



# THE MOBILIZER

## What Can The Mobile Home Program Do For You?

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### The Mission

To give mobile home park residents greater control over their housing, through organizing and education, in order to protect and improve their housing rights and living conditions.

### Who we are

The Mobile Home Program is a program of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity. We work with mobile home residents throughout the state of Vermont to defend their interests and ensure they are able to maintain their housing. We recognize that mobile homes are an important kind of affordable housing for many Vermonters and our goal is to keep mobile homes safe and affordable for Vermonters.

### Housing Counseling

*Providing information about:*

- ◆ Financing, purchase, repair, and replacement of mobile homes
- ◆ Resident and park owner rights and responsibilities
- ◆ How to resolve health and safety concerns related to water, sewer, electricity, road conditions and how to contact the proper enforcement agencies

*Counsel individuals:*

- ◆ To better understand the terms and conditions of their leases or loans
- ◆ To steer them away from predatory loans
- ◆ Who wish to sell their mobile homes or are looking for available lots
- ◆ Who are facing eviction or foreclosure

### Referral Services

*Providing referrals to:*

- ◆ Financial institutions for mortgages, refinancing, and home repair loans
- ◆ Agencies specializing in credit and debt counseling
- ◆ Lawyers and Superior Courts for illegal evictions, denied entry into parks, landlord-tenant disputes, or small claims
- ◆ Community action agencies for assistance with back-lot-rent, utility payment assistance, and weatherization services
- ◆ Fair Housing for cases of housing discrimination
- ◆ Efficiency Vermont for rebates and technical assistance

### Resident Organizing

*Assisting residents:*

- ◆ Who wish to organize resident associations
- ◆ Conducting elections for resident association leadership and writing by-laws
- ◆ Facing lot rent increases and provide guidance to residents who wish to seek mediation to dispute rent increases
- ◆ Facing park sales or closures

### Advocacy

- ◆ We promote the interests of mobile home residents by participating in the legislative and policy making processes in Vermont as mobile home park experts, and
- ◆ Assist mobile home park residents in exercising their rights provided under Vermont state law. We do this by working directly with residents and in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental agencies.

## Be Smart! Be Prepared!

### Do you have an **EMERGENCY** Plan?

#### Interested in FREE Emergency Planning Workshops?

CVOEO's *Mobile Home Program* and faculty of UVM's *Dept. of Community Development & Applied Economics* are offering

**FREE Emergency Preparedness Trainings** to mobile home communities!

We come to you! We schedule at your convenience. There is **no cost!**

But there will be **FUN** and **SNACKS!**



Call Annik to learn more:

(802) 660 - 3455 ex. 108

Emergency Planning Workshop Participant Feedback:

*"The process was very organized and informative."*

*"A plan in place is key to safety and security."*

*"I was impressed with all the information you had regarding our area."*

## Congratulations!

The Mobile Home Program would like to extend our congratulations to two newly formed resident purchased mobile home parks: **Shelburnewood MHP**, Shelburne and the **North Avenue Co-op**, Burlington (formerly Farrington's MHP). Residents at both parks have purchased the park land and now control their own destiny of how their parks are managed. They join eight previously formed resident owned communities: **ANDCO MHP**, Highgate, **Bunker Hill Community Co-op**, Windsor, **Homestead Acres MH Cooperative**, Swanton, **Milton MH Cooperative**, Milton, **Williston Woods Co-op Housing**, Williston, and **Tri-Park Cooperative**, Brattleboro.

We at the Mobile Home Program feel very strongly promoting cooperatively owned mobile home parks and each time a privately held park is put up for sale we will work with interested residents to see if the cooperative model is viable.

**Upcoming Cooperative Trainings:** A series of cooperative trainings are currently being planned and scheduled for the spring. These trainings will provide information about cooperative development and educational opportunities for current cooperative members and those interested in the cooperative model of housing. For more information about resident owned mobile home cooperatives and trainings please contact the Mobile Home Program.

## A Note from the Director

It is a pleasure to introduce myself as the new director of the Mobile Home Program at CVOEO. I had the opportunity to work on mobile home park issues with the former director, Sarah Woodward, through a partnership with the University of Vermont during the Tropical Storm Irene clean-up efforts. I am excited to work with you and your mobile home park communities. Please let me know how we can support you!

In the Spring 2015 newsletter we shared with you some of the legislative changes to the mobile home park law (Chapter 153) including the ability of the VT Department of Housing and Community Development to enforce violations. The proposed rules lay out the process of imposing penalties for violations of park owners.

**Wondering how your voice can be heard? Now is the time!** The rules have been drafted and a public hearing to review the new rules will be held:

**Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 4:30pm**  
**At the Calvin Coolidge Conference Room**  
Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development  
1 National Life Drive  
Davis Building, 6th Floor  
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

To learn about the proposed rules and how to submit your comments please call the Mobile Home Program or visit [http://accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities/housing/rules/housing\\_division\\_rulemaking](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/housing/rules/housing_division_rulemaking).

I will also be at the hearing and look forward to meeting with anyone who can attend.

— Jonathan Bond

## FREE Tax Preparation Assistance!

With the 2016 quickly approaching it's time to think about doing your taxes. Free tax assistance is available for eligible low-to middle-income Vermonters through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA).

Assistance is available to prepare an file the following:

- Federal Income Tax Return
- Vermont State Income Tax Return
- Homestead Declaration and Property Tax Adjustment Claim
- Household Income Schedule
- Renter Rebate Claim

All volunteers receive training from the IRS and the Vermont Department of Taxes.

If you would like to find out if you are eligible for free help filing your taxes, please visit [www.myfreetaxes.com](http://www.myfreetaxes.com) or call your local Community Action Agency or VT 211 for more information (1-866-652-4636 toll free in VT).



## Mobile Home Program

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**\*RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED\***

Please join the State of VT Department of Housing and Community Development in supporting the MHP and making this newsletter possible. Offer your support! **Donate now at [www.cvoeo.org](http://www.cvoeo.org).**

# Home Fire Preparedness Campaign

Despite improvements in manufactured housing in recent years, fire safety remains especially important to residents of mobile homes. Fire is fast and it can kill. The young and the elderly may be at special risk. The American Red Cross has launched an effort to reduce deaths and injuries due to home fires.



### To help avoid fire in the home, take these steps:

1. Smoke detectors
  - Install smoke alarms on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area, placing them on the ceiling or high on the wall.
  - Put a smoke alarm inside every bedroom.
  - Test the smoke alarms regularly. Install new batteries every year.
  - Get new smoke alarms every ten years.
2. Identify as many ways out as possible and practice escaping
  - The ideal goal is two ways out of each room.
  - Escape routes may include windows. Be sure all escape routes are clear and windows can be opened.
  - Practice, practice, practice!
3. Have a family meeting place outside where you will gather once everyone has escaped.
4. Practice good habits
  - Keep items that can catch on fire at least three feet away from anything that gets hot.
  - Never smoke in bed.
  - Turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to sleep.

**The more you know about fire preparedness, the safer you and your family will be.**

**\*\*If you are interested in FREE smoke alarms, please contact the Mobile Home Program for more information.\*\***