

For Immediate Release

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Central Vermont Winter Preparedness Plans Being Put in Place

A Central Vermont food, fuel, and transportation winter and long term preparedness coalition is in place. Forty or more representatives of towns, state agencies, non-profits, service providers and faith communities met on July 25th to organize their efforts to assure that Central Vermonters are not cold, hungry or without transportation this winter. The Central Vermont Food, Fuel and Transportation preparedness team met to understand what individual groups are currently doing, to assess gaps in meeting needs and to begin to put in place the means in which collaborative efforts can be initiated to allow for Central Vermonters to care for themselves and their neighbors.

In addition to focusing the efforts of the individual members, the group outlined ways in which the strength of Vermonters can be cultivated to respond to need and to help community members make sure friends and neighbors are not cold or hungry in the coming months.

Five action teams were organized. They are: food; weatherization; transportation; shelters; and, communication and education. The food group is looking at food swaps, preservation and processing events in local community kitchens. It will also be working on on-going food drives for local food shelves. The weatherization group will be working with the Central Vermont Community Action Council to put on programs which will teach individuals how to weatherize their homes. They are also looking into purchasing weatherization materials at low costs. The shelter team will be working at helping people who cannot afford to heat their homes find safe shelter—and protect their homes from the problems of freezing. The transportation group will focus on current public transportation programs and reaching out to people who may not be aware of ride sharing opportunities. The communication group will organize the information that has been developed on food, fuel and transportation and make it available to towns in Central Vermont. It will be developing information to be distributed to Central Vermonters about how they can help each other—and where help is available.

Many resources are available to help people take care of themselves through the winter. The most comprehensive source of information this services is available through the phone number 2-1-1. Information is also available at helpforVT.org. Some towns have food shelves, soup kitchens and other resources to provide assistance. The Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC) provides regional assistance for a variety of needs and can offer assistance in providing information to which group is in need of volunteers and funds to support their work. If you are able to help others in need through volunteering of time or able to offer a financial contribution to a specific cause, please contact CVCAC at 479-1053 or consider donating to a local food shelf or soup kitchen. If you are in need of help with food, fuel or transportation service, please contact 2-1-1 for an extensive listing of current services available.

The Winter Preparedness Team will meet again on September 3 from 1 to 4 pm at the United Way Conference Room, 963 Paine Turnpike, Berlin.