

## VYCC Housing Bullets

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To: Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>

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Hi Josh – Thanks for taking time to talk this through just now. We are applying for a Congressionally Directed Spending request through Senator Welch's office. The app is due 4/8.

We'll be applying for funds to increase our housing on campus. Here are key points that offer context and details:

- We start with a strong belief in the power of paid service experiences. VYCC consistently offers a profound learning and empowering experience for young adults. We also complete hundreds of projects throughout the state each year that strengthen communities and help our wild and working landscapes be ever more resilient.
- Over the past several years, we have worked hard to increase access to VYCC by raising the compensation levels for our Corps Members. We are also incorporating more credentials and credit into the program. The more "valuable" the VYCC experience, the more we are able to compete with other, higher paying jobs.
- However, one of the most significant barriers to participation is housing. For example, many of our Corps Members are AmeriCorps members. These folks earn a modest stipend that simply cannot pay for housing in this market. VYCC wants to increase the amount of housing we can offer our participants.
- Not only would increased housing make VYCC accessible to all members of our community, it would take pressure off the local housing market; if VYCC can house staff and participants on our campus, this would free up rentals in the Richmond area.
- We currently have 7 lean-tos and an old farm house. This provides accommodation for roughly 50 three-season participants and 5 year-round participants. We want to increase this significantly. In the coming years, we hope to be able to offer year-round accommodations for 40 participants and seasonal accommodations for 100. Converting the West Monitor Barn to a dorm, building a new dorm, and renovating the Farmhouse are all elements of our campus plan.
- We have been working with Vermont Integrated Architecture on a campus plan and look forward to sharing this with Richmond officials. We began this process about 18 months ago and have now made enough progress to provide a more detailed update.

Thank you for including this in the 4/1 selectboard meeting. I'd be happy to attend and look forward to the discussion and answering questions people might have.

Best,

Breck

**Breck Knauft**

Executive Director

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