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Affordable Housing in the Northeast Kingdom

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Affordable Housing in the Northeast Kingdom

Newport, VT

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Alayna Westcom

Social and Community Needs

Affordable Housing

Employment

Health Care Needs

Regular Medical Care

Mental Health Services

Health Behavior Needs

The use of illegal drugs or prescription drugs taken in a way not recommended by a doctor

Stress, Anxiety, or Depression

Treatment and Health Care Services

Urgent Care/Walk In Clinic

Emergency Mental Health Services

Problem Identification

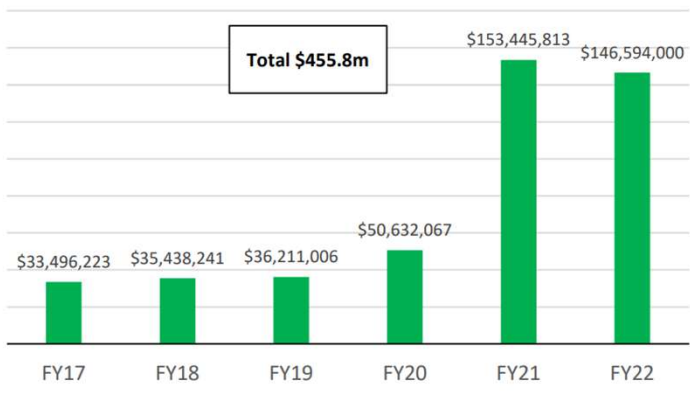
- Newport Vermont is in Orleans County, it shares Lake Memphremagog with Derby and the Canadian border. It is serviced by one community hospital, North Country Hospital.
- North Country Hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment for 2021 showed that affordable housing and employment were the top social and community needs. ¹
- Housing is a basic need for every individual. Housing directly effects medical needs and unsafe housing contributes to increases in non-fatal injuries and certain medical conditions, these may to increased visits to medical practitioners. ²
- AHEC focus area: Social Determinants of Health

Public Health Cost

For fiscal year 2022, Vermont spend \$146M to address homelessness. For years 2017-2022 \$455.8M was spent in total.³

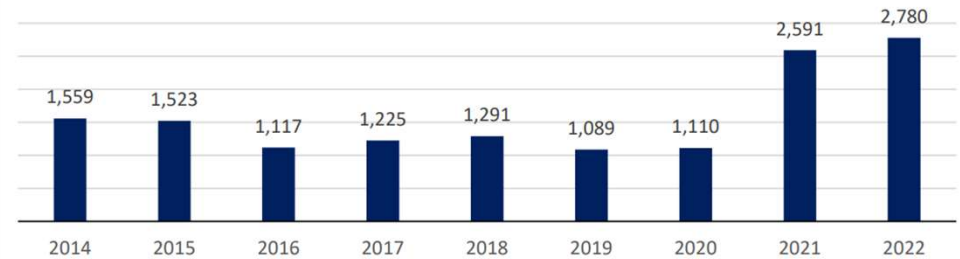
Unhoused Population in Vermont: 2,780 (point in time, 2022)³

Vermont Spending to Address Homelessness, FY17 - FY22



Note: FY22 was still ongoing at the time this data was assembled and therefore FY22 totals are partial.

Annual Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness in VT



Community Perspective/Interviews

Average cost of residential houses in Orleans County in from 2021-2022 was ~260K, average cost of houses sold from 2022-2032 is 306K. There is plenty of funding for loans, grants etc. for low-income, first-time home buyers, however there are not enough houses on the market, and those that are on the market are being sold quickly to buyers who can put 20% down or pay in cash. There are a lot of older individuals who have houses that have outgrown their needs and means to care for, however they have nowhere to go. There are no available options for elderly community housing.

–Ryan

Newport is lacking affordable housing for seniors, they are living in homes that are beyond their means to care for, sometimes potentially even unsafe for them. Newport recently closed a nursing home and those residents needed to be relocated and now family must travel to visit them. More houses would be available for sale if there was as a safe and affordable place for seniors to go. (Heidi believes in affordable housing for seniors so strongly that she is actively working to build independent and assisted living facilities for seniors in many rural areas across the state)

-Heidi

Rental vacancy rates have declined significantly over the past few years, as prices have simultaneously increased. We are seeing an increased need for support with housing, especially as the financial relief that was brought about during Covid is starting to dry up.

-Hilary

Intervention

- One page document with housing information
 - Information for homebuyers
 - Information for rent relief
 - Information for emergency/temporary housing (state-wide)
 - Information about NEK Community Action
 - Information about NEK council on aging

RESOURCES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE NEWPORT AREA

Affordable housing was one of the most important social and community need for 2021 identified by the Community Needs Assessment, done by North Country Hospital. Affordable housing carries a different meaning for each individual and family, as no two circumstances are the same. There are many resources for affordable housing, whether its renting, buying or emergency housing. Many of those resources have been compiled here, but this is not an exhaustive list.

Vermont State Housing Authority

VHSA is a state wide organization that aims to provide affordable housing and make affordable housing accessible throughout the State of Vermont. VHSA has many programs that are available for application including emergency assistance, rental assistance and home ownership assistance. More information and applications for these programs can be found on their website at www.vsha.org

The Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging

"The Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging is a dynamic organization that strives to make Northeast Vermont the best place in which to age well with dignity, respect, and independence. For 43 years, the Council has been guided by our vision to be known as a respected partner in the community in developing and delivering quality programs and services to older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers." NEK Council on aging offers services including meals and dining, fuel and housing, and many more. VISIT www.nekcouncil.org or call 1.800.642.5119

Northeast Kingdom Community

Action

"Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA) is a leading organization in the NEK addressing poverty through education, community collaborations, and community action. We believe in each individual's potential for positive growth and change." Programs available include food assistance, fuel and utility assistance, housing and many educational programs from early childhood to adulthood. More information can be found at www.NEKCAVT.org or by calling the Newport office at 802.334.7316.

Vermont Housing Finance Agency

"Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) was established in 1974 to finance and promote affordable, safe and decent housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income Vermonters. " VHFA offers many different loan options for those who are looking to purchase a home. VHFA hosts webinars to help educate prospective home buyers. More information about the different loan offerings, participating lenders, and educational session go to www.vhfa.org or call 802.864.5743

Results

Evaluation

At this time no evaluation has been completed, but could include tracking utilization of services that were mentioned in the hand out, or availability of the document in surrounding business.

Limitations

1. Timeline for the project- more time would allow of deeper investigation into the lack of affordable housing in the area, it would also allow for evaluation of the handout's effectiveness
2. Results- although information about organizations who provide help for affordable housing is helpful to some, it does not address the underlying cause of lack of housing in the area.
3. Stigma surrounding being unhoused- if we were able to reduce the stigma more individuals would be willing to speak about being unhoused, be willing to seek help, and more data would be available

Plan for the Future

- Elderly housing in the NEK/Vermont in general, where do they go?
 - Where are beds available with independent level care, assisted level care, nursing level care?
 - Where are the affordable options for the aging population and are there any locations in the NEK?
 - In depth look at bed distribution for nursing level care in the state.
- Who is buying all the properties?
 - In state residents? Residents moving from out of state?
 - Corporations? For use of a AirBnB?
 - An in-depth look at who is purchasing most of the real estate in the area.

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