



Everyone deserves a home.

2026 Annual Report

Prepared for 2026 Annual Meeting
in review of 2025 Fiscal Year
(10/1/24- 9/30/25)

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Executive Director's Message

Dear COTS Community,

The past year has been quite the ride. This time last year we were in the midst of running a low-barrier winter seasonal shelter known as the Warming Station, hosting 40 individuals each night, comprising 191 unique individuals from January through the end of April. That was in addition to the 36 individuals in our Waystation each night, the 54 beds for 15 families in our Family Shelter, the 7 beds in the Smith House, and all of our other programming.

We are beyond thrilled to have renovated 58 Pearl Street into a new 56 bed home for our Waystation shelter, and we could not have done it without the support of each of you. It is a beautiful, trauma-informed space that not only provides a place for our guests to sleep, but also supports the journey back to stable housing through innovative partnerships.

Each evening, Recovery Coaches from the Turning Point Center of Chittenden County are onsite, and staff from Community Health Centers are at the Waystation two evenings a week to provide health care services to our guests. These same partners follow the same schedule at our Daystation program as well, as we endeavor to literally and figuratively meet people where they are, and walk with them on their journey.

This philosophy is woven through all of COTS. Whether a household is in the Daystation, the Waystation, the Smith House, is at our Family Shelter, or is enrolled in our Family Supportive Housing program, the dedicated team at COTS works to tailor support and programming to the unique needs of the household, and to help create connections that endure well beyond their stay with us. Dedicated community partners work with our guests, to secure employment, for health and wellness, for kids and family programming, for food security, and so many other areas, creating a rich environment for learning, for healing, and for growth.

Throughout the past year, we have focused on creating a living, breathing strategic plan to guide us into the future. This process has included gathering feedback from clients, tenants, staff, board members, community partners, donors, and volunteers.

There is little more gratifying than bumping into someone in the community who has worked with COTS who chooses to stop, say hello, and to catch up. This is the work of establishing relationships, trust, and success that you all help us to achieve. As you read through this report, you will see this theme of connection unfold. It's the human touch, the earned relationship, the show of care and support, and the connections to our community that change lives. Thank you for being part of this work with our team! So many people contribute time, money, expertise, care, and love through COTS that our guests feel every day. That is how we build up our community and how we demonstrate that everyone deserves a home.

Thank you!

Jonathan Farrell, COTS Executive Director





Our Mission

We advocate for long-term solutions to end homelessness and provide emergency shelter, services, and long-term housing for people who are experiencing homelessness or are marginally housed.

We Believe

In the value and dignity of every human life.

That housing is a fundamental human right.

That emergency shelter is not the solution to homelessness.

COTS Board of Directors

Lynne Jaunich (Chair)
Julia Paradiso (Vice Chair)
Jared Annello (Treasurer)
Carol Boardman (Secretary)
Kevin Baker
Allison Crowley
Cathy Davis
Maree Gaetani
Steve Goldman
Tim Kane
Michael H. Lipson
Josh Prokopy
Kurt Reichelt
Sarah Sprayregen
Tom Stretton

COTS Senior Leadership Team

JONATHAN FARRELL
Executive Director

LOGAN BROWN
Property and Facilities Director

RACHEAL EMERY
HR Director

REBEKAH MOTT
Development & Communications Director

TAMMY SANTAMORE
Emergency Shelter and Outreach Director

SOPHIA SENNING
Housing Services Director

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging

COTS believes in the value and dignity of every human life. Our dedication to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging is not just an aspect of our mission and values, it is at the core of who we are. We strive to foster a safe, welcoming, and supportive space for all. To achieve this, we are committed to the following actions:

- We continuously collect and review feedback from those we serve and those we work with to ensure that we are living our values and treating everyone with dignity and respect.
- We acknowledge that members of the BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. We actively work to ensure the services we offer and the support we provide are in alignment with the needs of these and other marginalized communities.
- We aim to recruit team members that reflect the diversity of our community and those we serve. Beyond recruitment, once an individual is part of our team, we focus on cultivating a culture that allows all members of Team COTS to bring their authentic selves to work.
- We invest the time and resources necessary to continually improve our understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, through intentional education, celebration, and reflection on our current practices.

We must intentionally address all barriers to accessing housing, the inequities in our systems, and the evolving needs of our community. We know that we are not there yet, that the work never ends, and that we can always improve.



COTS STRATEGIC PLAN

I. STRENGTHEN THE CORE

Ensure that our internal capacity is not overridden by our desire to serve and that we have the systems and resources available to effectively carry out our mission.

→ Goal 1: Support Our Staff

We will cultivate a safe and supportive workplace by offering regular professional development, clear career pathways, and meaningful opportunities for staff to contribute, lead, and shape the culture and future of COTS. As a result, staff will feel more engaged and retention rates will increase.

→ Goal 2: Tell Our Story

We will invest in internal and external communications tools and resources to inform and educate audiences about our work and mission. As a result, staff and board will understand their roles in advancing our work, volunteers and donors will deepen their commitment, and the community will recognize COTS' role in addressing housing instability and housing development.

→ Goal 3: Strengthen Our Internal Systems

We will improve existing data and information systems so information is accessible and reliable. As a result, staff and board will be better equipped to carry out their daily jobs, and we will be able to more efficiently record, retrieve, analyze, and utilize data.

II. REDUCE THE PRESSURE

Streamline access to resources for our clients and engage our community partners in strengthening the system of care.

→ Goal 4: Create More Pathways to Housing

We will work with partners to increase access to safe, stable, and sustainable housing. As a result, we will reduce barriers for those we serve and will improve the path from shelter to permanent housing.

→ Goal 5: Enhance Client Experience Across Services

We will continue to cultivate client-centered environments where clients feel heard, respected, and supported. As a result, clients will experience greater consistency across our services, as well as a smoother transition from shelter to housing.

→ Goal 6: Develop and Strengthen Key Partnerships to Better Serve Target Populations

We will continue to build a robust network of community, government, and service partners with coordinated efforts, shared resources, and integrated support. As a result, the people we serve will experience more effective, timely, and equitable services and improved outcomes.

COTS STRATEGIC PLAN

III. BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

Expand prevention resources and housing opportunities and create new and innovative models for addressing homelessness so that we can move closer to our vision of a time and a place when no one is homeless.

→ Goal 7: Utilize Our Existing Spaces

We will maximize our facilities to provide safe, dignified, and well-utilized shelter and housing. As a result, our guests will feel safe and welcome in all of COTS' facilities, and we will optimize the use of space to foster a positive sense of community within our program and housing spaces.

→ Goal 8: Increase Future Funding Stability

We will enhance and invest in systems that build long-term financial stability, enable sustainable growth, and expand our capacity to meet future community needs. As a result, we will operate each year with a balanced budget and a healthy reserve to see the organization through difficult financial times.

→ Goal 9: Remain Open to New Opportunities

We will continue to develop the tools and capacity to identify, evaluate, and act on new opportunities. As a result, we will build staff capacity so we will be better positioned to meet the evolving needs of the people we serve.



Financial Report

The following financial information represents unaudited financials for the 2025 Fiscal Year. COTS works with an independent accounting firm to conduct annual financial audits, which are made available on our website at www.cotsonline.org.

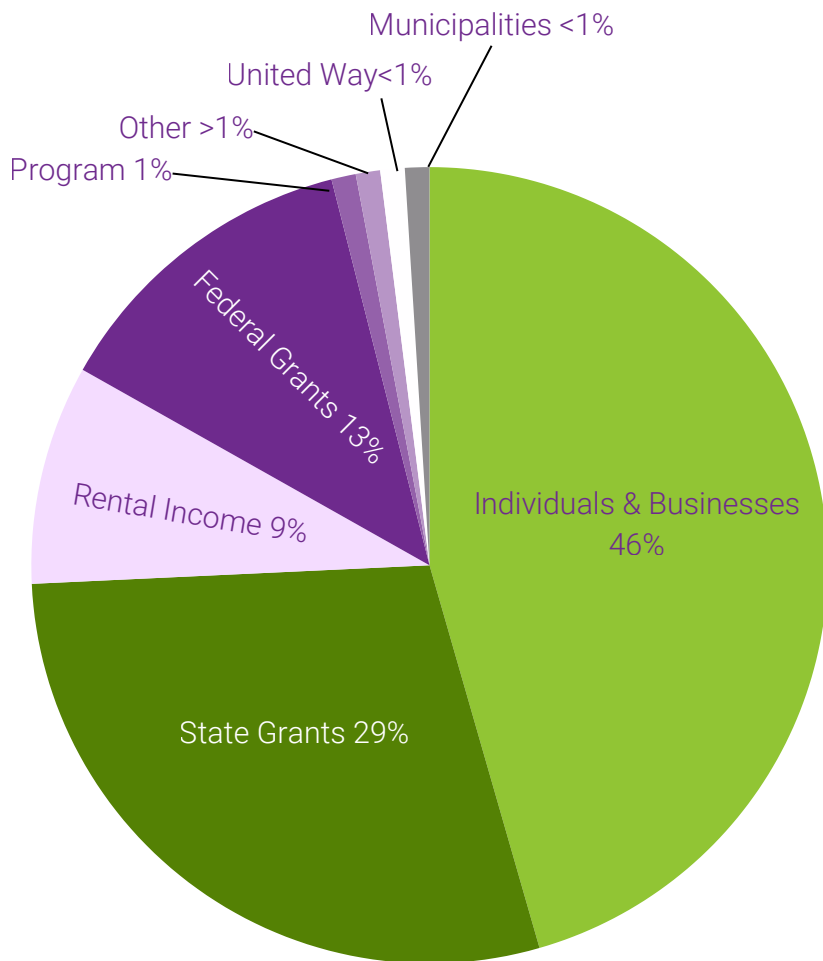
The majority of COTS's revenue comes from private donations from the public. Thanks to the generous support of COTS donors and funders, we met fundraising targets for the year.

COTS Income and Revenues October 2024 - September 2025	
Total Federal Grants	\$277,154.63
Total General Public Support	\$3,073,192.79
Total Municipalities Revenue	\$ 45,617.00
Total Other Revenue	\$37,500.00
Total Program Revenue	\$59,790.88
Total Rental Income and Reimbursement	\$339,500.95
Total State Grants	\$2,693,039.67
Total United Way	\$ 15,629.53
Total Income	\$ 6,541,425.45



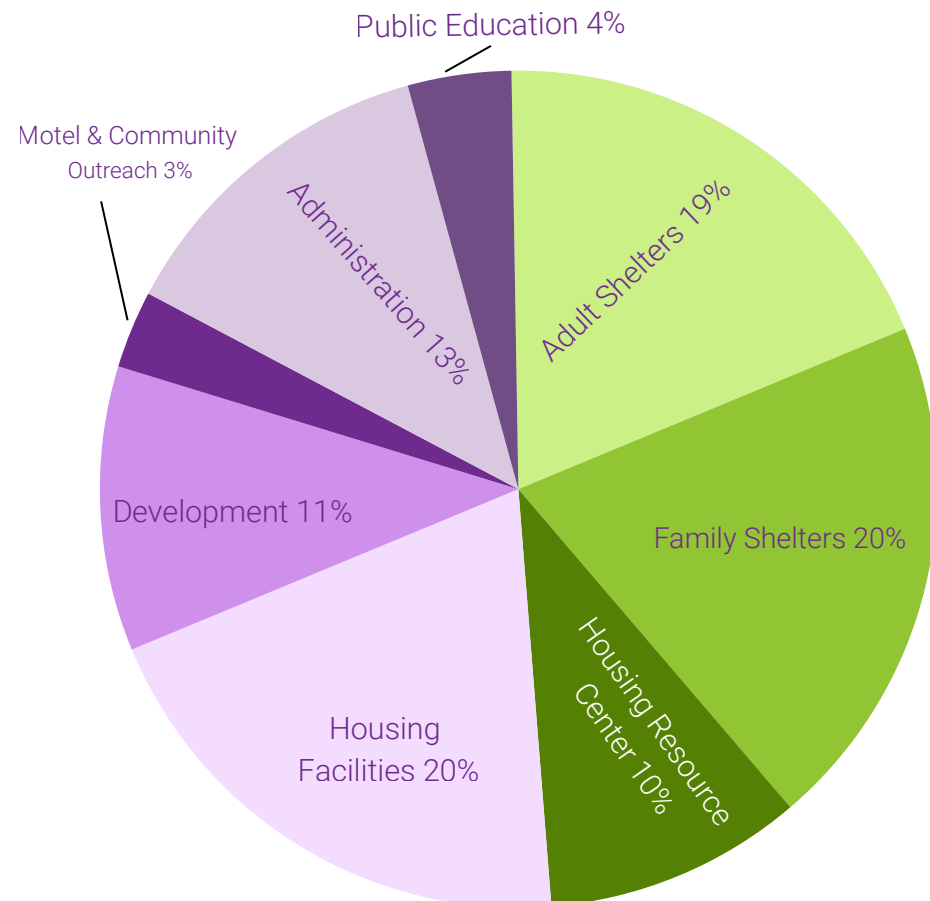
Client needs and programmatic costs continue to grow at a rapid pace. With prudent planning for the future, COTS maintains strong reserves to care for our portfolio of buildings. Full audited financials and 990 reports are available on our website at www.cotsonline.org.

COTS Expenses and Net Income October 2024 - September 2025	
Client Services and Prevention	\$159,955.28
Repairs and Maintenance	\$421,085.90
Operating Leases	\$88,504.76
Utilities	\$136,933.48
Contracts and Supplies	\$1,382,999.24
Personnel	\$3,230,440.73
Total Expenses	\$5,419,919.39



Revenues

The majority of COTS's revenue comes directly from our community, which includes annual donations, event fundraising, business and corporate support, family foundations and trusts, bequests and planned gifts, and gifts of stock or other assets.



Expenses

The majority of COTS's expenses go directly to clients in the form of shelter, housing, and outreach programs. A smaller portion supports fundraising, administration, and public education.



Everyone deserves a home.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS *

FAMILY SHELTER:

39 families, including **66 children**, stayed in a COTS family shelter and received housing and supportive services. Specialized programs were also offered for children.

THE WAYSTATION:

161 individuals stayed at the Waystation, COTS' year-round overnight shelter, and received housing and supportive services.

MOTEL OUTREACH TEAM:

69 adults and **11 children** experiencing homelessness in area hotels received re-housing and support services.

THE DAYSTATION:

1,845 individuals visited the Daystation, COTS' daytime drop-in center for lunch, showers, laundry, and services.

WINTER WARMING STATION:

191 individuals received low barrier overnight shelter from January to May.

FAMILY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:

66 households, including **123 children**, were enrolled in case management to obtain and retain permanent housing.

HOUSING NAVIGATION:

162 households, including **175 adults** and **62 children**, received housing and services through the COTS Housing Resource Center.

* COTS services provided during COTS Fiscal Year (10/1/2024 - 9/30/2025)

MORE THAN SHELTER

We believe in the dignity of every human life, that housing is a human right, and that shelter is not the solution to homelessness.

Learn more: cotsonline.org.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We provide **116 units** of affordable transitional and permanent housing.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

We provide year-round day and overnight emergency shelter for individuals and families with children.

HOUSING SERVICES

Housing Navigators help guests find sustainable permanent housing, as well as access community resources and mainstream benefits.

OUTREACH SERVICES

Outreach navigators connect with families and individuals staying in emergency motel shelter to help them find permanent housing.

CONTACT US

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COTS

*is one of the largest service providers for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Vermont. We helped **2,636 people**, including **207 children**, last year.*



Housing Services

COTS Housing Services programs include the Housing Resources Center, which provides housing navigation and prevention assistance, as well as our housing retention team, which serve residents in COTS's permanent affordable housing buildings and our Family Supportive Housing program which serves families with children. The Smith House provides step-up shelter for 7 individuals.

Message from Sophia Senning, Housing Services Director

Ending homelessness is not a single event; it is a continuum of support that begins in shelter and continues long after someone moves into housing. This year, we focused intentionally on strengthening and deepening each step of that continuum to prevent a return to homelessness. Our Housing Navigation team works in close partnership with COTS shelter staff to help individuals and families develop clear, realistic housing plans, secure documentation, and connect with community resources that set them up for long-term success. With the expansion of the Waystation, we added an additional Housing Navigator, increasing our capacity to engage people earlier and move more efficiently toward stable housing outcomes.

As the housing crisis deepens, helping someone move into housing is only the first step. Ensuring they remain stably housed is equally important. This year, we significantly strengthened our Retention Team — increasing staff capacity, dedicating intentional time within our buildings, and expanding proactive interventions. We introduced regular on-site office hours, brought community partners directly into our housing, and hosted events and celebrations designed to foster connection and belonging. By building stronger community across our six permanent housing properties, we are working to interrupt the cycle of housing instability before it begins again.

Breaking the cycle

In the past year, the Retention Team connected with over 80% of all COTS tenants, including some who have lived in our buildings for decades. The impact of this work can be seen in the story of a mother of three who graduated from shelter five years ago. After several years of stability, she fell behind on rent, received lease violations related to neighbor disputes, and was at risk of losing her housing subsidy. Our Retention Team supported her through tenant mediation, assisted in appealing the loss of her subsidy, helped establish a repayment plan, and worked alongside her to stabilize her housing. Today, she remains housed and has avoided returning to shelter with an eviction on her record.

IN THE PAST YEAR:

- **80% of tenants had contact with the Housing Retention Team**
- **50-60% actively connected with the team**
- **50% attended in-house activities**
- **30% participated in community-based activities**



Housing Services

Message from Sophia Senning, Housing Services Director, continued

Looking ahead, we are preparing for the transition to a single property management company across our portfolio. This will be an important step toward greater consistency, efficiency, and alignment in how we support tenants and steward our housing.

While the Retention Team focuses on COTS permanent housing, our Family Supportive Housing (FSH) team provides intensive services to families throughout the community. This year marked an important milestone for the program: all five team members are now fully employed by COTS, strengthening alignment, accountability, and consistency of care. The FSH program serves families experiencing homelessness with minor children, prioritizing those with DCF involvement, children under six, and multiple episodes of homelessness. These highly vulnerable families require intensive, ongoing support long after they move into housing. As our Program Coordinator aptly shared, “Often the work truly begins once a family has moved into housing.”

We continue this work in an increasingly challenging environment marked by decreased housing subsidies, federal funding uncertainty, and increased acuity among the individuals and families we serve. These pressures make retention efforts, coordination, and strong partnerships more critical than ever.

The challenges are real, but so is our commitment. I am deeply proud of our staff, our partners, and the resilience of the people we serve. Together, we are not only helping people access housing — we are ensuring they have the support to keep it.



Emergency Shelter and Outreach

COTS operates emergency shelter for single adults and families. Altogether, COTS has capacity for 56 adults in overnight shelter and serves around 80 adults daily at the Daystation. Additionally, COTS serves 15 families with children at two family shelter locations.

Message from Tammy Santamore, Emergency Shelter and Outreach Director

Deepening Support. Strengthening Community. Expanding Impact.

This year, COTS Emergency Shelter and Outreach Programs responded to unprecedented demand with innovation, partnership, and an unwavering commitment to those we serve. As homelessness grows more complex and visible in our community, our work has focused on two core priorities: deepening the support offered to guests and strengthening collaboration across community systems.

Meeting Rising Need with Coordinated Care

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Daystation served 1,845 unique individuals, totaling 25,754 visits— a significant increase over prior years. On any given day, between 40% and 60% of visits were from individuals sleeping outdoors or in other locations not intended for human habitation, underscoring the growing urgency and depth of need in our community.

As guest needs grow more acute, including complex medical conditions, mobility challenges, and significant mental health and substance use disorders, our response has evolved. We are expanding coordination with medical and behavioral health providers to stabilize health, reduce crises, and improve housing readiness.

Key community partners include:
University of Vermont Medical Center
Community Health Centers of Burlington
Howard Center
Pathways Vermont
Turning Point Center of Chittenden County
Veterans Administration
HireAbility

These partnerships bring on-site medical care, behavioral health support, employment services, recovery coaching, and coordinate planning directly to our guests, reducing barriers and increasing access to critical services.

In partnership with the City of Burlington and local agencies, staff participated in Situation Table training, a rapid, collaborative intervention model designed to support individuals facing acutely elevated risk.

Emergency Shelter and Outreach

Improving Access to Shelter

The Waystation shelter operated at capacity throughout the year, reflecting both the scale of need and the trust our community places in our programs. To better serve guests and strengthen coordination with community partners, we implemented a formal referral and waitlist system. This improved process enhances equity, streamlines communication, and ensures individuals are better prepared for successful transitions into housing-focused shelter.

Early outcomes show:

- Increased predictability and equity in bed access
- Better communication with community providers
- Reduced congestion at the Daystation
- Stronger housing-focused transitions

With the expansion at 58 Pearl Street, adding 20 additional beds, this system positioned us to serve more individuals with greater coordination and care.

Even in challenging circumstances such as accommodating guests with significant mobility limitations or responding to rising health acuity staff have demonstrated flexibility, compassion, and problem-solving to ensure no one is left without support.

Supporting Families with Stability and Dignity

Our Family Shelter programs served families experiencing deep housing instability amid a historically tight rental market and reduced voucher availability.

At the close of the fiscal year:

- 15 families (36 individuals) were sheltered
- 45 families remained on the waitlist
- Despite longer shelter stays and “shelter fatigue,” families achieved meaningful progress:
- Multiple households transitioned into permanent housing
- Parents reunited with children
- Children received tutoring, education advocacy, enrichment programming, and mental health support

Community partnerships strengthened programming for children and parents alike, including collaboration with:

- King Street Center
- Burlington City Arts
- Stern Center for Language and Learning

Volunteer-led art, mentoring, dance, respite care, literacy events, and therapy dog visits created stability and joy in the midst of crisis.



Emergency Shelter and Outreach

Expanding Workforce & Training the Next Generation

A critical part of our impact extends beyond the guests we serve today it includes helping prepare the human service workforce of tomorrow.



Main Street Family Shelter



Firehouse Family Shelter



Daystation Drop-in Shelter



Waystation Adult Overnight Shelter

This year, we proudly served as a training site for students across multiple disciplines, including social work, psychology, criminal justice, nursing, nonprofit management, and medicine. Through partnerships with institutions such as Champlain College, University of Vermont, Saint Michael's College, Berea College, and Sewanee - The University of the South, students gain direct experience in emergency shelter, housing navigation, public health outreach, and family services.

Interns collaborate with experienced staff in the Daystation, Waystation, Family Shelter programs supporting case coordination, facilitating children's programming, assisting with housing applications, conducting public health projects, and strengthening resource navigation. Medical and nurse practitioner students have completed targeted projects focused on health access, wound care, child nutrition, and the complex medical needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.

These placements do more than expand our capacity they immerse emerging professionals in trauma-informed, housing-focused, community-based practice. Students leave with a deeper understanding of homelessness, systems coordination, equity-centered service delivery, and the importance of dignity in care.

By investing in experiential learning, we are actively strengthening Vermont's future social service workforce. Many interns pursue careers in housing, healthcare, and community-based support some even continuing their work with us after graduation.

Training the next generation ensures that our impact extends far beyond a single fiscal year. It is an investment in sustainable, compassionate leadership for our community.

Beyond the numbers, this work demonstrated the power of sustained, relationship-based support in helping individuals overcome barriers and secure permanent housing.

In closing, the challenges are significant. But so is the strength of our partnerships, the resilience of our guests, and the dedication of our staff.

Together, we are building a more coordinated, compassionate system of care, one that not only provides shelter, but fosters stability, dignity, and pathways home.

SAVE THE DATES:

COTS Walk on May 3rd 2026

Participants harness the power of community by raising money as teams or individuals. Join us for this family-friendly event and take a 3.6 mile walk through Burlington to learn more about COTS services.

Back to School Bonanza on August 1st 2026

Through business sponsorships, partnerships, and donations, we provide school supplies, first-day outfits, free haircuts, fun activities, and snacks for students in our community who need a boost to get ready to head back to school.

COTS Phonathon from November 30th - December 3rd

Join dozens of volunteers as we call past supporters to thank them and ask for their continued support to fund our programs and services.

COTS Candlelight Vigil on December 21st 2026

Honor Homeless Person's Memorial Day (Dec. 21) and mourn those who have lost their lives while experiencing homelessness and reflect on our hope for those still striving for a better life.

Ways to give:



Donate online at www.cotsonline.org/donate, or by mail to COTS at PO Box 1616, Burlington, VT 05402.



Transfer appreciated stocks or bonds as a gift. Under the right circumstances, you can deduct their full fair market value and avoid incurring capital gains tax. Talk to your financial advisor about the amount and timing of your gift, and give them the following information for transferring the security.

Send electronic certificates to:
Charles Schwab and Company, Inc.
FBO Committee on Temporary Shelter
Account # 6163-8032
DTC # 0164, code 40
Tax ID # 03-0285606



Check out COTS's in-kind donation wishlist at www.cotsonline.org/wishlist.



Many employers will match their employees' charitable contributions or volunteer hours.

1. Ask your company if they have a matching gift program. Your HR representative will probably have the details.
2. If your company uses an online portal for matching gifts, use that to submit your information. If your company uses a paper form, request a copy.
3. Complete and sign the employee portion of the form, and send it and your gift to COTS.



Create a lasting impact by strategically arranging your estate and assets to support COTS's mission of providing assistance, shelter, and affordable housing to Vermonters who are experiencing homelessness.

Consider COTS in your legacy planning, including:

- IRA Qualified Charitable Contributions
- Bequests and Wills
- Beneficiary Designations

Join the COTS Legacy Society and let us know if you intend to make a planned gift!



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