



2021 Annual Report

Homeless Prevention Center

*Working with families
and individuals in crisis
to secure and retain housing
in Rutland County*

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Welcome

The more Vermonters we meet and work with at the **Homeless Prevention Center**, the harder it is to generalize around why some people don't have a place to call home, or what that *one* solution is to tackle such an intractable challenge as rural homelessness.

If you're on a quest for definitive answers that may sound disheartening. It's natural to find comfort in problems with clear causes and solutions, heroes and villains. Homelessness just doesn't fit the bill. Often we see narratives simplified or redacted in support of glossy initiatives that promise impressive outcomes just around the corner.

So is homelessness caused by structural and economic inequality? The scarcity and cost of housing? Bureaucratic barriers to assistance? Education gaps? People falling through the cracks of a stressed mental health or foster care system ...or getting tangled up with the criminal justice system? Substance abuse? Social disconnection and unhealthy relationships? Issues with one's parents or one's children? Traumatic brain injuries?

Sure. Sometimes it's these things. But why then are there people who experience these same challenges and don't lose their housing? Our experience is that it's the stacking of multiple challenges or stressors on a person or family which makes them vulnerable to losing their home when they hit a hurdle or a stretch of bad luck.

And what about that elusive *solution* to homelessness? More housing? Better jobs? More rental subsidies? More case management? Permanent Supportive Housing? Better benefit programs? Financial literacy and tenant education? Help with security deposits and move-in costs?

After more than two decades serving Rutland County families and individuals at every point in the continuum from chronic homelessness to stably-housed and thriving, we're in no better place to pronounce, conclusively, what is *the* cause of homelessness, or *the* solution.

What I can share with confidence is that the housing case managers at HPC remain dedicated to understanding, at the individual level, what caused a specific person's homelessness or put a certain family at risk, and then identifying what their strengths, goals and aspirations are. Next we work with people to address any specific risks, nurture those strengths, and match them with the housing, services and financial resource best-suited to achieve their goals and realizing their aspirations.

In the past year, our customized and client-centered approach worked to re-house a record 190 Vermonters in Rutland County who had been homeless. We provided prevention and supportive services to hundreds more to help them stay safely housed.

A goal of ending homelessness could not be more ambitious. We make progress towards it only when we focus on the person in front of us and work one person and one family at a time.

Thank you for your support and for looking out for your neighbor this year.

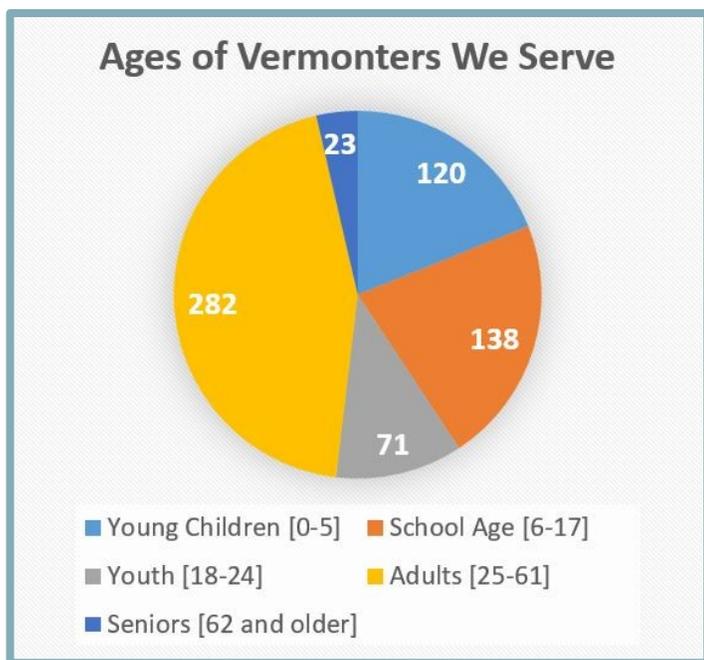
Angus

Angus Chaney, Executive Director



Who We Work With...

In 2021, HPC expanded assistance to serve a total of **634 Vermonters** in housing crisis.



Of the people we worked with, under half were adults between 25 and 61. Children under 18 made up 40%. Young adults (ages 18 to 24) comprised 11%, and seniors (62 and over) made up the remaining 3.5%.

Together, this was a **16% increase over the number of people we assisted last year**, with the largest increases seen among very young children (40%) and school-age children (27%).

Our 2021 Outcomes

Rapid Rehousing Program

Rapid Rehousing is targeted financial assistance and case management provided to people meeting the federal definition of homelessness. The goal of Rapid Rehousing is to ensure a family's experience of homelessness is as brief as possible.

In 2021, HPC served **67** homeless households through our Rapid Rehousing program. **97%** of the families housed through this program remained stably housed for at least 90 days, and in most cases far longer.

Short-Term Emergency Shelter

Sometimes, before we can address someone's long-term housing need, we have to sort out where they can stay that night. HPC leases a number of emergency apartments to provide a short-term solution when other shelters are not an option. While availability is limited, we've had success using these apartments as a place to rapidly connect people with services and help make successful transitions to permanent housing.

In 2021, **20** people were sheltered through our scattered-site emergency shelter apartments (**13** households consisting of **13** adults and **7** kids).

Of the households that exited these emergency apartments during the program year, **90%** moved directly to permanent housing and we continue to work with the others on housing.





Supporting the Transition from Institution to Community

In 2021, we served **16** individuals in our transitional housing program. Our approach combines case management with furnished apartments and household essentials. People coming out of our local correctional center get started right away developing life skills such as keeping a job, maintaining a home, preparing meals, and engaging with and respecting the rights of landlords, neighbors, and housemates. Participants save their income to support a solid transition to housing.

HPC works with correctional staff to coordinate case planning prior to release. Participants transition to the community with tasks and requirements as part of their conditions of release. HPC's role is to help participants plan, organize, and complete those tasks while seeking opportunities to help with unstructured time. It's important for a person to balance their obligations with fun and recreation in a prosocial manner. It can be challenging to try new things and our role is to support and encourage people to explore their healthy interests, such as reading, art, exercising, and spending quality time with their children.

Supporting Families

Family Supportive Housing is a more-intensive program for families who have already experienced homelessness. Most have young children and many have struggled through multiple episodes of homelessness along with other life challenges.

This year, the State of Vermont expanded our program to three dedicated FSH workers, allowing us to serve more families in need.

Our Family Supportive Housing Outcomes 2021:

51 families served (**66** adults and **106** children.)

78% of families were homeless at enrollment.

At the end of the program year (June 30, 2021),

88% of the families enrolled in FSH were housed.

Outreach to Neighbors in Crisis

Homeless Outreach is more about being available than being overly assertive. It's about developing trust, demonstrating integrity, and being able to provide useful information.

This year, HPC provided outreach to **47** individuals in the community experiencing homelessness.

36% of the people we outreached subsequently connected with supportive services.

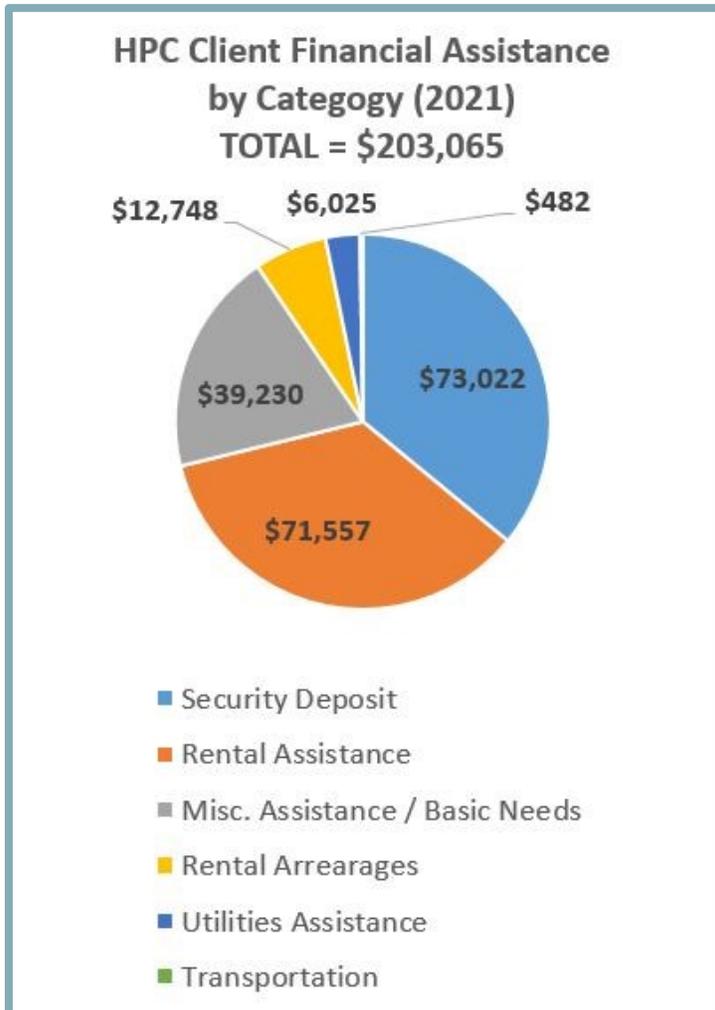
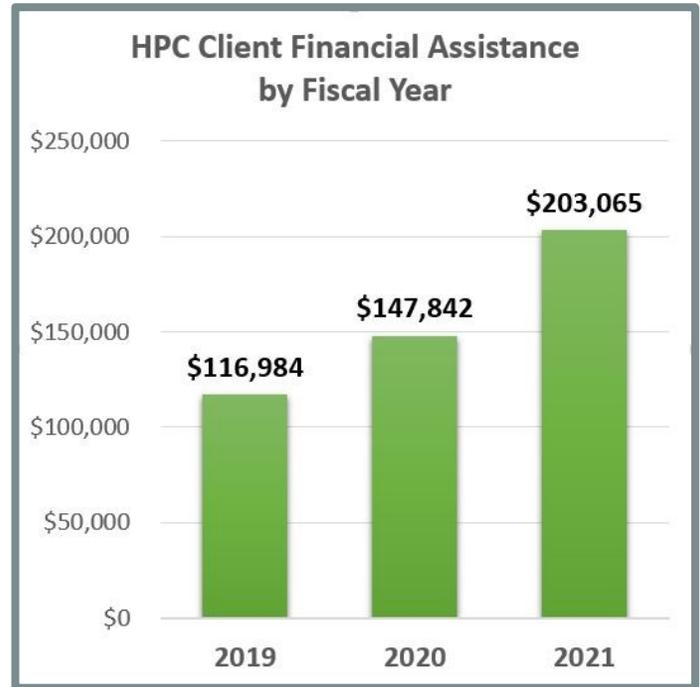
100% of those enrolled in supportive services received HPC case management supports.



Expanded Financial Assistance

HPC was fortunate to access additional funding in 2021 to provide a record level of financial assistance to get clients into housing and address unmet needs during the pandemic.

In fiscal year 2021, we disbursed over **\$203,000** on behalf of clients to landlords, public utilities and others. The majority of this funding went toward security deposits (**\$73,022**) and to address rental arrearages (**\$71,557**).



Special Programs During COVID

The Homeless Prevention Center was selected to administer a number of special programs for Rutland County funded through the federal CARES act and Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF). These include:

Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative (RRHI)

Flexible financial assistance for people who are homeless in motels as a result of the pandemic. Covers move-in costs, essential items and security deposits in support of a permanent housing plan. To date RRHI has assisted **104** households in Rutland County.

CARES Vouchers Case Management

12-month rental subsidy and case management targeted to families exiting motels into permanent housing. To date this program has housed **30** Rutland County families and provided case management to **42** households.



Community & Partnership

HPC chairs the **Homeless Continuum of Care**, a monthly forum and coordinating body for local organizations assisting people who are homeless. We provide **technical assistance** to other service providers in Rutland and neighboring counties, particularly around accessing services through Vermont's **Coordinated Entry and Assessment** initiative.

Partnerships have proven essential during the pandemic. In addition to the programs we directly administer, HPC continues to work closely with dozens of local organizations, state offices and landlords to improve outcomes for the many clients we serve. The following are just a sample...



The **brand new Lincoln Place** apartments, providing 19 housing units in a former school building, developed and managed by the Housing Trust of Rutland County, with onsite services and activities pledged by HPC and Rutland Mental Health Services.

The **Welcome Home** program with Rutland Mental Health Services and Vermont State Housing Authority, which combines rental subsidy, housing case management and clinical support in a scattered-site Supportive Housing model.

Rutland Regional Medical Center, which is supporting our participation in multiple projects and a three-year study of supportive housing models in Rutland County through a generous grant from the **Bowse Health Trust**.

Rutland's new **Bridge Housing** program, administered by the Rutland Housing Authority, which provides up to a year of housing, onsite services, and transitional supports for families and individuals coming from homelessness.

VT's Rehousing Recovery Program, administered locally by Neighborworks of Western Vermont, which provides grants to landlords who improve vacant apartments and get them back into the rental market for people who are homeless.

Program Update: Housing Navigation for Young Adults

In 2019 we launched a two-year pilot with funding from HUD to provide services to young adults between 18 and 24. This is a group that often improvises and stays "under the radar" of service providers that want to impose a lot of program and requirements. This puts youth at greater risk for exploitation and being in unsafe environments.

Two years later, Sara, our Youth Housing Navigator, has reached **48** homeless youth and helped **29** of them secure permanent housing for themselves and their children. When a youth needs more intensive support than navigation, she connects them with partners or other programs at HPC, such as Family Supportive Housing, or our PATH Outreach program. We were pleased to learn recently that HUD is extending funding for this successful program beyond the pilot phase.



Our Staff

Angus Chaney - Executive Director

Jessica Makela - Program Supervisor

Tara FitzGerald - Administrative Assistant

Sarah Woods - Family Supportive Housing

Chelsea Raymond - Housing Support Specialist

Janet Mott - Housing Support Specialist

Talla Caruso - Housing Support & Outreach Specialist

Jori Brija - Coordinated Entry & Reception

Lyndsay Corlew - Family Supportive Housing

Sara Orvis - Coordinated Entry Specialist & Navigator

Sindy Fortier - Family Supportive Housing

Erin Cameron - Housing Support Specialist

Tara Chandler - Re-Entry Case Manager



cover photograph:

“Killington Peak During Sunrise”

by Josh Hummel adventurewithjosh.com

Our Board of Directors

Justin Classen, President

Tonya Magoon, Vice President

Jay Kullman, Treasurer

Randal Smathers, Secretary

Michael Reeves

Carmen Schlieder

Sorelle Paige

Our Vision:

To eliminate hopelessness and homelessness within our community

How we do that depends on the needs and goals of the people we work with. Our services are free to participants and supported by grants and your private donations.

Please consider donating today so we can help even more Vermonters find home in 2022.

Homeless Prevention Center

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