

**Who will the secure youth treatment center serve?**

The center will serve youth ages 12 up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday who are involved with the justice system and placed there by the courts. These young people need a safe, structured place to live and receive treatment. Many have behavioral or mental health needs and may have experienced trauma.

**Why is this center needed?**

Vermont has no permanent secure treatment facility in the state. Vermont needs an in-state treatment option so young people can get care closer to home. Keeping young people in Vermont helps families stay involved, keeps school and services more consistent, and often leads to better results. The center will also bring some youth back from out-of-state programs and make the whole treatment system work better.

**Where are youth placed now if this program doesn't exist?**

At any time, about 100 Vermont youth in custody are in residential care and around two-thirds are placed out of state, not all of whom are justice involved. Another 20 to 25 youth are in short-term stabilization programs in Vermont. Without this center, some youth are cared for in emergency settings that are not designed to meet their long-term treatment needs. This center would prevent youth up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday who are charged with certain adult crimes from being held in an adult correctional facility.

**What is the program model?**

The center will house two related programs. One is an 8-bed crisis stabilization program mainly for youth waiting for court. The other is a 6-bed treatment program for youth who have completed their court process. Both programs are therapeutic and serve youth who need a secure setting.

**Why is this center the right size for Vermont?**

The center is the right size to meet the needs of Vermont's youth based on how many young people are expected to need these services at any time. It is designed to provide enough space and programming to serve youth safely and effectively.

**Is this a youth correctional facility in disguise?**

It is a treatment center, not a correctional facility. Youth are admitted based on treatment needs, not punishment. Each youth has an individualized plan that focuses on therapy, education, family support, and other services based on their treatment needs.

**Why use a third-party operator instead of a state-run center?**

This approach separates daily operations from the state's role as regulator. The state can focus on oversight, licensing, and investigations, while an experienced provider

delivers day-to-day care. This model is more efficient, strengthens accountability and is more likely to prevent opportunities for abuse and neglect.

### **How will abuse, neglect, or improper restraint be prevented?**

Staff will be trained in trauma-informed care and de-escalation, and the program will follow established policies. All serious incidents will be documented, reviewed, and reported according to state rules. A third-party operator will run the program, and the state's Residential Licensing and Special Investigations Unit (RLSI) will provide strong oversight.

### **How will the center be regulated and held accountable?**

The program must meet all state licensing requirements. The Residential Licensing and Special Investigations Unit (RLSI) will inspect the center, review incident reports, check compliance with regulations, and investigate complaints. Serious concerns about safety or rule violations could lead to formal investigations and actions to fix problems. Child advocates, legal representatives, and families will be notified as required by policy and law. A community liaison is also available at [AHS.DCFCommunications@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.DCFCommunications@vermont.gov).

### **What happens if there is a need for the city's emergency services?**

The Green Mountain Youth Center will be a secure center with trained professionals who can manage most serious situations. In rare situations that require outside help, emergency responders will be contacted.

### **How will the center coordinate with community providers?**

With proper consent, staff will work with a youth's therapist, school, case manager, and other providers during their stay. They will also coordinate closely when planning for discharge so services continue after the youth leaves the program.

### **Who will manage the center day to day?**

A professional leadership team will run the center. It will include a program director, a licensed clinical director, and operations staff. A board or steering committee will provide governance as required by the state. Licensed clinicians, licensed teachers, direct-care staff, and administrative staff will handle daily operations and care.

### **What services will youth receive?**

Services will be tailored to each youth's needs. Each youth will receive an individualized treatment plan that may include group therapy, education, recreation, life-skills training, among other supports tailored to their needs.

### **How will education continue during placement?**

Youth will receive education that meets state standards. The program will work with each youth's local school district and education partners to keep learning on track and support credit transfer.

### **How will safety be ensured?**

The building will be secure and made with durable materials but designed to feel more like a residence. Staff will be fully trained, including in nationally recognized crisis intervention methods. The program will use clear supervision and intervention protocols that follow licensing rules and best practices.

### **What happens if staffing levels drop?**

Minimum staffing levels are required for safety. If staffing falls below those levels, the program may pause admissions, reduce capacity, or adjust operations until staffing is restored.

### **What support will first responders receive?**

The center is designed and staffed to limit calls to local emergency services, with on-site medical and security support. If local police, fire, or EMS are needed, the program will have collaborative procedures in place.

### **Will the building meet fire safety standards?**

Yes. The building will meet all fire and life-safety codes. The program will work with the fire marshal on alarms, exits, and evacuation plans, and staff will take part in regular drills.

### **Is this a publicly owned center? Who is managing the site?**

It is a build-to-lease center on private property that the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services will lease. Sentinel Group, LLC – currently operating the temporary Red Clover Treatment Center – will run day-to-day services. The Department for Children and Families (DCF) will provide oversight and ensure accountability.

### **Why was this location chosen?**

The Meadowlands site was chosen through a competitive process to balance safety and access. It is close to hospitals and essential services.

### **What about impacts on nearby neighbors and businesses?**

The center will be in an industrial and professional area, away from most homes. Site design and daily operations will address lighting, noise, traffic, and landscaping to limit impacts and preserve the area's character.

### **How will the center affect the local economy?**

The center will add stable professional jobs and bring new local spending. It supports South Burlington's goals for safety, inclusion, climate resiliency, and better outcomes for youth, which benefits the wider community.

**Has the Development Review Board been engaged?**

Yes. The project is going through the city's normal development review process, including review and approval by the Development Review Board as required.

**Will nearby property owners be consulted?**

Yes. The project team will reach out to nearby property owners and other stakeholders. It will also keep regular communication with city leaders and partners to support transparency and accountability.

**How will community concerns be addressed after opening?**

The program will keep a clear communication channel and have a community liaison to answer questions and concerns. Community members can email [AHS.DCFCommunications@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.DCFCommunications@vermont.gov) for assistance.