



## Call for Affordable Housing Project Ideas

for a Design Charrette with Vermont Architects

### Submission Timeline

- Application Period Opens: December 20, 2021
- Application Period Closes: January 24, 2022
- Selected Projects will be announced by January 31, 2022
- Affordable Housing Charrette Event: March 25, 2022, at Vermont Technical College

### Introduction

The lack of affordable housing in Vermont poses a significant challenge to our state. Vermonters in need of housing can face a variety of barriers, including high prices, low availability, and the sixth-largest affordability gap in the nation, which means the average income does not provide residents with enough earnings to be able to afford the average rents.<sup>1</sup>

This complicated issue is one that impacts many Vermonters and is influenced by things like funding, subsidies, taxes, tourism, zoning regulations, construction costs, and more. In an effort to help Vermont towns and housing providers find solutions, AIA Vermont, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects, seeks to provide an afternoon of pro-bono design services to municipalities, community groups, and non-profits that can submit prospective affordable housing projects. Projects can be in early, even conceptual stages, and may include things like vacant lots, abandoned or underutilized buildings, and/ or change of use (for example, turning office space into affordable housing units), etc.

### About the Call for Submissions

AIAVT invites submissions from Vermont nonprofits, municipalities, and community-based groups for an afternoon of pro-bono design and planning input for projects related to affordable housing. Proposals must be for a specific project (i.e. not for ongoing design services for the organization). Selected projects will be invited to take part in an AIA Vermont Affordable Housing Charrette event, on the campus of Vermont Technical College (VTC), which will include a panel discussion with experts from the Affordable Housing sector and a 2-hour design charrette.

Groups are encouraged to submit projects which would benefit from design visioning, while taking into account existing planning and zoning restrictions, to develop strategies for the creation of affordable and even sustainable housing. Participating groups will come away with a better understanding of what they might be able to accomplish with their proposed affordable housing project. Affordable Housing is defined as housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

1 or 2 representatives of the applying organization will be required to be present at the Affordable Housing event, to discuss their project. AIAVT will work with the representatives from selected

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<sup>1</sup><https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/vermont>

projects to gather the needed background information prior to the day of the charrette. This could include a summary of local zoning restrictions, a satellite image of the property, photos of existing structures, measurements, floorplans, etc.

The received submissions will be reviewed and ranked based on our mission and our capacity.

## **Services Provided to Selected Projects**

We will use our architecture skills and knowledge to work with community-based organizations to provide design input for projects related to affordable housing.

On the day of the event, each selected project will be assigned a team of design professionals, who will meet with the selected project representatives to discuss the project in an interdisciplinary design process called a charrette. The charrette will entail a 2-hour period of discussion, analysis, and development of conceptual ideas. Deliverables will vary as most appropriate for each project but might include hand sketches, narratives, and conceptual drawings. This two-hour exercise can help determine the feasibility of moving forward with a project.

Projects that are a good fit will most likely be submitted by groups that are not seasoned affordable housing developers, and the project is in the very beginning stages, where a site or building has been identified as a good fit for being developed into affordable housing but little or no design or construction has begun, or, it is an existing affordable property that is in need of considerable rehab to make it accessible and/or livable, ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of its inhabitants.

## **What is a Charrette?**

A charrette is a type of participatory planning process that assembles an interdisciplinary team—typically consisting of planners, citizens, city officials, architects, landscape architects, transportation engineers, parks and recreation officials, and other stakeholders—to create a design and implementation plan for a specific project. It differs from a traditional community consultation process in that it is design-based. In addition, and as opposed to traditional planning exercises that can take a long time to be finalized, charrettes are usually compressed into a short period of time. See details and images from a previous design charrette here:

<https://www.aiavt.org/news-events/news-details/post/aiavt-members-help-vermont-communities-envisi-on-local-projects>

**AIA Vermont, the Vermont Chapter of the American Institute of Architects**, is an organization of architectural design professionals dedicated to enhancing the quality of our built environment, and thereby the quality of life. The Chapter endeavors to bring together and serve all who are interested in the art and science of architecture. AIA Vermont aspires to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of the architectural profession, expand the knowledge of all participating in the architectural process and improve the quality of services provided by architectural professionals. Learn more at [www.aiavt.org/](http://www.aiavt.org/)



## ***Affordable Housing Design Charrette Application***

Please submit this form via email to [info@aiavt.org](mailto:info@aiavt.org). The inclusion of images of your submitted project can be sent as an attachment to your email.

### **Organization**

Name:

Address:

### **Contact info of Project Representative(s)**

Name:

Phone Number:

Address:

### **Affordable Housing Project**

Name/Title:

Location:

### **Project Description:**

Please describe the current property condition and the ideas or goals for how to adapt the project into affordable housing. Please note if you have received property owner permission to develop or rehab the property.

Forms can be addressed to AIA Vermont's Executive Director, Sarah O Donnell. Please reach out with any questions you may have prior to submitting this form.

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