



MEMORANDUM

To: Vermont Municipal Officials
From: VLCT Municipal Assistance Center
Date: October 1, 2015
RE: VLCT Model Social Service Appropriation Policy

Under Vermont law, voters of a town may appropriate money for the support of social service programs and agencies that provide services to town residents. 24 V.S.A. § 2691. Such programs include, but are not limited to, transportation, nutrition, child care, medical care, and other rehabilitative services for persons with low incomes, senior citizens, children, disabled persons, drug and alcohol abusers, and persons requiring employment to eliminate their need for public assistance.

An article regarding an appropriation to a social service agency can be placed on the town meeting warning by vote of the selectboard. Alternatively, a social service agency may submit a petition signed by 5% of the voters to the town clerk by the 47th day before the date of Town Meeting. 17 V.S.A § 2642(a)(3)(A). These petitioned requests, if valid and timely, must be included in the warning.

Because of the proliferation of social service agency requests, selectboards may find it helpful to adopt a policy to manage these requests. Some selectboards require that all social service agency requests be submitted by petition. Other selectboards allow social service agencies that have had an appropriation approved at the last annual meeting to be included on the warning without a petition as long as the requested appropriation is the same or less than the amount previously approved by the voters. While both methods are appropriate, this model policy describes the latter of these two arrangements. Please note that any italicized language in this model denotes a policy choice to be made by the selectboard prior to adoption.

This model also provides an example of a petitioned article and language to encourage or require social service agencies to describe their programs for inclusion in the town's annual report. In addition, language can be added to this policy to require social service agencies to provide some form of financial disclosure as a condition for receiving an appropriation.

This model policy has been developed for illustrative purposes only. VLCT makes no express or implied endorsement or recommendation of any policy, nor does it make any express or implied guarantee of legal enforceability or legal compliance, nor does VLCT represent that any policy is appropriate for any particular town. Your legal counsel should review any proposed social service appropriation policy before adoption.

If you have specific questions about this policy please contact us at (800) 649-7915 or info@vlct.org.

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