

**Department for Children and Families  
Commissioner's Office**  
280 State Drive  
HC 1 North  
Waterbury, VT 05671-1080  
[www.dcf.vermont.gov](http://www.dcf.vermont.gov)

[phone] 802-241-0929  
[fax] 802-241-0950

*Agency of Human Services*

**To:** Representative Janet Ancel and Members of the Legislative Joint Fiscal Committee  
**From:** Ken Schatz, Commissioner  
**Subject:** Shelter Update for Barre and Rutland  
**Date:** November 7, 2017

---

**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 which are 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. However, 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. DCF has been working closely with Rutland and Barre area community partners to expand seasonal shelter capacity for single adults.

As an appendix to this memo updating you on the progress in the Barre and Rutland AHS Districts, we have included for your easy reference, the sample set of steps that generally all communities go through to site a shelter that was attached to our September memo.



### Barre AHS District

In Barre, DCF is pleased to announce that it has awarded a grant for \$297,703 to Good Samaritan Haven to provide an additional 33 beds of seasonal shelter in Montpelier. The funding supports the expansion of seasonal emergency shelter capacity for single adults specifically: 20 bed seasonal warming shelter at the Bethany Church in Montpelier; and 13 beds at Washington County Mental Health Nelson Street Apartments in Montpelier. Of the funds awarded, \$11,491 is contingent on the provision of eight additional beds pending final plan and site approval.

Good Samaritan Haven is moving this project forward with considerable support from its local homeless Continuum of Care and community partners. With a small percentage of matched funds from DCF, Washington County Mental Health will be providing a part-time position to support the new shelters. The same is true for Another Way which will be providing meals, peer support staff and a day-time shelter facility. National Life and the Capital City Foundation are both providing small grants to the project. Additionally, Good Samaritan Haven is working to identify roles for additional key stakeholders including the Central Vermont Medical Center. The Haven is on track to open the seasonal shelters by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Rutland AHS District

In Rutland, progress continues to be slow. In June, DCF leadership met with the Rutland Mayor, Representative Fagan, AHS Field Services and four community partners, to discuss shelter needs. DCF has met with community partners in Rutland and/or by phone almost weekly since that initial meeting.

Below is a description of the efforts and progress thus far:

- This summer, BROCC volunteered to take on project development for a seasonal warming shelter and made progress, including:
  - Arranging a site visit for Mayor Allaire to Charter House in Middlebury;
  - Working with Mayor Allaire and partners to identify a model that would be supported by the community, which includes replicating aspects of Charter House that combine seasonal shelter for families and individuals in separate parts of the same facility; and
  - Researching and pursuing possible sites including the United Methodist Church, which had expressed interest in pursuing a shelter at the Church. The Church moved to a new facility in October 2017, and the site is no longer an option. The Church still could provide staffing, volunteers, and/or operate the shelter.
  
- In October, BROCC concluded that it would not be the seasonal shelter operator, but committed to continue to lead project development – including work with Rutland partners to identify a site and operator as well as building support in the Rutland community for the shelter.



- Simultaneous and separate to the process of siting a seasonal warming shelter, the Homeless Prevention Center (HPC) and Housing Trust of Rutland County have been pursuing a family shelter to be operated by HPC. As of the writing of this report, full funding for the family shelter has not yet been raised. A building site in Rutland has been identified for a family shelter to be operated by the Homeless Prevention Center, although, the building requires significant renovation.
- The family shelter site was also identified by community partners as a possible location for a combined “Charter House” shelter for the 2017-18 winter, and potentially long-term.
- Recently, community partners, DCF and the family shelter site owner met to discuss the possible use of the family shelter building to provide for seasonal shelter for adults. There is willingness to use the family shelter site as a temporary location to serve adults this winter, with a goal remaining that the long-term use of the facility would be for families. The size of a singles shelter would be less than 20 beds, far fewer than the identified need. It’s also possible that the family shelter site could be adapted long-term to provide options for singles (seasonally) and families (year-round) in a joint “Charter House” approach.
- DCF has offered the use of one-time funds to support capital costs at the family shelter site to renovate one floor of the building to operate a seasonal shelter for adults this winter. This could leverage a reduction on annual leasing costs for the Homeless Prevention Center and give the family shelter project a “leg up”. DCF has committed \$143,169 towards family shelter operation (\$75,000 in GA funds and \$68,169 by redirecting existing funds for emergency apartments); as well as offered technical assistance on family shelter project development.
- The family shelter would be leased and operated by the Homeless Prevention Center. At this time, the Homeless Prevention Center does not wish to pursue a combined model at the family shelter site, primarily due to lack of secured, ongoing funds for the family shelter.

As there remains no feasible seasonal shelter site and an operator for a seasonal shelter in Rutland has not been identified, DCF plans to issue an RFP in November for seasonal shelter capacity for adults in Rutland this winter.



**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	Service & Operations Plans: <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:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Municipal approval – i.e. Development Review Board</li> <li>o Zoning requirements for use of building</li> <li>o Fire Marshall inspection and approval</li> <li>o Insurance requirements/approval</li> <li>o DCF shelter habitability site approval</li> </ul> </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</li> <li>- participate with the local coordinated entry partnership and connect shelter guests to permanent housing options</li> </ul>