

**Housing Trust Fund
Capacity Grant Application**

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION- COTS (Committee on Temporary Shelter)
CONTACT NAME- John Michael Longworth
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NAME OF PROJECT- COTS Adult Shelter Programs
AMOUNT REQUESTED- \$10,000
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION START DATE (FOR FEASIBILITY/PREDEVELOPMENT GRANTS)
ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST- \$999,557

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.):

COTS Waystation is a 36-bed emergency shelter that meets the most basic needs of single-adult homeless individuals in our community. The shelter has 28 beds in the men's dorm and 8 beds in the women's dorm and is open 365 days a year from 6PM to 8AM. The Waystation serves some of the most vulnerable members of our community, homeless men, and women with few if any social or familial supports to access in times of crises. Many guests are struggling with ongoing issues that make finding and maintaining permanent housing a significant challenge: chronic health conditions; physical disabilities; developmental disabilities; domestic violence; and mental health and substance use issues. The Waystation is a sober shelter for homeless adults working to maintain their sobriety, particularly amid the state's opiate crisis.

This program is designed to help individuals who are experiencing homelessness achieve self-sufficiency and avoid repeated episodes of homelessness. The Waystation serves as a refuge from the streets and helps people stabilize their lives in times of crisis. Guests can stay for up to one year while they work with staff to identify their needs, set goals, and access services to increase stability and secure long-term sustainable housing. It is the entry point for a variety of services offered through COTS, including assistance from COTS Housing Resource Center's Housing Navigation Team, access to COTS' housing (permanent or transitional), and connections to other community resources and housing through partners such as Champlain Housing Trust, Safe Harbor, Howard Center, and others.

The Daystation, a daytime drop-in shelter for homeless adults in the greater Burlington area, is open daily from 9AM to 5PM. Guests can eat a nutritious meal (the only daily, no-cost, noontime meal available in Chittenden County), take a shower, wash their belongings, receive mail, use the phone, and access the internet. Guests can meet with peer support workers who help them identify their needs and access a range of services (such as veteran's services, substance abuse treatment and employment support, etc.). The Daystation provides emergency shelter to an average of 75 people a day.

Daystation guests can get referrals for tuberculosis testing and Hepatitis B shots and they can attend monthly health presentations on topics such as HIV/AIDS, frostbite, heatstroke, diabetes, hepatitis, and high blood pressure. To help guests find employment, staff members hold job skills meetings, where the focus ranges from resume/application assistance to mock interviews. Daystation staff link guests with community resources, refer them to other agencies such as the Joint Urban Ministry Project, the Community Health Centers of Burlington, Community Action, Legal Aid, Voc Rehab, Office of Veterans Affairs, and Howard Center to name a few.

These two programs work in tandem to ensure that single adults currently experiencing homelessness can have access to round the clock safe and supportive space, while creating the opportunity to enter the process of becoming successfully housed, either in public housing, COTS permanent housing, or another community partner's housing stock. Our Daystation provides opportunities for robust community involvement and volunteering, from creating personal care kits and securing warm safe boots to preparing and serving lunch and build relationships with guests in a pro-social atmosphere.

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

COTS is currently in the process of building 16 new units of permanently affordable housing specifically for families with children who are either exiting our Family Shelter Program, another organization's family shelter, or emergency shelter in motels funded by the state of Vermont. The facility will be adjacent to our Main Street Family Shelter, providing easy access to the wrap around support team at the shelter, including educational and mental health advocacy and assistance for children.

In addition to this project, COTS has also begun an engineering and feasibility study of our St. John Hall property on Elmwood Avenue with the goal of transforming this primarily SRO housing into apartments. This would be achieved through internal restructuring and some modifications to the roofline of the building to turn all 18 of the SRO units into efficiency apartments, and to restructure the 4 existing apartments to create at least 6 units of housing.

100% of the units in both facilities are reserved for households exiting homelessness and they have portable project-based vouchers to aid with housing transitions in the future.

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

COTS has long been a leader in Burlington in deploying *IV. New Approaches to Homelessness in Our Community*. We were the first overnight no-freeze shelter, the first year-round emergency shelter operated directly in conjunction with deeply affordable permanent housing for hard to house single adults, the first year-round drop-in day center, and the effective co-location of the Daystation and Housing Resource Center to create opportunities for quicker connections between guests and navigators.

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

COTS is committed to the long-term well-being of our clients, ensuring that they have access to decent and affordable housing, utilizing every available resource for income stabilization and financial security, and having an opportunity to reboot and rebuild their credit and rental record after a housing crisis. We believe that this supports the objective for EXPANDED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Empowerment and self-sufficiency for low-income persons to reduce generational poverty in federally assisted housing and public housing. We are continually seeking opportunities to create, nurture, and partner with the sorts of wrap around support that prevent multiple cases of homelessness or housing instability within a family, and from generation to generation.

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

COTS has worked diligently this past year to acknowledge and adapt to a changing service environment, with an increasing number of guests experiencing serious mental health challenges, substance use behaviors, and behavioral challenges. We strive to create a safe, welcoming, and pro-social environment for everyone, guests, staff, and volunteers alike. To further these goals, we’ve increased our training budget this year to provide all our staff with the latest techniques for trauma-informed care, de-escalation tactics, and mental health first aid. We’re reviewing all our safety and security procedures and have stretched to ensure that we can have two staff present for each overnight at the Waystation and two staff present for both weekdays and weekends at the Daystation.

Income		Expense	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
State Grants	\$315,661	Personnel	\$752,115
Federal EFSP Support	\$8,000	Operating Costs	\$199,753
BHTF	\$10,000	Client Supplies & Activities	\$23,539
Foundation Grants	\$58,000		
Fundraising	\$583,746		
Total	\$975,407	Total	\$975,407

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

In the most recent COTS fiscal year, ending September 30th, 2023, the Waystation had served 183 individuals including 42 who were chronically homeless. The Daystation served 515 distinct individuals with an average of 55 guests daily and an annual daily high of 80 guests. Without adequate funding, we risk moving backwards on the advances we’ve made on training, staffing levels, and improved safety for a high need and at-risk population.

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

A review of COTS assistance data for the last four years reveals that on average 98% of our clients are below 50% of AMI for our area, of those households, roughly 83% are at or below 30% of AMI. While our services are not exclusively for these tranches, a significant majority of our efforts assists very-low and low income households with achieving housing stability. All our clients are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. 22% of our clients are Black/African Descent, 1% are Native American, 2% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5% are multiracial. Nearly 2% of our clients are Trans/Non-binary Vermonters.

Signature

Please check each box that applies:

- X **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.

- X **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.

Jonathan Farrell Executive Director

Print Name

Jonathan Farrell

11-10-23

Applicant Signature

Date