through this request, our goal is to address this challenge and provide safe, stable housing for those in the care and custody of the Department of Corrections.

The Community and Restorative Justice Unit spent the summer of 2020 creating a **Theory of Change** for our transitional housing investments, with assistance from experts in the Agency of Human Services Central Office. This fall we presented and vetted the theory with DOC and AHS leadership; and shared it with current community providers for input. The full Theory of Change is incorporated below for your reference. In essence, it summarizes the belief of the Department of Corrections that successful programs to help people re-enter their communities from incarceration require supportive housing that is trauma-informed, provides a range of services, and is focused on restorative justice.

In **APPENDIX A** of this request, there is a list of resources which provide critical background information on the topics of:

- Vermont State Policies, Directives, and Resources regarding DOC Transitional Housing, Definition of Homelessness, and AHS Trauma & Resilience
- Evidence-Based Models and Practices for Re-entry Housing
- Housing First

Please review these materials carefully and use them to inform and support your proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information about the Justice Reinvestment Act can be found here:

- **Act 148 (SB 338)**, was signed into law in July 2020, and will take full effect in January 2021. The full text of the Act: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/Docs/ACTS/ACT148/ACT148%20As%20Enacted.pdf>
- **A summary of changes made through this Act:** <https://doc.vermont.gov/sites/correct/files/Justice%20Reinvestment%20Overview%20and%20Impacts.9-20-20.pdf>

**Theory of Change: DOC Re-Entry Housing**

**VISION**

All Vermonters under supervision have the housing resources and relationships they need to thrive and keep themselves and communities safe.

**DESIRED OUTCOMES**



People are supported to thrive.

Housing is available for people that meets their needs.

**DIGNITY**



Relationships increase social capital for people.

People are motivated to make decisions that stabilize their lives.

**STABILITY**



People are safe from harm. (no more new victims)

People have access to resources that help them meet their needs.

**SAFETY**

**ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS**

**VALUE**

People contribute meaningfully to community

**TRUST**

People experience consistency, equity, and transparency

**CHOICE**

People have options from which to make choices

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Community members & organizations create opportunities and relationships that help people to achieve their goals

**SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR WELL-BEING**

**COMMUNITY INVESTMENT**

Community members & organizations participate and invest in supporting successful re-entry

**ASSUMPTIONS**

- Interventions are most effective when they are **trauma-informed** and when they help people in ways that are **personally meaningful**.
- **Basic life needs must be met** before people can spend energy working toward their goals and priorities, including meaningful engagement with desired support services.
- When people have **access to essential tools, resources, knowledge, and skills** for getting through life and accomplishing their priorities, they are less likely to act harmfully or criminally.
- When people can **build their capabilities and strengths**, they reduce their risk of reoffending.
- Ensuring that everyone in our communities has equitable access to what they need to thrive is a **shared responsibility** and cannot be accomplished by any one program or intervention alone.
- **Stable housing and person-led, supportive re-entry programming** decreases the likelihood of reoffending and supports increased resilience toward thriving.

The Good Lives Model & SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach & National Alliance to End Homelessness

**OUR APPROACH**

## RESULTS

### HOUSING

People transition to and/or remain in stable, permanent housing that meets their needs

### STABILITY

People are accomplishing their goals and believe in their own capability  
People are not committing new crimes  
People feel an increased sense of hopefulness  
People are connected to supportive relationships and services that offer help, stability, and accountability

### COMMUNITY

People and organizations are building relationships with people to support their re-entry

## INTERVENTIONS

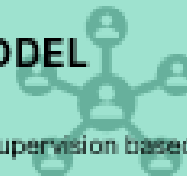
### HOUSING MODEL

- Facilitate permanent housing (short-long term rental assistance and link to vouchers)
  - Integrate with broader array of housing services, resources, and supports (continuum of care)
- Offer supportive services for participants if/when they choose to engage them toward their goals



### RE-ENTRY & CASE MANAGEMENT MODEL

- Focus on safety for individuals and community
- Autonomy balanced with appropriate level of supervision based on risk
- Strong link to probation & parole, mental health, substance use treatment, and supportive services
- Utilize restorative justice, harm-reduction, and trauma-informed principles, including:
  - Holistic, person-centered, strengths-based case plans
  - Integrated community case planning including natural supports, peers, and volunteers
  - Clarified role for victims' voices and needs



### NEW ACTIONS

- Partner with providers who demonstrate ability to implement foundational DOC policy direction and models.
- Train and support partners and DOC probation and parole staff, in effective models for re-entry and housing stability.
- Integrate with VT Housing Continuums of Care so that people re-entering communities have their housing needs considered along with other Vermonters experiencing risk of homelessness.

## PARTNERS

### CORRECTIONS

- Facility caseworkers and District Managers work together to facilitate meaningful referrals
- Probation & Parole caseworkers refer to housing program, create initial case plan, and advocate for housing
- CRJ Unit provide program guidance and funding
- Partner with AHS departments and Housing Authorities around development of housing and long-term housing solutions

### RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS

- Ongoing case planning with clients
- Connection to Continuum of Care and housing resources
- Connection to community support services
- Community relationship development
- Staff training and support
- Monitoring and evaluation

## HOW WILL THE PROGRAM BE DIFFERENT?

### WHAT WE OBSERVED

- Tiered transitional housing options were based on offender risk profile
- Zero tolerance program rules (e.g. sober housing) were resulting in reincarceration
- DOC lacked an overarching housing philosophy that connected all program investments
- Program milieu did not necessarily incorporate trauma-informed practices
- Referrals were inconsistent and discretionary, affected by perception of program or participant

### HOW WE ARE CHANGING

- Investments targeted to programs that can meet range of DOC needs (e.g. house sex offenders)
- Focus on stable housing as top priority, and facilitate access to support services
- Focus on offender strengths (skill building & tenancy education)
- More fully engage the community in supporting re-entry
- Services integrated with the Continuum of Care
- Focus on restorative justice to address challenges (CJC's)

## IMPLEMENTING THE THEORY OF CHANGE



### NEW PARTNERSHIP

Partner with Continuum of Care, CJC's, Service Providers



### ONGOING LEARNING

Sustain dialogue with providers about what is & is not working

### NEW AGREEMENTS

Develop agreements that reflect best practice for housing & successful re-entry

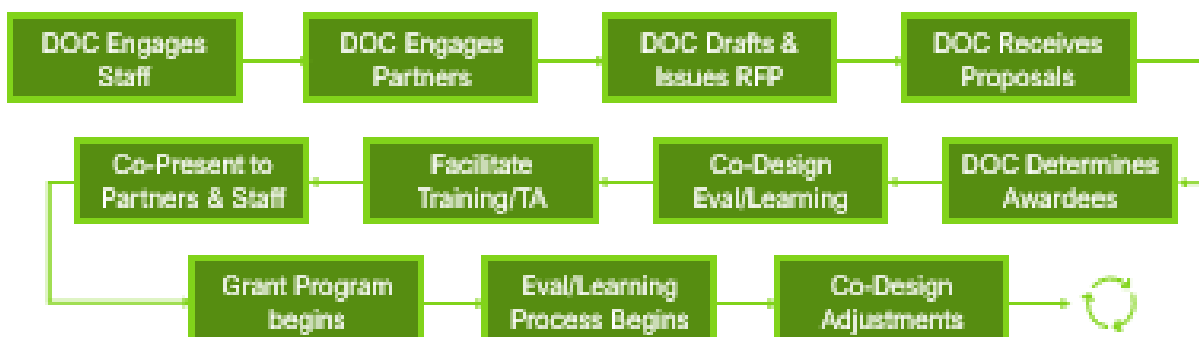


### ONGOING SUPPORT

Offer ongoing training and support for implementing best practices



## WHAT TO EXPECT



**C) FUNDING AVAILABLE**

Grants will be awarded by the State Department of Corrections.

The State anticipates that the following funds will be available for eligible entities and activities under the DOC Transitional Housing Program during SFY 2022 (7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022). **Up to \$3,797,748 from the General State Fund (GSF) appropriation, and up to \$2,186,111 in Global Commitment/ Medicaid funds for a total of \$5,983,859.**

The Community and Restorative Justice Unit, at its discretion, may reserve funds for:

- Training & Technical Assistance
- Release Money
- Landlord Risk Pool
- Innovative or statewide proposals

Assuming level funding from both sources, it is anticipated that a similar amount of funding will be available for eligible entities and activities in SFY 2023 (7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023). Awards will be made for two years – SFY 2022 and SFY 2023. The availability of funds in both SFY 2022 and SFY 2023 is contingent on final appropriation by the State legislature and final negotiated details of Global Commitment Medicaid funding.

Based on a recent Needs Assessment completed by the Department of Corrections, we are requesting proposals for the following regional capacity. *These allocations are meant to serve as a planning tool only, and are subject to change based on the proposals we receive:*

<b>AHS District</b>	<b>Proposed Range for DOC-Funded Beds</b>	<b>Proposed funding allocation SFY 2022</b>
Barre	38-45	\$ 950,000.00
Bennington	14-17	\$ 375,000.00
Brattleboro	20-35	\$ 660,000.00
Burlington	42-55	\$ 1,500,000.00
Hartford	15-19	\$ 270,000.00
Middlebury	4-8	\$ 190,000.00
Morrisville	4-6	\$ 160,000.00
Newport	4-8	\$ 145,000.00
Rutland	13-25	\$ 400,000.00
Springfield	10-20	\$ 400,000.00
St Albans	10-20	\$ 400,000.00
St Johnsbury	4-8	\$ 150,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178-266</b>	<b>\$ 5,600,000.00</b>



## **D) OBJECTIVES**

The purposes of DOC-funded housing and services are to:

- Promote housing stability of individuals returning to the community from incarceration
- Supervise and support individuals (offenders) in the least restrictive environment
- Provide opportunities for reintegration and connections to community and services

Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of best practices in housing those with complex needs. Providers should have a general understanding of core correctional practices and include evidence-based services which align with the Vermont DOC's community supervision goals. Applicants should include plans to house sex-offenders, as this is the most challenging and necessary service for those re-entering their communities.

Proposals should reflect an understanding and reasonable incorporation of the principals and characteristics laid out in the Theory of Change and the resources listed in APPENDIX A. If a program currently operates under a different model, the application should include an explanation of proposed changes to policy & operations. Applicants may also describe what would be useful in terms of training and technical support from DOC. Ensuring that people are not evicted for program violations is critical to reducing recidivism, homelessness, and other negative outcomes. Including harm reduction interventions, or formal connections to other housing interventions if the location is a sober living environment, is key to doing this. There is a need for various program types to serve the needs of all citizens re-entering our communities.

All proposals, and subsequent grantee performance, shall align with the following DOC principles:

- That people can change
- That community participation and support are essential for the successful delivery of correctional services
- In the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals
- In treating people with respect and dignity
- In teamwork and the process of continuous improvement
- In professional self-improvement
- In the placement of offenders in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety and offense severity
- In fairness throughout decision making
- In respect for the liberty interests, rights and entitlements of the individual
- In individual empowerment
- In non-violent conflict resolution
- In maintaining a safe and secure environment
- In the value of individual, cultural and racial diversity
- That victims have the right to have an active role in determining how their needs can best be met
- That offenders are responsible, to the extent possible, to repair harm done to victims and the community

## **E) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

Applicants may request funding for the following program components:

**Staffing:** may include program managers, site staff, service coordinators, etc. Staffing may also incorporate services such as housing search and placement, and housing retention case management. As stated under the cost proposal section of the application (C, 11, b) every staff position that will be funded in part or in full via this proposal must be detailed and described in both narrative and budget format.

**Program Operations:** Requests for operations funding must include a list of items for which the grantee is requesting funding (i.e., rent, electricity, insurance, fuel, rubbish/snow removal, maintenance/minor repairs, etc.). As stated under the cost proposal section of the application (C, 11, c), all operations expenses must be detailed in both narrative and budget form, with adequate basis.

Programs may offer “scattered site” single or shared apartments located in the community with full or partial rental assistance. Regular case management shall occur, with regular visits made to the apartment by grantee staff.

Programs may also offer temporary transitional housing in a congregate setting (generally up to twenty-four (24) months) for re-entering individuals who are in need of a stable living environment and support in the transition to permanent housing.

Purchase and/or rehabilitation of real estate are NOT eligible expenses under this RPF.

**Direct Client Assistance:** Applicants may request funding for security deposits, rental assistance, housing supplies to furnish an apartment, and/or limited food or moving costs. Clear justification must be made for the average amount of rental assistance and other costs per program participant, and evidence that other sources of support for these costs are being leveraged.

## **F) GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Grant Terms**

The selected grantee will sign a grant with the DOC to carry out the specifications and provide the activities detailed in the proposal. Terms and conditions from this RFP and grantee’s response may become part of the grant. This grant will be subject to review throughout its entire term. The DOC will consider cancellation upon discovery that a grantee is in violation of any portion of the agreement, including an inability by the grantee to provide the products, support and/or service offered in their response.

### **Grant Award**

The DOC may award one or more grants and reserves the right to make additional awards to the same applicant or other applicants who submitted proposals at any time during the first year of the grant if such award is deemed to be in the best interest of the DOC.

### **Subgrantees**

Any subgrantees hired by the primary grantee must adhere to the same standards and grant

provisions applicable to the primary grantee. The primary grantee retains overall responsibility for grant performance. The primary grantee must advise the DOC of intent to hire a subgrantee and provide the name of company, name of president/owner and location of company. The DOC reserves the right to reject the hiring of subgrantee during the term of grant.

### **Invoicing**

All invoices are to be submitted by the grantee on the grantee's standard invoice. The invoice must include the following: an authorized signature, name and address for remittance of payment by the state, the current grant number, dates of performance and a brief description of the service or product provided. Additionally, all invoices shall be accompanied by a detailed statement of financial expenditures for the period.

### **Grantee Performance Guidance**

All applicants will be held to specific performance review criteria over the life of the grant to ensure that project deliverables as outlined in the RFP and attested to in the Scope of Work are being met. Review of project deliverables, using a Results Based Accountability framework, will occur at intervals agreed upon by both the State and the grantee and designated in the grant.

### **Grantee Staffing**

Key staff member(s) should be assigned to this grant for the full duration proposed. Grantee should notify DOC of any changes in program staffing.

The Grantee must identify staff member(s) who will remain on this project until completion, unless indicated otherwise in the Grantee's proposal. The Grantee may propose other staff members as "key" if desired. The Grantee will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the early removal of a key staff member has no adverse impact on the successful completion of this project.

All staff and volunteers must undergo a criminal background check and those who will have direct contact with program participants must complete all required DOC Training.

### **Key Grantee Responsibilities**

The selected Grantee must assume primary responsibility for the implementation of the grant specifications and activities. The Grantee will successfully implement the plan to accomplish the tasks described and defined in the Scope of Work.

The Grantee must abide by all State policies, standards and protocols as provided, and defined in this grant. Before commencing work on this Agreement, the Party must provide certificates of insurance to show that the following minimum coverage is in effect. It is the responsibility of the Party to maintain current certificates of insurance on file with the state through the term of the Agreement. **No warranty is made that the coverage and limits listed herein are adequate to cover and protect the interests of the Party for the Party's operations. These are solely minimums that have been established to protect the interests of the State.**

**Please review APPENDIX B, for all applicable STANDARD STATE PROVISIONS as listed in Attachments C, D, E, and F. All grantees will be required to abide by these provisions, and they will be incorporated into all grant agreements.**

**Excerpt from ATTACHMENT C, #8:**

**Workers Compensation:** With respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont. Vermont will accept an out-of-state employer's workers' compensation coverage while operating in Vermont provided that the insurance carrier is licensed to write insurance in Vermont and an amendatory endorsement is added to the policy adding Vermont for coverage purposes. Otherwise, the party shall secure a Vermont workers' compensation policy, if necessary to comply with Vermont law.

**General Liability and Property Damage:** With respect to all operations performed under this Agreement, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:

Premises - Operations  
Products and Completed Operations  
Personal Injury Liability  
Contractual Liability

The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:

\$1,000,000 Each Occurrence  
\$2,000,000 General Aggregate  
\$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate  
\$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury

**Automotive Liability:** The Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than \$500,000 combined single limit. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, limits of coverage shall not be less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.

**Additional Insured:** The General Liability and Property Damage coverages required for performance of this Agreement shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, then the required Automotive Liability coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. Coverage shall be primary and non-contributory with any other insurance and self-insurance.

**Excerpt from ATTACHMENT F, #5:**

Party shall not discriminate, and will prohibit its employees, agents, subcontractors, sub-grantees and other service providers from discrimination, on the basis of age under the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, on the basis of handicap under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, on the basis of sex under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and on the basis of race, color or national origin under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Party shall not refuse, withhold from or deny to any person the benefit of services, facilities, goods, privileges, advantages, or benefits of public accommodation on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity as provided by Title 9 V.S.A. Chapter 139.

**Notice of Cancellation or Change:** There shall be no cancellation, change, potential exhaustion of aggregate limits or non-renewal of insurance coverage(s) without thirty (30) days

written prior written notice to the State.

The Grantee must abide by all Federal Regulations if applicable to this Grant, including, but not limited to the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003 (28 C.F.R. Part 115, Docket No. OAG-131, R1N1005-AB34- Dated May 17, 2012), and with all applicable PREA Standards, VTDOC Policies and Directives related to PREA for preventing, detecting, monitoring, investigating, and eradicating any form of sexual abuse within VTDOC. Grantee acknowledges that, in addition to “self-monitoring requirements” VT State staff will conduct announced or unannounced, compliance monitoring to include “on-site” monitoring. Failure to comply with PREA, including PREA Standards and VTDOC Directives and Policies may result in termination of the grant.

Link to the Final PREA Standards:

<http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/library/488/standards/departement-of-justice-national-prea-standards>

### **Project Management**

The Grantee will be accountable to the Department of Corrections Community and Restorative Justice Executive and/or designee(s), and holds responsibility for the project deliverables, schedule, and adherence to grant provisions. The Grantee must abide by all DOC standards and protocols as defined by the Housing Administrator and his/her designee(s).

### **Status Reports**

The Vermont Department of Corrections reserves the right to call meetings with the grantee to ensure that unresolved issues are resolved during this grant period. The grantee will be accountable in advising the Housing Administrator of this grant or designee when/if performance measures agreed upon will not be met. The following status reports will become part of the grant. They include the following:

- Regular meetings with local and Central Office DOC staff to discuss general program operation
- Quarterly Performance Reports
- Regular data entry into the DOC’s Offender Management System (OMS)

## **G) SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

This RFP defines the scope of work required and work/management structure within which the chosen Grantee must operate. In order to be considered for selection, applicants must complete all sections and answer all question as laid out in the Application. Proposals not meeting the requirements described in this RFP will not be considered.

### **Single Point of Contact**

All communications concerning this RFP are to be addressed in writing to the attention of Emily Higgins, as listed on cover sheet of this request for proposals. Attempts by applicants to contact any other party could result in the rejection of their proposal as determined by the DOC.

Applicants may submit written questions and discussion points in advance of the Information Session. A follow-up Frequently Asked Questions and Answers document will be made available to all applicants.

## Applicant Information Session

The applicant Information Session will be held on **January 29, 2021** at 1:00pm via a Microsoft Teams meeting.

**Join on your computer or mobile app**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

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**Applicants should notify Emily Higgins at [emily.higgins@vermont.gov](mailto:emily.higgins@vermont.gov) by January 22, 2021 by 12:00pm if they plan to participate.**

Attendance at the applicant information session is not mandatory but is strongly recommended. The conference is intended to be an interactive exchange of information, with appropriate Department of Corrections staff available to provide clarification and/or answers to questions.

### Timetable

The table below presents the DOC schedule for this RFP and granting process. Please note that the DOC may change this schedule at any point.

RFP published	<b>January 8, 2021</b>
Written questions due	<b>January 22, 2021 by 12:00pm</b>
Applicants Conference/response to questions	<b>January 29, 2021 at 1:00pm</b>
Proposal due	<b>March 12, 2021 by 12:00pm</b>
Grant negotiation period	<b>To begin March 15, 2021</b>
Grant Start Date	<b>July 1, 2021</b>

The State reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. Selected State staff will evaluate proposals. If a proposal is selected, the chosen Grantee will be invited to negotiate a grant for all or part of the activities outlined in this RFP. Work to be completed under this grant will commence no later than July 1, 2021.

### Proposal Submission

Please note that any and all pages of the applicant's proposal containing confidential and proprietary information must be clearly marked "Proprietary and Confidential." After completion of this bid process, all proposal materials are in the public domain. Proposals may not be marked "Proprietary and Confidential" in their entirety.

### Content and Form

Proposals should follow the outline in the APPLICATION section below. All proposals must include the following, in the order shown:

- Cover Sheet
- Background (New Applicants Only)
- Program Narrative
- Budget & Justification

- Attachments – please review carefully

Proposals should be in 12 pt. font, with a header that includes page number and applicant name. There are no page limitations, but please be concise.

**Letters of Support**

Applicants may provide letters of support from partners to describe how their proposal meets the demonstrated need in their community and their qualifications to provide the service. Letters are not required, however are encouraged for new applicants or innovative new approaches.

**Submission Process**

Applicants must submit their proposals electronically by sending a PDF document to: [emily.higgins@vermont.gov](mailto:emily.higgins@vermont.gov). Budgets may be submitted in Excel. All questions should be directed to Emily Higgins at (802) 798-2302 or via the above email.

Applications will NOT be accepted by fax, mail, or hand delivery.

The closing date for the receipt of proposals is **March 12, 2021 at 12:00pm**. Proposals or unsolicited amendments submitted after that time will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant. There are no exceptions to the closing date conditions.

**H) SELECTION PROCESS**

The evaluation team will determine if each proposal is sufficiently responsive to the RFP to permit a complete evaluation of the individual/organization and experience.

**Method of Award**

Upon completion of the evaluation process, the DOC will select one or more applicants based on the evaluation findings and other criteria deemed relevant for ensuring that the decision made is in the best interest of the DOC. The selected applicant will be requested to enter into negotiation with the State of Vermont on grant specifications, including detailed work plans, budget, deliverables and timetables. In the event the DOC is not successful in negotiating a grant with a selected applicant, the DOC reserves the option of negotiating with another applicant. Any grant negotiated must undergo review and signature according to statute and policy.

The grant for is for two year(s): July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023. The grant may be renewed without rebidding for one two-year period with approval from the Administration. Award of a grant and any renewals thereof are contingent upon availability of funds.

**Scoring Information**

Proposals will be evaluated and weighted using the following distribution between experience, program design and cost:

Experience	20%
Program Characteristics/Alignment with Theory of Change	40%
Cost	25%
Bonus for Connection with Permanent Housing	15%

The criteria below (listed in no particular order), will be given significant consideration by the evaluation team.

- *Applicant has relevant background and experience*
- *Compelling letters of support (optional)*
- *Staff are qualified and turnover is reasonable*
- *History of effective program operation*
- *Proposal aligns with DOC framework of Risk Need Responsivity: trauma-informed, evidence-based*
- *Focus on participant strengths: skill building, tenancy education, intrinsic motivation*
- *Provide housing options for registered sex offenders (unless there's a specific prohibition, e.g. family shelter or town ordinance)*
- *Program allows for individualized services and responses*
- *Process for preventing and addressing conflict and/or program violations that reduces recidivism and exits to homelessness*
- *Evidence of active community engagement in the re-integration process: restorative justice approach to conflict, relationship development, integrated case planning*
- *Effective partnerships (including AHS/funders, mental health & substance use services, housing providers, DOC field services, volunteers & participants)*
- *The request aligns with the proposed allocation per District and is a reasonable per unit/participant cost*

Although the criteria listed above are material factors, they are not the sole factors in proposal evaluation. A grant award will be made to the applicant(s) whose proposal(s) are determined to be the most advantageous to the State, taking into account cost and other evaluation criteria as set forth in this RFP. Additional consideration will be given to proposals that leverage multiple resource streams for on-going program operations and/or create strategic links to permanent housing options and/or Housing Choice Vouchers.

Staff of other departments, agencies and/or consultants may be involved in the evaluation of the proposals.

During the evaluation process, applicants may be contacted for the purpose of obtaining clarification of their response. However, no clarification will be sought if an applicant completely fails to address a feature contained in the RFP document. If the failure was in response to a mandatory feature, the applicant may be disqualified.



**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**Community & Restorative Justice Unit**

**Transitional Housing Program**

**SECTION II: APPLICATION**

**A) COVER SHEET**

- 1) Applicant name, business address, telephone
- 2) DUNS # (if applicable)
- 3) Legal status of the applicant (non-profit, municipality, corporation, etc.)
- 4) Fiscal agent name and address (if applicable)

If using a Fiscal Agent, please attach signed written agreement between applicant and fiscal agent.

- 5) Grant Agreement contact person, telephone and email
- 6) Local Agency of Human Services (AHS) District(s)
- 7) Total Funding Request \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Has the applicant, the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent), or any persons who may be directly involved in this funded agreement over the past five years been convicted, imprisoned, placed on probation or under supervision, or fined for any violation of any law, including motor vehicle violations?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ (if yes, please describe on separate page)

Has the applicant, the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent), or any persons who may be directly involved in this funded agreement been convicted of a felony?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ (if yes, please describe on separate page)

To the best of my knowledge and belief, information on all forms of this application is true and correct, and the application has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant. We certify that our operations are in compliance with all applicable Federal and State laws, and we accept the conditions outlined in this RFP and the State's grant provisions (Appendix B).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name/Title

**For numbers 8 & 9 below, please list out each project/location separately for clarity. Attach**

**additional pages as needed.**

8) For Congregate sites:

- a. Name and Address of Program location
- b. Site Contact Person, Telephone & Email
- c. Specific population served (youth, sex offenders, those in recovery)

9) The request for funding will support the following transitional housing capacity (list congregate and scattered-site):

	EXISTING	NEW (Proposed)
# of congregate beds:		
# of congregate rooms:		
# of apartment bedrooms:		
# of apartment units:		

## **B) BACKGROUND NARRATIVE**

**(NEW APPLICANTS ONLY, i.e., those not previously direct recipients of DOC funds)**

- 1) **General Background:** Provide the following background information on your organization: brief history, structure of organization, board members, staffing, affiliations and activities. Make clear how housing programming or services aligns with the mission of the organization. Disclose any history of defaults, grant terminations, and/or bankruptcies.
- 2) **Management Experience & Capacity:** Describe past experience and current capacity of the applicant to manage comparable state or federal grant programs in terms of scale/scope, in terms of program and financial management. Optional: attach organizational chart if available.
- 3) **Housing Program Experience:** Briefly describe the experience of the organization in providing housing or services (e.g. transitional housing, apartments, vouchers, housing search and retention, service coordination, etc.) and/or other relevant experience working with the target population.
- 4) **Demonstrated Results:** Use data from past performance to demonstrate the applicant's ability to help people successfully re-enter their community after incarceration, get connected to benefits & services, and reduce the incidence of re-incarceration.

## **C) PROGRAM NARRATIVE (please use the following outline; please cross-reference when appropriate)**

- 1) **Program Summary:** Briefly describe how funds will be utilized and who the program is designed to serve. Be specific and include any sub-populations to be served; the number of participants to be housed (annually and general capacity); eligibility and acceptance criteria, as well as any exclusionary criteria; description of services to be provided and how they will be delivered (include specific evidence-based curricula or programming); community partnerships that enhance the program; description of communication with the local Probation and Parole office related to the proposal; and identification of start-up requirements and/or permitting status of the proposed housing, if applicable.
- 2) **Permanent Housing:** Describe how the applicant intends to partner with housing entities (including private landlords, public housing authorities and/or affordable housing agencies) to foster connections to permanent housing opportunities. Provide details of how the experience of the partners applies to the project and how the partnership will work. If the program is a sober living environment, describe how provisions will be made to prevent exiting residents to homelessness or prison due to program violations.
- 3) **Conflict Resolution:** Describe what procedures, approaches, and interventions will be used to prevent and resolve issues that arise with a participant. Please list out the steps involved, and

all options used to address and diffuse the conflict. Describe services or consultation that will be offered through local partnerships.

- 4) Relevant Program Experience: Does your organization have previous experience in providing the housing or services described above?

\_\_\_Yes

\_\_\_No

If no, please briefly describe the organization's relevant experience and expertise that qualify it to operate the proposed program. (NEW APPLICANTS PLEASE SKIP)

- 5) Program Results: Provide data that demonstrates results your program has achieved in the past year. Use past DOC outcome data or other relevant data. If helpful, provide any analysis or explanation. Include participant stories only if used to provide a deeper understanding of results data provided (not required). (NEW APPLICANTS PLEASE SKIP)

- 6) Local Coordination:

a) Describe your organization's role and participation in your local Continuum of Care. While those in the custody of DOC generally do not meet the definition of literal homelessness, an understanding of the resources in place for those who may be eligible is important.

b) Explain the need for the proposed housing/assistance and how it fills a gap or addresses a priority of the Department of Corrections. Will funding preserve existing community resources or will it provide new or expanded housing or services?

- 7) Mainstream Resources: Describe the plan for connecting participants with mainstream benefits (e.g., Medicaid, 3SquaresVt, Reach Up, WIC, SSDI/SSI, VA, unemployment insurance, etc.) and services such as medical/mental health treatment, counseling, workforce development/job training, childcare, financial empowerment, and other services needed to achieve independent living.

- 8) Participation of those with lived experience: Describe how, to the maximum extent practicable, the grantee will involve, through peer support, employment or volunteer services, advisory groups, or otherwise, individuals who have a history of involvement with the justice system in operating or providing housing and/or services.

- 9) Accessibility: Describe how the grantee will ensure access to all programs, services and activities for people with disabilities.

- 10) Confidentiality & Safety: Detail how protected information will be maintained and secured, as well as internal policies related to training, confidentiality, and hiring policies related to criminal background checks for current and potential employees.

11) Cost Proposal:

- a) Applicants must provide a detailed program and organizational budget. We encourage the use the Excel Budget Template provided for this purpose. Also required is a narrative justification of each category of funding requested (i.e. program operations, staffing, and direct participant/client expenses. The budget justification should include the basis or methods for determining costs, so that reviewers may determine whether costs are allowable, reasonable, and appropriate. **DOUBLE CHECK ALL MATH.**
  
- b) For every staff position that will be funded in part or in full via this proposal, please include: Position Title, Brief Description of Responsibilities, Show Calculation for \$ Request, including: Total Hours/Week, Total Weeks/Year, Hourly Wage, and Fringe Rate. Applicants are encouraged to use or adapt the staffing detail worksheet tab included in the Budget Template provided. In addition to salary and staff position information, include additional costs such as contracted services, staff mileage, etc. Provide a basis for the amount included. Job descriptions may be attached to provide further detail.
  
- c) Requests for operations funding must include a list of items for which the grantee is requesting funding (i.e., rent, electricity, insurance, fuel, rubbish/snow removal, maintenance/minor repairs, etc.). If not evident, provide a basis for the amount included. If the organization operates more than one facility or transitional housing program, be clear with program titles and addresses which buildings/sites are being included in the request.
  
- d) If the program requires that participants pay fees or rent, please detail the anticipated annual amount of income from this source, and how it will offset the funding requested. If the applicant requires participants to save household income, please describe how the program monitors or collects savings, including any interest earned from client savings held by the program in escrow. Describe how savings requirements, totals and returned funds are communicated to clients. Attach any written policies or procedures related to savings requirements.

**D) ATTACHMENTS**

REQUIRED	OPTIONAL
❖ Signed Cover Sheet	❖ Letters of Support
❖ Completed Budget Workbook	❖ Staff Job Descriptions
❖ Certificate of Insurance	❖ Organizational Chart
❖ W-9 signed within 6 months	❖ Relevant policies & procedures
❖ New Applicants: Tax Certificate/proof of tax status (non-profit, corporation, etc.)	❖ New Applicants: materials describing the agency's relevant experience and outcomes