

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Community, Justice and Equity

CHAMPLAIN HOUSING TRUST
STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

*From Growth, Recovery and Resiliency
To Community, Justice and Equity*



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INTRODUCTION

Resiliency, Recovery and Growth

Six months after the adoption of CHT’s most recent Strategic Plan (2019-2022), the Covid-19 pandemic hit Vermont and the United States. Soon after, the murder of George Floyd reawakened the call for racial justice.

These events dramatically influenced our three-year plan. In many ways, the plan remained relevant to its principal themes. The themes of our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan are outlined in an appendix of this plan, with a summary of our progress to achieve our goals.

Over the past three years, our mission, vision and commitment to our work remained strong. We strengthened the housing continuum, while we innovated, evolved and advocated. Our financial strength, size and growth mattered. We remained engaged in the community, responding to its needs, while building and strengthening partnerships. Under it all, our employees remained our greatest asset.

This Strategic Plan for 2023-2025 builds on Champlain Housing Trust’s nearly 40 years of history and a remarkable past three years of Growth, Recovery and Resiliency, with a renewed commitment to Community, Justice and Equity.



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: Community, Justice and Equity

Champlain Housing Trust's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan

After consultation with our partners, input from our residents and staff, a review of the current market conditions and extensive discussion by our Board of Directors, CHT has committed to the following new initiatives:

Support the Housing Continuum and Address the Need for Housing Innovations and Community Facilities

While we continue to strengthen our core mission and programs, it is also critical that we remain flexible in addressing the housing and facility needs of the community. In fact, doing so addresses a core theme of justice and equity.

We will:

- Implement the six-point Homeownership Equity Program (HEP) for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) households.
- Expand Shared Equity homeownership.
- Create new affordable apartments for low, moderate and middle-income people and households that are formerly homeless.
- Continue to support improvements in farmworker housing.
- Create employer-supported housing.
- Seek and create opportunities for childcare facilities and home childcare providers.
- Support the development of new community centers.
- Create transitional housing for refugees.
- Preserve existing housing for middle-income renters.
- Support the creation of new housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Support housing and programs for veterans.

Provide Services, Build Community and Empower Our Residents

Creating a Resident Services Department was a first step and we need to continue to build our internal capacity and expand our programs while lifting up the strength of our residents.

We will:

- Strengthen our partnerships with existing service providers such as Turning Point, Community Health Centers of Burlington, SASH and Howard Center.
- Provide access for our residents to high-quality services such as health care, food access and security, wealth building and mental health.
- Focus on housing retention and eviction prevention.
- Create restorative justice systems within our properties.
- Deepen our partnerships with community-based organizations led by people of color.



- Target efforts to mitigate eviction and home loss among BIPOC community members.
- Strengthen communication, security and safety within properties through neighborhood watch and ombudsman programs.
- Create resident councils and increase resident feedback systems.
- Strengthen co-op boards and committees through ongoing trainings and board recruitment.
- Create opportunities for celebration, beautification and community building at CHT properties.

Advance Racial Justice and Equity

Addressing racial justice and equity is a strategy that is now integrated into the CHT’s everyday work.

We will:

- Promote and advocate racial equity and justice in housing everywhere through advocacy.
- Improve and increase contracting with BIPOC businesses.
- Strengthen partnerships with cultural organizations that provide services to various ethnic and racial communities.
- Use the demographic make-up of the community as a starting point to measure and benchmark our work.
- Adopt and adapt the Race Forward Racial Equity Impact Assessment tool, an evidence-based methodology that is widely used in many government racial equity processes. Below is an outline of the process that we will to assess all future major initiatives. In addition, and as needed, CHT will use this process to assess changes in current programs. This is only an outline and will be further developed and strengthened over time.
 - * Describe Need
 - * Describe Program and Outcomes
 - * Review Data
 - * Determine Populations Impacted
 - * Engage appropriate Board Committees
 - * Conduct Justice and Equity Benefit Analysis
 - ◊ Identifying stakeholders
 - ◊ Engaging stakeholders
 - ◊ Identifying and documenting racial inequities
 - ◊ Examining the causes
 - ◊ Clarifying the purpose
 - ◊ Considering adverse impacts
 - ◊ Advancing equitable impacts
 - ◊ Examining alternatives or improvements
 - ◊ Ensuring viability and sustainability
 - ◊ Identifying success indicators
 - * Adjust Program
 - * Implement
 - * Evaluate and Review
 - * Report



This process will compliment a Stage Gate review of new programs and activities, as follows:

• Idea/Concept

Ideas from staff, board, partners; internal and external trends and opportunities; Focus on: Values and Mission Impact, Sustainability, Innovation.

• Feasibility

Research; Draft Income and Expense; Deeper Analysis of: Organizational Barriers, Reputation, Volatility, Partnerships, Competition, Financial Deficit or income, Balance Sheet Risk.

• Business Planning

Draft Business Plan: In Depth Market Analysis, Market Test, Business Model Projections.

• Implement the Program or Line of Business

In order to accomplish these goals, we will also need to do the following:

Increase Capital

We will increase capital and development capacity from both public and non-public sources by:

- Raising longer-term private equity.
- Increasing access to flexible, low-cost, long-term debt.
- Continuing to expand capacity at raising philanthropic funds.
- Building our net assets and strengthening our balance sheet.

Strengthen our Internal Systems

Continue to develop systems that streamline internal communication and simplify workflow such as:

- Providing translation and interpretation services and reduce cultural barriers. Consider hiring ambassadors from BIPOC communities.
- Creating more automation in business operations.
- Creating one unified property information system.
- Having better processes for housing and program applications to ensure equal access and opportunity.



Support our Human Resources

Make sure that CHT is a best place to work by doing the following:

- Build racial equity considerations into senior hiring practices and increase the diversity of our staff through a series of initiatives such as leadership development.
- Provide training and education to increase cultural competency, staff knowledge and skills.
- Enhance training, orientation and mentoring.
- Create pathways and ladders of opportunity for employees.
- Strengthen equity and diversity in our workplace.
- Support the resiliency of our staff.
- Strengthen evaluations and recognize staff.
- Support a remote and hybrid workplace.
- Recruit the best people ever.
- Work hard, have fun.

Build and Engage our Broader Community and Expand our Reach

Strengthen CHT's staff and Board role in the following:

- Engaging in statewide advocacy and coalition building such as the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition (VAHC), Vermont Housing and Conservation Coalition (VHCC) and Building Homes Together campaigns.
- Participate in national networks such as National NeighborWorks Association (NNA), Housing Partnership Network (HPN), Grounded Solutions Network (GSN) and the Homeownership Alliance.
- Provide technical assistance to peer organizations.
- Provide information and advice to local municipalities on issues of affordable housing.
- Continue to engage in new forms of communication such as email newsletters, CHT in Focus events and other forms that reach a diverse population in our community.

Strengthen our Board Governance

Make our community-based board even better:

- Build our Board's capacity, education and knowledge on issues of racial justice and broader social equity.
- Provide support and leadership to all of CHT.
- Improve committee structure, functions and practices.
- Engage in advocacy and policy work.
- Conduct a Board Self-Assessment.



WHO WE ARE: Housing Is a Human Right

Mission

The Champlain Housing Trust is a community land trust that supports the people of northwest Vermont and strengthens their communities through the development and stewardship of permanently affordable homes and related community assets.

Vision

The communities of northwest Vermont will have a stock of permanently affordable homes to assure that the region will be diverse and inclusive, with safe and decent housing for all people, supported by services and programs that enhance health and opportunity.

Racial Justice and Equity

The Champlain Housing Trust affirms and reaffirms its commitment to fight racism and to the principle of racial justice and equity in its policies, programs and employment in all aspects of its work. CHT is deeply committed to achieving racial equity, diversity and the highest level of inclusion and cultural humility in all our programs, services and in the workplace.

Values

The following core values define our affordable housing work:

- **Permanent Affordability and Community Control.** CHT is a community land trust with a membership drawn from our region that elects a Board of Directors comprising equal representation of local governments, residents of CHT homes and the wider community. Through this open and democratic structure, we steward a variety of permanently affordable housing options and related community assets for low- and moderate-income persons, with a priority for our most underserved populations and neighborhoods.
- **Housing Security and Mobility.** CHT is committed to providing the widest range of options to serve people at various income levels, with any kind of special need, at different points in their life and in different housing markets within the service area. We do this through our partnerships with social service agencies and by developing and stewarding a variety of housing types and tenures. Most importantly, we provide wraparound programs, services and membership benefits that allow people to enjoy security, affordability and mobility within our portfolio of homes to meet changing needs.



The following values guide all we do to implement our mission:

- **Collaboration.** CHT values strong partnerships and mutual self-help among our peers as the best way for CHT to add value and to amplify our collective impact.
- **Energy Conservation and Smart Growth.** CHT is committed to combating climate change by building homes that exceed energy codes and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. CHT supports long-term regional sustainability through development strategies that use the land wisely and that foster pedestrian and transit-oriented communities.
- **Courageous Governance.** CHT will balance social responsibility with reasonable risk-taking so that we can meet our commitments in a changing world and adapt services, production and financing models to respond to market changes, customer needs and new opportunities.
- **Employer of Choice.** CHT is committed to employing the best workforce possible by providing competitive compensation and benefits, including a livable wage, as well as a safe, welcoming and joyful workplace for all employees.
- **Transparency and Accountability.** CHT conducts its business, programs and activities with honesty, integrity and transparency and is accountable to the people we serve and our members through our membership and elected Board of Directors.
- **Leadership.** CHT is recognized at local, regional, state, national and international levels as being a leader in affordable housing and in particular for our success in creating and preserving permanently affordable homes through the community land trust model. We embrace our obligation to lead and to advocate for policies and programs that will support this sustainable and community-based approach to housing affordability.
- **Excellence.** CHT is committed to excellence and quality in all of our programs and services including equity, inclusion, cultural humility and competency and justice

Membership and Governance

Our membership and governance structure is an important part of who we are as a community-based organization. All CHT residents are CHT members. Additionally, membership is open to anyone who expresses interest and support for CHT and its purposes and pays annual membership dues of \$1.00. Members elect the Board of Directors and are critical to the governance of CHT.

Our Board of Directors has three distinct stakeholder groups (five seats each): residents of our homes (renters, homeowners, co-op members), municipal leaders and general members. This open membership and representative governance helps to assure that we will remain responsive and responsible to the people of our community.

Implementation of this plan is ultimately in the hands of the Board of Directors. To successfully manage and oversee all the ongoing work and new initiatives of CHT, the board remains committed to functioning at a high level. The Board is committed to operate by balancing fiduciary, strategic and generative modes of governance. CHT strives in its board composition to reflect the diversity of the community as a way to ensure equity and the representation of those with lived experience are present in the organization's work.



Departmental Operational Strategies for 2023-2025



Homeownership Promotion and Preservation

Shared Equity, Loan Fund, Education

CHT provides and supports affordable and sustainable housing options, and in particular, permanently affordable homeownership to those excluded from the market by offering education and counseling, residential loans, shared equity purchase subsidies, shared equity stewardship and related services.

We create new and preserve existing permanently affordable housing and wealth building opportunities for all low and moderate income members of our community through the sustainable and equitable operation of all Homeownership Center (HOC) programs. We continue to expand statewide programming to support access to manufactured housing for low and moderate income households, to improve farmworker housing and to provide other products and services as needed.

STRATEGIES

Increase and Sustain Homeownership for Black and Other Households of Color

- Make Homeownership Equity Program Down Payment Assistance (HEP DPA) forgivable loans to eligible BIPOC shared equity homebuyers and explore opportunities to offer these loans statewide.
- Develop and implement an outreach plan to engage households of color in all HOC programs including HEP DPA loans, shared equity purchase opportunities, counseling and education services, and rehab loan programs.
- Offer a financial capabilities program with in-depth counseling and education services and matched savings and credit building tools for renters that want to become homeowners, with a focus on bridging the racial homeownership gap. Focus on engaging Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) clients, United Way Working Bridges participants and CHT tenants.
- Offer and/or facilitate education and counseling opportunities to households who speak languages other than English.
- Conduct outreach events with partner agencies serving communities of color, including events at CHT properties in collaboration with Resident Services, Property Management and resident groups.
- Continue to work with Opportunities Credit Union (and other lenders) on Sharia-complaint lending for homeownership and seek options that work with the shared equity program.

Expand Equitable Access to Quality Housing along the Housing Continuum

- Make home repair and whole home replacement/construction loans for farmworker housing improvements throughout Vermont.
- Partner with local financial institution(s) to develop and promote innovative credit building products to serve people historically excluded from traditional credit building opportunities.
- Work with financial institutions to mitigate discriminatory activities against BIPOC communities.
- Expand:
 - * Financing to assist with the purchase and replacement of manufactured homes throughout Vermont through the Manufactured Housing Down-Payment (MHDP) Program; and
 - * Grant funding for site work and other infrastructure improvements for manufactured homes.
- Provide grants to landlords to rehabilitate vacant rental units for lease to households exiting homelessness through the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP).



- Operate and adapt Ready, Set, Rent! to serve people who want to rent a CHT apartment or co-op and have credit challenges.
- In partnership with Property Management and in anticipation of the expiration of emergency rental assistance from the State of Vermont, develop our Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) to provide appropriate education and counseling interventions to CHT tenants at risk of eviction due to nonpayment of rent.
- Advocate at the local and federal level to:
 - * Expand the term of Section 8 homeowner vouchers from 10 years to up to 30 years; and
 - * Revise Section 8 policy to allow these homeowners to save funds to sustain homeownership and maintain their home.

Expand Shared Equity Program (SEP)

- Develop and implement a campaign to educate the public and decision-makers about the shared equity model.
- Add homes to the shared equity portfolio by collaborating with Habitat for Humanity as they expand their program, and continue to add shared equity homes through Habitat resales.
- Secure new and expand existing funding opportunities to develop more shared equity homes, such as the Vermont Housing Finance Agency's (VHFA) Missing Middle Homeownership program, New Markets Tax Credits or national NeighborWorks® shared equity funding.
- Seek opportunities to convert apartments to permanently affordable homeownership where it best serves the community, either through conversion of existing CHT apartments or through the purchase of a rental development.
- Develop new homeownership units through low-risk partnerships with private developers/builders or in combination with CHT-developed multi-family properties, including at the NRG site in Hinesburg.
- Collaborate with municipalities to encourage more affordable homeownership through Inclusionary Zoning and permit-required affordable homes.

Support Existing Homeowners

- Fund the shared equity stewardship fund to a minimum of \$300,000 and develop a clear policy for the use and repayment of these funds.
- Provide affordable rehabilitation loans to shared equity homeowners and low- and moderate-income homeowners in northwest Vermont who are not served through conventional loan products.
- Complete a portfolio-wide windshield survey and pursue funding sources to help homeowners with preventative maintenance work.
- Increase our support for shared equity homeowners through website updates, newsletters, events/webinars and Homeowner University programs.
- Provide counseling to shared equity homeowners regarding home maintenance, budgeting, and home sales, with an emphasis on those at risk of losing their homes.
- Provide resources, training, support and education to homeowner associations (HOAs) with shared equity units to develop HOA capacity and ensure long-term and cost effective maintenance of shared capital assets.
- Offer delinquency and foreclosure assistance (e.g. financial assessment, budget and credit counseling, action plan development, support for loan modifications/workouts, etc.) to homeowners, with a focus on shared equity homeowners and loan fund customers, and help them access emergency homeownership relief funds.



Review and Revise HOC Systems for Equity and Sustainability

- Review education and counseling intake process, loan fund applications, and the shared equity program application and financial policies to remove barriers to program participation and ensure an equitable and inclusive application process.
- Reduce the shared equity portfolio's receivables through outreach, delinquency counseling, support, and intervention.
- Provide training opportunities to HOC staff on cultural competency, non-violent communication, trauma informed care, racial equity and related topics.
- Conduct a capacity analysis of HOC functions.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- CHT will facilitate 170 home sales total, which includes adding 60 homes to the shared equity portfolio.
- CHT will make 45 Homeownership Equity Program Down Payment Assistance (HEP DPA) loans.
- The Shared Equity Stewardship Fund will have a minimum of \$300,000.
- Rehabilitation loans will be provided to 75 homeowners.
- Mobile Home Down Payment Loans will be provided to 110 households throughout Vermont.
- Long-term funding will be established for farmworker housing; CHT will provide 25 farmworker housing repair loans and four loans for farmworker whole house replacements.
- Credit counseling and money management programming will be offered to 60 households.
- CHT will conduct three outreach events each quarter to expand the number of low- and moderate-income renters who know about our homeownership services.
- CHT will offer four interpreted homebuyer education or related workshops each year.
- Provide pre-purchase education and counseling to 600 households.
- 200 households will go on to purchase homes after receiving CHT counseling.
- Delinquency rates on loans will be kept below 5% of the amortizing portfolio.
- Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) grants will be provided to rehabilitate 45 rental units.
- CHT will assist 60 Ready, Set, Rent! participants to rent with CHT.
- Customer satisfaction ratings will be maintained at 90% across all three homeownership programs.
- The Homeownership Center will have positive net income in each of the next three years.
- 90% of shared equity homes will go under contract with a marketing time of 30 days or less.
- Resale fees of an average of at least 4% of appraised value will be earned across all resales.
- Monthly receivables for shared equity stewardship fees will be reduced from \$45,000 to under \$20,000.
- Homeowner University workshops will be offered twice each year.



Multifamily Housing and Property Management

Property Management will provide affordable, safe, high-quality housing that CHT stewards for residents' benefit while remaining financially sustainable and while improving the customer service experience for our residents before, during and at the end of their lease. We will continue to internally review actions that may cause people to lose their housing, such as evictions that have been known to disproportionately impact BIPOC residents.

STRATEGIES

Overall

- CHT will continue to implement and manage effective operating budgets for each property, aimed at ensuring the affordability and sustainability of each asset.
- CHT will evaluate refinancing loans to lower interest rates, apply for grant funding as available or eliminate amortizing debt.
- CHT will monitor property tax billings and valuations annually and file appeals as necessary.
- CHT will proactively manage loss prevention and continue to improve HPIEx Risk Score.
- CHT will evaluate property insurance cost savings by increasing the deductible levels.
- Operating and capital budgets will be developed annually and monitored monthly.
- Immediate corrective action plans will be developed and implemented for properties that are not performing as projected.
- Operating expenses will be reviewed annually, including utilities, contracts and taxes.
- Capital budgets will be developed annually and monitored monthly by Project Management.
- CHT will utilize third party Capital Needs Assessments (CNA) and internal 5–15 year Capital Plans for each property and will invest in and recapitalize multifamily housing stock to ensure its safety and to preserve these community assets.
- As part of this reinvestment in our portfolio, CHT will continue to promote energy efficiency and adopt green building standards, and integrate them further into the CNA process.
- Property Managers will collect rent on a timely basis and fill vacant apartments as quickly as possible.
- Staff will work to develop strategies to decrease the amount of time it takes to fill all vacant apartments, including Burlington Housing Authority/Vermont State Housing Authority (BHA/VSHA) project-based apartments.
- Property Managers will follow the CHT rent collections procedures.

Maintenance

- Maintenance will use OneSite software to track and reduce make-ready time.
- Maintenance will track and reduce maintenance work order calls and call response (both in general and for on-call).
- All properties will have and follow preventive maintenance schedules.
- Maintenance staff will utilize additional tools to track work orders electronically through OneSite facilities and OneSite mobile app.
- Maintenance will undertake reviews of all contracts to:
 - * ensure that CHT is paying the best price for the service,
 - * ensure that there are two contractors for each required service,
 - * ensure that appropriate insurance language is included, and
 - * assess whether any of the services purchased under contract could be performed with our own forces.
- Maintenance affirms its commitment to working with vendors of color and will create opportunities to ensure that there is opportunity to participate in contracts with CHT.



- Maintenance staff will be trained cultural competency and conflict resolution strategies.
- Maintenance and Project Management will negotiate standardized rates for appliance and flooring replacements.
- All nonemergency work orders will be completed within one week of being called in to Maintenance.
- Property Management will implement risk-management protocols for building and resident safety, especially for fire prevention.
- 100% of recertifications will be completed accurately and on time, or all appropriate attempts will be made for these to be completed on time.
- CHT will reduce third party maintenance costs by 10% through vendor management and/or bringing work in-house.

Applications

- CHT staff will continuously review internal policies to screen for racial bias, including the use of criminal history and credit ratings.
- Staff will improve the application process to be swifter and more customer-friendly.
- Applicants with a typical review process will be screened and notified of their approval or denial within 10 business days of the date that they submitted their completed application.
- Staff will explore ways to provide a smoother transition and better customer service for approved applicants to find appropriate housing.
- Staff will provide key documents in various languages as required or requested and will promote translation services.

Residents

- CHT will provide more follow-up to tenants during the first few months of tenancy including setting expectations around behavior. CHT is committed to providing a safe working and living environment. Discrimination, including racist words and actions, won't be tolerated.
- CHT will use resident surveys to keep abreast of residents' concerns and satisfaction with the levels of responsiveness by Property Management and Maintenance staff. We will modify the survey to obtain, as possible, more site-specific readings on resident experience.
- CHT will strengthen our partnerships with organizations that are BIPOC-led organizations and/or who are serving BIPOC and other historically disadvantaged groups including AALV, USCRI, BLM of Burlington, Migrant Justice, NAACP and the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Property Management

- Residents will be surveyed every year to assess satisfaction, and the good-to-excellent satisfaction categories will increase by 10%.
- Regarding criminal and/or credit issues, the number of BIPOC approvals will be equal to all approvals.
- Translation and interpretation services will be provided to our tenants/applicants.
- Denials and approvals of all applications as well as other processes should not discriminate against BIPOC households as evidenced by a review of internal data.
- Residents will receive a Welcome Home Packet within two months of moving in (separate from the tenant handbook and orientation). This will include the benefits of being a CHT member.



- Residents will receive a tenant handbook at move in, along with orientation on the following:
 - * apartment living, neighbor issues, housekeeping skills;
 - * maintenance;
 - * support services;
 - * the benefits of renters' insurance.
- 98% of all rent will be collected by the end of each month.
- A vacancy rate of 3% or less will be maintained.
- Vacant apartments will be leased up within 30 days, but in no more than 60 days.
- Each property's expenses will be managed to budget with no more than a 5% negative variance.
- Budgeted rent increases will be implemented.

Maintenance

- For standard turnovers, apartments will be made ready for occupancy within 10 days or less.
- For nonstandard turnovers, apartments will be made ready for occupancy within 30 days or less.
- For nonstandard turnovers with no notice or eviction, apartments will be made ready for occupancy within 60 days or less.
- Preventive maintenance plans will be implemented at every property, which will result in a 10% reduction in work orders.
- Materials cost will be reduced by buying in bulk negotiated rates.
- Stovetop firestops will be installed in all apartments.
- Common area fire extinguishers/emergency lights/playgrounds/pools will be inspected monthly.

Compliance

- Recertification and lease renewals will be completed on time.

Asset Management

- Property tax increases will be under 5% annually or in line with CPI (Consumer Price Index).
- Annual insurance premium increases will be 6% or less.
- Properties within the portfolio will be rated on their Debt Service Coverage Ratios:
 - * Standard properties will have a DSCR of at least 1.15.
 - * "Mission" properties will have a DSCR goal of at least 1.0.
 - * Properties with a DSCR of less than 1.0 will have a workout or internal subsidy plan.
- All properties will be reviewed for refinancing on an annual basis, and CHT will seek refinancing for any property greater than 2% of the current financing rate available.
- The amount owed to CHT by properties overall will be reduced by 10%.
- Each property will have a five-fifteen (5-15) year Capital Plan. Plans will be updated annually.
- 95% of the portfolio will have capital reserve funds adequately funded to meet the capital needs identified in the property's Capital Plan or will have a workout plan.
- The capital reserve account for each property will be no less than \$2,000 per unit after all scheduled activities are completed.
- No property will have uncorrected findings from regulatory agencies and investors on compliance reviews and inspections that result in IRS reporting.



Real Estate Development

The Real Estate Development department works to address the lack of availability and affordability of housing opportunities in the region through creating new housing opportunities and strengthening the existing CHT portfolio through renovations and reinvestments. Our work also seeks to respond to community and nonprofit facility needs.

STRATEGIES

Create New Rental Apartments

- Construct new multifamily rental apartments to increase the overall supply of affordable apartments.
- Concentrate new construction development in markets with a demonstrated high demand for rental housing, including the core of Chittenden County and Saint Albans.
- Sites and developments will be chosen that meet smart growth and community development goals, including proximity to transportation, goods, services and employment opportunities. CHT will continue to pursue projects that maximize density in keeping with smart growth principles and to maximize ongoing operating efficiencies. New construction projects will be 20 apartments or more.
- Rental development projects will be aligned with CHT values of equity and inclusion. CHT will respond to community feedback regarding rental housing needs.
- CHT will continue to pursue hotels to housing conversions and other strategies to accelerate production of new apartments and create homes for households experiencing homelessness.
- Project-based rental assistance will be pursued when possible, especially for new construction projects in Franklin and Grand Isle counties.
- CHT will continue to engage a Realtor to seek out, as well as respond to, offers for sale of privately owned affordable rental housing by assessing the economic feasibility of each project. Consideration of purchase will include price, market demand, rental subsidy and availability of financing.

Create New Shared Equity Homes

- Construct new shared equity condominiums and single-family homes to increase the overall supply of affordable homes for sale.
- Continue to strengthen the relationship with Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity (GMHfH) as an affordable approach to the construction of new homes for sale.
- Look at opportunities to affordably convert existing rental housing (both in the CHT portfolio as well as privately owned) into shared equity condominiums for homeownership, but only where this can be done without economic displacement.

Increase Housing Resources

- Explore and secure impact investments.
 - * Continue to grow the internal LIFT Fund in order to facilitate our ability to respond quickly to opportunities to provide additional affordable housing and to purchase NOAH (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) properties.
- Promote housing trust funds.
- Advocate for increased state resources.
- Advocate for resources to Chittenden County projects.



Respond to Community Needs

- Support the development of new community centers.
 - * Work with the City of Burlington to develop new offices and program space for the Community Justice Center.
 - * Work with the Community Health Centers of Burlington and the City of Winooski to redevelop the O'Brien Community Center property for a more effective health and community center.
 - * CHT will remain open to other community facility opportunities.
 - * Review CHT's Commercial Development Projects Policy and revise as needed to ensure that it is consistent with CHT's commitment to equity and inclusion and to formalize a framework for decision-making criteria including: fit for CHT, sustainability, cost, responsiveness to stakeholders and alignment with mission of permanent affordability.
- Create employer-supported housing.
- Create transitional housing for refugees.
- Support housing and programs for veterans.
- Will work to ensure that the State has established race-specific targets in its production goals.

Promote Housing Affordability

- Advocate for the construction of private market rental housing to increase the overall supply of rental housing, thereby stabilizing rents.
- Work with towns and cities to institute new or improve existing Inclusionary Zoning Ordinances or similar effective strategies.

Strengthen CHT's Housing Portfolio

- Work with partners on the refinancing and rehabilitation of existing partnership projects with expiring tax credits to ensure that they are permanently affordable to low-income households and are safe and decent homes in which to live.
- As long-term stewards, owners and managers, continue to strengthen the involvement of Property Management in the development of new projects to ensure that they are successful. Input from Property Management will be solicited on the design and budget projections for new projects and the Project Manager will be involved in reviewing project drawings and specifications.
- Look for opportunities to leverage CHT's financially strong properties to stabilize financially weaker properties through cash-out refinancing.

Advance Energy Efficiency and Smart Growth

- Strive for maximum energy efficiency wherever economically feasible, including the pursuit of alternative energy sources in all projects. CHT will take advantage of proven and effective sustainable products and materials as much as possible.
- Pursue partnerships with alternative energy companies to provide alternative energy resources to projects both on-site and off-site through leasing properties in the portfolio that can make use of the energy use offsets they provide.
- Coordinate and institutionalize green principles (i.e., energy efficiency, water conservation, healthy environments, sustainable materials/products, accessibility/walkability, electric vehicle charging stations, environment friendly landscapes, recycling/water-reduction products, durability, lifecycle approach, etc.).
- Communicate CHT's commitment to green practices and performance on the CHT website, in newsletters, press releases, through social media and more.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- CHT will construct 270 new apartments by the end of FY 2025, an average of 90 new apartments per year.
 - * This includes 36 at Stuart Avenue in Colchester, 72 at Zephyr Place in Williston, 68 at Bay Ridge in Shelburne, 64 at 10th Cavalry in Colchester, and 38 at 176 South Winooski in Burlington.
- Complete three hotel conversions or other adaptive reuse projects, including Zephyr Place, Bay Ridge Rehab and Ho Hum Apartments.
- Develop 100 new affordable homes for sale through a combination of condominium conversions and new construction. This includes Bay Ridge Condominiums, Hinesburg Homeownership, and Cambrian Condominiums.
- Build/renovate two new community facilities.
- In Chittenden County, 1,000 new homes will be created each year in all sectors, 25% of which will be affordable.
- CHT will work with Evernorth and funders on the restructuring of expiring tax credit projects to preserve affordability.
- The State of Vermont will have increased resources for affordable housing production to prevent reversion to pre-pandemic levels.
- The existing pool of affordable rental housing in Chittenden County will not shrink due to gentrification of privately owned developments.
- CHT projects will be well-sited and well-designed, will have low utility costs due to high energy efficiency, and, when properties are redeveloped, energy use will be reduced by 20%. CHT homes will be free from environmental hazards, including lead, asbestos, mold and other chemicals.
- At least 50% of CHT's portfolio will be served by alternative energy sources or will be built with the infrastructure to retrofit alternative energy technology.
- At least 5% of CHT's portfolio will be served by electric vehicle charging stations.



Cooperative Housing

CHT will help its housing cooperatives to be self-sustaining and effective in their governance. Northgate Residents' Ownership Corporation will be well-governed through our support of its on-site Community Builder.

STRATEGIES

Support the co-ops in updating outdated legal documents and policies; formalize new policies and procedures where necessary

- All co-ops will schedule regular reviews of their CHT contracts, Proprietary Leases, By-laws, and Articles of Association to be completed at least every five years.
- Annually, co-op boards will determine if any house rules or policies need to be updated and will assign committees to work on them as needed.
- Ensure all co-ops are maintaining current and complete co-op records.
- All co-ops will maintain a cloud-based storage platform that stores co-op documents and continue to assure that the co-op membership has full access to view all documents.
- The CHT Co-op Specialist will assure historical documents are scanned and placed in cloud-based storage folders.
- Share certificates will be developed to issue to all members.

Support the full functioning of co-op boards

- Support boards to move back to in-person board meetings.
- Evaluate trainings for co-op board members and committees; based on feedback, fine-tune and modify existing trainings, explore new trainings, and consult with outside presenters as necessary.
 - * Work with co-op boards to develop training requirements for members.
 - * Create a flexible training schedule to ensure all members are able to attend required trainings.
 - * Explore a process for recording trainings and making them accessible for future viewing.
 - * Strengthen the board through training; each full board will attend at least one training per year.
 - * Ensure that board trainings include a racial equity component.
- Assure a pipeline of board-ready candidates through outreach prior to annual meetings, enforcing the participation policy that requires each member attend at least one board meeting per year and regular reminders in the monthly board packets.
- Strengthen annual meeting structures to improve committee and board succession.
 - * All leadership roles will be assigned and meeting schedules will be set at annual meetings.
 - * Plan for outside facilitation if warranted, taking into consideration the cultural competence of the facilitator.
- Encourage the sharing of best practices between co-ops including member participation tracking, code of ethics and conflict resolution policy.



Maintain and improve relationships between the co-ops and CHT

- Survey members annually to obtain ratings and comments on general satisfaction with CHT’s services, desire to add more of them and co-op-specific assessments on resident experience.
- Respond to members’ concerns about property management, maintenance and governance advising with explicit detail as to what CHT’s responsibilities are versus those duties which fall upon the co-ops. Refer to the contracts, and when necessary, work with the co-ops to update those contracts.
- Request CHT’s Resident Services assistance in matters related to their scope of work, when situations arise which necessitate their involvement.

Strengthen operations

- Continue to review and update the website, application and orientation process to strengthen new member integration.
- Explore new marketing opportunities including postings on Front Porch Forum and social media to increase interest in co-ops and build up waiting lists.
- Support the co-ops to assess and plan for long-term capital needs by increasing advisement from CHT’s Project Management team. Provide ongoing education about reserves contributions and impact on carrying charges.
- Co-ops will review any reasonable accommodations annually.

Support the Northgate Residents Ownership Corporation (NROC) Board

- NROC board members have the knowledge and tools to govern effectively.
- Through enhanced resident services, NROC will engage more residents and increase connections for volunteer, advisory, and board roles.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Within one month of their Annual Meetings, all committees will convene and begin developing a work plan.
- At least one member at each co-op will be trained as an archivist.
- At least 80% of co-op members will attend trainings as required for their role(s).
- At least 75% of co-op households will answer the annual survey, with an average approval rating of 75% or greater.
- All co-ops will have active waiting lists.
- No co-op will suffer more than 30 days vacancy loss.
- Provided trainings will achieve at least 85% positive ratings in evaluations.
- NROC will hold at least three board trainings during the plan period.
- NROC will have increased participation from resident board members.



Resident Services

Resident Services strives to reduce/eliminate homelessness, explores new opportunities for service-enriched housing, strengthens efforts to keep residents stably housed and builds community within our properties.

STRATEGIES

Reduce Evictions and increase housing stability for CHT residents

- Establish a portfolio-wide plan to identify residents experiencing challenges as early as possible in order to offer support and interventions in a timely way and to track our results.
- Explore the development of a range of housing options with comprehensive, coordinated services provided by the Resident Services Team to help households in crisis overcome their challenges. These options may include recovery housing, housing for veterans and housing for those exiting corrections and may utilize a scattered site approach.
- Strengthen and improve our interpretation services and communication to residents and members in all languages to assure all residents are receiving the supports and interventions they need in culturally appropriate ways.
- Strengthen our partnerships with the Housing Authorities to assure maximum utilization of rental subsidy by our residents. Continue to assess the need for rent subsidy for those who are not eligible for or otherwise cannot access the subsidy they need to make their housing affordable.
- Continue to review internal policies and procedures to address the underlying cause and result of evictions.
- Continue to operate SASH (Support and Services at Home) as one focus to respond to the needs of our aging tenant population.

Create and maintain relationships with community and in-house partners to better ensure housing stability and better serve CHT residents and SASH participants

- Strengthen our partnerships with organizations serving BIPOC and other historically disadvantaged groups including AALV, USCRI, BLM of Burlington, Migrant Justice, NAACP and the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance.
- Continue to participate in Continuum of Care committees (Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle and statewide) to work toward an effective, coordinated community system that provides safe and stable housing for all people experiencing homelessness and makes homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring.
- Continue to be a partner in Coordinated Entry, working to create a streamlined and fair process for accessing resources that combines housing, subsidy and services.
- Strengthen service coordination with housing navigators from partnering agencies for guests at Harbor Place.
- Continue to work on housing retention to reduce evictions and other landlord-initiated move outs (LIMOs), both in-house and partnering with external service providers.
- Create a stronger range of support services for residents with ongoing special needs and for residents in crisis, endeavoring to provide wraparound services for those in need.
- Improve internal management of homelessness preference apartments and others designated for priority populations in a way that quickly matches available apartments with qualified applicants deemed appropriate by partnering agencies.
- Offer training and support to Property Managers, Maintenance Technicians and other CHT staff in dealing with residents who are experiencing challenges.



Explore funding sources, training opportunities and policy initiatives

- Advocate for state policies and program changes that improve access for our residents to emergency housing, permanent housing, health care, mental health services and drug and alcohol prevention/rehabilitation.
- Participate in the Statewide GA (General Assistance) workgroup to advocate for homelessness prevention.
- Seek out sustainable funding for the support and expansion of Resident Services.
- Expand in-house Resident Service provision through the UVM Social Work and Saint Michael's College Sociology and Psychology internship programs.
- Continue to seek out staff training and education opportunities to improve the services provided to residents.

Expand the role of Resident Engagement to not only provide activities that promote community development, but also be part of assessing what residents need to reduce stressors and increase their ability to thrive

- Create a Restorative Justice program that empowers residents and offers alternatives to eviction.
- To further CHT's commitment to providing a safe work and living environment, free from racist words and actions, we will develop a system for responding to and tracking racist complaints which may include designating a single point of contact that is posted at all locations.
- Survey residents every year to obtain, as possible, general satisfaction with CHT's services, desire to add more of them, and site-specific assessments on resident experience.
- Work with Rental Resident Advisory Committee (RRAC) to implement resident-focused activities at properties.
- Identify and support leaders among our resident community through the NeighborWorks Building Leaders Building Communities (BLBC) curriculum.
- Explore organizing resident groups at larger properties that will provide property-specific ideas for community building and property improvements.
- Work with other community partners to deliver services to our residents, such as youth mentoring and food access.
- Support residents of CHT properties who want on-site community gardens and support the creation of additional gardens.
- Continue to offer the DREAM youth mentoring program at Salmon Run and Winchester Place, and evaluate opportunities to expand to other properties.

Offer a service-enriched experience in an emergency hotel setting

- Make efforts to create connection among guests and foster a sense of community at emergency hotels.
- Transition Harbor Place to 3229 Shelburne Road after completing renovations specific to the improvement of safety, security and guest satisfaction.
- Contract with a professional cleaning service to maintain rooms and common areas.
- Renegotiate contracts and MOUs to fully fund each property's annual budget, including investments in the overall guest experience.
- Continuously evaluate our guest agreement to be sure the proper balance between safety and guest retention is kept.
- Hold at least three trainings per year for hotel staff to expand their knowledge of key issues, such as hoarding, trauma informed care, implicit bias and cultural competencies.
- Continue to work on service coordination with housing navigators from partnering agencies to support guests transitioning to permanent housing.



- Expand relationships with other organizations to provide support to guests, including Turning Point Center, Community Health Centers of Burlington, the Shelburne Food Shelf, Howard Center and others.
- Work with the CHT Home Education department to create classes for guests to provide tangible skills needed to advance their housing situation.
- Continue to work with community partners to provide meals for all guests on a weekly basis.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Overall, local levels of homelessness will be reduced because more homeless individuals and families are able to find housing options with services to help them keep their homes.
- Maintain the level of LIMOs at less than 10% of all turnovers.
- For households facing eviction, retain housing for 80% of the households.
- Provide at least 15% of CHT’s housing to homeless households.
- Fewer people will lose their homes, both within our portfolio (as measured by the number of LIMOs) and on a community-wide basis (as measured by Coordinated Entry and Point-in-Time counts of first-time homeless households).
- Fewer people will return to homelessness, both within our portfolio (as measured by LIMOs of formerly homeless households) and on a community-wide basis.
- Hold at least seven trainings per year to expand staff knowledge of key issues, such as cultural competency, hoarding or trauma informed care.
- Two large properties will have at least two resident meetings per year to solicit resident input on community building and property improvements.
- Provide Resident Leadership Training for up to 10 residents.
- There will be successful community gardens at 11 properties.
- Youth mentoring programs will operate at four properties.
- Hotel guest satisfaction will improve.
- Fewer hotel guests will be asked to leave before the end of their reservation.
- Harbor Place will operate with a surplus annually, which will further support efforts to improve services.



Finance and Accounting

Fiscal responsibility and sustainability are key to CHT's past, present and future success. CHT will continue its practice of operating with a balanced budget, growing responsibly and strategically as capital and opportunities allow. Creating and funding capital reserves will remain a strong focus.

Finance will continue to provide timely and accurate financial statements to help inform responsible decisions. The department will also manage accounts payable, receivable, and cash flow in the most efficient, cost-effective manner possible, creating additional capacity through the use of streamlined systems and technology wherever possible.

STRATEGIES

- CHT will continue to automate financial systems specifically streamlining AP (Accounts Payable) and Credit Card systems to better automate and eliminate paper files while continuing to provide needed visibility in financial reports. Finance staff will also look at other ways to continue to automate (or improve) repetitive entries and processes, and will implement solutions that have a cost benefit.
- Finance staff will provide necessary reporting, analysis and advice to support CHT departments in the creation of balanced budgets, in which each line of business is fiscally self-sustaining by matching operating expenses with expected revenues.
- CHT will develop goals and strategies both near term and long term for accountability, monitoring, reporting and reducing receivable balances.
- CHT will improve reporting and monitoring on all working capital activities.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Benchmark key balance sheet ratios quarterly and/or annually comparing CHT's performance over the last five years to the region as well as nationally, including:

* Days Cash (DOC)	90 (more is better)
* Unrestricted Days Cash	90 (more is better)
* Unrestricted Cash/Months Operating Expense	Greater than 3
* Cash and Receivable/Current Liabilities	Greater than 1
* Current Ratio (CR)	2.0 (more is better)
* Defensive Interval (DI)	7.5 (more is better)
* Debt Ratio	100% (less is better)
* Capital Ratio	50% (more is better)
* Net asset ratio	25% (more is better)
* Self-sufficiency ratio	85% (more is better)
* Total Assets/Total Liabilities	Greater than 1.4
* Long-term Debt/Unrestricted Net Assets	Less than 4
- Reduce accounts receivable to less than 5.0% of total revenue for CHT and Partnerships (excluding grants, pledges, tax credit, or development fees with different terms dictated by each individual agreement or contract).
- All grants receivable will be aged less than 90 days.
- Manage cash to ensure that we use the line of credit strategically, recover costs from projects or properties to the greatest extent feasible and maintain a positive cash flow with a goal of having a balance of \$2.5 million in operating cash.
- Meet 100% of internal and external reporting deadlines.
- Finance will monitor and adjust staffing levels to ensure adequate staff for current and expected growth.



Community Relations

The overall purpose of the community relations work is to engage the community broadly to build an understanding of CHT's mission and programs, secure public and private resources to advance CHT's work, and advocate for governmental policy and funding that support the development of affordable homes and strengthen the social safety net. The community relations work overlaps from time to time with the community building work of the Resident Services department and others.

STRATEGIES

Secure Revenue

- Conduct sustaining monthly donor campaigns through mail, email, advertising and in-person events.
- Build and incorporate a planned giving program into donor communications and on the website, including directly and indirectly soliciting gifts of real estate.
- Directly solicit individual donors to secure larger gifts.
- Broaden donor base with efforts that bring in new donors.
- Host a volunteer-led fundraising event each year.
- Win the highest possible grant awards from public and private sources of funding, and identify new funding sources.
- With partners, create and respond to strategic opportunities to develop innovative funding proposals that will be submitted to both public sources and private foundations, further demonstrating the effectiveness and sustainability of our housing model and related services.

Inform the Public about our Work

- Cultivate better relationships with existing CHT members through informational and social events, ongoing updates on CHT's work, and personal connection through email, phone or in-person meetings.
- Support staff leadership, Board members and other volunteers to host informational meetings and visit community groups to make presentations on CHT and affordable housing.
- Conduct tours for donors, volunteers and policy makers of CHT's housing and programs.
- Engage both traditional and new media outlets with news, commentary, public events or feature stories.
- Publish a monthly e-newsletter and bi-annual print newsletter.
- Use social media and the website to publicize information about CHT, affordable housing and related issues.
- Do more storytelling, in print, web and video.
- Sponsor local and regional community events.
- Integrate marketing efforts with work plans of the Homeownership, Co-op and Property Management programs so that they may effectively promote their housing and services.
- Support other departments to attend community events to showcase CHT homes and services.
- Use print, mail and electronic advertising coupled with email outreach to reach targeted audiences.
- Organize a summer members' event and an Annual Membership Meeting each year.



Engage in Advocacy

- Engage Board’s Community Relations Committee and the Board as a whole to develop local, state and federal advocacy strategy and policy position framework.
- Educate local, state and federal policy makers and their staffs on the need for our work.
- Advocate directly with policy makers and policy-making bodies for policy proposals, reforms and funding, focusing on those which advance equity and address systemic racism.
- Explore new ways to look at solving challenges that involve cross-sector collaboration, such as tax policies, health system reform, land-use reform or climate action.
- Participate as a leader within the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition (VAHC) and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Coalition (VHCC) to support those coalitions’ State legislative advocacy.
- Continue to lead the Building Homes Together Campaign and support similar efforts around the state.
- Strengthen relationships with Vermont’s Congressional Delegation and their staffs.
- Provide leadership on a national level, participating in such national associations as Grounded Solutions Network (GSN), NeighborWorks® America (NWA), National NeighborWorks® Association (NNA), the Housing Partnership Network (HPN) and the Housing Partnership Insurance Exchange (HPIEx).
- Work to advance shared equity programming by NeighborWorks® and through the Grounded Solutions Network work to ensure that CLTs and related programs continue to grow as part of our sector, both in production and influence.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Raise \$1,500,000 in donations over the course of the three-year plan.
- Secure 15 new planned gifts.
- Earn 300 news or media stories.
- Grow CHT’s sustaining monthly donor list to 150 supporters.
- Win awards from three new grant sources.
- Add 300 new dues-paying members.
- Over the three years, make 20 presentations to community members.
- Conduct 12 property tours over the plan period.
- Feature 30 residents, donors, volunteers or staff in e-newsletter, printed materials, video, and/or web profiles.
- Sponsor or participate in nine local community events throughout our region.
- Meet sales, rental and client-level targets set by the Homeownership and Property Management Departments.
- Over 200 people will attend the summer members’ event and at least 250 will attend annual meetings each year.
- Local funding sources will be created or expanded by three municipalities in our region to increase the pace of production of affordable housing.
- Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) will be funded at the statutory amount, and an additional \$50 million in capital will be secured for affordable housing development activities.



Human Resources and Administration

CHT's staff are its most valuable resource, and critical to ongoing success in every facet of our work. We believe a vibrant, diverse staff that is representative of the communities we serve will strengthen connections, improve services and maximize impact. We will enhance recruitment, development, and retention efforts to cultivate a culture of equity and inclusion that embraces differences and the unique contributions of each individual using recommendations from the Racial Equity Assessment as a guide.

Our people-focused systems nurture an inclusive, fun work environment that creates equitable opportunities for professional development. This will allow us to meet present individual and organizational needs while anticipating future growth and preparing for succession at all levels. Providing a fun and fulfilling workplace will preserve high levels of employee engagement in the near-term, and ensure organizational strength and stability in the future.

STRATEGIES

Attract a highly skilled and diverse workforce reflective of the communities we serve

- CHT will promote job openings proactively at our properties and at locations in which communities of color, LGBTQ+, disabled and other underserved groups are represented.
- CHT will create apprenticeship and internship opportunities with a focus on underserved and underrepresented populations including technical centers, training and development programs and other non-traditional settings.
- CHT will create and/or enhance relationships with organizations or affinity groups that directly support communities of color, LGBTQ+, disabled and other underrepresented groups.
- All positions will be reviewed prior to posting for hiring ensure that they accurately reflect the skills that are essential for the job to be performed, use inclusive language and are attractive to a wide array of candidates from various backgrounds.
- All openings, especially those in supervisory and/or leadership roles, will be assessed to determine whether internal promotion or external posting will most effectively achieve the organization's long and short-term goals surrounding performance, racial justice, equity and inclusion.

Provide opportunities for growth and prepare for succession at all levels

- Managers will be responsible for providing real-time feedback regarding performance to employees through regular, ongoing meetings and coaching sessions, and will evaluate job duties at least annually.
- A CHT training road map will clearly outline the following training and development opportunities:
 - * Technical training based on individual roles and needs.
 - * Regular learning and enrichment opportunities required of all staff to promote cultural awareness, power, privilege, intrinsic bias and other topics that will promote equity, empathy, inclusion and excellent customer service.
 - * Management and leadership education.
 - * Other professional development.
- Each position will have clear and measurable growth paths including basic qualifications required.
- Job shadows and informal or formal mentorships will provide opportunities for growth and promote knowledge transfer and perpetuation of organizational culture.
- The performance review process will be streamlined and enhanced to support timely, accurate feedback and continuous growth.
- Each position will be analyzed by managers and staff to identify key tasks, and each will have a documented internal or external coverage plan as deemed appropriate by program management and/or leadership.



Cultivate a supportive, inclusive and fun work environment where people can do their best work and want to stay

- CHT will create and implement a clear system for reporting and responding to situations involving racism or similarly inappropriate conduct toward staff.
- CHT will update its employment policies to include inclusive language and promote accessibility and comprehension.
- There will be increased communication across all departments.
- CHT will enter the Best Places to Work in Vermont competition annually.
- CHT will continue to provide comprehensive health and wellness benefits and will explore new benefits to meet the needs of employees and their families.
- CHT will continue to sponsor clubs, teams and events to promote staff connection and well-being.
- Staff will be recognized for tenure, excellent performance and outstanding achievements.
- Staff opinions will be solicited via mini surveys or other methods at least once per year.

Provide the most secure, up-to-date, cost-effective and reliable technology possible to support everyone's ability to stay connected with one another and to carry out essential functions as efficiently as possible

- All desktops and laptops will be replaced on a three- to five- year schedule based on individual and departmental requirements, budgetary guidelines and application performance metrics.
- Perform in-depth firewall reviews with managed services providers quarterly.
- Implement ongoing third party testing to enhance staff cyber-security awareness and provide related training as needed.
- IT staff will actively research security news, risk factors and technology trends, and will maintain a high level of current knowledge through trainings, online resources, communications with managed service providers and daily reviews of help desk trends and worldwide IT updates.
- IT staff will provide training and support to CHT staff regarding IT security and common applications as time and resources allow. In the case of third-party support—such as building security cameras and alarms, satellite office internet-connectivity etc.—IT will act as liaisons between CHT staff and the respective vendor as needed.
- IT staff will reduce help desk volume by implementing routine trainings, advising department supervisors to interact with employees prior to help desk contact, work towards consolidation of applications and software resources and provide proactive measures such as company-wide messages to advise on planned outages.
- Alternative telephone systems will be explored with the goal of reducing cost and maintaining or improving functionality.
- Software systems will be evaluated to identify and eliminate redundancies. The IT Team will support departments in identifying software systems/improvements/maintenance/tools/deficiencies and recommending and supporting implementation of solutions.
- A software or intranet solution will be identified and implemented to improve interdepartmental communications and connections among staff.
- The existing cloud-hosted/on-premise server environment will be migrated to the cloud via SaaS (Storage-as-a-Service), utilizing Azure, Microsoft O365 or similar by June 2023.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- CHT will be the Best Place to Work in Vermont in 2023, 2024, and 2025 in its size category, with an overall engagement score of 95% or better.
- The Best Places to Work survey score for “Generally, employees feel comfortable representing themselves regardless of backgrounds, beliefs or identities” is at least 95 across gender, racial, ethnic, age and job level categories.
- At least 20% of all job applicants will identify as BIPOC.
- Management composition will be at least 10% BIPOC by September 2025.
- 100% of employees will take at least 80 hours of vacation time annually.
- Each core function will have redundancy and/or a documented backup plan by September 2023.
- Zero LAN (Local Area Network) breaches will be detected at main and satellite offices.
- By the end of this plan, monthly help desk ticket volume will be reduced from 2022 numbers by 25%, reported annually.
- By the end of this plan, password lockouts will be reduced from 2022 numbers by 50%, reported annually.
- There will be a 100% success rate on staff security awareness testing.
- There will be zero SaaS sever environment breaches.
- There will be zero end-user workstations infected with malicious software.
- There will be zero phishing or impersonation responses from CHT staff.
- IT staff will attend at least 40 hours of technical training annually to bolster education and comprehension of CHT’s technological infrastructures.
- Help desk will triage all requests and respond to all high level requests in one hour or less during business hours. For mission-critical emergencies, such as loss of 88 King Street internet, system-wide email outages etc., the help desk will respond within 20 minutes or less.
- To prevent malicious coding, enhance data security, and increase efficiency, all CHT sites with three or more full time staff will have hardware firewall protection installed by October 2025.



Technical Assistance

TA\CHT supports our peers through technical assistance and contributes to our broader mission of ensuring access and equity in housing through the growth of community-controlled, permanently affordable housing such as community land trusts, shared equity homeownership and cooperatives. Through TA\CHT, CHT provides support to agencies in the United States and around the world as they explore and create new community-controlled, permanently affordable housing opportunities.

STRATEGIES

Continue to support the national NeighborWorks® shared equity initiative through grant-funded activities

- Create and teach new courses on shared equity models for the NeighborWorks National Training Institutes (NTIs) and Community Leadership Institutes (CLIs).
- Deliver Place-Based-Trainings on shared equity models in regional markets where local NeighborWorks groups seek to build support for their programs by educating their peer non-profit organizations, as well as partners in local government and foundations.
- Assist with developing racially diverse expertise in shared equity housing (SEH) for NeighborWorks; mentoring participants as a mentor in the initiative's mentoring program.
- Provide grant-funded or direct fee-for-service technical assistance to NeighborWorks organizations developing and implementing community land trust or shared equity homeownership programs.

Respond to inquiries to the TA\CHT help desk

- Provide pro-bono consultations in response to inquiries about CHT's development and examples of CHT best practices.
- Contribute to research and surveys by national policy groups and academic institutions.
- Participate in panel discussions and lead presentations.
- Where feasible and appropriate, develop these relationships into fee-for-service technical assistance.

Develop fee-for-service technical assistance and training

- Contract with local organizations and citizen groups seeking to expand or grow their CLT or shared equity homeownership programs.
- Contract with local organizations seeking to improve their governance, expand their fundraising and/or manage through organizational change such as executive director searches, mergers and strategic planning.
- Expand our fee-for-service technical assistance work so that this revenue supports all TA\CHT activities.
- Collaborate with Grounded Solutions Network and other technical assistance providers in our sector.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- CHT will continue to be known in our sector for assisting our peers and contributing to the national movement for community-controlled and permanently affordable housing by sharing our story, example and expertise.
- CHT will contribute to the growth and success of the national NeighborWorks shared equity initiative through annual grant-funded activities and direct technical assistance contracts with NeighborWorks organizations (NWOs) resulting in a doubling of network NWOs with CLT and SEH programs from 20% to 40% by 2025.
- TA\CHT will have the right mix of pro-bono service, grant funded activities and fee-for-service technical assistance work to be a fully self-sufficient department.



Governance

The CHT Board of Directors provides support and leadership to all of CHT, and will operate at optimal levels of strategic, generative and fiduciary governance to assure that CHT is always leading with core values, justice and equity and responding to changing needs in the community. All Board members will have sufficient knowledge of CHT programs, services, financial position, portfolio performance and development risks to be effective stewards of CHT's mission and plan goals. The Board will help build community understanding of CHT's mission and programs, and help raise the public and private charitable funds necessary for general operations.

STRATEGIES

Policy Action

- The Board of Directors will work with Community Relations to develop a policy framework and codify the Board's role in advocacy and policy-setting.
- The Board will explore engaging in more advocacy and policy work during the plan period and identify when it is beneficial for the Board to take a more active leadership role.

Board Assessment, Structure, Functions, and Practices

- The Governance and Nominations Committee will lead a Board Assessment during the plan period.
- With oversight from the Governance and Nominations Committee, each CHT committee will:
 - * Create a matrix for demographics/skills/qualifications for committee membership;
 - * Create written committee job descriptions and procedures;
 - * Establish an annual calendar with activities;
 - * Be responsible for receiving and tracking their departments' quarterly benchmarks.
- The Board, with the Governance and Nominations Committee, will identify and implement ways to more effectively invite people to participate who are not currently represented in CHT's governance, using the Board Matrix as a tool to identify needs and support recruitment.
- CHT's Mission, Vision, and Values will be reviewed and updated (if needed) during the plan period.
- There will be a thorough review and update to the Board Book within the plan period. It will be accompanied by a training and review of all key documents with the Board.
- Board members will suggest ambassador/fundraising activities that they are willing to participate in, and will make their best effort to volunteer for and participate in activities led by Community Relations.
- The Governance and Nominations Committee will have an officer succession plan as well as a recruitment plan for any planned vacancies in place by December of each year to propose to the full Board.
- The practice and content of annual Board Member Agreements will be reevaluated; additional consideration will be given to supporting individual member development.



Enrichment and Education

- The Board will identify ways in which to continue Board education and dialogue on the topics of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and will identify the ways in which that practice will inform the Board's governance role.
- The CHT Board will have strong leadership and informed members through an education and leadership development program that will include in-house and external trainings and one-on-one support.
- Board meetings and retreats will be organized to provide ample time for generative discussions; discussions will be framed around organizational values and strategic themes whenever possible.
- Board members will be given a tour of CHT properties with representative examples of the urban, suburban and rural portfolios, as well as special housing properties and nonprofit facilities.
- New Board members will receive a timely orientation conducted by staff that will include onboarding with staff leadership. New Board members will be paired with an experienced Board Mentor. Volunteers for mentors will be recruited and supported by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Education will be included in at least four board meetings per year.
- At least seven Board members will attend relevant trainings or conferences in the plan period. Board members will actively participate in the training curriculum.
- The Board will be at full capacity at all times with a clear but flexible recruitment strategy based on the Board Matrix.
- Each year, there will be at least ten board meetings and a full-day retreat with time dedicated to generative discussions and big-picture issues.
- Up to three non-officer Board members will serve on the Governance and Nominations Committee, relieving officers of shouldering the entire governance role, and building future leaders who are qualified and representative of CHT's membership.
- Committees will have clear descriptions, membership guidelines, and annual activities.
- CHT will have 100% Board participation in its fundraising and community relations strategies. Each Board member will make their best effort to attend the Annual Meeting and annual membership event in addition to as many other events as possible, and will engage meaningfully with CHT members directly. Each Board member will participate in at least one Community Relations activity per year.
- Each Board member will make a personally meaningful annual gift to CHT each year.



APPENDIX

A Look Back at the Events of the Past Three Years

EXPAND SERVICES

Prior to the adoption of the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan in 2019, there were three service staff working as part of a resident services group. In 2022, CHT now has a new department with new leadership and a staff of 15 providing support, services and community building to our residents and to homeless households.

SERVE THE MISSING MIDDLE

CHT expanded its capacity to serve the missing middle, providing access to homeownership for residents up to 100% of median income while building our capacity to preserve existing housing stock.

BUILD OUR CAPITAL RESOURCES

CHT is probably in the best financial condition it has ever been. Early access to a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan kept the organization on solid financial footing at the beginning of the pandemic. Funding through pandemic relief funds, New Market Tax Credits (NMTC), and a highly successful capital campaign to raise additional funds through philanthropy and planned giving were all signature events.

In 2020 and 2021, CHT created 125 new high quality, safe permanently affordable apartments, and renovated 96 apartments. In 2022, the level of development and development opportunity is equally significant.

SUPPORT OUR PEERS THROUGH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

We launched TA\CHT with Brenda Torpy leading this effort. We continue to be a resource for other nonprofit housing groups throughout the state, providing support, ideas and feedback on a regular basis in areas such as human resources and development, and managing two statewide loan programs. We also provide leadership to state and national networks, including Housing Partnership Network, National NeighborWorks Association and Grounded Solutions Network.

ADDRESS SUCCESSION

The past three years have brought significant changes in CHT leadership. Throughout these changes, the health of the organization remained strong. Brenda Torpy stepped down as Chief Executive Officer into a new role, leading CHT's new technical assistance line of business. Michael Monte assumed the role of CEO. Amy Demetrowitz assumed the role of Chief Operating Officer, Cheryl Read assumed the role of Chief Administrative and Financial Officer and Josh Chant became the Director of Finance. CHT welcomed new staff leadership as Miranda Lescaze joined us as the Director of Real Estate Development and Julie Curtin assumed the role of Director of Homeownership. Mike Ohler assumed the role of Director of Resident Services and Homelessness Prevention Initiatives.

We have built a strong bench of capable leaders and have been able to attract high quality outside candidates when necessary.



THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Like everything, everywhere, our world was turned upside down. When the prescription was to stay at home, we needed to make sure that everyone had a home to be safe in.

- We moved quickly and early, ordering supplies and materials that we would need to manage properties.
- We kept our residents informed, assisted with their rent and connected them to services including internet access.
- We kept our staff safe, taking every precaution in equipment and protocols, including getting everyone vaccinated.
- Everyone got the technology needed to work remotely.
- We purchased a motel and created a new program to support people experiencing homelessness who needed to be quarantined.
- We created new permanent housing opportunities for people experiencing homelessness.
- We provided financial counseling to homeowners and renters.

CHT's relationships, reputation and aggressive advocacy led to unprecedented resources being available to develop more housing and support our residents.

A CLEAR CALL TO ENGAGE IN RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

The events of 2020 strengthened our commitment to reflect, create and respond to the need for racial justice.

- We launched the Homeownership Equity Program, a six-part program that includes advocacy, marketing and outreach, financial counseling, credit and lending, housing sustainability, advocacy and down payment assistance for households of color, one of the first of its kind in the nation.
- We initiated the Vermont Farmworker Housing Repair Loan Program throughout the State.
- We undertook a racial equity assessment of our programs and services.
- We read the "Color of Law" and "Race for Profit".
- We increased representation on our Board and in our staffing to reflect the communities we serve.
- We continue to train all staff members on fair housing issues both in person and online through the GROW program and have enhanced requirements surrounding racial justice and equity.
- We increased translation and interpretation services in our materials and on our website.
- In partnership with other organizations, we launched a statewide program that includes speakers on critical topics and a series of discussions with statewide partners and non-profits on critical issues.
- We prioritized our partnerships with organizations serving BIPOC communities.



Overview of Business Lines, Programs and Services

The Champlain Housing Trust is a developer and trustee of public assets through two primary activities:

- **Homeownership Promotion, Preservation and Lending.** CHT develops and preserves affordable homeownership opportunities through our stewardship of shared equity, owner-occupied housing. CHT also promotes, expands and preserves homeownership through financial and home education and counseling; lending programs, default intervention and foreclosure prevention.
- **Multi-Family Housing and Property Management.** CHT owns and manages affordably priced rental housing for a wide variety of incomes. CHT provides training and technical support for housing cooperatives so that residents may effectively govern their corporations and their communities. CHT also owns and manages commercial and nonprofit community facilities. CHT provides a range of social, health and financial counseling services to help people access our homes and to succeed in them, especially people experiencing homelessness.

These two primary activities are supported by:

- **Real Estate Development.** CHT develops new, and preserves existing, affordably priced housing, including resale-restricted homes, multi-family rental apartments and limited equity cooperative homes. CHT also develops service-enriched and transitional housing, commercial spaces, community facilities, community parks and other nonresidential amenities that provide a foundation for strong, vital communities.
- **Community Relations.** CHT is a membership organization that encourages advocacy and community building activities in support of affordable housing programs. CHT raises private donations from individuals, corporations and charitable foundations as well as public sources in support of our mission and activities through an annual campaign, endowment, planned giving and targeted fund drives. CHT promotes our mission through marketing, community group engagement and other outreach tools. CHT is also a leader and mentor in promoting affordable housing and the community land trust model in Vermont, nationally and internationally.
- **Finance.** The Finance Department provides financial and accounting services to all CHT departments, manages the annual corporate and partnership audits, develops annual budgets and provides monthly and quarterly reporting as well as mid-year budget projections and forecasts.
- **Human Resources, Administration and Management.** Human Resources leads all recruiting and staffing efforts, ensures staff performance management, develops and coordinates training and development, oversees the establishment of staff compensation and benefits and supervises administrative staff and technology services. Human Resources plays a key role in advancing the racial justice and equity work for CHT.
- **Governance.** Board members are committed to CHT's mission of expanding affordable housing opportunities in our region, and to the community land trust model of permanent affordability. They use their diverse array of skills and perspectives to add value on strategy, governance, fundraising and CHT's profile in the community. The Board plays a key leadership role in the racial justice and equity work for CHT.



Service Area and Program Delivery

Champlain Housing Trust directly serves and draws membership from people in northwest Vermont, encompassing urban, suburban and rural housing markets in Chittenden, Grand Isle and Franklin counties. This service area is home to one third of Vermont's population with over 215,000 people. The region's 39 cities and towns are all able to draw on CHT's capacity to fulfill their affordable housing and community development goals.

While the service area is regional, CHT's historic target area is Burlington's Old North End, the region's largest concentration of poverty and Vermont's most multi-cultural area with a large population of New Americans and refugees. CHT has a significant amount of housing in the Old North End – 400 homes in less than one square mile – a neighborhood that has historically suffered from aging, substandard housing stock and periods of neglect and disinvestment. CHT has embraced the Old North End's proud history as home to immigrants going back to the 19th century, and has improved the neighborhood not just through housing development but also in the form of community buildings such as the Food Shelf, Legal Aid, and most recently, the Old North End Community Center.

While CHT's overall affordable housing development, management and stewardship activities are predominantly deployed in our service area of northwest Vermont, CHT is also increasingly sought out to provide training and technical assistance or special programs for the entire State of Vermont, including:

- a statewide mobile home purchase program;
- a statewide farm worker housing program;
- fiduciary and coordinating duties for the NeighborWorks Alliance of Vermont, five groups that partner to deliver programs statewide; and

CHT provides technical assistance to groups and government entities across the United States on the community land trust model and permanent affordability. CHT also receives funds from NeighborWorks America to provide training and technical assistance to organizations seeking to implement our resident retention financial services.

In all, there are over 130 CHT employees. World headquarters is located in downtown Burlington. We also have property management offices in St. Albans, and property site offices in Burlington, Colchester, South Burlington, Shelburne, Swanton, Williston and Alburgh.



Plan Development

CHT utilized several tools to develop this plan:

Interviews with Local Partners. Our many strong and valued partnerships are a vital aspect of CHT's ability to leverage resources and deliver services for the benefit of the people and communities we serve. We engaged an independent consultant to gather advice and feedback from our local and state partners and stakeholders. In the winter of 2021, interviews were conducted with leaders representing 33 organizations and agencies, including funding partners, housing service providers and social service agencies. Interview findings were summarized in a written report and presented for discussion to CHT's Board and senior staff members.

Racial Equity Organizational Assessment. Beginning in February 2022, CHT contracted with Racial Equity Partners (REP) to conduct an organizational assessment. The assessment included gathering feedback from the CHT community: staff, Board, residents and other key constituents - to evaluate CHT's efforts to advance racial equity and inclusion. It included a staff survey, a Board survey, resident focus groups, staff focus groups, key stakeholder interviews and a review of human resource documents, policies and data.

Best Places to Work. The Best Places to Work in Vermont survey asks a series of questions of CHT staff that helped form an understanding of the internal organizational needs of the organization.

Resident Survey. We conduct a yearly survey of our renters. This year's survey generated over 700 responses, and this feedback informed Board and staff thinking about programming and priorities.

Staff Input. CHT initiated the plan with a full-day staff meeting to generate input from all employees. This provided a broad spectrum of ideas to explore and incorporate in the plan. Managers took these concepts and refined them further with an eye on staffing capacity, community need and available funding.

Board Review and Approval. The Board held a two-day retreat to explore the effectiveness of current programs and new ideas. These discussions formed the basis for this plan and reflect the priorities of the Board. In addition, the Board conducted a self-assessment. Department leaders worked with board committees to finalize the written draft to present to the full Board. The Board adopted the full plan in October 2022.



Plan Evaluation

CHT has established measurable performance targets and benchmarks for all of the goals described in this Strategic Plan. Progress will be tracked as follows:

- A written staff report to the Board will track progress toward plan goals.
- Quarterly benchmark reports to the Board will track specific outcomes.
- A yearly Board review will assess overall progress and make any needed amendments to the goals and strategies.

