

**City of Burlington Housing Trust Fund (HTF)  
Capacity Grant Application**

<b>APPLICANT ORGANIZATION</b> Champlain Housing Trust
<b>CONTACT NAME</b> Chris Donnelly
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<b>NAME OF PROJECT</b> CHT Capacity Funding Application
<b>AMOUNT REQUESTED</b> \$60,000
<b>ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION START DATE (FOR FEASIBILITY/PREDEVELOPMENT GRANTS)</b> October 1, 2023 [FY Start]
<b>ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE</b> September 30, 2024 (FY End)
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST</b> \$27.1M

Is the applicant a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation organized and operated for the purpose of creating or preserving housing for very low, low and moderate income households?

- Yes  
 No

Would the requested grant support the staffing, training, planning, fundraising or on-going operations of a nonprofit corporation, thereby increasing that corporation's capacity to create or preserve housing for very low, low and moderate income households?

- Yes  
 No

Is the applicant a corporation, partnership or individual who is delinquent, at the time of application, in the payment of property taxes or impact fees to the City of Burlington, who have been convicted of arson, who have been convicted of discrimination in the sale or lease of housing under article IV of this chapter or under the fair housing laws of the State of Vermont, or who have pending violations of current city electrical, plumbing, building or housing codes or zoning ordinances?

- Yes  
 No

**Project Narrative**

Funding priority goes to projects which respond to requirements of the Housing Trust Fund and the City of Burlington's affordable housing priorities. The Housing Trust Fund Administrative Committee (HTFAC) uses the attached criteria to score projects. Scores are tallied and ranked high to low. The HTFAC funds projects at its discretion.

Please provide the information below in the space provided. It is important to complete all fields. If you need additional space, attach separate pages to your application and title them as indicated below.

**Project description (Please briefly describe your project. Specifically describe how Housing Trust Funds would: a) support your organization's ongoing operation and/or b) support the assessment of structural and financial feasibility of new affordable housing.):**

Funding from the Housing Trust Fund directly supports CHT's advocacy, fundraising and affordable housing awareness staffing and activities. These efforts deliver tens of millions of dollars annually of federal, state and charitable dollars to the City and region to advance affordable housing development and programs that support low-income residents.

The need for housing has never been so obvious, and the ability for CHT to respond to this need has only increased in the last few years from homelessness advocates, municipal governments, the State, employers and residents throughout Burlington and the larger region. CHT's ability to respond to the opportunity and to serve the community is directly related to our ability to:

- Promote the need for housing construction in and outside of Burlington to local and state officials as well as members of the general public. Our coordinated activity through the Building Homes Together campaign and other coalition work will result in more available resources and policy reforms that make building affordable housing possible.
- Secure federal and state dollars in support of affordable housing and programs that support low income households. CHT's staff have become trusted advisors and leaders for State officials as decisions are made on how to prioritize the use of and allocate these resources.
- Address the needs of, and create a broader understanding of the needs of, unhoused residents. In addition to the management of the Elmwood Avenue Shelter Community, CHT has partnered with CVOEO to preserve the resource for unhoused residents at the Champlain Inn. CHT also operates Harbor Place, and is increasing permanent housing options that provide a pathway out of homelessness.

The staffing to carry out this community education, advocacy and real estate development work is dependent on capacity funding from sources like the Housing Trust Fund – the HTF is one of only three remaining public capacity grants that CHT receives each year.

**Please describe how the organization is currently involved in the construction of new affordable housing:**

We have a lot of development activity in our real estate pipeline. These include:

- Redevelopment of the VFW site into 38 new apartments with co-located community services, after the City uses the site as a shelter for the winter months.
- Working with the developer of Cambrian Rise to fulfill inclusionary zoning requirements, possibly with new project with as many as 70 homes in our pipeline
- Supporting the work of Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity in developing several homes for sale at various sites around the City.
- Engaging with property owners to develop in Burlington's South End.

**Please describe how the application supports one or more of the priorities listed in the City's Housing [Action Plan](#):**

CHT's work directly supports many goals in the Consolidated Plan, including the following priorities list in the 2023 Annual Action Plan, though some of our activities are also supporting a regional approach to housing needs and challenges:

- **DH 1.1 Protect the Vulnerable - New Perm Supportive Housing**  
CHT has just opened new permanently supportive housing in South Burlington with 20 apartments and is looking to do more where possible.
- **DH1.2 Protect the Vulnerable - New Special Need Housing**  
CHT is renovating a property to add office space to increase substance use disorder programming where a dozen people live in an SRO, and is exploring converting another property into one to serve adults with intellectual disabilities with services.
- **DH 2.1 Acquire/Rehab - Rental or Owner Units**  
CHT continues to maintain and rehab as necessary its housing in its own rental portfolio, and will be assuming the responsibilities of the City's revolving loan fund to rehab single family homes. We also operate the Vermont Rental Housing Improvement Program in our region that provides grants or loans to property owners to rehab existing apartments.
- **DH 1.3 Create New Affordable Housing**  
CHT is pursuing new housing on South Winooski Avenue and at Cambrian Rise in Burlington, and several projects outside of Burlington.
- **DH 1.4 Promote new homeownership buyer assistance**  
CHT's shared equity program serves between 25-50 homebuyers per year, and also offers additional direct downpayment assistance for BIPOC households buying a shared equity home.
- **DH 3.1 Protect the Vulnerable – Hsng Retention Svcs**  
CHT's resident services staff provided support to over 800 households last year.
- **SL 1.3 Improve Public Facilities & Infrastructure**  
CHT owns and manages the Old North End Community Center, an amazing asset for the City and region.
- **SL 1.4 Remediation of Brownfields**  
CHT has just received funding to remediate the site where the VFW is on South Winooski Avenue.

**Please describe how the application supports one or more of the priorities listed in the City's [Consolidated Plan](#):**

This application, and CHT's work more broadly, supports the following priorities in the City's Consolidated Plan:

- DH 1.2 –New Permanent Housing
- DH 2.1 Produce new affordable rental units
- DH 3.5 Reducing Lead Hazards
- DH 2.1 Produce new affordable units
- DH 2.2 – Produce new homeowner units
- DH 2.3 Buyer Assist Homeownership
- DH 3.1 Preserve and Upgrade Existing Housing

**Please describe the financial need of the requested activity (include a project budget with all sources and uses):**

Our organizational budget for FY24 is attached, broken down by line of business. There are multiple, complicated programs, grant sources, and revenue streams that are all supported by a small number of capacity grants, community fundraising, and earned real estate development fees. The margin is very thin with a **positive balance at the end of the year projected to less than 1% of expenses** – each capacity grant is critical to our operations.

We recently received a large grant from MacKenzie Scott -- \$20 million, which is the largest in our history and a reflection of the investment the City and community members have made in building this organization into one that is recognized as a leader.

This one-time gift is being dedicated to one-time initiatives and opportunities, and our Board has directed staff not to back fill ongoing programs with this gift. The donation will resolve financial bottlenecks in properties where there was debt coming due, ensuring that tenants (both residential and commercial) will have affordable rents, will replace expensive borrowing to move development projects along more expediently and at a lower cost to taxpayers, and will provide a steady stream of revenue to support some resident services and financial literacy programs.

The gift will not supplant ongoing operational support from places like the City of Burlington, the State of Vermont through VHCB, or NeighborWorks America’s annual capacity grant – the latter of two have indicated that their capacity support for CHT won’t waver. We trust that’s the case with the City as well, especially considering the work ahead.

**Please describe the negative impact to the community if the request is not funded:**

As stated above, our organization has a complicated, multi-dimensional budget that depends on all sources to ensure that we keep our staffing levels at the necessary levels to effectively advocate for housing resources and to secure public support for affordable housing initiatives and development. The negative impact may result in not having state or federal resources available to develop as much new housing in the community, or win needed policy reforms.

**Please describe how the proposed project supports an underserved and vulnerable population:**

The mission of the Champlain Housing Trust is to support underserved and vulnerable populations. Capacity funding from the Housing Trust Fund enables us to pursue this purpose. This funding supports our ability to create and preserve new housing for these populations, advances our work to ensure that there is a continued focus on creating housing for people experiencing homelessness, and supports our advocacy to make Burlington and the region more affordable for all.

Signature Page

Please check each box that applies:

- Good Standing:** I certify that I am in “good standing” with respect to, or in full compliance with a plan to pay any and all taxes due to the City of Burlington.
  
- Certification:** Under penalties of perjury, I declare that the information I have provided, to the best of my knowledge and belief, is true, correct, and complete.

Chris Donnelly

Print Name



Applicant Signature

November 14, 2023

Date