

**RICK CASTILLO**  
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Rick Castillo is passionate about people's right to live and thrive in healthy and safe housing. He has been employed as a provider of housing and homeless services since 2009. He has extensive training and work experience in housing advocacy, rapid re-housing, Healthy Homes practice, and Environmental Justice.

From 2011 to 2014 Rick represented The Way Home, a housing services agency in Manchester, NH, as a member of the State of New Hampshire's Healthy Homes Steering Committee, and as a member of the City of Manchester Health Department's One-Touch to a Healthy Home Network. He was also a founding member of the Greater Manchester Hoarding Task Force (now inactive).

Rick was trained in Healthy Homes practice by the National Center for Healthy Housing to provide in-home peer education services to low-income families in underserved communities. As a Healthy Homes practitioner, Rick helped households to identify and reduce environmental health concerns such as lead paint hazards, asthma triggers, and pest infestations, including cockroaches and bed bugs. Rick was the principal Healthy Homes practitioner for the City of Manchester's Lead Hazard Reduction Program and the principal implementer of the EPA Environmental Justice Small Grant, "Tenant Services in Integrated Pest Management" that was awarded to The Way Home in 2012.

From 2012 to 2014, utilizing a grant from the New Hampshire Division of Agriculture and Markets obtained by the Granite State Organizing Project, Rick performed statewide outreach and general education on bed bug control to tenant households, housing providers, local governments, and civic organizations. He served as the chairperson of the Greater Manchester Bed Bug Action Committee (BBAC) from 2012 to 2014 and he successfully organized the BBAC's Statewide Bed Bug Conference held in 2013. During this period Rick worked with landlords and pest control professionals to develop protocols for rapid bed bug intervention. The team worked with tenants in vulnerable communities to establish inspection, monitoring, and control systems to detect pests and safely use pest control products and services. He learned that long term pest control can be achieved when families are empowered to take control of their living spaces to maintain conditions that are inhospitable to bed bugs.

In Vermont Rick was employed at CVOEO Chittenden Community Action as a Housing Advocate beginning in 2014. In addition to advocacy work he participated in meetings of the Chittenden Hoarding Task Force, and provided training and advice to the task force on bed bug risk mitigation for home visitors. In October 2018 Rick delivered a webinar-based training for the Chittenden County SASH organization titled "Common Sense for Home Visitors" on precautions to take to prevent the spread of Bed Bugs. Rick retired in 2018 and he stays active in the Healthy Homes movement by providing training and task force organizational assistance.

Rick recently conceived a plan to establish a statewide network to connect housing advocates, landlords, and various other stakeholders in Vermont to identify how environmental hazards are adversely affecting people in their homes. He began a collaborative effort with the Field Service Directors of the Agency of Human Services; together they organized a meeting that was attended by 90 people from diverse organizations from all regions of the state. The purpose of this inaugural meeting was to discuss and begin to organize solutions for families whose housing or health is at risk due to the presence of bed bug infestations and/or hoarding conditions. Based on feedback from the attendees, the meeting organizers committed to establishing a learning community to connect and support regional groups in efforts to educate their communities, and to develop resources to help people overcome these risks to their health and housing. In early September 2019 [Healthy Communities VT](#) was launched with a listserv and website to serve as a technology backbone for the learning community. We are currently formulating plans to facilitate additional meetings and provide trainings on the issues that animate our communities: controlling bed bug infestations and helping people with hoarding syndrome in low-income rental housing.