

## City of Burlington Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Project Award Application

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION
Committee On Temporary Shelter (COTS)
CONTACT NAME
Tamira Martel, Corporate and Foundations Relationship Manager
DAYTIME PHONE & E-MAIL
(802) 540-3084 ext. 208 ; tamiram@cotsonline.org
NAME OF PROJECT
The Wilson – A Home For All
AMOUNT REQUESTED
\$10,000
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION START DATE
May 2021
ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE
June 2021
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST
\$43,615
TOTAL NUMBER OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS
23
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST / TOTAL NUMBER OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS (PER UNIT COST)
\$43,615/\$1,896

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

Will the proposed housing project be perpetually affordable?

- Yes  
 No

Will the proposed housing project be affordable for 10-40 years?

- 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. Attach a project budget including all sources and uses):

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS The Wilson – A Home for All and Attachment B.: FY21 The Wilson Project Budget

**Please describe how many households at or below 80% of AMI will be served by the project:**

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS The Wilson – A Home for All

**Please describe how many households at or below 50% of AMI will be served by the project:**

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative -COTS The Wilson – A Home for All

**Please describe how the City has already demonstrated its interest and support through the investment of CDBG funds, the provision of technical assistance, and/or acquisition of site control for the proposed housing project:**

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS The Wilson – A Home for All

**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 The Wilson – A Home for All

**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 The Wilson – A Home for All

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

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS The Wilson – A Home for All

**Please describe the experience of the development team:**

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS The Wilson – A Home for All

**Please describe other ancillary uses (community space, mixed use, etc.), if any, in the proposed project:**

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS The Wilson – A Home for All

**Please describe how the project addresses community need:**

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS The Wilson – A Home for All

**Please describe how the project would impact the community:**

Please see Attachment A.: Project Narrative - COTS The Wilson – A Home 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.

Tamira Martel, COTS Corporate & Foundations Relationship Director

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Print Name

*Tamira Martel*  
Applicant Signature

11.24.20  
Date

**Attachment A.: Project Narrative – The Wilson – A Home for All**  
**BURLINGTON HOUSING TRUST FUND FY20**  
**Project Award Grant Application**  
*Submitted by the Committee on Temporary Shelter*  
*November 25, 2020*

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**Project Description:** Built in 1815 and located in the heart of Burlington’s historic district, this Federal-style structure was originally a printing operation owned by the Mills Brothers. It was later converted into a hotel and then became a boarding house, known locally as The Wilson Hotel. When COTS purchased the building in 1984 it needed extensive repairs. Although the structure was extremely blighted COTS saw the acquisition as a way to preserve scarce affordable housing in an area of the city that was experiencing gentrification. After the completion of an extensive renovation COTS opened The Wilson providing permanent affordable housing for 23 formerly homeless adults. Additionally, COTS Waystation, our year-round overnight emergency shelter program, located on the first floor of the building, opened its doors to single adults with nowhere else to turn upon completion of the renovations.

The three-story structure now has 22 single-room occupancy (SRO) units and one manager’s apartment. The units vary in size and layout, but most are about 150 to 200 square feet. Residents share a common kitchen/community space and two full bathrooms, located on the first floor of The Wilson. Both bathrooms were recently remodeled in early 2020. They were modified from multi-user, unisex facilities into private baths that are ADA compliant. Another multi-user, unisex, three-quarter bathroom is located on the third floor.

Almost every space in this historic structure receives substantial use every day by the 23 individuals living there and their guests. Replacement of the 50 plus year old windows throughout the structure and repairs and upgrades to hallways and common spaces are needed to adhere to trauma-informed design principles and increase the building’s energy efficiency. COTS Board of Directors and Leadership Team are in unanimous agreement that this project is important to complete during the next 6-9 months as it will significantly impact the comfort of the building’s occupants and help us achieve savings on our utility bills.

The renovations planned for this phase of the project include a complete remodel of the hallways and common spaces to include new paint, flooring, and trim. Energy-efficient updates are also included – specifically, new windows and motion-sensing, LED lighting throughout the structure.

Our plan to remodel the existing hallways and common spaces and energy-efficient upgrades has several advantages:

- Reduce the building’s energy consumption, while increasing the aesthetic appeal, ease of use, and comfort for our residents;
- Increase the cleanliness of the space through the use of commercial-grade materials and installation techniques that ease maintenance burdens,
- Creation of common spaces that are welcoming and calming to help facilitate relaxation through the use of Trauma-Informed Design principles.

**Please describe how many households at or below 80% of AMI will be served by the project:**

100% of households residing at The Wilson (23) are below 80% AMI

**Please describe how many households at or below 50% of AMI will be served by the project:**

100% of households residing at The Wilson (23) are below 50% AMI

**Please describe how the City has already demonstrated its interest and support through the investment of CDBG funds, the provision of technical assistance, and/or acquisition of site control for the proposed housing project:** Last year COTS received a \$30,000 grant from this funding source to support the renovation of two bathrooms in The Wilson at a total cost of \$63,000. Because bathrooms pose a significant transmission risk for the COVID19 virus the creation of two new single-use, private bathrooms from two previously existing communal, unisex bathrooms has greatly increased the health and safety of our residents. Not only have we improved the

cleaning and maintenance capability we can now assign residents to one specific bathroom to limit the number of users and allow for enhanced contact tracing should an infection among our residents occur.

Our renovation of the existing communal bath on the second floor into two private baths met several objectives:

- Increased the health and safety of the space through the use of commercial-grade materials and installation techniques that ease cleaning and maintenance burdens;
- Increased accessibility for our aging resident population through the removal of trip hazards and the implementation of ADA standards and Universal Design elements;
- Increased privacy, through the creation of two private, single-use bathrooms vs. one unisex, multi-user facility. This change increases COTS' ability to respond to residents' unique needs, e.g., female, and transgender residents.

**Please describe how the application supports one or more of the priorities listed in the City's Housing Action Plan:** Assisting COTS with much-needed renovations to The Wilson will help the City achieve its goal listed in Section I., Item 1. of the City's Housing Action Plan (CHAP): "Continue to Prioritize Affordable Housing Preservation." The Wilson provides permanent, low-cost housing for formerly homeless adults with low- or extremely low AMI. Funds received through this grant opportunity will enhance COTS' ability to continue to deeply subsidize monthly rents for those tenants who do not reside in a project-based unit at The Wilson. Thereby increasing their stability and helping to reduce their risk of homelessness. A grant award will help reduce the strain on COTS' limited building reserves ensuring the continued operation of this vital community resource and the protection of this historic asset.

Renovations at The Wilson will help the City achieve their goal of increasing energy efficiency as outlined in Section I., Item 5.: "Improve Home Energy Efficiency" of the CHAP. Replacement of the windows at The Wilson will reduce the overall energy consumption of the building, while increasing the aesthetic appeal, ease of use, and comfort for our residents. With the installation of new LED fixtures, we will realize savings in consumption of electricity. These energy-efficiency upgrades will help reduce our annual operating and maintenance costs on the building, which will free up designated COTS' financial resources for direct services to residents.

This project meets the objectives outlined in Section V of the CHAP: "Provide Appropriate Housing Options for an Aging Population" by supplying a housing option for seniors on limited, fixed incomes located in downtown Burlington.

**Please describe how the application supports one or more of the priorities listed in the City's Consolidated Plan:** Throughout this application we demonstrate how The Wilson helps the City of Burlington positively advance, in some capacity, two of the three statutory program purposes listed in the City's Consolidated Plan: decent housing and providing a suitable living environment. In particular the following bullet points:

DECENT HOUSING, which includes:

- Assisting persons at risk of becoming homeless;
- Retaining the affordable housing stock;
- Increasing the availability of affordable, permanent housing in standard condition to low-income and moderate-income families, particularly to members of disadvantaged minorities without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability;
- Providing affordable housing that is accessible to job opportunities.

A SUITABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT, which includes:

- Eliminating blighting influences and the deterioration of property and facilities;
- Increasing access to quality public and private facilities and services;
- Reducing the isolation of income groups within areas through spatial de-concentration of housing opportunities for lower income persons and the revitalization of deteriorating neighborhoods;
- Restoring and preserving properties of special historic, architectural, or aesthetic value; and
- Conserving energy resources.

From a community development standpoint the location of our building is ideal, located in the heart of downtown Burlington, at the end of the Church Street Marketplace, residents can easily and quickly access much-needed resources e.g., groceries, employment, public transportation, fitness facilities, entertainment venues and health care centers. Wilson residents save precious time and money securing resources and utilizing amenities that enhance their quality of life. This helps increase their opportunities for social connectedness and civic engagement. The Wilson's proximity to the Marketplace, an area of wealth and prosperity, helps combat the geographic segregation of income groups at the neighborhood level. Wilson residents have less social and economic isolation, where residents are physically cut-off from the larger economy and community.

The current phase of renovations planned for The Wilson, are focused on energy-efficiency upgrades, that feature trauma-informed design principles that will greatly improve resident's comfort, safety, and general well-being.

**Please describe how the proposed project supports an underserved and vulnerable population:** The Wilson serves some of our most vulnerable community members – formerly homeless men (79%) and women (21%) with few, if any, social or familial supports to access in times of stress. Several residents are veterans, medically fragile, disabled or elderly trying to maintain housing on deficient fixed incomes. The Wilson offers deeply affordable, permanent housing for people moving from life on the streets to sustainable independence in a space of their own. Tenants range in age from their 20's into their 70's with 54 being the average age. Native Americans (5%) and African Americans (15%), extremely low- and low-income individuals are represented among our residents. Many tenants struggle with ongoing issues that make finding and maintaining permanent housing a significant challenge. A substantial percentage – 29% – are in recovery from substance abuse and working to maintain their sobriety. Of our current residents, 33% have a chronic health condition; 36% a physical disability; 14% a developmental disability; and 52% are dealing with a mental health issue.

The Wilson is dedicated to those who are coming out of homelessness, which is traumatic in and of itself, and the majority of our tenants have experienced multiple forms of trauma in their lifetime. Our goal is to create, on a holistic level, a calm, supportive environment in which our tenants may recover from the trauma of homelessness. To this end we will employ the concepts of Trauma-Informed Design (TID) throughout this entire renovation. TID is a paradigm shift in which the combinations of proper lighting including color spectrum and warmth, along with soothing colors on walls, the incorporation of natural elements, the special layout of physical spaces, and controlled visual interest work in concert to have a positive overall effect on those who have experienced trauma.

**Please describe the experience of the development team:** COTS is an award-winning and nationally recognized nonprofit. We are the largest service provider in Vermont for people who are homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless, serving on average more than 2,300 people each year. The breadth and depth of COTS' services, programs, and access to community partners are unmatched in this area.

Three years ago, we completed an extensive \$7.6 million renovation and addition to our administrative building, COTS 95 North Avenue, located in the Old North End of Burlington. This complex project involved a dynamic partnership with Housing Vermont that combined housing tax credits along with federal, state, municipal, and private funding to create 14 new units of permanently affordable housing in addition to the renovation of a 126-year-old historic building to accommodate multiple COTS programs. In 2011, COTS previously partnered with Housing Vermont and the Veterans Administration on our successful Canal Street Veterans Housing project. The cost of this project was more than \$5.6 million.

COTS's leadership team is organized in functional roles, providing needed oversight of all aspects of this project: Director of Facilities, Jonathan Farrell: Responsible for management of the overall bidding process for the project components, as well as recommendation of qualifying contractors. He will oversee all project work, approves project invoices for payment and ensures that the final completed work is consistent with original plans.

Director of Development and Communications, Becky Holt and Corporate and Foundations Relationship Manager, Tamira Martel: All grant-related communications and reporting is managed by the Development Team and these two positions in particular.

Director of Operations and Finance, Denise Danyow and Accounting Manager, Jan Stickle: Receipt of project funds and payment of project expenses are handled by the Finance Team. COTS consistently receives unqualified opinions from its outside auditor with no audit findings related to internal controls.

Executive Director, Rita Markley: Rita has been the Executive Director of COTS for the past 23 years and has been with the organization since 1991 and will oversee all aspects of the above project, related roles, and responsibilities.

**Please describe other ancillary uses (community space, mixed use, etc.), if any, in the proposed project:** N/A

**Please describe how the project addresses community need:** The prolonged housing crisis in Chittenden County continues to have a major impact on rates of homelessness in our community. Burlington has one of the nation's lowest-vacancy rates (often less than 2 percent). This coupled with the lack of affordability leaves many with few options for permanent sustainable housing. The FY20 Fair Market Rent for an efficiency apartment in the Burlington area is \$1,030 per month. To afford that, without paying more than the recommended 30% of their income on housing, renters must make \$41,160 annually (or \$19.79 an hour) – far beyond the grasp of many low-income individuals. With the help of project-based vouchers and subsidies, the average monthly rent for a resident at The Wilson is \$525.

Most of our residents have little or no positive rental history making it virtually impossible for them to secure permanent housing in such a challenging rental landscape. The Wilson provides a lifeline for homeless Vermonters who otherwise would struggle to get a foothold in Burlington's expensive and extremely tight rental market. COTS' housing is targeted to the most vulnerable, those who are homeless, or people facing eviction and at eminent risk of homelessness.

**Please describe how the project would impact the community:** For more than thirty years The Wilson has provided a critical permanent housing resource for individuals experiencing the crisis of homelessness with nowhere else to turn. Without the 23 deeply affordable rentals The Wilson provides, there would likely be a corresponding increase in the number of homeless individuals in our community.

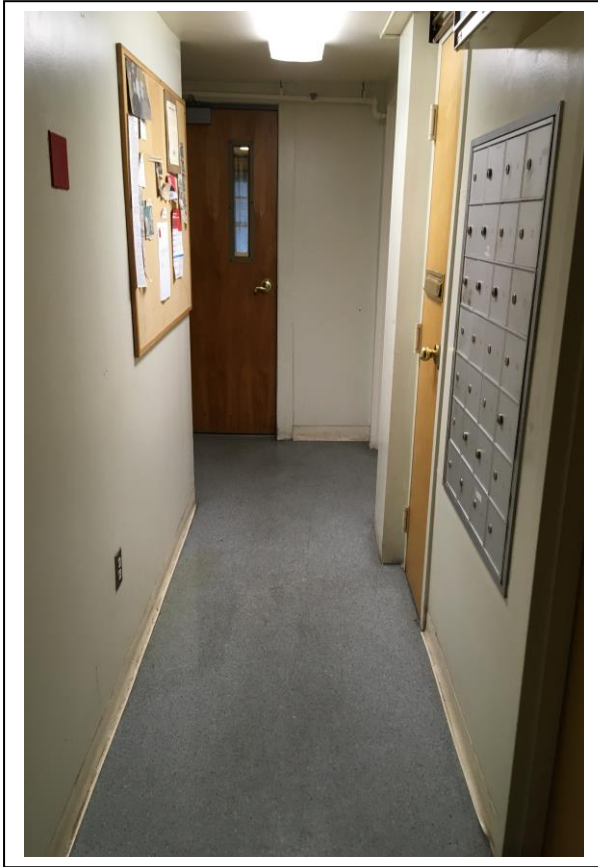
Investments in affordable housing pay multiple dividends. Homelessness comes at a very high cost — to individuals, communities, and systems of care. Numerous studies demonstrate that communities save money by providing affordable housing to people who have experienced homelessness. Homeless persons are more likely to suffer from chronic medical conditions and complications due to housing instability. Emergency rooms, crisis response and public safety systems are utilized at a much higher rate by individuals experiencing homelessness. Ensuring that some of our most vulnerable citizens have safe and decent affordable housing positively impacts our collective vitality.

Initially before the impact of COVID-19 COTS was slated to renovate the kitchen and dining space at The Wilson and add a much-needed laundry area along with the improvements to the hallways, lighting, and windows. Because of the immense physical disruption, a kitchen/dining renovation would cause for our tenants during this uncertain time we have temporarily postponed the work until FY2022. Once the entirety of the work is complete, we believe our tenants will realize tremendous benefit from these improvements.

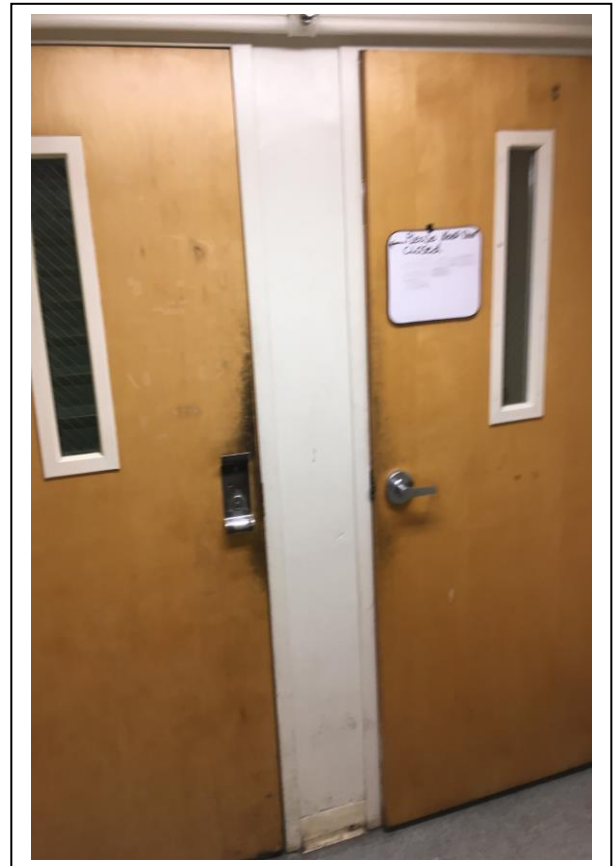
**Attachment B.: FY21 The Wilson Project Budget**

<b>FY21 The Wilson - Project Budget</b>				
<b>Item</b>		<b>Quantity/Cost</b>		
		<b>#</b>	<b>\$ ea.</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Doors</b>				
	Doors, fire rated	2	\$ 850.00	\$ 1,700.00
	Door, exterior	1	\$950.00	\$ 950.00
	<i>Subtotal</i>			<b>\$ 2,650.00</b>
<b>Carpentry</b>				
	Wall repair/painting			\$ 6,000.00
	Windows			\$ 20,000.00
	Finishes			\$ 3,000.00
	Junk removal/demolition			\$ 500.00
	<i>Subtotal</i>			<b>\$ 29,500.00</b>
<b>Electrical</b>				
	lights; hall			\$ 2,500.00
	<i>Subtotal</i>			<b>\$ 2,500.00</b>
<b>Flooring</b>				
	flooring			\$ 5,000.00
	<i>Subtotal</i>			<b>\$ 5,000.00</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>				
				<b>\$ 39,650.00</b>
	Contingency 10%			\$ 3,965.00
	Design/Project management			\$ -
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$ 43,615.00</b>
<b>Revenue</b>				
	<b>Source</b>	<b>Status</b>		<b>Amount</b>
	COTS Community Fund	Secured		\$ 23,615.00
	Private Donor	Secured		\$ 10,000.00
	Burlington Housing Trust Fund	Pending		\$ 10,000.00
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$ 43,615.00</b>





**Hallway finishes are extremely dated. Some are nearly 30 years old and at the end of their useful lifespan.**





**Existing windows: double hungs are 50 plus years old and casements are nearly 30 years old.**

