



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE  
**Joint Fiscal Office**

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**Fiscal Note**

March 19, 2024

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**H.879 – An act relating to the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program**

As Introduced by the House Committee on Human Services

**Bill Summary**

The bill proposes to establish the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program to replace the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program. It would also create the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program Advisory Committee and Emergency Temporary Shelter Program Task Force.

**Sec. 2 & 3 – Emergency Temporary Shelter Program Advisory Committee**

The bill would create the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program Advisory Committee to provide advice and recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) regarding the implementation, administration, and operation of the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program. Each coordinated entry lead agency would appoint an individual with lived experience of homelessness to serve on the Committee. Members would be eligible for per diem compensation under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 12 meetings annually.<sup>1</sup> Estimated annual per diem costs to DCF could range from \$4,000 to \$9,000 depending on the number of per diem eligible members, number of meetings, and in-person attendance rates. The Committee would sunset on July 1, 2029.

**Sec. 4 - Emergency Temporary Shelter Program**

The bill would establish the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program within DCF for the purpose of temporarily sheltering households in a manner that ensures participant dignity and leads to greater stability. Criteria defining permissible shelters, eligibility requirements, and adverse weather conditions are specified in the bill.

The Governor’s fiscal year 2025 budget includes \$16.5 million in one-time funding and \$7.5 million in base funding for General Assistance (GA) Emergency Housing, plus another \$839,184 in new base funding for security for hotels and motels participating in the program. According to the Agency of Human Services (AHS), this bill would cost \$49 to \$51 million “depending on clarification of intent.” Taking into consideration the \$7.5 million in current base funding and \$839,184 in proposed base funding for security in the Governor’s recommended budget, the proposal would require an additional base appropriation of approximately \$40.6 to \$42.6 million.

<sup>1</sup> 32 V.S.A. § 1010

**Section 5 – Emergency Temporary Shelter Program Task Force**

The bill would create the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program Task Force to provide recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the statewide and local operation and administration of the Emergency Shelter Program. The Task Force would have 16 members of which at least 2 legislators and 7 non-legislators would be eligible for per diem compensation under 32 V.S.A. § 1010. Per diem costs could be as much as \$9,500 depending on the number of members, number of meetings, and in-person attendance rates. The Task Force would cease to exist by January 15, 2025.

**Sunsets**

The bill would sunset both the current General Assistance Emergency Housing Program and the Emergency Housing Transition established under Act 81 (2023) on July 1, 2025.<sup>2</sup>

**Fiscal Summary**

**Per diems (estimates)**

- Emergency Temporary Shelter Program Advisory Committee = \$4,000 to \$9,000 annually
  - To be covered within DCF’s existing budget
  - Sunsets on July 1, 2029
- Emergency Temporary Shelter Program Task Force = \$9,500 (one-time)
  - To be covered within the General Assembly’s existing budget for the 2 legislative members and within DCF’s existing budget for the non-legislative members.
  - Sunsets by January 15, 2025

**Emergency Temporary Shelter Program**

- The bill would require an additional base appropriation of \$40.6 to \$42.6 million
  - This takes into consideration \$7.5 million in base for GA Temporary Housing and \$839,184 in new base in the Governor’s budget proposal for hotel/motel security.

<b>GA Emergency Housing Program Gov Rec. - FY 2025</b>	
<i>One-time</i>	\$16,500,000
<i>Base</i>	\$7,500,000
<i>Proposed Base</i>	\$839,184
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$24,839,184</b>

<b>Emergency Temporary Shelter Program H.879 - FY 2026</b>	
<i>Estimated Total Need</i>	\$49,000,000
<i>Base (FY '25 Gov Rec.)</i>	(\$7,500,000)
	(\$839,184)
<b>Additional Base Funding Needed</b>	<b>\$40,660,816</b>

<sup>2</sup> 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 81, Secs. 5-9.