

Hello Ron --

Please see our answers to the committee's questions below. If committee members have additional questions, Sean Brown, Deputy Commissioner of the Economic Services Division will be at the statehouse this morning and can answer questions or provide clarification that is needed. Or, you can also reach out directly to me.

thanks,
Karen

- Please elaborate on the factors that brought Chittenden County's emergency housing expense for December down to \$2,000 vs approx. \$150,000 in Rutland.

In Burlington, the opening of the low barrier warming shelter, with the capacity to serve 50 people at multiple sites, has allowed us to meet the need for individuals in Chittenden County seeking Emergency Housing. Additionally, families are the primary users of Harbor Place, another shelter in Chittenden County. Both of these programs have allowed us to avoid the need for motel utilization which directly decreased our spending in what is typically a high spending district.

Next to Burlington, Rutland is the next highest spending district on emergency housing. Despite community interest and involvement, as well as our offers of support, siting new shelter facilities that serve families and individuals face numerous challenges including location and cost. Yet, homelessness in Rutland is a pervasive and persistent problem.

- Please detail how the requested \$1.6 million adjustment will be applied.
 - Motels
 - Master Leases
 - Other (please describe)

The current FY 2016 budget for emergency housing is \$2.3M. If the additional \$1.6M described in the BAA is approved for use in the GA Emergency Housing budget, the entire \$3.9M will be used to fund the use of motels for emergency housing and to fund community alternatives throughout the state to address our state's emergency housing needs. The current total obligated and/or grant in process for GA alternative projects is \$650,763. Those community alternatives include projects in Barre, Brattleboro, Burlington, Middlebury, Newport, St. Johnsbury, and Vergennes. The types of projects include expanded seasonal shelter capacity for individuals, expanded capacity to serve families with children, largely through short-term, scattered site apartments with services, and a partnership with a Domestic Violence shelter and service provider. There are additional proposals still under consideration.

We require that all of the community based alternatives demonstrate how the investment in their community program will reduce spending on motels. We recognize that it takes time for communities to begin offering a new service. Going forward, we believe that implementation of the community based alternatives will allow us to significantly reduce the use of motels.

- What is the plan for the disposition of any remaining funds from the requested adjustment?

We anticipate spending the entire appropriation because of the increased need for emergency housing services. For the first six months of the current fiscal year (7/1/15-12/31/15) approximately \$1,716,578 has been spent on motel rooms through the GA emergency housing program. This is an increase of 16% over the same time period for the last state fiscal year that had spending of \$1,474,288. Given the high degree of need, we do not anticipate having remaining funds. However, in the unlikely event that we have remaining funds after the adjustment, we would use those funds to support GA community alternative projects.

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