

Economic Services Division (ESD) Department for Children and Families Agency of Human Services



“Taking pride in providing assistance, supporting Vermonters, and strengthening communities.”



Economic Services Division (ESD)

ESD provides economic benefits to Vermonters in need. We provide a safety net for individuals and families who may be experiencing unemployment, underemployment, single parenthood, aging, disability, the death of a family member or other life-changing events. Our programs include:

- ✓ 3SquaresVT (SNAP)
- ✓ General and Emergency Assistance (GA/EA)
- ✓ Fuel Assistance (LIHEAP)
- ✓ Reach Up (TANF)

ESD Organizational Structure

- Approximately 350 Staff located across the state
 - Deputy Commissioners Office
 - Operations
 - Central Office Units:
 - Program Teams
 - Training
 - Administrative Services
 - Quality Control
 - Fraud
 - Process and Performance
 - Grants and Contracts
 - Business Application Support Unit (BASU)
 - Application & Document Processing Center (ADPC)
 - ESD Benefits Service Center (BSC) call center

- There are 12 ESD district offices across the State, co-located with other AHS district offices:

ADO – St. Albans
BDO – Burlington
HDO – Hartford
JDO – St. Johnsbury

LDO – Brattleboro
MDO – Barre
NDO – Newport
RDO – Rutland

SDO – Springfield
TDO – Bennington
VDO – Morrisville
YDO – Middlebury

Application & Document Processing Center

- Processes all incoming mail for ESD statewide
- Scans and indexes an average of 240,000 document pages per month for ESD and DVHA.
- These include:
 - Applications
 - Reviews
 - Supporting documents such as paystubs, tax returns, identification, correspondence, etc.
- Mails all reviews and interim reports each month.
- An average of 8,000 - 10,000 documents are mailed from the ADPC each month.



Business Application Support Unit (BASU)

- Total of 10 staff
- Staff in this unit are considered system “super users”
- BASU staff support OnBase, the legacy ACCESS system, and the new VHC Healthcare eligibility system
- All “production” system issues and/or new IT projects are funneled through this unit for review and prioritization.



Benefits Service Center

1-800-479-6151



- Total of 26 staff
- 23 Agents receive an average of 600 to 1,000 calls per day.
- July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018 there were over 126,000 calls to the BSC. The average talk time is 4 minutes per call. The average wait time is 3 minutes.
- Clients can establish accounts and access the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) to obtain information about their benefits (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- Clients can also choose to speak with a customer service representative during regular business hours:
 - 8:00 am – 5:45 pm Mon – Thurs; 8:00 am – 4:15 pm Friday
- Staff are fully trained in program eligibility rules so they can resolve consumer issues without having to transfer calls to district offices.
- Staff process on average 1,132 cases per month.

General /Emergency Assistance

- Staff led by Geoffrey Pippenger
 - Program team includes 4 staff
- GA and EA help eligible individuals and families meet their emergency basic needs. This may include assistance paying for:
 - Personal Needs and Incidentals;
 - Room & board;
 - Fuel, utilities, utility deposit, connect & reconnect fees, special trip charges;
 - Transportation;
 - Medical, dental, prescription, medical supplies/equipment; and
 - Burial costs.
- GA is funded from the State's general fund. EA is funded from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant and Medicaid.
- Individuals and families may be eligible if they have an emergency need and do not have the income or resources to meet that need. They must show:
 - Their assets have been exhausted (with certain exceptions);
 - They have actively pursued all sources of potential income; and
 - Other criteria such as responsibility for dependent children, older Vermonters, unable to work, or having barriers to employment according to GA/EA rules.

GA Temporary Housing

- Temporary housing, a large portion of the GA budget, is provided only if alternative arrangements (e.g., family, friends, shelter) are not immediately available and they have no financial resources.
- Eligibility is based on one of the following criteria:
 - Catastrophic (fire, flood, natural disaster, court-ordered or constructive eviction, domestic violence) up to 84 days.
 - Vulnerable Population (65 years of age or older, receipt of SSI or SSDI, child six years of age or under, in the third trimester of pregnancy) up to 28 days.
 - Adverse Weather Conditions (formerly Cold Weather Exception) – Eligibility for temporary shelter is relaxed when any of the following conditions exist (or are anticipated to exist) between 6pm and 6am – in the Vermont zip code where the homeless applicant is applying:
 - Temperatures or Wind Chill are less than 20 degrees (F)
 - Temperatures are less than 32 degrees (F) with a higher than 50% chance of precipitation reported.

SFY19 General Assistance Community Investments to Decrease Reliance on Motels			
Awards Under Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP)			
AHS District	Organization	Total General Assistance Funds	Project Description
Addison	Charter House Coalition	<u>\$ 26,000*</u>	5 rooms of seasonal emergency shelter capacity for families
Addison	John Graham Housing & Services	<u>\$ 22,200*</u>	2 2-bedroom year-round crisis units for families (including DV survivors) in Middlebury, with leveraged services
Barre	Capstone Community Action	<u>\$ 137,309*</u>	6 2-bedroom year-round crisis units for families, with services
Barre	Good Samaritan Haven	<u>\$ 332,303*</u>	14-bed seasonal emergency shelter for single adults (added 33 beds)
Bennington	Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless	<u>\$ 75,000*</u>	16-bed year-round emergency shelter beds for single adults
Bennington	Project Against Violent Encounters (PAVE)	<u>\$ 68,612*</u>	5 additional DV shelter rooms and motel pool for all District victims fleeing DV
Brattleboro	Groundworks Collaborative	<u>\$ 143,000*</u>	33-bed seasonal shelter in new location with overnight staffing (added 13 beds)
Brattleboro	Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)	<u>\$ 30,000*</u>	.5 FTE position for motel-based housing specialist
Brattleboro	Women's Freedom Center	<u>\$ 198,439*</u>	Expand year-round shelter capacity by 6 rooms, operate motel pool, and provide services to all District victims fleeing DV.
Burlington	Community Health Centers of Burlington – Safe Harbor	<u>\$ 287,885*</u>	37-bed seasonal shelter for single adults (added 2 beds)
Burlington	CVOEO	<u>\$10,000*</u>	Extreme cold weather "pop-up" shelter
Burlington	COTS	<u>\$32,000</u>	Referral capacity for beds at Waystation
Lamoille	Good Samaritan Haven (fiscal agent for Lamoille Community House)	<u>\$101,420</u>	Seasonal shelter for 12 adults in Lamoille County
Hartford	Upper Valley Haven	<u>\$ 55,000*</u>	12 bed seasonal shelter for single adults
St. Johnsbury	Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA)	<u>\$ 88,888*</u>	10-bed seasonal emergency shelter for adults, with services
Rutland	New Story Center (formerly RCWNS)	<u>\$ 375,000*</u>	3 additional year-round emergency shelter rooms, motel pool, and services to serve all District victims fleeing DV
Rutland	BROC (Community Action in Southwest VT)	<u>\$10,000*</u>	Extreme cold weather "pop-up" shelter
	TOTAL INVESTMENT	<u>\$ 1,993,056</u>	

* continuation of SFY18 project

Cold Weather Analysis (now known as Adverse Weather Conditions)

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS (AWC) ANALYSIS FOR SFY14 - SFY18					
<u>AWC Measure</u>	<u>SFY14</u>	<u>SFY15</u>	<u>SFY16</u>	<u>SFY17</u>	<u>SFY18</u>
Nights Meeting Criteria*	154	133	93	108	135
Requests for Emergency Housing	6835	12,279	3721	5565	7009
Number of Motel Nights	16,542	26,226	4745	9136	11,446
Avg. Number Motel Rooms Per AWC Night	107	197	51	85	85
Number of Adults	7338	13152	3961	6241	7990
Number of Children	1558	3370	1334	1409	2160
Cost	\$983,443	\$1,833,587	\$344,441	\$671,567	\$818,896

*The first Cold Weather night:

SFY14 - 10/25/2013

SFY15 - 11/02/2014

SFY16 - 11/17/2015

SFY17 - 11/11/2016

SFY18 - 11/07/2017

*The last Cold Weather night:

SFY14 – 04/25/2014

SFY15 – 04/08/2015

SFY16 – 04/27/2015

SFY17 – 04/07/2017

SFY18 – 03/25/2018

Vermont Rental Subsidy Program (VRS)

- State-funded short term (12 month) rental assistance program.
- Clients are generally on Reach Up or SSI or have income less than 125% of FPL.
- Subsidies provide support for up to one year while households work to increase their income or secure other long-term affordable housing.
- Participants pay 30% of their income towards rent (\$232 in Chittenden County or \$198 outside of Chittenden County, whichever is greater), the State of Vermont pays the difference directly to landlords. VRS works closely with VSHA which provides VRS recipients with a preference on the Section 8 waiting list.
- Housing Review Teams in local communities make all VRS referrals to central office and assign a case manager that follows/supports clients throughout their time on the program.
- Case management is provided by local Housing Support Workers (case managers from community partners or Reach Up).



Vermont Rental Subsidy Program (VRS)

- VRS began in December of 2011 as a rapid rehousing program.
- State-funded short term (12 month) rental assistance program.
- Clients are generally on Reach Up or SSI or have income less than 125% of FPL.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Average monthly rent paid by each household:	\$282	\$287	\$280	\$303	\$308
Average monthly rent paid by ESD per household is:	\$536	\$623	\$713	\$715	\$816
Households are approved and leased up	69	113	133	131	50 (active, leased up) 0 (new participants)
Households are tentatively granted and seeking housing	60	27	36	0	0
Households are on the waiting list	0	56	79	98	2
Vermont Rental Subsidy Funding	\$500,00	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

Vermont's Reach Up Program: TANF



- Staff led by Erin Oalican
 - Program team includes 6 staff
- Congress created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.
- TANF replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which had provided cash welfare to poor families with children since 1935.
- States receive a fixed block grant to fund their own welfare programs (FY 2018-VT received approximately \$47.3 million). This funding is used in a number of ways: EITC, childcare, basic assistance, CCDF-Child Care Development Fund, SSBG-Social Services Block Grant, administration.
- States must also spend some of their own dollars on programs for needy families (Maintenance of Effort – MOE – requirement, Separate State Programs and Solely State Funded programs approximately \$45 million). This funding is also utilized for basic assistance, child care, administration etc...

Related Programs

Reach First

Stabilizes families experiencing a short-term crisis by providing case management, financial assistance and support services within a four-month period.

Reach Ahead

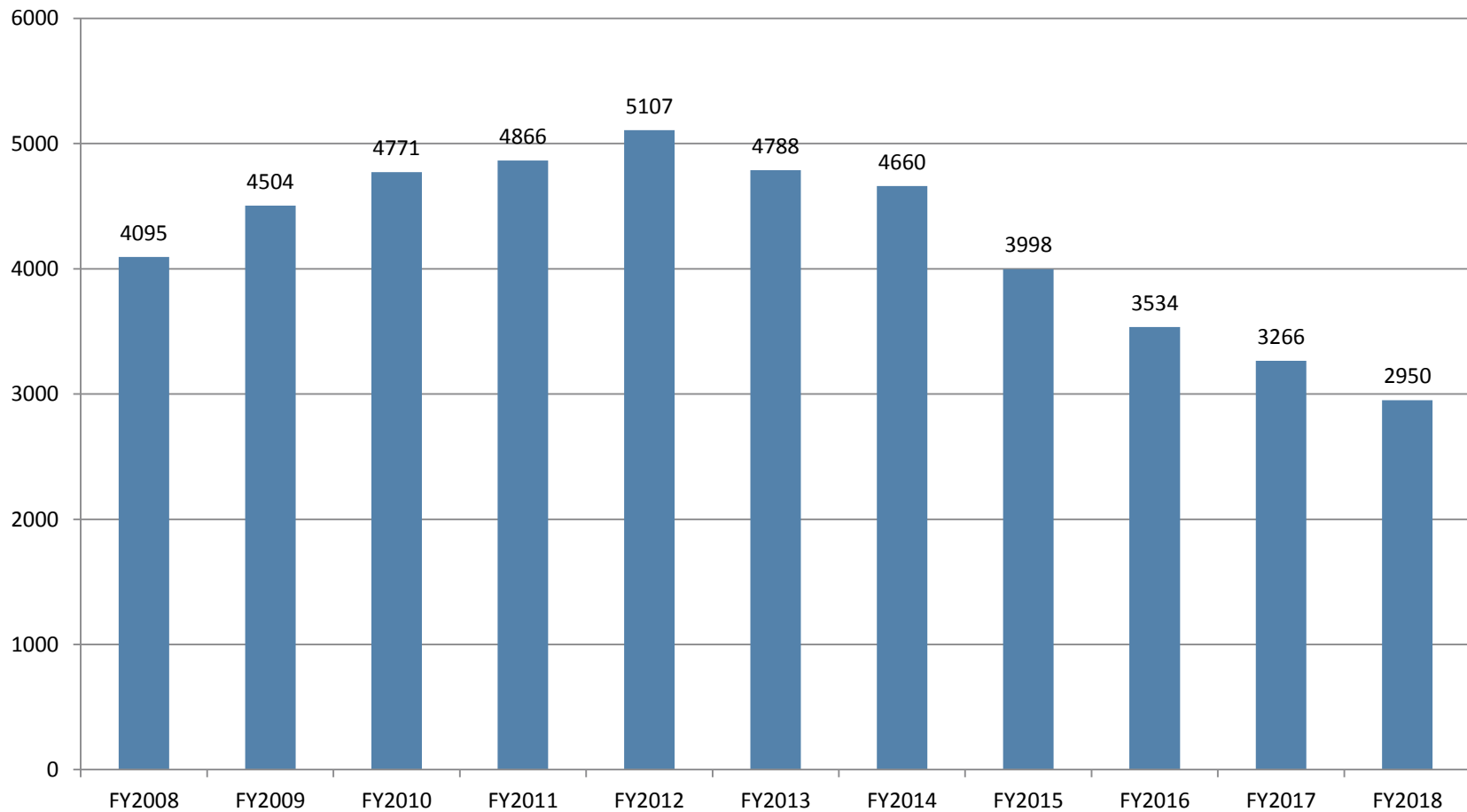
Promotes financial stability after families have transitioned off of Reach Up by providing a food and child care benefit and support services for up to 24 months (cumulative in a lifetime), after a family has left Reach Up.

Postsecondary Education (PSE)

Assists parents in eligible low-income families to obtain two- or four-year postsecondary undergraduate degrees in fields directly related to employment.

Reach Up Caseload Trend

Families on Reach Up Average Monthly Caseload

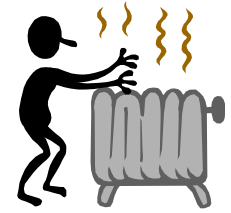


Seasonal Fuel Assistance



- Staff led by Richard Giddings
 - Program team includes 3 staff
- Helps lower-income Vermonters to heat their homes by paying part of their home heating bills.
- Benefits are granted if the client is income eligible (185% FPL / 60% SMI). Example: maximum income for a 3-person household is \$3,204/month
- Applications are processed year-round (approx. 36,000/year)
- Grants are made from late September (firewood/pellets) through mid-March (all fuels)
- 20,000+/- households are projected to receive a benefit in FFY2019
- Average FFY2019 “full-season, full-fuel-liability” benefit projected at \$735
- Federal Requirement: Benefits based on client “*need*” (financial need and energy burden)
- “Heat-&-Eat” – annual \$21 fuel benefit to 16,000+/- households leverages additional 3SquaresVT benefits
- www.dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/fuel-assistance

Crisis Fuel Assistance



- Applications are processed by Vermont's five Community Action Agencies
- Income limits: 200% of FPL. Example: the maximum income for a 3-person household is \$3,464/month. In addition to being income eligible, the household must also be experiencing a crisis
- One grant per season for households with incomes up to 185% FPL; two grants for households between 186% and 200% of FPL
- Clients receiving Seasonal Fuel can also receive Crisis Fuel
- Crisis season: last Monday in November to the last business day in April or until funds run out
- After-hours help is available statewide (8:30am to 4:00pm) on Saturdays, Sundays and state holidays for households with "vulnerable" members (age 60 or older, living with a disability, or under the age of 6) by calling 1-866-331-7741
- Approximately 5,200 households are projected to be assisted in FFY2019
- www.dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/crisis-fuel

LIHEAP Funding & Benefit Stats Compilation

30-Nov-18

SFY	LIHEAP Total	LIHEAP Carry-Over (1)	State Funds	TOTAL FUNDS	Fuel Liability Households	Full Season Fuel Liability Avg. Benefit O/P/K	Nov-Apr Avg cost petro/gal (2)	Purchase Power Gallons / %age (3)	SFY
2019	\$17,316,859	\$700,000	\$3,055,916	\$21,072,775	20,000	\$735	\$2.87	256 / 34%	2019
2018	\$16,120,387	\$3,706,712	\$2,967,984	\$22,795,083	20,526	\$849	\$2.65	320 / 42%	2018
2017	\$16,181,020	3,646,376	3,837,000	23,664,396	21,286	\$831	\$2.16	385 / 50%	2017
2016	\$14,664,644	\$1,939,626	\$2,857,970	\$19,462,240	22,618	\$699	\$2.11	331 / 43%	2016
2015	\$18,965,161	\$2,074,954	\$5,000,000	\$26,040,115	25,147	\$783	\$2.87	274 / 36%	2015
2014	\$19,140,144	\$591,060	\$8,100,000	\$27,831,204	26,625	\$792	\$3.62	219 / 29%	2014
2013	\$18,359,509	\$1,583,684	\$9,700,000	\$29,643,193 (4)	27,776	\$898	\$3.85	233 / 31%	2013
2012	\$19,529,156	\$4,005,000	\$6,100,000	\$29,634,156	27,100	\$900	\$3.61	249 / 33%	2012
2011	\$27,557,850	\$6,687,000	\$0	\$34,244,850 (5)	26,546	\$866	\$3.31	262 / 34%	2011
2010	\$27,341,881	\$5,447,000	\$0	\$32,788,881	20,399	\$1,064	\$2.68	397 / 52%	2010
2009	\$38,642,377	\$363,000	\$0	\$39,005,377 (6)	19,227	\$1,718	\$2.62	656 / 86%	2009
2008	\$16,883,723	\$1,780,000	\$5,898,032	\$24,561,755 (7)	15,369	\$1,362	\$3.24	420 / 55%	2008

(1) The carry-over amounts are as of June 30 State Fiscal Year 2018 close-out plus pending fuel dealer refunds

(2) 2019 Heating Season "Blended price" for oil/propane/kerosene including MOR/DOR discounts

(3) Assumes average winter consumption of 764 gallons for a delivered petro fuel (oil/propane/kerosene)

(4) Includes \$130,000+ in non-block grant LIHEAP funds

(5) Income maximum increased from 156% federal poverty level gross per month to 185% fpl, and resource test eliminated

(6) In July 2008 - heating oil approached \$5.00/gallon

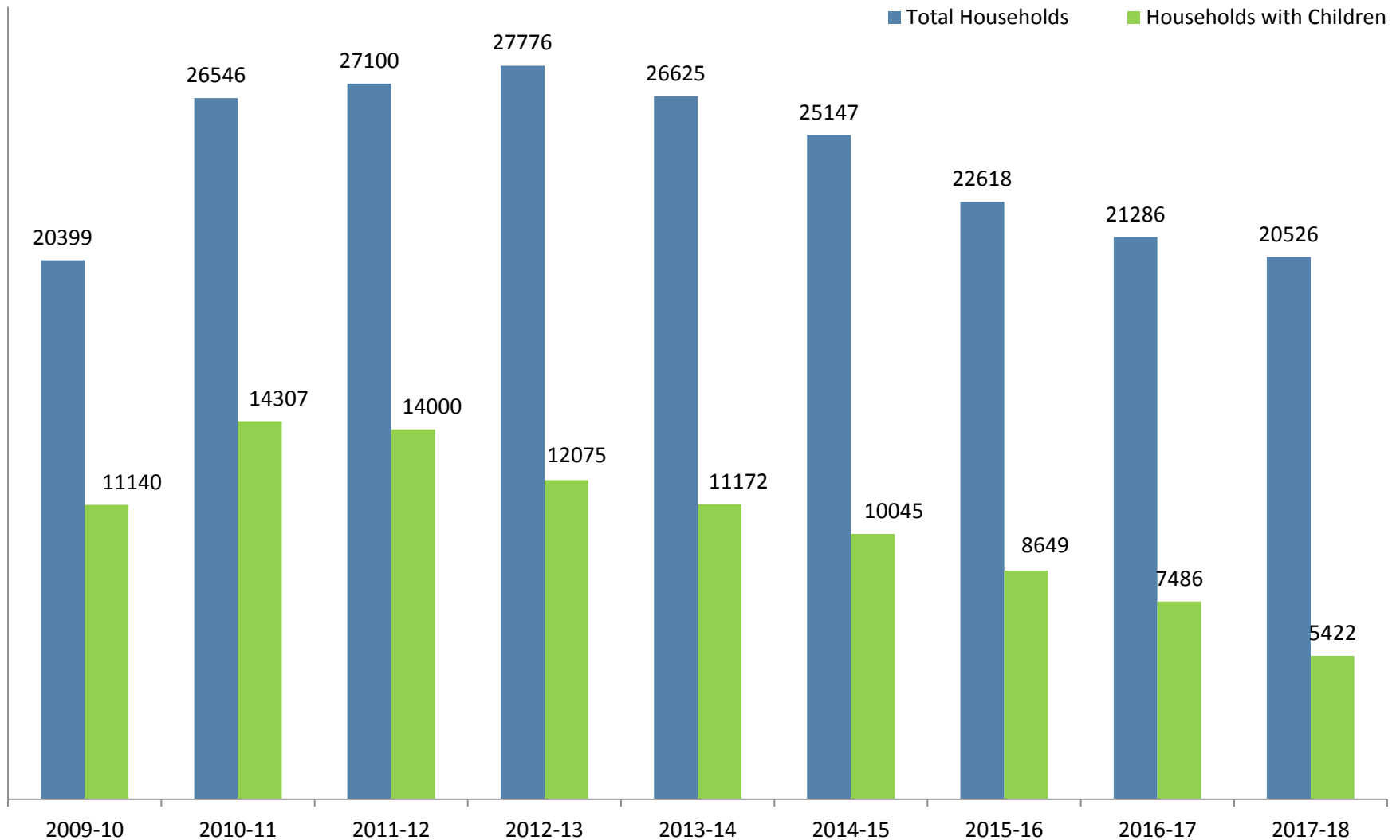
(7) State Funds Contributed Prior to SFY 2008: SFY2007 \$590,769; SFY2006 \$10,200,000; and SFY 2005 \$1,000,000

No state funds were contributed to LIHEAP prior to FFY2005

* LIHEAP Totals for 2016 - 2019 are total federal block grant awarded during the respective fiscal years less the 15% transfer to Weatherization

** 2016 LIHEAP block grant award is less \$2.8M transfer to Wx and less 10% of block grant, which was carried over into 2017. Projected 2017 block grant amount does not anticipate any federal carryover into 2018

Fuel Assistance Caseload



Utility Assistance Programs



- Benefits are funded by a surcharge on all GMP & VGS rate-payers.
- DCF/ESD/Fuel & Utility Office determines eligibility under agreements with GMP and VGS.
- Green Mountain Power (GMP) 25% discount on entire bill; 150% federal poverty maximum; new enrollees eligible for a one-time arrears forgiveness. Current and ongoing enrollees may be eligible for an additional 50% arrears forgiveness.
 - **To be eligible for Energy Assistance you must:**
 - Be a residential customer of Green Mountain Power; and
 - Your total gross monthly household income is not more than:
 - 1 person \$1,518
 - 2 persons \$2,058
 - 3 persons \$2,598
- Vermont Gas Systems (VGS) 20% discount on entire bill; 185% federal poverty maximum.
 - **To be eligible for Energy Assistance you must:**
 - Be a residential customer of Vermont Gas; and
 - Your total gross monthly household income is not more than:
 - 1 person \$1,872
 - 2 persons \$2,538
 - 3 persons \$3,204
- Residential service only
- Website: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/eap>

3SquaresVT – (SNAP)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs

- Staff led by Pat Duda
 - Program team includes 8 staff
- 3SquaresVT is a federal USDA program that helps eligible Vermonters to stretch their food budgets and put three healthy meals on their tables every day
- At the national level, the program is called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP
- SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net
- ESD works with and provides funding to community partners such as Community Action Agencies, Area Agencies on Aging, the Vermont Food Bank, Hunger Free Vermont, and others to outreach, educate, and assist Vermonters with accessing the program.



One-Month Snapshot of 3SquaresVT Participants

One-Month Snapshot of 3SquaresVT Participants

Data for the Month of September, 2018

Average Household Benefit	\$228
Total Recipients	70,988
Recipients aged 0-17	21,109 (33%)
Recipients with a disability	20,524 (29%)
Recipients aged 60 or older	14,395 (20%)
Total Participating Households	39,923
Households with children aged 0-17	11,874 (30%)
Households with at least one person with a disability	19,312 (48%)
Households with at least one person aged 60+	13,213 (33%)

3SquaresVT Caseload SFY18

3SquaresVT and Cash-Out Participation and Issuance

Month Prepared: July, 2018

SFY 2018 Month	Households			Recipients			\$ Issued		
	EBT	CO	TOTAL	EBT	CO	TOTAL	EBT	CO	TOTAL
JUL	26,505	14,663	41,168	58,448	15,844	74,292	\$6,825,656	\$2,365,892	\$9,191,548
AUG	26,503	14,708	41,211	58,622	15,889	74,511	\$6,845,188	\$2,375,964	\$9,221,152
SEP	26,575	14,782	41,357	58,741	15,974	74,715	\$6,830,854	\$2,364,635	\$9,195,489
OCT	26,623	14,927	41,550	58,809	16,119	74,928	\$6,792,094	\$2,430,918	\$9,223,012
NOV	26,614	14,944	41,558	58,971	16,132	75,103	\$6,704,758	\$2,422,705	\$9,127,463
DEC	26,596	14,942	41,538	58,712	16,124	74,836	\$6,704,758	\$2,401,659	\$9,106,417
JAN	26,843	14,959	41,802	59,045	16,145	75,190	\$6,737,853	\$2,395,579	\$9,133,432
FEB	26,604	15,022	41,626	58,373	16,209	74,582	\$6,689,412	\$2,350,414	\$9,039,826
MAR	26,364	14,976	41,340	57,520	16,168	73,688	\$6,525,280	\$2,538,270	\$9,063,550
APR	26,050	14,982	41,032	56,810	16,169	72,979	\$6,498,542	\$2,378,482	\$8,877,024
MAY	25,684	14,952	40,636	55,961	16,126	72,087	\$6,396,301	\$2,386,830	\$8,783,131
JUN	25,414	14,939	40,353	55,425	16,119	71,544	\$6,436,644	\$2,365,892	\$8,802,536
YTD AVG.	26,365	14,900	41,264	57,953	16,085	74,038	\$6,665,612	\$2,398,103	\$9,063,715
YTD Total							\$79,987,340	\$28,777,240	\$108,764,580

Prepared by Karolyn White, Economic Services Division, Process and Performance Unit

Source: Household and Recipient figures are from PPR extracts of ACCESS data. Dollars Issued figures are from the FNS 388 report prepared by the business office.

EBT - Electronic Benefits Transfer

CO - Cash-Out

Individual Career Advancement Network (ICAN)

Employment and Training Program for 3SquaresVT Recipients



ICAN Partner Agencies

- Vermont Department of Labor
- DAIL Vocational Rehabilitation
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- VABIR
- Economic Services
- Community Action Agencies
 - Micro Business Development Program

SERVICES

- Job Search
- Job Search Training
- Workfare
- Education
- Job Retention
- WIOA
- Self Employment Training
- Work Experience

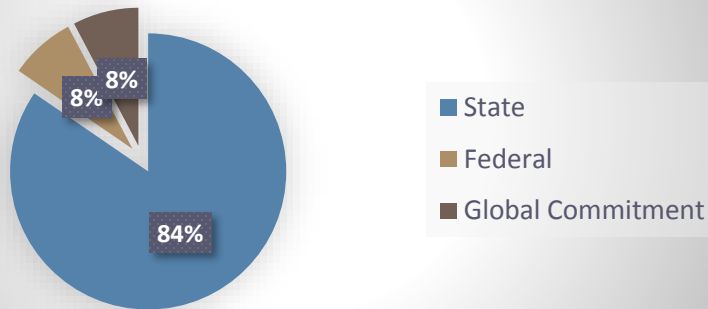


Vermont Farm to Family Program

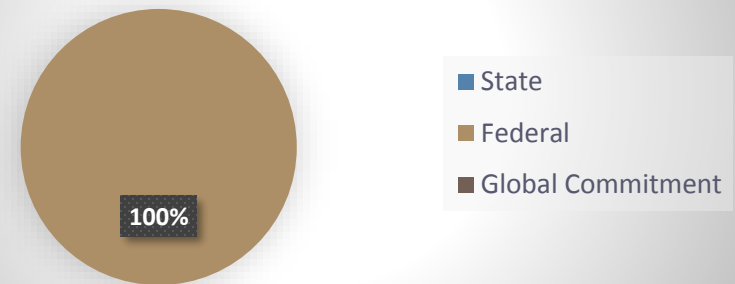
- Helps income-eligible Vermonters to buy locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets.
- About one in four Vermonters qualifies for Farm To Family coupons.
- Coupon distribution begins in June and ends September 30th or sooner if all coupons are distributed. Coupons expire October 31.
- Eligible applicants get one \$30 book of coupons per year. The program was not created to supplement incomes but rather to change food shopping and eating habits and build the consumer base for local farmers markets.
- Vermont distributes four blocks of coupons each year:
 - Participants in the Ladies First Program
 - Participants in the WIC Program
 - Income-eligible households that include someone age 60 or older
 - Other low-income households

Federal vs. State Funding for Programs

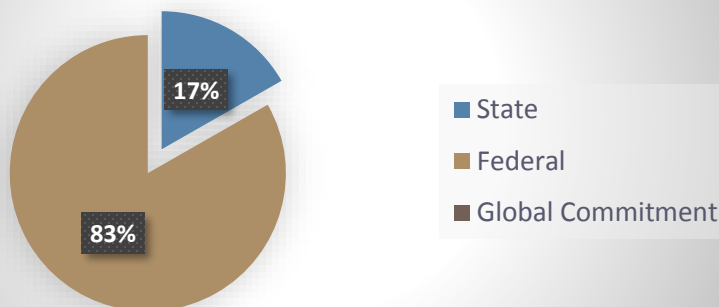
Reach Up



3SquaresVT (EBT and Cashout)



LIHEAP



General Assistance

