

**From:** Coriell, Scott [Scott.Coriell@state.vt.us]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2015 8:18 AM  
**To:** Coriell, Scott  
**Subject:** Gov. Shumlin Announces Strategy to End Family Homelessness by 2020  
**Attachments:** Ending Family Homelessness in Vermont - March 2015.pdf

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 30, 2015

**Gov. Shumlin Announces Strategy to End Family Homelessness by 2020**  
*Announces \$580,000 Grant for New Day Station and Affordable Apartments in Burlington*

**BURLINGTON** – With over 1,500 Vermonters without housing on any given night and families with children now making up half of all people in emergency shelters, Gov. Peter Shumlin and Human Services Secretary Hal Cohen today announced a statewide strategy for ending child and family homelessness in Vermont by 2020. The Governor and Secretary made the announcement while celebrating a grant of more than a half-million dollars to rehabilitate and increase the number affordable housing units in Chittenden County, helping to relieve a shortage that affects all of those who face homelessness.

“Even with serious budget challenges, we are fortunate in Vermont to have many of the programs and partnerships already in place to support an ambitious initiative,” Gov. Shumlin said. “We can build on these foundations to achieve the goal of ending childhood and family homelessness by 2020.”

The administration’s initiative adopts the national strategy supported by the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and others. Vermont’s plan will bring together programs operated by the Agency of Human Services, federal programs providing housing and shelter assistance, and local organizations that provide shelter, housing and services to Vermonters who are homeless or at-risk. The fullthree-part plan to attack homelessness is attached and includes:

1. Adopting the national “Family Connection” framework, developed by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, to ensure that local communities have a coordinated system for assessing families’ housing needs and connecting them to the appropriate benefits, employment, and evidence-based intervention the first time.
2. Bringing together rental subsidy programs with intensive services for people who are homeless so that families can get into housing faster and local providers spend less time chasing and coordinating resources and more time addressing and resolving the root causes that led to homelessness.

3. Constructing and rehabilitating homes and apartments that are accessible and affordable to Vermonters with extremely low incomes so that Vermont creates better opportunity for families experiencing homelessness or at risk.

“The stress and instability of homelessness can have profound impacts on children’s health, behavioral development, and educational achievement,” said Cohen. “It’s time to wake up and realize that this is intolerable and that we are responsible to build the Vermont we want to see. For families without housing, we can do better than a motel room on cold nights.”

The Governor and Secretary Cohen were joined by Jennifer Hollar, Deputy Commissioner from the Department of Housing and Community Development, and guests representing state agencies, housing funders, housing providers, and organizations from various local Continuum of Care.

Simultaneous with the announcement of this new strategy, Gov. Shumlin presented a \$580,000 grant for the construction and rehabilitation of fourteen new affordable apartments and a day station for the homeless at 95 North Avenue in Burlington. The project is being developed by the Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) and Housing Vermont. The Town of Williston secured the grant from the Vermont Community Development Program on behalf of homeless throughout Chittenden County. The grant provides a critical piece of the overall funding for the project which will enable COTS and Housing Vermont to create a permanent location to replace the day station flooded and displaced in 2012.

The grant was funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant Program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is administered by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. Also at the ceremony were representatives of Senator Patrick Leahy, Senator Bernie Sanders and Congressman Peter Welch. Each member of the congressional delegation has played a key role in securing the funding that makes the program possible.

In a joint statement, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Representative Peter Welch (D-Vt.) said: "This investment of federal Community Development Block Grant funds will provide much needed housing for Vermonters experiencing homelessness. We know that the most effective solutions for homelessness combine safe and affordable housing with essential services to help people get back on their feet. We applaud all of the community partners, including the State of Vermont and the Committee on Temporary Shelter, who are working to address the crisis of homelessness and its impact on some of the most vulnerable people in Vermont."

For information on Vermont’s strategy for ending child and family homelessness by 2020, please see the Agency of Human Services website at:

<http://humanservices.vermont.gov/>

For information about the Vermont Community Development Program, please see the Agency of Commerce and Community Development website at:

[http://accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp)

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# CALLING FOR AN END TO FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN VERMONT

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In support of the national goal of Ending Child and Family Homelessness by 2020, The State of Vermont endorses the following three-part strategy.

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**A. ADOPT** the "*Family Connection*" framework developed by the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Support four key components of an effective homeless Continuum of Care.

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1. Develop a [coordinated entry system](#) to assess needs and connect families to [targeted prevention](#) and temporary shelter as needed in each community.

2. Ensure **interventions and assistance are tailored to the needs of families.**

- Provide assistance to [rapidly re-house](#) homeless families.
- Increase access to [affordable housing](#) and help communities target resources.
- Direct [service-intensive housing interventions](#) to the highest need households.

3. [Connect families to benefits, employment, and community-based services needed to sustain housing.](#) Promote stability and positive education outcomes for children and youth by ensuring coordination between local homeless Continuum of Care, homeless education liaisons, runaway and homeless youth programs and organizations providing early education and intervention, such as Head Start.

4. Develop and build upon **evidence-based practices** for serving homeless families and families at risk for homelessness.

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**B. BRAID** supportive services, housing, and rental assistance to improve housing stability for families, children, landlords and communities.

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1. Create a Section 8 **rental subsidy preference** for homeless families participating in Supportive Housing programs.

2. Foster **local partnerships** between service providers and property managers around concrete initiatives such as Rapid Re-Housing, Supportive Housing, and apartments set-aside for the homeless.

3. Encourage **local admissions preferences** for homeless families applying for subsidized housing.

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**C. CONSTRUCT** and rehabilitate rental housing affordable to households with extremely low incomes, and accessible to families and individuals who have experienced homelessness.

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**1. Promote significant public and private development of rental housing...**

**a.** Work with the Agency of Human Services, local housing and service providers, and continuums of care to prioritize local housing needs and resource allocation.

**e.** Identify increased development and rental assistance resources paired with support services for family housing, similar to recent initiatives targeted to veterans.

**b.** Integrate housing with services and rental assistance for the homeless into mixed-income affordable housing development.

**f.** Encourage communities to support building new rental housing. Encourage municipalities and regional planning commissions to examine their plans for housing with a goal of reducing barriers to appropriately sited housing.

**c.** Use housing needs and homelessness data to target development and set production goals.

**d.** Explore alternative and compact designs for new housing, public policy requirements, and State or publically donated property and land to reduce construction and operating costs, thereby addressing the supply gap.

**g.** Engage in strategies that move current renters to homeownership and improve the rental market for potential renters.

**2. ...And Encourage Improvements to Distressed Rental Stock.**

**a.** Work with state and local government to increase the supply of apartments meeting rental habitability standards.

**b.** Develop a strategy and funding sources to provide incentives and technical assistance to private landlords who bring apartments up to quality standards and into service at affordable rents.