



Welcoming New Vermonters
to Visit, Work, and Live In
Central Vermont

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Downstreet Housing & Community Development and the Central Vermont Refugee Action Network Celebrate the Completion of a Five-Bedroom Permanently Affordable Home for a Family of Nine from Afghanistan

MONTPELIER, VT – Downstreet Housing & Community Development and the Central Vermont Refugee Action Network (CVRAN) are proud to announce the completion and celebration of a five-bedroom permanently affordable home that will soon welcome a family of nine from Afghanistan. This project marks a significant milestone in providing stable and sustainable housing for refugees in the Montpelier area.

The journey to transform the project into a welcoming home for a family seeking refuge began with a shared vision of creating inclusive communities where everyone has access to safe and affordable housing. Through the collaborative efforts of Downstreet and CVRAN, along with the generous support from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB), the Montpelier Housing Trust Fund, the Montpelier Community Fund, Capstone Community Action, the Vermont Community Foundation, and individual donors, this vision has become a reality.

Montpelier and Central Vermont have increasingly become home to a small yet vibrant Afghan community, thanks to the Department of State's approval of Vermont to welcome 100 refugees starting in 2021. Since then, many families have transitioned from initial homestays to rental homes and homeownership within our community, contributing to the rich cultural tapestry of our region.

"This project exemplifies the power of community collaboration and the collective commitment to ensuring that all individuals and families have access to safe, quality affordable housing," said **Angie Harbin, Executive Director of Downstreet Housing & Community Development**. "We are honored to play a role in providing a new beginning for this Afghan family in Central Vermont."

"Our shared vision to provide affordable housing for this Afghan family in Montpelier has come to fruition through the collaborative efforts of many, including community members who have been inspired by the Afghan families living in Montpelier," said **Kathie O'Connor, VP CVRAN Board of Directors and Chair Affordable Housing Committee and Hope Crifo, CVRAN Board of Directors and Direct Services Coordinator**. We are very grateful to VHCB for their funding of this

unique project. We consider ourselves extremely fortunate in partnering with Downstreet, an organization for which we have a great deal of respect and with whom we share a common goal for safe quality affordable housing, inclusiveness, and a community united in achieving this.

“Our Board is proud to be a part of this important housing initiative,” said **VHCB Executive Director Gus Seelig**. “We congratulate CVRAN and Downstreet on this partnership, which is making Montpelier and Vermont a more welcoming place for all.”

“In Vermont, everyone is always welcome. But our housing crisis has left many without a place to call home,” said **Senator Welch**. “This project highlights Vermont values at their best: working together to foster more inclusive communities and ensuring everyone can access safe, affordable housing.”

Representative Balint said, “I’m grateful to Downstreet Housing and the Central Vermont Refugee Action Network for their critical work providing housing for families in Vermont, including for refugee families who we are proud to welcome to our communities. Housing is at the root of some of our state’s greatest challenges, and Vermont’s creative community partnerships will help lead the way to ensuring that safe, quality housing is within reach for every family.”

As we celebrate the completion of this new permanently affordable home, we reaffirm our dedication to creating inclusive communities where everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, can find a place to call home. Together, we stand united in our commitment to building a brighter future for all.

For more information about Downstreet please visit www.downstreet.org. For more information about CVRAN, please visit www.cvrان.org.

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About Downstreet Housing and Community Development:

Downstreet Housing & Community Development is a non-profit organization that strengthens the communities of Central Vermont by creating permanently affordable homes, promoting equity and inclusion, and connecting people to the resources and services they need to thrive. Since 1987, Downstreet has been enriching neighborhoods in Washington, Orange, and Lamoille counties through real estate development projects, homeownership programs, supportive services, and a rental portfolio that provides safe, healthy, mixed-income rentals to over 500 households in apartments and manufactured housing communities.

About Central Vermont Refugee Action Network:

Established in 2015, the Central Vermont Refugee Action Network (CVRAN) is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Montpelier and dedicated to making our communities welcoming, safe places for refugees, as well as asylum seekers, and migrant workers. Our mission is to help these new Vermonters to settle, work, and thrive in Central Vermont. In welcoming them, we see how they greatly enrich our own cultural and economic lives.

Our organization provides wrap-around services to those under our care. That includes essentials such as housing, food, medical/dental care, legal services, English lessons, help registering the children in schools, help with drivers ed and earning a driver’s license, help with job counseling and training, etc. We gradually taper our services as our New Vermonters become more self-sufficient and eventually fully independent.

Faced with acute difficulty in finding housing, and encountering challenges specific to asylum seekers and refugees, CVRAN began actively creating affordable housing in 2023. CVRAN is a wholly volunteer organization except for two part-time coordinators. It is funded by individual donors and some grants.

