



Published on *Vermont League of Cities and Towns* (<https://www.vlct.org>)

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Model Social Services 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](#) [1]. 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, persons with a substance use disorder, 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\(a\)\(3\)\(A\)](#) [2]. 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 like the one linked below 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 policy has been developed for illustrative purposes only. VLCT makes no express or implied endorsement or recommendation of any model or any express or implied guarantee of legal enforceability or legal compliance. VLCT also does not represent that any model is appropriate for any particular municipality. Please seek legal counsel to review any proposed model before use.

Members may contact the Municipal Assistance Center at info@vlct.org [3] or 1-800-649-7915 for assistance.

Documents:

 [Model Social Services Appropriation Policy.pdf](#) [4]

Links:

[Town Meeting Home](#) [5]

[Model Town Meeting Articles](#) [6]

[Model Town Meeting Warnings](#) [7]

Resource Category:

- Template
- Guidance
- Model

Links

[1] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24/073/02691>

[2] <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/17/055/02642>

[3] <mailto:info@vlct.org?subject=MAC%20Inquiry%3A%20Open%20Meeting%20Law>

[4] https://www.vlct.org/sites/default/files/documents/Resource/Model%20Social%20Services%20Appropriation%20Policy_0.pdf

[5] <https://www.vlct.org/municipal-assistance/town-meeting-0>

[6] <https://www.vlct.org/resource/model-town-meeting-articles>

[7] <https://www.vlct.org/resource/model-town-meeting-warnings>