

## Memorandum

**To:** Representative Janet Ancel and  
Members of the Legislative Joint Fiscal Committee  
**From:** Ken Schatz, DCF Commissioner *KAS*  
**Re:** Shelter Update for Barre and Rutland  
**Date:** September 14, 2017

Please see the information below regarding the shelters in Barre and Rutland. This memo serves as the requested September update on these shelters.

### Act 85, Section B.1101:

Department for Children and Families: The sum of \$600,000 in general funds is appropriated to the Department for Children and Families to be used to facilitate the development of two seasonal warming shelters, one in the Rutland district office service area and one the Barre district office service area to be in place for the 2017-2018 heating season. The Department for Children and Families and the local continuums of care in the Rutland and Barre districts shall report on or before September 15 and November 15, 2017 to the Legislative Joint Fiscal Committee on the progress of the siting and development of seasonal warming shelters in these two areas of the state.

### Overview:

Siting an emergency shelter for individuals who are homeless, especially providing shelter that is accessible for those most in need, is a complex process. To be successful, it must be built upon a strong foundation of municipal leadership commitment, community member support and stakeholder input. Siting a shelter does not typically follow a linear progression. In most communities, it starts with building relationships and support for the project. DCF does not fund shelters that do not have town or municipal approval, and many times, projects will fail to progress if community support is not strong from the outset, regardless of need.

As an appendix to this memo updating you on the progress in the Barre and Rutland AHS Districts, we have included a sample set of steps that generally all communities go through to site a shelter as a reference. In most communities, this is a several month process or longer.

### Updates on Siting Shelters:

#### Barre AHS District

Good Samaritan Haven is taking the lead in developing additional seasonal shelter capacity in Washington County. The local homeless continuum of care is very supportive of creating additional capacity. Three possible sites have been identified and assessed for feasibility, including two local churches. Together, these sites could create an additional 35 bed capacity. Enhanced partnerships with Another Way, Washington County Mental Health and Central Vermont Medical Center are being explored. Obtaining local municipal approval is a key next step, and may prove challenging. Good Samaritan Haven is starting to develop an operational plan.



Rutland AHS District

BROC – Community Action in Southwestern Vermont has agreed to take the lead on the seasonal warming shelter project. The Rutland Continuum of Care is supportive of moving the project forward. Current work is focused on identifying a feasible site and building community and municipal support; there are currently two site options being considered. Rutland has significant need for crisis bed capacity for multiple populations experiencing homelessness – families, victims of domestic violence, single adults, and youth. Local housing and service providers, with community support, have been working on a year-round shelter to serve families. While addressing family homelessness is a priority for AHS and DCF, General Assistance expenditures in Rutland are being driven by single adults, largely in the cold weather months. Thus, the legislature and DCF identified the need for a seasonal warming shelter to reduce motel expenditures.



**Appendix:**
**Sample Shelter Siting Overview**

Identify population to be served and scale of project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review data from Homeless Point-in-Time Count and identify gaps in existing programs/shelters.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Is the need seasonal? Year-round? Daytime?</li> <li>o Is the need for a specific subpopulation (e.g., DV, youth, individuals, families)?</li> <li>o Determine how many beds/rooms are needed</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Determine criteria for who will be served based on community need</li> </ul>
Build Early Support and Commitment for shelter project concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage municipal leadership</li> <li>- Collaborate with partners, i.e. members of the local homeless continuum of care to develop concept</li> <li>- Identify roles &amp; steering process             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o What community organization will take the lead?</li> <li>o What community partners will provide support/key roles?</li> <li>o Do we need to form a new organization, steering committee or advisory group? (not always)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Meet with community members and leaders</li> <li>- Engage business support</li> </ul>
Service & Operations Plan	<p>Service &amp; Operations Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Managing physical structure – bedding, meals, maintenance, security, health issues/pest control,</li> <li>- Staff and volunteer structure             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Develop/revise personnel policies</li> <li>o Develop/revise job descriptions</li> <li>o Training Plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Develop shelter policies and procedures regarding admission, diversion, referrals (coordination with other shelters and ESD), discharge, termination of shelter/services, safety/security, guest expectations and responsibilities, daytime/continuity of care, assessment/screening/referral for services and mainstream supports</li> <li>- Services offered (onsite? In-house? by referral? Partnership?)</li> </ul>
Identify & Narrow Potential Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deepen commitment from municipal leadership, community members, businesses and neighbors</li> <li>- Ensure that building meets basic safety and security needs, and understand any significant renovation needs that will require start-up/capital funds</li> <li>- Secure regulatory, zoning and legal approvals:</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Municipal approval – i.e. Development Review Board</li> <li>○ Zoning requirements for use of building</li> <li>○ Fire Marshall inspection and approval</li> <li>○ Insurance requirements/approval</li> <li>○ DCF shelter habitability site approval</li> </ul>
Build Start-Up and Annual Operations Budgets (source & use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify start-up and capital costs</li> <li>- Identify annual operating costs</li> <li>- Identify all funding sources (in-kind and cash)</li> <li>- Demonstrate cost savings to GA/Emergency Housing Motel Spending.</li> </ul>
Leverage in-kind and financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secure financial support from public, private and community-based organizations to support shelter</li> </ul>
Keep community engaged and committed before and during shelter opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication plan</li> <li>- Media and Press Releases</li> <li>- Volunteer recruitment</li> <li>- Fundraising</li> <li>- Plan to             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participate with the local coordinated entry partnership and connect shelter guests to permanent housing options</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

