

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

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION
Committee On Temporary Shelter (COTS)
CONTACT NAME
Tamira Martel, Corporate and Foundations Relationship Manager
DAYTIME PHONE & E-MAIL
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NAME OF PROJECT
COTS Waystation
AMOUNT REQUESTED
\$7,500
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION START DATE (FOR FEASIBILITY/PREDEVELOPMENT GRANTS)
N/A
ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE
Ongoing program
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST
\$390,754.88

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.):

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS Waystation

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

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS Waystation

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

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS Waystation

Please describe how the application supports one or more of the priorities listed in the City's Consolidated Plan:

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS Waystation

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

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS Waystation and Attachment B.: FY21 COTS Waystation Budget

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

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS Waystation

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

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS Waystation

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.

Tamira Martel, COTS Corporate & Foundations Relationship Manager
Print Name

Tamira Martel
Applicant Signature

11.24.20
Date

**Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS Waystation
BURLINGTON HOUSING TRUST FUND FY20
Capacity Grant Application**

*Submitted by the Committee on Temporary Shelter
November 25, 2020*

Project description: The Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) provides emergency shelter, homelessness prevention assistance, support services, and housing for those who are homeless or marginally housed in Vermont. COTS began in 1982 when a group of concerned community members joined to address the needs of the growing homeless population in Burlington. Today, COTS serves approximately 2,300* people annually through a variety of programs. Nearly half of all COTS clients are residents of Burlington.

This application seeks funding for the Waystation, a 36-bed* emergency shelter that meets the most basic needs of adult homeless men and women in our community. The Waystation serves as a refuge from the streets and helps people stabilize their lives in times of crisis. It is the entry point for a variety of services offered through COTS, including assistance from COTS Housing Resource Center's Housing Navigator 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.

Funding will be used to pay for the day-to-day expenses of operating the shelter and providing services to help stabilize approximately 200 homeless adults. Our goal is to help Waystation clients move toward independence and permanent housing.

Please describe how the organization is currently involved in the construction of new affordable housing: COTS is currently not developing any affordable housing units that will be available for occupancy within the next twelve to eighteen months.

Please describe how the application supports one or more of the priorities listed in the City's Housing Action Plan: Under the fourth priority listed in the City's Housing Action Plan (CHAP), "New Approaches to Homelessness in Our Community" item 2. outlines the benefits of emergency shelter, particularly as a gateway for accessing programs and services. COTS Waystation program is that point of connection for individuals experiencing homelessness in the greater Burlington area. As the largest service provider for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in Vermont the breadth and depth of our services and connections to community providers is unmatched in this area.

Drawing on established research in this field, as well as 38 years of experience working with homeless populations, COTS knows that emergency shelter is not the solution to homelessness. It is critical to provide shelter, one of our most elemental human needs, to those without housing, but this itself is not enough to end homelessness. People become homeless because of many complex factors, including poverty, mental illness, substance abuse, soaring health care costs, and domestic violence. Shelter alone, without supportive services, does not address these factors.

Staff members work with residents to find employment, health care, and affordable housing so they can become independent. We help individuals obtain entitlement benefits and link them to local resources that help them increase skill levels and income and overcome personal barriers hampering their ability to secure and maintain housing, such as poor credit and/or rental histories or substance abuse or mental health issues.

Therefore COTS has designed the Waystation so that guests have their need for shelter met while also receiving supportive services that help them achieve self-sufficiency and stable, permanent housing.

*Please note that the number of individuals currently served by COTS and those served during the recently completed fiscal year was artificially constrained by health and safety protocols we implemented as a result of the State of Vermont's required recommendations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please describe how the application supports one or more of the priorities listed in the City's Consolidated Plan: COTS Waystation helps the City of Burlington positively advance in some capacity, several of the strategies and objectives listed in the City's Consolidated Plan.

Under the CDBG purpose: Decent Housing one of the key strategies is to protect the vulnerable. Homeless individuals face enormous safety and health issues. Without a secure place to be at night, they run the risk of being mugged, beaten, or raped. They face other health issues as well, such as frostbite, circulation issues, diabetes, skin infections, and upper respiratory infections.

The Waystation program provides those without a home with a warm, safe, and sober place to sleep each night and a starting point to regain independence. The Waystation is a vital resource in our community for those homeless individuals in recovery trying hard to maintain their sobriety, particularly amid the state's opiate crisis. The emergency shelter provided 365 days a year to homeless individuals by COTS Waystation helps protect some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

The housing assistance provided by COTS' housing navigators to our Waystation guests directly addresses bullet number one under the CDBG purpose: Decent Housing.

- Assisting homeless persons obtain affordable housing;

Although the primary activity of the Waystation is the provision of safe and decent emergency shelter for homeless adults, Waystation guests have access to COTS Housing Navigators (HN). COTS' HN's are experts in housing. Their knowledge and expertise in this arena coupled with their ability to leverage community resources, such as COTS Housing Resource Center to their client's benefit is unparalleled in our area. HN's offer one-on-one support services to guests currently experiencing the crisis of homelessness, to assess and overcome barriers to housing stability. Our HN's help clients prepare for and locate sustainable housing. They provide direct housing assistance through the completion of housing and subsidy applications, addressing credit challenges, and connecting guests to mainstream and available housing resources that will expedite housing. Early in the process they provide targeted referrals for guests to services and supports in the community in-order-to focus on housing. This approach helps ensure a timely transition back to housing and stabilization.

Please describe the financial need of the requested activity (include a project budget with all sources and uses): COTS Waystation program costs more than \$390,755 annually. COTS Waystation is the largest emergency shelter for single adults in our area and serves as the centralized entry point to access shelter and services for a majority of men and women experiencing homelessness in Chittenden County.

The \$7,500 requested in a capacity grant from the Burlington Housing Trust Fund would be used for staffing, operations, and client programs.

See Attachment B.: COTS FY21 Waystation Budget

Please describe the negative impact to the community if the request is not funded: In the [2020 Out of Reach](#) report, it has become clear that there are no states within the US where an individual can work 40 hours per week at the minimum wage and afford a modest 1-bedroom apartment. The 2020 Fair Market Rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Burlington is \$1,223 per month. At that rate, a renter must work an average of 54 hours per week at Vermont's current minimum wage to afford a one-bedroom apartment and not pay more than 30% of their income on housing.

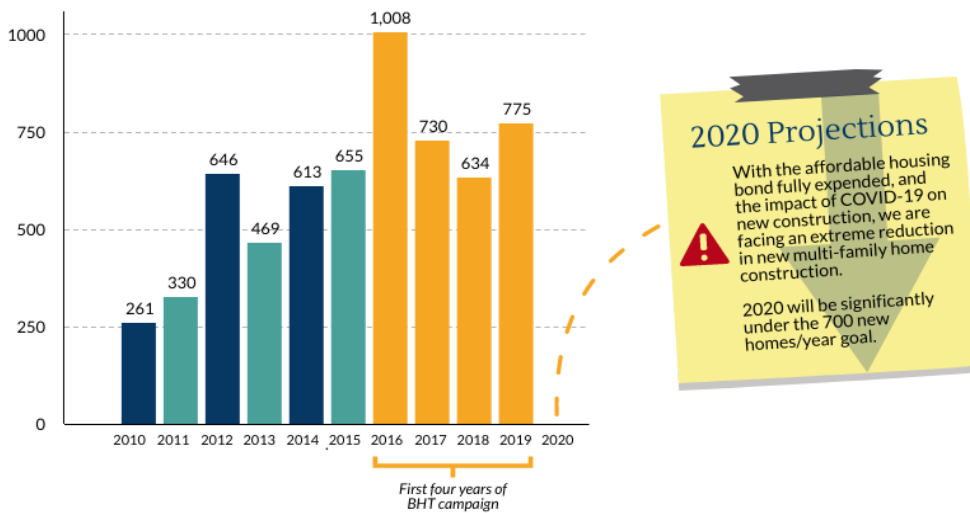
Fair Market Rent prices in Burlington-South Burlington are very high compared to the national average. This FMR area is more expensive than 97% of other FMR areas nationwide. This data highlights the already challenging environment for low income individuals trying to secure decent affordable housing.

The rise of COVID-19 and its economic instability have only intensified pre-existing financial issues. 54% of the US renter population are employed in the 5 industries hit hardest by COVID-19—restaurants, retail, personal services, service workers and entertainment. Within the northeast, specifically, low-income renters have been 15-80% more cost burdened by rent since March 2020.

In addition to the problems surrounding employment or underemployment as a result of the pandemic the number of new multi-family units scheduled to come online this year and next in the greater Burlington market has been severely impacted.

Total New Home Construction

✓ Goal: *Average of 700 new homes/year for five years. (Over the first four years, 3,147 new homes were built -- a 787 homes/year average.)*



Source: Building Homes Together

The lack of supply in our area increases monthly rents creating a crisis of unsustainability where previously secure renters and homeowners alike teeter on the verge of homelessness. Each year, through private and public funding, COTS is able to help hundreds of households avert the crisis of homelessness through prevention. Last year, we helped 301 households (including 274 children) avoid homelessness by providing financial assistance and services. Private support, like that requested through the Town of Milton is a critical and much-needed resource, as it specifically helps those at-risk, households who are often not eligible for homelessness prevention and rehousing assistance made possible through state and/or federal programs.

Over the last three years the HRC has served an average of 250 to 300 households per year that are at-risk of becoming homeless. With the mid- and long-term impacts on the economy of the COVID-19 pandemic yet unknown the number of households who become at risk of homelessness and seek COTS' support could increase dramatically over the next 12 to 18 months. They could return to or exceed 2008 recession-era levels where COTS Housing Resource Center served approximately 500+ households annually. At this time, we have no way of predicting the number of households that will ultimately need assistance.

Last year COTS Waystation was a lifeline for well over 183 individuals in our community who were experiencing the crisis of homelessness. The Waystation is a 36-bed, year-round overnight emergency program shelter for single adults. 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 facility offers guests a spot to store their few belongings, and access to a washer, dryer, and clean showers. Guests work with staff to identify their needs, set goals, and access services to increase stability and secure long-term sustainable housing.

Although our shelters at COTS are dry, meaning guests must be sober; the Waystation offers white flag nights (when the temperature is below freezing or otherwise inhospitable), when we permit guests under the influence to stay at the shelter. COTS Waystation staff work in tandem with the local Warming Shelter and the State of Vermont's Office of Economic Services Division to ensure that no individual remains without shelter during inclement weather.

From 11.1.19 to 04.1.20 COTS provided safe and decent emergency shelter for up to four homeless individuals at a time who were referred by Economic Services Division to our Waystation facility. COTS had the following outputs and outcomes for that population during the time referenced above:

- 97 unique individuals referred through ESD and receiving General Assistance received shelter and supportive services at the Waystation during the performance period listed above;
- 345 bed nights in total during the reporting period were provided for individuals referred through ESD therefore reducing general assistance motel stays by a similar amount during the performance period listed above;
- ESD guests successfully integrated into the COTS program at the Waystation, 74 engaged in housing navigation services and as a result 30 (compared to 13 in FY19) secured transitional or permanent housing.

This program connects people who are homeless with housing resources and supportive services, while meeting their urgent need for safe shelter, food, and medical assistance. This program – and the critical service it provides – are an essential component of the safety net in our community.

If COTS is unable to raise the full program budget, it could result in a reduction of services and/or staffing within this program or in other areas of our organization. A decrease in services and staffing levels could result in fewer households served overall and potentially increased shelter stays particularly among chronically homeless individuals with little or no support networks. We would aim to sustain the program through additional individual contributions, corporate support, and foundation grants from new and existing sources. However in a more competitive fundraising climate, it may be impossible to provide the same level of service with reduced funds and it is likely that services could be negatively impacted in the short-term while trying to secure new funding.

Impact of our work:

“Scott” came to COTS Waystation in late autumn of 2019. He was experiencing several undiagnosed health concerns and had not been able to get his medication for anxiety in some time. As a result of his health issues, he was unable to work and therefore had no source of income and struggled with going out in public. Waystation are required to meet with their housing navigator (HN) within three days of arriving in shelter. Scott and his HN met frequently in the first few weeks of his stay in shelter. Together they develop a two-tiered approach – the first tier focused on getting Scott reconnected with his doctor and securing the necessary tests to find a diagnosis and the second tier focused on finding housing through available subsidies. With the assistance of his HN Scott continued to meet with his doctor and attend various medical appointments while moving forward with his housing search. In late Spring of this year Scott moved into an affordable apartment with the help of a housing voucher. He is still dealing with his health challenges, but reports that having a personal, private space of his own has made handling those issues easier.

“Robert” came to COTS in late fall looking for help after receiving a non-renewal of lease notification. His landlord was going to be renovating his entire building and after more than eight years of successful tenancy he was being asked to leave his home. Robert worked the overnight shift at a local big box store stocking the shelves in time for customers to arrive when the store opened at 7am every morning. Robert stated to one of our intake staff members that, “I just need somewhere to be able to sleep a little bit and clean up so I can keep my job.” We set Robert up with a bed at the Waystation and a locker to store the few personal belongings he kept when forced to leave his home. When he wasn’t working he would sleep in his bed at the Waystation, but on the days that he worked his overnight shift he would use the Daystation’s sleep room so he could rest before his next shift began. Within a few days of arriving at COTS Robert began meeting regularly with his housing navigator to find permanent, affordable housing. Within three months Robert was able to move into the Smith House, COTS’ transitional housing facility, because he had an income and was able to pay the modest rent. This allowed Robert to maintain his positive rental history while he continued to save money and look for an affordable, long-term housing option.

Please describe how the proposed project supports an underserved and vulnerable population: 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 are struggling with ongoing issues that make finding and maintaining permanent housing a significant challenge. The Waystation offers a safe, caring environment and is the only alternative to the streets for many homeless adults. This program is also a gateway to a continuum of services offered through COTS, such as transitional housing or permanent single occupancy units.

Some Waystation guests suffer from a chronic health conditions (52%); a physical disability (38%); a developmental disability (21%); struggled with substance abuse prior to being admitted to the Waystation; (61% - up from 33% in 2019) or a mental health issue (59%) or are recently released from prison (1%). We work to connect these individuals with organizations within our community to provide the appropriate services and supports they need to regain and maintain their independence. As the percentages bear out many clients struggle with multiple disabilities or conditions.

As mentioned above many individuals experiencing homelessness struggle with chronic and/or debilitating medical issues. Prior to admission all Waystation guests are referred to the Safe Harbor Clinic to get a tuberculosis screening. Not only does it help to ensure the health of all guests at the Waystation, but it also means that guests will see a health practitioner who may notice additional health issues. Many homeless people do not have regular medical checkups, so this is one way to connect them with medical care. In addition, COTS has a long-time partnership with the University of Vermont's College of Medicine to provide additional health and wellness screenings and guidance.

More than 10% of the visitors to the Waystation are veterans and 33% of our guests have experienced domestic violence. Last fiscal year, the Waystation provided services to 183 unduplicated individuals, an average of 33 people each night prior to the pandemic ranging in age from 21 to 79 years old. The two most common reasons Waystation guests became homeless: 1) asked to leave a shared residence/family situation changed and 2) loss of job or reduction in income. Chronically homeless individuals comprised 26% of Waystation guests.

The following demographics represent guests utilizing the Waystation during COTS FY20:

AGE: 14% aged 18-30; 33% aged 31-40; 23% aged 41-50; 19% aged 51-60; 9% aged 61-70; 1% aged 71+.

ETHNICITY: 9% Hispanic/Latino; 89% Not Latin; 2% unknown.

*RACE: 5% American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2% Asian; 16% Black or African American; 77% Caucasian; 1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 6% Unknown.

GENDER: 25% females; 73% males, 3% identified as gender non-conforming.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: The average monthly income for all adults was \$565.31 and 50% of guests had monthly income.

*Percentages are of all respondents indicating association with a particular race. Some respondents indicated associations with multiple races. Denominator is all respondents who knew and chose to disclose their race. Percentages listed will not necessarily add up to 100%

Attachment B.: FY21 COTS Waystation Budget

	WS
	Oct '20 - Sep 21
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
United Way	
Chittenden County UWay	
Other United Way	
Total United Way	
General Public Support	
Cookies	
Bequests and Planned Gifts	
Corporations	
Foundations	
General Contributions	299,807.84
Mailings	
Major Donor Campaign	
Other Special Events	
Phonathon	
Holiday	
Prospecting	
Walkathon	
Total General Public Support	
Federal Grants	
HOP Supplemental	0.00
FEMA	9,000.00
Total Federal Grants	9,000.00
State Grants	
Dept Bldgs & Grounds VT	
HOP	74,447.04
Family Supportive Housing	
Family Savings Accounts	
Dept of Children & Families-DCF	
Total State Grants	74,447.04
Municipalities	
BHTF	7,500.00
Local Cities and Towns	
Total Municipalities	7,500.00
Other	
VT Children's Trust	
Veterans Per Diem Fees	
Program Revenue	
95 North Service Provider Fee	
Program Revenue - Other	

Total Program Revenue	
Dividend and Interest Income	
Total Other	
Rental Income and Reimbursement	
Tenant Rent	
HAP Payments for Tenants	
Total Rental Income and Reimbursement	
Miscellaneous Income	
Carry Forward To/From Prior Yrs	
Total Income	<u>390,754.88</u>
Gross Profit	390,754.88
Expense	
Personnel	
Salaries & Wages	273,546.15
FICA	20,570.69
SUI	
Life & Disability Insurance	2,034.36
Health Insurance	17,042.27
Dental Insurance	1,203.36
Workers Compensation	3,185.40
S/125 Benefit	2,186.64
403B Employer Contribution	4,331.39
Emp Plan Mgmt	664.26
Personnel EAP & COSTCO	<u>643.46</u>
Total Personnel	325,407.98
Operations	
Operating Leases Canal & 95N	
Reserve Rent 95N	0.00
Operating Leases Canal & 95N - Other	<u>4,049.04</u>
Total Operating Leases Canal & 95N	4,049.04
Furnishings	180.00
Infestation Avoidance	2,400.00
Repairs and Maintenance	6,599.64
Capital Obligation	10,293.00
Maintenance & Cleaning Supplies	7,157.04
Property Management Fee	3,758.04
Americorps	0.00
Life Safety & Security	990.00
Insurance	7,761.60
Utilities	
Gas	899.99
Water and Sewer	3,999.96
Electric	<u>3,045.72</u>
Total Utilities	7,945.67
Telephone	1,314.84
Contract Janitorial	3,267.96
Contract Labor	

Technology Supplies & Equipment	2,709.96
IT & Network Support	1,067.40
Office Supplies & Services	107.16
Printing and Reproduction	
Postage	
Dues, Subscriptions, Permits	
Development Event Expenses	
Devo 30th Anniversary	
Volunteer Expense	
Hiring & HR	624.00
Kudos	
Travel	
Interest Expense	
Training and Development	
Legal & Professional Fees	152.52
Board of Directors	
Accounting, Audit & Invsmt Fees	3,262.07
Miscellaneous Expense	
Total Operations	63,639.94
Client	
Meals	50.00
Prevention	
Security Deposits	
Housing Retention Svcs	
Prevention - Other	
Total Prevention	
Rapid Rehousing	
Telephone & Utilities	301.44
Translation Service	249.96
Transportation	620.04
Rent	
Supplies & Activities	485.52
Total Client	1,706.96
Total Expense	390,754.88
Net Ordinary Income	0.00
Net Income	