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**Report to  
The Vermont Legislature**

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**GENERAL ASSISTANCE EMERGENCY HOUSING REPORT  
In Accordance with 33 V.S.A. 2115**

**Submitted to:** House Committee on Appropriations  
House Committee on General, Housing and Military  
House Human Services  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

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**Report Date:** September 1, 2021



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**AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES  
Department for Children and Families**

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## Executive Summary

The COVID-19 public health emergency precipitated vast, program-wide changes to the General Assistance Emergency Housing program's fundamental structure and goals. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency housing program housed between 200 and 300 households per night during cold weather. At its peak during the pandemic, in April 2021, the emergency housing program housed just over 2,000 households in more than 70 lodging establishments.

The General Assistance Emergency Housing Program experienced a variety of changes during this 18-month period, beginning with the decision to move vulnerable populations from congregate shelters to hotel rooms in March of 2020. Since that time, the Economic Services Division (ESD) has reinstated program legislatively mandated changes, culminating in the emergency housing waiver and variance of rules effective June 1st, 2021.

The Department for Children and Families has experienced a loss of motel capacity in recent months. Several factors have contributed to the loss of capacity, including: the opening of Vermont to tourism, the reduction in use of motels/hotels due to sustained stress of emergency services in some municipalities, and health and safety code violations that have led to the closure of some locations. Additionally, some motels have declined to continue accepting DCF vouchers.

The Department for Children and Families awarded multiple rounds of funds to organizations to provide services to guests of motels. Services included housing navigation, case management, mental health outreach, security, and staffing to support the general health and safety of motel guests. These costs are a combination of FEMA, ERAP and CRF funds.

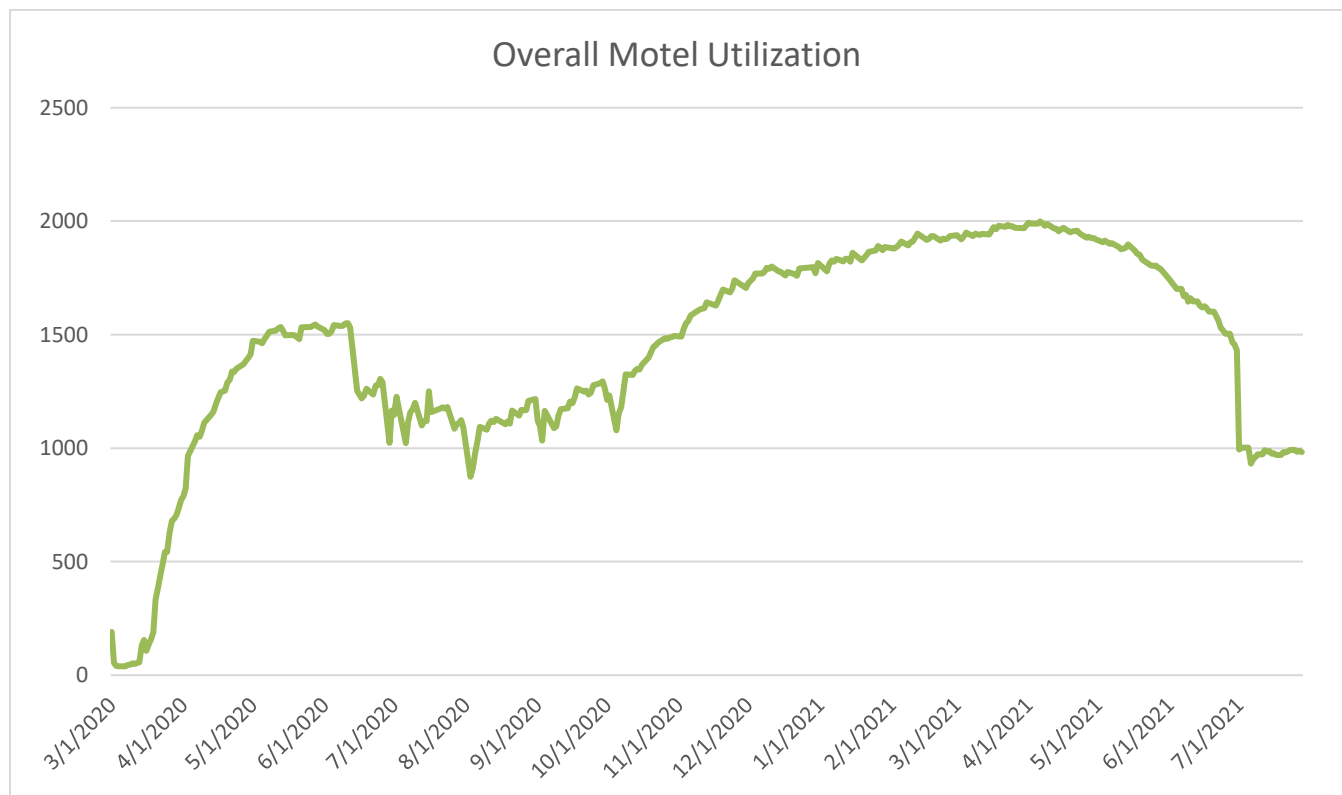
General Assistance emergency housing is normally funded through the state General Fund. Beginning with the Governor's State of Emergency declaration on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, expenditures for emergency housing have been funded with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds. The state of Vermont expects to be reimbursed for its Emergency Housing outlays by the FEMA. In SFY 21, Hotel/Motel authorizations were issued totaling \$53,475,000.

## Introduction

The General Assistance (GA) Emergency Housing Program is administered by the Economic Services Division (ESD) within the Department for Children and Families (DCF). The program is designed to provide short term housing for Vermonters experiencing homelessness. The General Assistance Emergency Housing program has undergone many changes since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

To properly encompass the changes to the emergency housing program due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this report will include information on both fiscal years 2020 and 2021. The period covered will be from March 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021.

The following chart represents the number of households housed by the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program.



## Waiver and Variance of Rules Summary

On March 17, 2020, the Department for Children and Families expanded eligibility for emergency housing to include individuals who met conditions that made them “hyper-vulnerable” to COVID-19.

On June 1, 2020, the Department for Children and Families implemented a requirement for applicants to work with housing case management to find permanent housing. DCF also implemented a 30% income contribution for households with income above the Reach Up basic needs standard. For a household of one, this includes individuals with income above \$585 per month. For a household of two, this includes households with income of more than \$771 per month.

On June 15, 2020, the Department for Children and Families implemented a “Period of Ineligibility” for temporary housing applicants asked to leave a hotel due to their behavior.

On July 13, 2020, the Department for Children and Families implemented an income threshold for the temporary housing program. The income threshold was set at 185% of the Federal Poverty Level; this mirrors the 3SquaresVT program.

Effective July 20, 2020, DCF amended the Period of Ineligibility (POI) to shorten it to 15 days for the first offense and 30 days for all subsequent offenses. Additionally, DCF informed emergency housing recipients that the Department would not approve a motel voucher when appropriate shelter space was available. Clients were informed of these changes via a letter.

On October 19, 2020, DCF removed the income contribution provision. Clients were no longer required to contribute 30% of their income toward their own housing.

Effective November 9, 2020, the Period of Ineligibility provision was changed to no longer apply to families with children.

On June 1, 2021, DCF implemented new comprehensive GA Emergency Housing Rules. These rules were developed by a legislative required working group that included representatives from the Agency of Human Services, the Committee on Temporary Shelter, BROCC Community Action, Champlain Housing Trust, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, the DCF Business Office, Economic Services Division, Office of Economic Opportunity, Department of Housing and Community Development, Groundworks Collaborative, Upper Valley Haven, the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, Vermont Legal Aid, and the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. The rules will remain in place until June 30, 2021. The working group will continue to meet and has been tasked with providing recommendations on a plan for the future of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program.

The following is a summary of the rules implemented on June 1, 2021 for new applicants and July 1<sup>st</sup> for existing recipients:

- Households must be living in Vermont voluntarily and not for a temporary purpose
- Household must meet categorical eligibility:
  - Loss of housing due to a natural disaster
  - Loss of housing due to fleeing domestic violence
  - Have a child in the household
    - This includes an 18 or 19 attending secondary education full-time
  - Have someone in the household age 60 or older

- Have someone in the household who is pregnant
- Have a government entity declare rental unit is unsafe to live in
- Have a landlord who has denied client access to the rented premises
- Households that do not meet one of these categories, and were housed on May 31, 2021, will be grandfathered into category until June 30, 2021 to provide transition time
  - An Essential Payment check of \$2,500 was provided to households that were housed on May 31, 2021 and lost eligibility on July 1, 2021 due to category.
- A motel voucher will not be issued if shelter space is available, unless there are safety concerns
- Households cannot have left housing voluntarily
- The income threshold has been set at 185% of the Federal Poverty Limit
- There is a 30% income contribution
  - The contribution is set at the net monthly income greater than the Reach Up basic needs standard
- The resource limit is set at \$2,250
- Clients are required to engage with housing case management
- The program is approved for a maximum of 84 days annually
  - Waivers can be considered for families with children and households with a disabled member where the disability significantly impairs activities of daily living and the household member is eligible for Choices for Care; development services; CRT, brain injury program; or attendant services.
- A Period of Ineligibility (POI) will be applied
  - The length of the POI is based on the violation
  - POI's are set at 15 days or 30 days

The full text of the General Assistance Emergency Housing rules can be found in Appendix A

### **Adverse Weather Conditions (AWC)**

In previous years, the Department for Children and Families relaxed rules on winter nights when certain weather conditions were met. This allowed applicants not categorically eligible to receive a motel voucher when congregate shelter beds were not available. During Fiscal Year 2021, DCF did not implement Adverse Weather Conditions (AWC) because the rules permitted housing for households that previously would only have been eligible under AWC.

### **Hotel/Motel Capacity**

Prior to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the General Assistance Emergency Housing program served anywhere from 200 to 300 households on a cold weather night. At its peak in April 2021, the emergency housing program was housing approximately 2000 households and utilizing rooms at 76 hotels statewide. To compare this with prior years, in March 2019, the program authorized 5,442 hotel rooms versus March 2021 when 60,688 rooms were authorized

In recent months, there has been a significant decline in motel capacity across the state. Some motels have notified DCF that they will no longer accept vouchers. Others have stated they will not accept new guests, which means that as current clients move out of a motel, new clients cannot be placed in the vacated rooms.

While DCF does not identify and put a “cap” on the numbers of households in motels there have been some instances where DCF has had to reduce the numbers of clients place in some communities or municipalities around the state. Neither before nor during the pandemic has the State predetermined the number of households we will house in non-congregate shelter. Limitations on the numbers of people housed in certain motels or specific communities are the result of resource limitations – whether that be the literal number of motels or the availability of supports and services. One of the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic we – the State as well as communities and community partners – have learned is the importance of providing services and supports to people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Adequate supports and services include and goes beyond housing navigation, housing case management, and other social services. It also encompasses the availability of community resources including public safety and first responders. DCF has worked with community partners – including service providers, advocates, local government, and legislators – to keep Vermonters as safe as possible during the public health crisis, and we will continue to work as collaboratively as possible into the future.

As the state reopens to tourism and travel, motel capacity continues to decrease. The ability to access rooms fluctuates depending on public events. For example, hotels in White River Junction stopped accepting vouchers June 11<sup>th</sup> through June 14<sup>th</sup> due to Dartmouth College graduation.

DCF expects capacity to further decrease to approximately 650 rooms by October 2021.

The following chart represents the number of motel rooms utilized by the emergency housing program during its peak in April 2021 compared to the number of rooms available on June 21, 2021. Information has also been provided for the rooms utilized on July 22, 2021, as capacity continues to decline at a rapid rate.

<b>Motel</b>	<b>4/6/2021</b>	<b>6/21/2021</b>	<b>7/22/2021</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Apple Valley Inn	5	5	5	0
Autumn Inn	11	10	6	-5
Bennington Motor Inn	8	4	1	-7
Best Western	31	22	7	-24
Black Mountain Inn	26	22	18	-8
Bradford Motel	16	18	16	0
Brandon Motor	9	6	4	-5
Budget Inn	13	13	11	-2
Cadillac	30	24	16	-14
Catamount Motel	3	3	3	0
Chalet Motel	21	17	14	-7
Colonial	21	22	8	-13
Colonnade Inn	33	33	24	-9
Comfort inn-White River Jct	35	0	0	-35
Countryside	7	9	9	2
Days Inn-Colchester	69	54	31	-38
Days Inn-Shelburne	55	58	55	0

Deer Run	15	14	6	-9
Econo Lodge-Brattleboro	38	38	22	-16
Econo Lodge-Manchester	12	13	6	-6
Econo Lodge-Montpelier	40	36	37	-3
Econo Lodge-Rutland	64	48	23	-41
Econo Lodge-St Albans	30	29	17	-13
Ethan Allen Motel	5	2	0	-5
Europa	3	4	2	-1
Fairbanks Inn	36	30	22	-14
Fife n' Drum	15	11	8	-7
Four Winds	14	5	2	-12
Golden Eagle	37	25	19	-18
Hampton Inn - White River	17	13	5	-12
Hampton Inn-Rutland	3	1	0	-3
Harbor Place	48	48	49	1
Highlander	10	9	8	-2
Hilltop Inn	72	68	8	-64
Holiday Inn	116	34	0	-116
Holiday Inn-Rutland	75	62	32	-43
Hollow Inn	26	27	21	-5
Killington Pico	12	17	7	-5
Knoll Motel	6	10	7	1
Ladd Brook Motel	23	19	17	-6
Magic View	17	15	7	-10
Marriott	39	25	14	-25
Maurice's	4	1	0	-4
Middlebury Inn	7	0	0	-7
Middlebury Sweets	8	6	4	-4
Midtown Motel	16	18	9	-7
North Star	22	23	24	2
Palmer House	8	7	3	-5
Pierre Motel	13	12	11	-2
Pine Tree	2	0	0	-2
Pinecrest	15	8	5	-10
Quality Inn-Shelburne	63	58	16	-47
Quality Inn-Barre	40	32	34	-6
Quality Inn-Brattleboro	100	93	63	-37
Quality Inn-Colchester	112	93	30	-82
Quality Inn-Rutland	65	0	0	-65
Rodeway East	20	20	16	-4
Rodeway North	25	23	15	-10
Rodeway Inn	26	24	11	-15
Shady Lawn Motel	18	18	16	-2
Snowden	4	0	0	-4
Sonesta	11	10	9	-2
South on Five	22	23	15	-7



Southgate Motel	16	14	12	-4
Starlight	5	3	1	-4
Sugar House	12	7	3	-9
Sunset Motor-Morrisville	20	16	10	-10
Super 8 Motel	46	23	14	-32
Swanton Motel	13	13	7	-6
T-Bird Motel	22	21	21	-1
Travel Inn	23	22	14	-9
Travelodge	46	49	46	0
Weathervane - Manchester	6	6	3	-3
West Road	18	14	5	-13
Windsor Motel	4	3	1	-3
White River INN	1	0	0	-1
<b>Total Rooms</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>1583</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>-1014</b>

### Grants to Provide Services to Guests in Motels

Throughout Fiscal Year 2021, the community organizations received funding through the DCF Office of Economic Opportunity to provide a range of services to Emergency Housing Voucher recipients. Services included security, housing navigation and case management, mental health outreach, non-congregate wrap around services to support safety and health, and general onsite staffing at some sites. The first and second rounds of funding were distributed as a supplement to the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP). HOP Supplemental Grants supported a range of additional costs and activities related to COVID response – including shelter staffing and support. Approximately, \$1.8 million was awarded under the first HOP supplemental round supporting projects from March through June 2020. The second HOP supplemental supported work from July through December 2020, with \$3.5 million in awards. Both HOP Supplemental rounds support a range of additional costs and activities related to COVID homelessness response – including services directed to support households in Emergency Housing and also support for shelter staffing and operations. Subsequently, a request for proposals was issued in November 2020 to solicit proposals to provide non-congregate wrap around services onsite at motels/hotels to households in Emergency Housing. To date, non-congregate wrap around service contract awards have totaled \$4.6 million. Finally, in spring of 2021, OEO issued a new notice of funding and application for Housing Stability Services through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Many of these projects are supporting housing case management for households in Emergency Housing. To date, \$4.5 million in funds have been awarded under the ERAP Housing Stability Service program from April 2021 through June 2022.

DCF’s Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) has worked to partner with community organizations to expand motel-based services to Emergency Housing Voucher recipients. In some cases, projects have included onsite 24/7 staffing at hotels, including the Holiday Inn in South Burlington and the Quality Inn in Brattleboro. Staff in both locations were instrumental in assisting voucher recipients during COVID-19 outbreaks. Additionally, beginning in April of 2020, DCF contracted with Rob Evans, a consultant with Margolis-Healy, to work as a liaison with security contractors and law enforcement. DCF was able to establish contracts with various country sheriff’s departments, the Colchester Police Department, Green Mountain Concert Services, and Chocolate Thunder Security.

Since the start of the pandemic, DCF has partnered with state agencies and outside organizations to provide services to motel clients, as well as alternative isolation and quarantine housing to Vermonters

exposed to the COVID-19 virus. DCF worked with the State of Vermont Buildings and General Services to lease the Holiday Inn on Williston Road in South Burlington. Initially the site was used for isolation and quarantine, then later transitioning to non-congregate housing Vermonters experiencing homelessness. When the ANEW Place seasonal shelter closed in spring of 2020, DCF, ANEW Place, and the City of Burlington partnered to provide housing at North Beach, initially renting RVs. Later, North Beach became a tenting site managed by ANEW Place. DCF has partnered with Champlain Housing Trust to manage the former Ho Hum Motel in South Burlington as alternative housing for people needing to isolate or quarantine due to COVID.

## Funding

The chart below describes the total funding and funding sources which supported the Emergency Housing program in SFY 21. Unless otherwise noted, amounts are presented as the total amount of invoices received rather than the amount awarded.

Cost Category	Funding Source	Amount
Hotel/Motel Authorizations	FEMA	53,474,760.00
Rapid Resolution	CRF	1,254,000.00
Supplemental Housing Opportunity Program grants	CRF	3,671,101.90
Wrap-around Services	FEMA	4,419,517.94
Meals	FEMA	8,665,904.00
Security and Lease	FEMA	2,879,973.82
<b>Total</b>		<b>74,365,257.66</b>

## Conclusion

Fiscal Year 2021 was an eventful year for the Emergency Housing program. The General Assistance program operated in a state of constant change, dictated by conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department for Children and Families expanded Emergency Housing eligibility to meet the needs of Vermonters. Consequently, the program experienced exponential growth throughout FY 2021. As the fiscal year ended a new set of rules was implemented, bridging the gap between the expanded eligibility due to COVID-19 and the more restrictive eligibility rules of prior years. The Agency of Human Services collaborated with community partners, law enforcement agencies, and private businesses to provide services to those housed in motels throughout the public health emergency. DCF continues to work with partners from a variety of agencies to plan for the future of the Emergency Housing program.



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## Emergency Housing Waiver and Variance of Rules

As Vermont begins to reopen, June 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 is an interim year to transition from the General/Emergency Temporary Housing COVID-19 non-congregate shelter policy to a more sustainable emergency housing system that will begin July 1, 2022. **Below is the Emergency Housing eligibility criteria that will exist for the period of June 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.** These rules will remain in effect unless there is a need to respond to a public health emergency or other emergency and expand eligibility.

The authority to waive or vary the rules is in Act 6 Sec. 1 (2021). H. 439 extended these rules to remain in place until June 30, 2022. While the Department does not intend on making changes to these rules, please always look for the most current version posted on the Economic Services Division COVID-19 webpage at <https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/covid19>.

### Rules Effective June 1, 2021

#### **EH-700      Emergency housing**

Emergency housing provides financial assistance in the form of a motel voucher for eligible applicant households whose emergency need, according to Department standards, cannot be met under any other assistance program administered by the Department and cannot be relieved without the Department's intervention. The Department will not approve an application for emergency housing if shelter space is available unless there are safety concerns regarding domestic violence. Specifically, these concerns are when an applicant is fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to violence

against an individual and provided there is no domestic violence provider that administers shelter overflow at motels, in that district.

Your household may be eligible for up to a maximum of 84 days of emergency housing. If your household includes children, you may request additional housing beyond the 84 day maximum in 30 day extensions if you are actively working with a service provider to find permanent housing. The Department will issue a motel voucher for up to 30 days at a time. Payment may be authorized in an amount necessary to secure motel space at the least expensive rate available to the applicant at that time. General Assistance emergency housing is not an entitlement and may cease upon expenditure of the appropriation.

Emergency housing has no provision for ongoing assistance. Additional requests will be treated as new applications. If your household does not pursue all available resources to end the emergency housing need you will not be eligible for emergency housing.

#### **Eh-701     Application, Interview, Verification and Decision**

Your Application and interview may be completed either in person or by phone.

To receive emergency housing, you must complete and sign the application. Your application must include income information for all members of your household including verification, and you must complete an interview with a representative of the Department. The Department will make a decision once we receive a completed and signed application with the necessary verification [see EH-701.1] and an interview has been completed.

Failure to submit a completed application promptly shall not be the sole reason for the Department to deny assistance unless it is established that you did not cooperate in gathering all the necessary information.

#### **Eh-701.1     Verification**

As the applicant, you are the primary source of information to establish eligibility. It is your responsibility to furnish the necessary information completely and

accurately and to give the Department permission to obtain the information from other sources.

You have the right to refuse to give the Department information, to refuse to submit required proof, or to refuse to allow the Department to contact others. However, refusing to provide information or access to the information necessary to establish eligibility will result in denial of your application. In addition, if you willfully misrepresent your household's circumstances it will result in a denial and may result in legal action under fraud statutes, and termination of the benefit if learned after being granted a motel voucher. Department staff will make every effort to help you understand this provision and the potential consequences of refusing access to the information that is necessary to determine eligibility or willful misrepresentation of your household's circumstances.

You may provide verification and supporting documentation by:

- Dropping it off at a district office;
- Mailing it to the Department;
- Uploading it using the Department's uploader [find instructions to use the uploader at <https://dcf.vermont.gov/doc-uploader>] ; or
- Allowing the Department representative to confirm the information with a phone call.

#### **EH-701.2 Action on Application**

The Department will decide whether you qualify for emergency housing once a completed, signed application with the necessary verification is submitted. Once the Department has this information it will:

- Review the information and make a decision; and,
- Let you know if your application was approved or denied.
  - If your application is approved verbal notice will be given, and if requested, it can also be provided in writing. The notice will include:
    - Number of days approved;

- The check in date and check out date at the motel; and
  - When to reapply.
- If your application is denied, the denial notice must be in writing and include the specific reason for the denial.

## **EH-705      Definitions**

The following definitions apply to the terms used in these emergency housing rules.

1.      “Applicant” means an individual applying for emergency housing for their own need and for the needs of those dependents who live with them in Vermont and for whom they are legally responsible.

For married individuals or parties to a civil union who live together, the term applicant refers to both spouses or civil union partners. Either spouse or partner may complete the application.

For unmarried adults who live together and have a child-in-common, the term applicant refers to both adults. Either adult may complete the application.

Applicants must be age 18 or older, unless emancipated (see emancipated minor below).

2.      “Available resources” means cash on hand or in a bank or other financial institution that are not retirement accounts and can be converted into cash on demand within 24 hours when responding to an immediate emergency need for the first time.
3.      “Department” means the Department for Children and Families, Economic Services Division.
4.      “Dependent” means any of the following members of the applicant's immediate family: husband, wife, civil union partner, or children under age 18, unless the child is an emancipated minor, including biological, adopted, and stepchildren, or those who are 18 or 19 and are attending secondary education full-time or an equivalent level of vocational or technical training.
5.      “Emancipated minor” means a minor emancipated by judicial decree under

the laws of any state. A minor is also considered emancipated if married or in active military service.

6. "Emergency Housing" means General/Emergency Assistance for temporary housing (commonly known as the motel voucher program).
7. "Motel" means a motel or hotel.
8. "Net monthly income" means as calculated by the Reach Up Financial Assistance program in rules 2270 through 2276, as amended.
9. "Transient" means an individual who does not intend to establish a permanent residence in Vermont.

#### **EH-705.1 Calculation of Time**

Calculation of time periods shall include the date of application. When determining income for the last 30 days, however, the 30-day period ending on the day prior to the date of application is used.

#### **EH-715 Vermont Resident**

You must be living in Vermont voluntarily and not for a temporary purpose.

If you are transient or not planning on staying in Vermont, assistance will be limited to that which will get you to a state border. [See 33 V.S.A. 2103(d)].

#### **EH-720 Applicant Household Must Meet One of the Following**

To be eligible for a motel voucher your household must meet one of the following:

- Lost housing due to a natural disaster such as a flood, fire, or hurricane
- Fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to violence against a household member that causes you to reasonably believe that you or your household member are at risk of further harm if you remain in the unit, or if the relevant incident occurred within your home.

- A family with a child or children under the age of 18, or who are 18 or 19 and are attending secondary education full-time or an equivalent level of vocational or technical training *[You may ask for housing beyond the 84 nights, 30 days at a time, if actively working with a service provider to find permanent housing (See EH-700).];* or
- A household that includes a person with a disability, includes someone who receives SSI, SSDI, VA disability benefits, Medicaid for the Aged, Blind and Disabled (MABD), or whose health care professional provides documentation that the individual is unable to work due to a disability for at least three months *[You may request housing beyond the 84 nights, 30 days at a time when a disability significantly impairs activities of daily living (ADL), or you or a household member are enrolled in or likely eligible for Choices for Care, Developmental Services, CRT, Brain Injury program, Attendant services, if you are actively working with a service provider to find permanent housing (See EH-755)];* or
- A household that includes a person age 60 or older; or
- A household that includes a pregnant person; or
- A Town Health Officer, the Division of Fire Safety, or another governmental entity has declared your rental unit has safety violations that make it unsafe for you to live there. The report must be dated within the last two weeks or the inspector must confirm that the unit is still unsafe for you to live there (examples of unsafe living conditions that might appear in a report are: no water, if water was provided; no heat, if heat was provided; an unvented heating system; failed septic system; or structural failure); or
- Your landlord has intentionally caused, directly or indirectly, the interruption of any utility service being supplied to your household for more than a temporary interruption for emergency repairs (this does not include telephone or internet service), or if your landlord directly or indirectly denies you access to or possession of your rented or leased premises, except through the proper court process.



## **EH-725     Shelter Space**

The Department will not house you in a motel if space is available in a shelter.  
*The Department will let you know if shelter space is available when you apply.*

If you have a physical or mental disability:

- Your local shelter may be able to make special arrangements to help you stay there. This is called a *reasonable accommodation*.
- Your ESD worker can help you talk to your local shelter about your need for an accommodation.

If your local shelter can't make a reasonable accommodation so the shelter is accessible to you:

- Please ask the Department for a reasonable accommodation
- If approved and you meet other requirements, a motel voucher will be provided.

### **EH-725.1     Refusal of Shelter Space or Asked to Leave a Shelter**

You will not be eligible for a motel voucher if in the last 30 days:

- You did not accept an available shelter space when offered; *OR*
- You were asked to leave a shelter for not following the rules of the shelter.

If your disability was a factor in being asked to leave the shelter, you may request a reasonable accommodation to not apply this rule. Otherwise, having a disability does not prevent the application of this rule.

If you request a reasonable accommodation, it will be reviewed by the General Assistance Team, and a written decision will be issued by the Deputy Commissioner of the Economic Services Division.

### **EH-730     Causing One's Own Loss of Housing**

Emergency housing is intended to provide short term shelter for applicants who are involuntarily without housing through circumstances they could not reasonably

have avoided, and for whom permanent housing or alternative arrangements are not immediately available.

The Department will not house you in a hotel/motel if you caused your own loss of housing within the past 90 days – unless you left for health or safety reasons. Causing one’s own loss of housing includes, but is not limited to, violent behavior, or a Relief from Abuse (temporary or final) order that prevents you from returning to your home or leaving housing where you could have stayed.

If your disability was a factor in causing your loss of housing, you may request a reasonable accommodation to not apply this rule. Otherwise, having a disability does not prevent the application of this rule.

If you request a reasonable accommodation, it will be reviewed by the General Assistance Team, and a written decision will be issued by the Deputy Commissioner of the Economic Services Division.

#### **EH-735     Income Limit**

You must have gross monthly income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This includes everyone’s income:

- From all sources, and
- Before things like taxes are subtracted (*gross income*).

<b>Number of People in Household</b>	<b>Maximum Gross Monthly Income (185% of FPL)</b>	<b>Number of People in Household</b>	<b>Maximum Gross Monthly Income (185% of FPL)</b>
1	\$1,969	6	\$5,421
2	\$2,659	7	\$6,113
3	\$3,349	8	\$6,803
4	\$4,041	9	\$7,495
5	\$4,731	10	\$8,187

**For each additional person add \$692.**

**EH-740      Income Contribution**

If you are otherwise eligible and have net monthly household income, as calculated by the Reach Up program in rules 2270 through 2276 (as amended), equal to or less than the Reach Up basic need standard for a household of the same size, you will not be required to contribute any of your income toward the cost of emergency housing.

If you are otherwise eligible and have net monthly household income greater than the Reach Up basic need standard for a household of the same size, you will be required to contribute 30 percent of your net household income toward the cost of emergency housing.

Number of People in Household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 or more
Basic Needs	\$585	\$771	\$1011	\$1209	\$1418	\$1560	\$1803	\$2012	Add \$193 for each additional person

**How your Income Contribution is determined:**

- If you have income on the day you apply, the Department will not house you for the number of days, rounded down to the nearest whole number, equal to 30 percent of the net income received on that day, divided by the average motel cost available in the district at that time.
- If your household does not receive income on the day you apply, you will be housed for up to 14 days or until the next time your household has income.
- When you have income again, the Department will not house you for the number of days, rounded down to the nearest whole number, equal to 30 percent of the net income received on that day, divided by the average motel cost available in the district at that time.

- If 30 percent of your household's net income divided by the average motel cost available in the district is less than the cost of two days at the average motel rate, the Department will continue to provide you with a motel voucher.

**EH-745      Resource Limit**

You may not have more than \$2,250 in available resources [see EH 705(2)]. This includes everyone in the household.

- After the initial period of emergency housing, if you apply for additional emergency housing, you will need to have taken steps to access other resources such as cash value of life insurance, sale of stock, bonds, or mutual funds, or other reasonably accessible resources to meet your housing needs. This does not include any type of retirement accounts. Future emergency housing applications will be evaluated in relation to whether you have taken reasonable steps to access these resources. If you have not taken steps to access these resources, your application will be denied.
- The resource limit does not include any money contributed as part of the Vermont Match Savings Program, an ABLE Account or PASS plan.

**EH-750      Housing Case Management/Coordinated Entry**

For the Department to continue to house you in a motel you must work with a housing agency to find long term housing. *If you need help, the Department can connect you with the right person when you apply for emergency housing.*

**EH-755      Waiver Beyond 84 Days**

You may request a waiver of the 84-day maximum, if you or a household member has a disability that significantly impair activities of daily living (ADL). You may also request a waiver of the 84-day maximum if you or a household member is eligible for: Choices for Care; development services; CRT; brain injury program; or attendant services. Requests to waive the 84-day maximum for any of these reasons should be made to the Deputy Commissioner of the Economic Services

Division. If approved by the Deputy Commissioner, your emergency housing will be extended up to 30 days at a time.

In cases where the individual is eligible for one of the above programs or has a disability that significantly impairs ADL, the housing case manager or legal representative should request a waiver from the Department, who will then coordinate with the nurse coordinator for that region of the state from the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL).

#### **EH-760      Housing Separate Applicants Together**

Individuals who are not members of the same applicant household [see EH-705(1)] may request to be housed together in the same motel room.

- The Department will house no more than two separate applicants together.
- You must each complete a separate application and be approved for a motel voucher individually. *Unless you have a reasonable accommodation to have a caretaker reside with you.*
- Each applicant must indicate at the time of the interview that they would like to be housed with the other individual. *If the Department has safety concerns it may choose, in its sole discretion, to house the applicants separately.*
- Each applicant must continue to meet all program requirements.
- The applicants' income will be considered together and calculated as one household for the purposes of determining the 30 percent income contribution (see EH-740) and amount of time both applicants need to house themselves.

#### **EH-765      Period of Ineligibility**

*This rule does not apply to parent(s) or qualified caretaker(s), as defined in Reach Up rule 2230.1(as amended), if you have a child or children living with you who are under the age of 18, or who are age 18 or 19 attending secondary education full time or an equivalent level of vocational or technical training and who are included as part of the household in the current emergency housing grant.*

You will not be eligible to be placed in a motel by the Department for a period of time if you are asked to leave a motel for:

- Violent criminal behavior;
- Attempted violent criminal behavior;
- Theft of a \$75 or greater value from Hotel/motel or guests;
- Creating safety hazards (examples: disabling smoke detectors, placing tape over a smoke detector, using appliances or heaters which create a fire hazard, blocking exits, disabling any type of alarm);
- Threatening other guests or motel staff, or having guests that threaten others;
- Sale, distribution, or manufacturing of illegal substances; or
- Destruction of property (intentional damage or misuse)

*For other violations there is no period of ineligibility, however the hotel/motel may require you to leave and will no longer accept you as a guest. In these situations, the Department will try and book you at a new location, but the Department cannot guarantee that it will be able to secure a new reservation.*

If it is determined by the Department that you are not eligible for a period, the Department will not pay for you to stay in a hotel/motel during that time. This is called a Period of Ineligibility (POI).

- For a first violation, the POI is 15 days.
- For a second and any other violation, the POI is 30 days.

If you are placed on a period of ineligibility (POI) and you disagree with the decision, you may:

- Ask the Human Services Board for a fair hearing. *You'll get to tell your side of the story. And you can have a person you trust help you.*
- Ask to be housed in another motel while waiting for the recommendation from the fair hearing officer.

- Call 1-800-889-2047 to see if you qualify for free help from Vermont Legal Aid.

To request a fair hearing, call the Department at 1-800-479-6151. If you ask for a fair hearing, one will be scheduled usually within 10 days. Before the hearing, the Department will give you or your representative a copy of the evidence the Department will be presenting. If the hearing officer agrees with the Department's decision, the POI will begin right away. If you do not show up to the hearing, the Department will not continue to house you, and your POI will begin right away.

If you ask to be rehoused and you do not ask for a fair hearing within three days, your POI will begin.

Please let the Department know if you have a physical, mental, or learning disability that:

- Makes it hard for you to follow the rules at the motel/hotel, or
- Makes it hard for you to participate at a fair hearing.

You may be entitled to ask for a reasonable accommodation. This could include changing how the program is administered to give you an equal opportunity to participate.

### **RIGHT TO A FAIR HEARING**

If you disagree with a decision the Department has made, you may ask for a fair hearing. The Human Services Board will:

- Hold a hearing within 10 days (usually).
- Listen to your side of the story.
- Review the facts fairly and objectively.
- Decide if the decision should be upheld or reversed.

You must ask for a fair hearing within 90 days of getting a notice. To do so, call the Department at 1-800-479-6151 or the Human Services Board at (802) 828-2536. You can get someone you trust to help you.

## **RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability, you may be entitled to program modifications, and/or free aids & services to help you get benefits. This is called a *reasonable accommodation*. Examples include:

- Having someone write your answers down.
- Giving you documents in other formats. For example: large print, audio, or Braille.
- Having a support person with you when you talk to us.
- Meeting in your home or by phone.
- Giving you more time to get the Department the necessary documents.

Call 1-800-479-6151 if you need this help.

## **NEED LEGAL HELP?**

Call 1-800-889-2047 to see if you qualify for free help from Vermont Legal Aid.

## **HAVE QUESTIONS?**

Ask your worker or call 1-800-479-6151.

## **LEARN MORE**

Go to <https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/covid19>. You can also call 1-800-479- 6151 to learn more about temporary housing.

### **If you need interpretation services...**

(Arabic) 1-855-247-3092 إذا أنت ترغب خدمات الترجمة الفورية اتصل برقم

Ako su Vam potrebne usluge tumačenja, pozovite 1-855-247-3092. (Bosnian)

စကားပြန် ဝန်ဆောင်မှုလုပ်ငန်းကိုအလိုရှိပါက 1-855-247-3092 သို့ဖုန်းဆက်ခေါ်ပါ။ (Burmese)

Si vous avez besoin de services d'interprétation, appelez le 1-855-247-3092. (French)

Mugihe woba ushaka impfashanyo yo gusigurirwa, hamagara uyu murungo 1-855-247-3092. (Kirundi)

यदि तपाईंलाई दोभाषे सेवाको जरुरत परेमा 1-855-247-3092 मा कल गनुर्होस्। (Nepali)

Haddii aad u baahan tahay adeegyo turjumaan, wac 1-855-247-3092. (Somali)

Si usted necesita servicios de interpretación, llame al 1-855-247-3092. (Spanish)

Ikiwa unahitaji huduma za ukalimani, piga simu 1-855-247-3092. (Swahili)

Nếu quý vị cần dịch vụ thông ngôn, hãy gọi 1-855-247-3092. (Vietnamese)



## Appendix B: Household Composition of Emergency Housing Recipients

The following is a chart of the number of families by district compared to the number of individuals/couples without children in motels. This information is as of 6/11/2021.

GA Motel Household Composition

Households With Children	# of Rooms
Barre District Office	32
Bennington District Office	33
Brattleboro District Office	11
Burlington District Office	60
Hartford District Office	8
Middlebury District Office	10
Morrisville District Office	18
Newport District Office	5
Rutland District Office	33
Springfield District Office	5
St. Johnsbury District Office	12
St. Albans District Office	12
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>239</b>

Households Without Children	# of Rooms
Barre District Office	147
Bennington District Office	148
Brattleboro District Office	163
Burlington District Office	428
Hartford District Office	87
Middlebury District Office	36
Morrisville District Office	32
Newport District Office	20
Rutland District Office	183
Springfield District Office	49
St. Johnsbury District Office	51
St. Albans District Office	64
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1408</b>

## Appendix C: Average Daily Motel Cost

The cost per night a motel room through the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program has risen over the past 12 months.

