

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Health and Welfare to which was referred House Bill
3 No. 965 entitled “An act relating to health care- and human services-related
4 appropriations from the Coronavirus Relief Fund” respectfully reports that it
5 has considered the same and recommends that the Senate propose to the House
6 that

7 * * * Purpose * * *

8 Sec. 1. PURPOSE

9 The purpose of this act is to appropriate ~~\$300,000,000.00~~ \$211,930,000.00
10 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund for health care- and human services-related
11 expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

12 * * * Coronavirus Relief Fund; Administrative Provisions * * *

13 Sec. 2. CONSISTENCY WITH CARES ACT AND GUIDANCE

14 The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the
15 Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this act complies with the requirements
16 of Sec. 5001 of the CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136 and related guidance
17 because the costs to be covered:

18 (1) are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health
19 emergency with respect to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);

20 (2) were not accounted for in Vermont’s fiscal year 2020 budget; and

1 (3) were, or will be, incurred during the period beginning on March 1,
2 2020 and ending on December 30, 2020.

3 Sec. 3. GRANT RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS; REVERSION AND
4 REALLOCATION SCHEDULE

5 All appropriations made from the State’s Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)
6 in this and other bills passed after March 1, 2020 as part of the 2020
7 legislative session are made with the knowledge that the statutory and
8 regulatory context is constantly changing. Additional federal legislation may
9 further change the potential for and appropriateness of CRF usage. As a
10 result:

11 (1) Appropriations from the CRF are subject to changes in source of
12 funds that may occur as the result of subsequent legislation or through
13 administrative actions, where permissible by law.

14 (2) Specific CRF uses may need to change based on changes to federal
15 laws or on revised or updated federal guidance.

16 (3) It is the responsibility of all entities receiving CRF monies to ensure
17 compliance with all federal guidelines as to CRF spending and use.

18 (4) Unless otherwise authorized by the Commissioner of Finance and
19 Management, any monies appropriated from the CRF shall revert to the CRF to
20 the extent that they have not been expended by December 20, 2020 to enable
21 reallocation.

1 Sec. 4. CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND GRANTS; CONDITIONS

2 (a) Any person receiving a grant comprising monies from the Coronavirus
3 Relief Fund shall use the monies only for purposes that comply with the
4 requirements of Sec. 5001 of the CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136 and related
5 guidance.

6 (b) Any person who expends monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund for
7 purposes not eligible under Sec. 5001 of the CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136
8 and related guidance shall be liable for repayment of the funds to the State of
9 Vermont; provided, however, that a person shall not be liable for such
10 repayment if the person expended the monies in good faith reliance on
11 authorization of the proposed expenditure by or specific guidance from the
12 agency or department administering the grant program.

13 (c) The Attorney General or a State agency or department administering a
14 grant program established or authorized under this act may seek appropriate
15 criminal or civil penalties as authorized by law for a violation of the terms or
16 conditions of the applicable program, grant, or award.

17 Sec. 5. CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND; RECORD KEEPING;

18 COMPLIANCE; REPORTS

19 (a) In order to ensure compliance with the requirements of Sec. 5001 of the
20 CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136, and related guidance, and to assist the State
21 in demonstrating such compliance:

1 (1) any agency or department, and any subrecipient of a grant, that is
2 authorized to disburse grant funds appropriated by this act shall include
3 standard audit provisions, as required by Agency of Administration Bulletins
4 3.5 and 5, in all contracts, loans, and grant agreements; and

5 (2) each grant recipient shall report on its use of the monies received
6 pursuant to this act to the agency or department administering the grant as
7 required by that agency or department and shall maintain records of its
8 expenditures of the monies for three years, or for a longer period if so required
9 by State or federal law, to enable verification as needed.

10 (b) On or before July 31, 2020 and September 1, 2020, each agency or
11 department administering a grant program pursuant to this act shall provide
12 information to the legislative committees of jurisdiction, including the House
13 and Senate Committees on Appropriations, regarding its distribution of grant
14 funds to date, the amount of grant funds that remains available for distribution,
15 and its plans for awarding the available funds by December 20, 2020.

16 * * * Health Care Provider Stabilization Program * * *

17 Sec. 6. HEALTH CARE PROVIDER STABILIZATION PROGRAM;

18 CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

19 (a) The sum of ~~\$250,570,000.00~~ ~~\$165,300,000.00~~ is appropriated from the
20 Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2021

1 for purposes of establishing the Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant
2 Program as set forth in this section.

3 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
4 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to stabilize
5 health care providers based on their COVID-19-related costs and the fiscal
6 impacts of disruptions to their business operations as a result of COVID-19.
7 Health care providers have had to change their care delivery models, suspend
8 elective procedures and surgeries, reduce patient volume, acquire additional
9 equipment and supplies, and make other modifications to their practices in
10 order to respond to and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 public health
11 emergency.

12 (c)(1) The Agency of Human Services shall establish the Health Care
13 Provider Stabilization Grant Program to disburse the funds appropriated in this
14 section to eligible health care provider applicants as expeditiously as possible
15 using a needs-based application process.

16 (2) Based on federal law and guidance, the Agency shall establish
17 guidelines identifying the specific types of costs for which grant recipients may
18 use grant funds. Costs are not compensable under this section if the same costs
19 or expenses have been or will be covered by insurance or by another State or
20 federal grant; provided, however, that this restriction does not include loans or
21 advance payments for which repayment is expected.

1 (3)(A) Providers of health care services in the following categories shall
2 be eligible to apply for grant funds pursuant to this section if the provider is
3 located in Vermont and delivers health care services in this State:

4 (i) hospitals, including community hospitals and psychiatric
5 hospitals;

6 (ii) health care professional services, including independent
7 medical practices, hospital-owned medical practices, designated and
8 specialized services agencies, federally qualified health centers, rural health
9 clinics, ambulatory surgical centers, and laboratory and imaging centers;

10 (iii) dental services;

11 (iv) other professional services, including mental health providers,
12 residential and nonresidential substance use disorder treatment providers,
13 advanced practice registered nurses, physical therapists, podiatrists,
14 optometrists, chiropractors, and other health care providers;

15 (v) home health and hospice agencies;

16 (vi) pharmacy services;

17 (vii) facility- and community-based long-term care services,
18 including skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, residential care homes,
19 assisted living facilities, and adult day service providers; and

20 (viii) organizations recognized by the Agency of Human Services
21 through their status as provider grant recipients providing health support

1 services, including the area agencies on aging and organizations providing peer
2 support services.

3 (B) The Agency of Human Services shall evaluate applicants based
4 on their demonstrated need and ability to meet the criteria set forth in
5 subsection (d) of this section, not on the basis of a provider applicant’s size or
6 its proportion of health care spending in this State, and shall consider the
7 impact of the requested funds on the applicant’s sustainability.

8 (d) In determining whether and how much to award an applicant from the
9 Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program, the Agency shall consider
10 the applicant’s demonstrated need and the extent to which the applicant meets
11 some or all of the following criteria, to the extent applicable:

12 (1) The applicant would use the grant funds to sustain or improve the
13 quality of health care services, including essential community services and
14 services delivered using telehealth, provided during the COVID-19 public
15 health emergency.

16 (2) The applicant would use the grant funds to prepare for mitigating or
17 responding to anticipated surges in COVID-19 cases or to prepare to meet
18 increased needs for specific types of services, such as the likely demand for
19 mental health services as a result of prolonged social isolation and economic
20 stress due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

1 (3) The applicant would use the grant funds to provide or support
2 services that would otherwise likely become limited or unavailable as a result
3 of business disruptions caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency, or
4 the grant funds would enable the applicant to withstand and recover from
5 business disruptions caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency, or
6 both.

7 (4) The applicant would use the grant funds to supplement existing
8 patient financial assistance programs in order to assist patients whose financial
9 situations have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 public health
10 emergency or to enable the applicant to continue providing services to
11 Medicaid beneficiaries, or both.

12 **(5) The applicant would use the funds to ensure that patients are**
13 **able to receive necessary, appropriate, and timely health care services.**

14 (6) The applicant appears capable of making appropriate and efficient
15 use of the grant funds.

16 (e)(1)(A) The Agency shall provide notice and outreach regarding the
17 availability of the grants and grant applications to health care providers and
18 provider organizations in a timely manner.

19 (B)(i) The information the Agency requires a provider to provide in
20 an application for the Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program should
21 not exceed the minimum necessary to demonstrate the applicant’s need for the

1 grant funds requested and the degree to which the provider satisfies some or all
2 of the criteria in subsection (d) of this section, to the extent applicable.

3 **(ii) The Agency shall require hospital applicants to break out**
4 **the financial needs of their outpatient medical practices separately from**
5 **those of the rest of the hospital in order to compare the needs of hospital-**
6 **owned medical practices with those of independent medical practices.**

7 (C) The Agency shall consider each application received and shall
8 prioritize applications and the amount of each grant award based on the
9 applicant’s level of financial need and on the extent to which the applicant
10 satisfies some or all of the criteria set forth in subsection (d) of this section, to
11 the extent applicable.

12 (2) Grants to be awarded pursuant to this section may be requested and
13 disbursed as a single payment or as multiple payments, depending on the needs
14 of the applicant and the proposed uses of the funds, provided that all funds
15 shall be disbursed, and cover costs incurred, on or before December 30, 2020
16 as required by the CARES Act.

17 (3) Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, of the
18 funds appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) of this section:

19 (A) at least \$5,000,000.00 in grant funds shall be awarded to nursing
20 homes; and

1 (B) at least ~~\$8,500,000.00 in grant funds shall be awarded and~~
2 ~~divided between residential and nonresidential substance use disorder~~
3 ~~treatment programs, home health and hospice agencies, and designated~~
4 ~~and specialized services agency programs specific to individuals with~~
5 ~~intellectual and developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries~~
6 ~~\$10,000,000.00 in grant funds shall be awarded to the designated and~~
7 ~~specialized services agencies, of which \$1,000,000.00 shall be for mental~~
8 ~~health counseling services for children.~~

9 (f)(1) On or before July 31, 2020, the Agency of Human Services shall
10 provide information to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health
11 Care, and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations
12 and on Health and Welfare regarding its distribution of Health Care Provider
13 Stabilization Program grant funds to date, including the types of providers
14 awarded funds, the aggregate amounts awarded by provider type, and the
15 aggregate amounts awarded by geographic region of the State.

16 (2) On or before September 1, 2020, the Agency of Human Services shall
17 provide information to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health
18 Care, and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations
19 and on Health and Welfare regarding its distribution of Health Care Provider
20 Stabilization Program grant funds since those included in the report required in
21 subdivision (1) of this subsection, including the types of providers awarded

1 funds, the aggregate amounts awarded by provider type, and the aggregate
2 amounts awarded by geographic region of the State, and any amounts
3 remaining for allocation.

4 (3) On or before January 15, 2021, the Agency of Human Services shall
5 report to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on
6 Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health
7 and Welfare the specific grant amount or amounts awarded to each recipient of
8 funds under the Health Care Provider Stabilization Program.

9 * * * Community Health Investments * * *

10 Sec. 7. COMMUNITY HEALTH INVESTMENTS; CORONAVIRUS

11 RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

12 (a) The sum of \$9,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
13 Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2021 in order to sustain
14 existing population health management programs.

15 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
16 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to promote
17 the health of Vermonters, including identifying patients most at risk from
18 COVID-19, providing outreach and education regarding prevention of and
19 testing for COVID-19, expanding access to telehealth, and maintaining care
20 management programs to help patients manage chronic conditions while access

1 to health care services is limited as a result of the COVID-19 public health
2 emergency.

3 * * * COVID-19-Related Health Disparities * * *

4 Sec. 8. ADDRESSING HEALTH DISPARITIES; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF
5 FUND; APPROPRIATION

6 (a) The sum of \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
7 Fund to Department of Health in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of addressing
8 health disparities in Vermont as they relate to COVID-19 by providing direct
9 services to affected populations and conducting outreach to isolated individuals
10 at high risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19.

11 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
12 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to reduce
13 health disparities that disproportionately affect individuals who belong to or
14 identify with certain social categories by providing all Vermont residents with
15 an equal opportunity to be healthy and to protect themselves and others from
16 COVID-19.

17 (c)(1) The Department of Health shall use the funds appropriated in this
18 section to provide up to 10 grants to community agencies to provide direct
19 services to populations most likely to experience adverse outcomes from
20 COVID-19 based on factors such as race or ethnicity, immigrant status, sexual
21 orientation, gender identity, disability, age, and geographic location. Grantees

1 shall work directly with affected populations and conduct outreach to isolated
2 individuals at high risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19 to assess and
3 identify their needs during the COVID-19 public health emergency in order to
4 help them protect themselves and others from the disease, such as by providing
5 education and resources regarding prevention of COVID-19 in languages and
6 formats appropriate to the population, assisting with access to COVID-19
7 testing and treatment, and identifying and addressing difficulties in safely
8 meeting essential needs, including food, shelter, health care, and emotional
9 support, during the public health emergency.

10 (2) The Department shall select grantees based on prior demonstrated
11 work with the affected population, membership as part of the affected
12 population, and ability to rapidly implement programming in response to the
13 COVID-19 public health emergency.

14 (d)(1) The grantees under the program established in this section shall
15 provide insights gathered from their work under the grant, and
16 recommendations for further actions based on those insights, to the Department
17 to inform the Department’s future efforts to address health disparities in
18 Vermont.

19 (2) The Department of Health shall use the insights and
20 recommendations provided by the grantees, along with the recommendations
21 from the Governor’s Racial Equity Task Force expected on or before August

1 15, 2020, to enhance and expand upon the Department’s previous work in
2 addressing health disparities in Vermont and shall consider ways to continue
3 involving members of the affected populations in the Department’s health
4 equity planning processes and action plans going forward.

5 * * * Mental Health Services * * *

6 Sec. 9. SUICIDE PREVENTION; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;

7 APPROPRIATION

8 (a) The sum of \$800,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
9 Fund to Department of Mental Health in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of
10 implementing suicide prevention initiatives focused on individuals at
11 heightened risk of death by suicide due to economic stress, social isolation, or
12 other impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

13 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
14 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to mitigate
15 the negative effects of COVID-19 on Vermonters’ mental health as economic
16 stress, social isolation, and other impacts of the COVID-19 public health
17 emergency have increased many individuals’ feelings of panic, fear, anxiety,
18 depression, loneliness, and other mental health concerns.

1 Sec. 10. PEER WARM LINE; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;

2 APPROPRIATION

3 (a) The sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
4 Fund to the Department of Mental Health in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of a
5 grant to Pathways Vermont to operate its peer warm line 24 hours per day,
6 seven days per week until December 30, 2020 and to conduct outreach to
7 health care providers and others across Vermont to make them aware of the
8 warm line and encourage them to use it.

9 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
10 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary because
11 call volume to Pathways Vermont’s warm line has increased substantially as a
12 result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, including significantly
13 increased numbers of calls regarding suicidality; the warm line provides an
14 essential service to Vermonters on which their mental health and, in some
15 cases, their lives may depend; and currently, Pathways only has sufficient
16 funds to continuing operating the warm line 24 hours per day, seven days per
17 week through June 30, 2020. In addition, responding to the COVID-19 public
18 health emergency has taken an enormous toll on the mental health of health
19 care providers across the State, and it is vital that they be aware of the support
20 available to them through the warm line.

1 (c) Pathways Vermont shall use the funds received pursuant to this section
2 to:

3 (1) operate its warm line 24 hours per day, seven days per week, until
4 December 30, 2020;

5 (2) conduct outreach to health care providers across provider types in all
6 geographic regions of the Vermont to make them aware of the warm line and
7 of existing hotline options in Vermont and encourage them to use those
8 resources; and

9 (3) conduct outreach to Vermonters all across the State to make them
10 aware of the warm line and of existing hotline options in Vermont and
11 encourage them to use those resources.

12 * * * Child Care and Family Supportive Services * * *

13 Sec. 11. PARENT CHILD CENTER NETWORK; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF
14 FUND; APPROPRIATION

15 (a) The sum of ~~\$3,900,000.00~~ \$4,000,000.00 is appropriated from the
16 Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Department for Children and Families' Child
17 Development Division in fiscal year 2021 for distribution to the Parent Child
18 Center Network for the purpose of supporting parent child centers' response to
19 an increased demand for services, such as supporting clients with housing and
20 food insecurity; responding to child development inquiries; and providing

1 parental supports, technology support and training, and other supplies and
2 services to meet families' immediate needs.

3 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
4 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary because the
5 Parent Child Center Network serves many of Vermont's most vulnerable
6 families, and the COVID-19 public health emergency has rendered the State's
7 most vulnerable families even less secure in terms of food, housing, and
8 parental and other educational supports.

9 Sec. 12. CHILD CARE, SUMMER CAMP, AND AFTERSCHOOL

10 PROGRAM RESTART GRANTS; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF

11 FUND; APPROPRIATION

12 (a) The sum of \$9,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
13 Fund to the Department for Children and Families' Child Development
14 Division in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of providing additional restart grants
15 to summer camps, afterschool programs, and child care providers through the
16 month of August. Of the sum appropriated, \$3,000,000.00 shall be designated
17 for summer camps and afterschool programs and \$6,000,000.00 shall be
18 designated for child care providers.

19 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
20 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to ensure
21 that summer camps, afterschool programs, and child care providers are able to

1 conform to health and safety standards designed to mitigate the risk of
2 COVID-19 infections, such as altering staffing patterns, securing personal
3 protective equipment and cleaning supplies, and retrofitting facilities. This
4 appropriation is also necessary to cover budgetary shortfalls resulting from the
5 inability of a summer camp, afterschool program, or child care provider to
6 open at full capacity, which is due to or resulting from COVID-19, because
7 families are either unenrolling children to prevent transmission of the virus or
8 summer camps, afterschool programs, and child care providers are reducing
9 their capacity to conform with required health and safety standards.

10 Sec. 13. CHILDREN’S INTEGRATED SERVICES; CORONAVIRUS

11 RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

12 (a) The sum of ~~\$100,000.00~~ \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the
13 Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Department for Children and Families’ Child
14 Development Division in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of addressing
15 immediate needs related to providing Children’s Integrated Services, including
16 information technology training and the provision of equipment necessary for
17 telehealth services.

18 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
19 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to provide
20 remote services because the risk of COVID-19 infection has limited the
21 provision of in-person Children’s Integrated Services.

1 Sec. 14. INFANT SUPPLIES; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;

2 APPROPRIATION

3 (a) The sum of \$50,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
4 Fund to the Department for Children and Families in fiscal year 2021 for
5 distribution to the Junior League of Champlain Valley Diaper Bank for
6 purposes of providing supplies to families statewide who are facing economic
7 hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

8 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
9 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary because
10 many families with infants and young children are in need of diapering and
11 other supplies and the COVID-19 pandemic has created economic hardships
12 for many families, including loss of employment, that render them unable to
13 procure these supplies.

14 * * * Addressing Food Insecurity * * *

15 Sec. 15. CHARITABLE FOOD SYSTEM; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF

16 FUND; APPROPRIATION

17 (a) The sum of \$4,600,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
18 Fund to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2021 for distribution to the
19 Vermont Foodbank for purpose of addressing food insecurity throughout the
20 State, including purchasing more food, providing subgrants to partner food
21 shelves and meal sites, and for additional personnel, supplies, materials,

1 warehouse space, delivery services, and equipment to meet the increased need
2 of Vermonters for access to food as a result of the COVID-19 public health
3 emergency.

4 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
5 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary because the
6 Vermont Foodbank has experienced a 46 percent increase in demand for
7 services resulting from high unemployment rates, business closures, and
8 significant business interruptions during the COVID-19 public health
9 emergency. In addition, the Vermont Foodbank will also incur significant
10 expenses to access the food assistance funds available from the U.S.
11 Department of Agriculture’s Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, especially
12 if the availability of the Vermont National Guard to support food distribution
13 changes, because the Vermont Foodbank does not currently have the resources
14 needed to independently manage food distributions on its own.

15 Sec. 16. SUMMER MEALS TO CHILDREN; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF

16 FUND; APPROPRIATION

17 (a) The sum of \$12,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
18 Fund to the Agency of Education for distribution to Summer Meal Sponsors in
19 fiscal year 2021 for purposes of continuing meal delivery services to children
20 during the months of June, July, and August.

1 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
2 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to provide
3 meal delivery services to children, including the preparation, packaging, and
4 delivery of meals. Food insecurity has increased significantly during the
5 COVID-19 pandemic, and settings that often provide meals during summer
6 months, like congregate settings, may not be available in the summer of 2020
7 due to public health considerations. This appropriation shall assist in the
8 payment of costs incurred by Sponsors to address one or both of the following:

9 (1) compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions; or

10 (2) accommodation of increased participation in the Program due to the
11 increase in number of eligible participants due to the negative economic effects
12 of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

13 (c)(1) The Agency of Education shall continue to seek waivers from the
14 U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Summer Food Service Program to
15 enable the State to draw down federal funds for the delivery of meals in
16 accordance with this section.

17 (2) The provision of summer meals to children is not compensable under
18 this section to the extent that the same costs or expenses have been or will be
19 covered by other federal grant funds.

1 Sec. 17. FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO OLDER VERMONTERS AND
2 OTHER VULNERABLE POPULATIONS; CORONAVIRUS
3 RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

4 (a) The sum of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
5 Fund to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living in
6 fiscal year 2021 for distribution to the Area Agencies on Aging for the purpose
7 of providing nutrition services to older Vermonters and other vulnerable
8 populations in compliance with public health or social distancing requirements
9 implemented in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

10 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
11 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to address
12 the increased demand for nutrition services and the added costs of public
13 health precautions incurred by the Area Agencies on Aging due to or resulting
14 from COVID-19 because the public health emergency has increased food
15 insecurity in Vermont and has restricted the availability of congregate settings
16 in which many older Vermonters and other vulnerable populations are
17 typically served.

1 **Sec. 18. COORDINATION OF FOOD PROCUREMENT AND**
2 **DISTRIBUTION; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;**
3 **APPROPRIATION**

4 **(a) The sum of \$400,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus**
5 **Relief Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2021 to**
6 **establish a food procurement and distribution system to ensure**
7 **coordination among the Agencies of Human Services, Education, and**
8 **Agriculture, their departments, and community partners serving food**
9 **insecure households in their response to food insecurity resulting from the**
10 **COVID-19 public health emergency.**

11 **(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies**
12 **from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary**
13 **to coordinate the State's response to food insecurity among Vermont**
14 **households, which has increased as a result of COVID-19-related financial**
15 **hardships. While numerous State entities and community partners are**
16 **involved in the response to food insecurity, these monies are necessary to**
17 **ensure that there is neither duplication of effort, nor gaps in the**
18 **populations or regions served.**

1 **Sec. 19. OUTREACH TO FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS;**

2 **CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION**

3 **(a) The sum of \$X00,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus**
4 **Relief Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2021 for**
5 **distribution to community partners, including partner food shelves and**
6 **meal sites, for the purpose of providing educational resources to**
7 **households experiencing food insecurity as a result of unemployment or**
8 **other financial hardships created by the COVID-19 public health**
9 **emergency.**

10 **(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies**
11 **from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary**
12 **to make information and other resources about food insecurity and**
13 **nutrition services known, particularly to those persons who may be**
14 **accessing such information and services for the first time as a result of**
15 **COVID-19-related financial hardships.**

16 * * * Adult Day Programs * * *

17 **Sec. 20. ADULT DAY PROGRAMS; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;**
18 **APPROPRIATION**

19 **(a) The sum of ~~\$850,000.00~~ \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the**
20 **Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and**
21 **Independent Living in fiscal year 2021 to provide sustainability payments to**

1 adult day programs during the months of July, August, and September to
2 ensure that these programs remain viable and will be able to reopen once the
3 risk of COVID-19 transmission in congregate settings dissipates.

4 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
5 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to provide
6 financial stability to Vermont’s adult day programs while clients remain
7 socially distanced to prevent the risk of COVID-19 transmission in congregate
8 settings and to ensure that programs are able to reopen once the risk of
9 COVID-19 transmission in congregate settings dissipates.

10 * * * Supports for New Americans, Refugees, and Immigrants * * *

11 Sec. 21. SUPPORTS FOR NEW AMERICANS, REFUGEES, AND
12 IMMIGRANTS; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;
13 APPROPRIATION

14 (a) The sum of \$700,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
15 Fund to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal year 2021 for distribution in
16 equal amounts to the Association of Africans Living in Vermont and the U.S.
17 Committee for Refugees and Immigrants’ Vermont Refugee Resettlement
18 Program for various purposes related to COVID-19, including:

19 (1) hiring outreach staff to communicate health and hygiene information
20 related to COVID-19 in many languages, including the of symptoms of
21 COVID-19, how to access health care, and the importance of social distancing;

1 (2) preparing and delivering care packages of food, clothing, and
2 cleaning and hygiene products to persons experiencing economic hardship as a
3 result of high unemployment rates, business closure, or significant business
4 interruption during the COVID-19 pandemic;

5 (3) providing navigation of case management services to clients in need
6 of unemployment insurance, Reach Up, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
7 Program, and other benefits as a result of high unemployment rates, business
8 closure, or significant business interruption during the COVID-19 pandemic;
9 and

10 (4) hiring a coach to collaborate with the Department for Children and
11 Families' Child Development Division to assist New Americans interested in
12 becoming registered family child care providers, including gaining a better
13 understanding of the challenges facing New Americans in accessing child care
14 as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and providing a career
15 path for New Americans who have lost employment as a result of COVID-19.

16 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
17 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary because
18 many members of Vermont's New American, refugee, and immigrant
19 populations have been unable to access information related to:

20 (1) the prevention of COVID-19 transmission; and

1 (2) support services for persons experiencing either symptoms of the
2 virus or financial hardship as a result of high unemployment rates, business
3 closure, or significant business interruption due to the COVID-19 public health
4 emergency.

5 * * * Supports for Persons with Disabilities * * *

6 Sec. 22. PEER SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL
7 DISABILITIES; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;
8 APPROPRIATION

9 (a) The sum of \$50,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
10 Fund to the Department for Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living in
11 fiscal year 2021 for distribution to the Green Mountain Self Advocates for the
12 purposes of providing peer outreach services to persons with intellectual
13 disabilities regarding:

14 (1) health and hygiene precautions related to avoiding exposure to and
15 transmission of COVID-19;

16 (2) resources and services for persons impacted by financial hardship as
17 a result of high unemployment rates, business closure, or significant business
18 interruption during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

19 (3) training, assistance, and acquisition of digital equipment to access
20 the supports described in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection.

1 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
2 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to ensure
3 that persons with intellectual disabilities understand how to:

4 (1) reduce the risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19; and

5 (2) access health, social, and financial supports necessitated due to

6 infection from COVID-19, social distancing, or financial hardship as a result of
7 the high unemployment rates, business closure, or significant business
8 interruption during the COVID-19 pandemic.

9 **Sec. 23. SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES;**

10 **CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;**

11 **APPROPRIATION**

12 **(a) The sum of \$50,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief**
13 **Fund to the Department for Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living in**
14 **fiscal year 2021 for distribution to the Vermont Center for Independent**
15 **Living to provide support services to persons with disabilities requiring**
16 **communication equipment and training as a result of social distancing**
17 **precautions required as a result of the COVID-19 public health**
18 **emergency.**

19 **(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies**
20 **from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary**
21 **to support persons living with disabilities who do not have access to**

1 **typical social connections as a result of the COVID-19 public health**
2 **emergency. These monies shall provide the necessary technology and**
3 **training to foster such connections.**

4 * * * Supplemental Reach Up Assistance * * *

5 Sec. 24. SUPPLEMENTAL REACH UP ASSISTANCE; CORONAVIRUS
6 RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

7 (a)(1) The sum of ~~\$300,000.00~~ \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the
8 Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Department for Children and Families'
9 Economic Services Division in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of providing
10 small supplemental grants to families in the Reach Up program experiencing
11 extraordinary financial hardship due to the COVID-19 public health
12 emergency for expenses such as:

13 (A) cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment to prevent
14 infection by transmission of COVID-19;

15 (B) cash assistance to families with children under six years of age,
16 which is linked to better health outcomes for young children;

17 (C) expenses related to remote learning or employment, including
18 access to the Internet; and

19 (D) transportation-related expenses to offset limited public
20 transportation options during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

1 (2) The Department shall distribute the supplemental grants in
2 accordance with its standard process for distributing supplemental Reach Up
3 financial assistance.

4 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
5 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary because
6 Vermont’s most vulnerable families, many of whom are Reach Up
7 participants, have been especially susceptible to financial hardship as a result
8 of the high unemployment rates, business closures, and significant business
9 interruptions due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and may require
10 supplemental funds to provide COVID-19-related resources for their families.

11 * * * Recovery Residences * * *

12 Sec. 22. RECOVERY RESIDENCES; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;

13 APPROPRIATION

14 (a) The sum of \$350,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
15 Fund to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2021 for distribution to
16 recovery residences for the purposes of:

17 (1) providing rental payments on behalf of residents who are unable to
18 pay rent due to unemployment as a result of COVID-19; and

19 (2) purchasing cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment
20 necessary to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 within a recovery
21 residence.

1 ~~(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from~~
2 ~~the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to ensure~~
3 ~~that residents are able to remain in recovery residences despite experiencing~~
4 ~~unemployment as a result of COVID-19 and to ensure that recovery residences~~
5 ~~have the cleaning and other supplies necessary to mitigate the transmission of~~
6 ~~COVID-19.~~

7 * * * COVID-19 Public Health Precautions on State Lands * * *

8 Sec. 25. AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES; COVID-19 PUBLIC
9 HEALTH EXPENSES ON STATE LANDS;
10 APPROPRIATIONS

11 In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Agency of Natural
12 Resources in fiscal year 2021, the amount of \$3,500,000.00 is appropriated
13 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund in fiscal year 2021 for necessary
14 expenditures incurred by the Agency for the purpose of implementing COVID-
15 19 public health precautions on lands owned or controlled by the Agency of
16 Natural Resources. Eligible projects to implement COVID-19 public health
17 precautions include:

18 (1) updating of signage or information provided at entry to or access to
19 trails, access areas, forests, parks, or other areas where information regarding
20 COVID-19 public health precautions would be available to the users;

21 (2) temporary campsites or structures to allow for proper social

1 distancing of users and staff;

2 (3) the cost or expense of services or equipment required to clean or
3 sanitize public spaces; and

4 (4) expanding, improving, or adding public access to State lands and
5 public waters to allow greater social distancing among users, including
6 purchasing, building, repairing, or expanding parking areas, boat ramps,
7 restrooms, trail heads, visitor centers, and other amenities.

8 * * * Legislative Branch; Health and Safety * * *

9 Sec. 26. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH; SPACE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY
10 ASSESSMENT; COVID-19 MITIGATION PREPARATION;
11 CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

12 (a) The sum of up to \$750,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus
13 Relief Fund to the Sergeant at Arms in fiscal year 2021 as described below.

14 (1) Of the amount appropriated in this section, the Sergeant at Arms
15 may use up to \$100,000.00 for a short-term and long-term space and health and
16 safety needs assessment for the Legislative Branch for COVID-19 mitigation
17 and meeting social distancing requirements. Any funds not expended for the
18 assessment shall be used for the purpose described in subdivision (2) of this
19 subsection (a).

20 (2) Of the amount appropriated in this section, the Sergeant at Arms
21 may use up to \$150,000.00 for COVID-mitigation equipment or upgrades to

1 the State House, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and other
2 health and safety equipment or infrastructure; and

3 (3) Of the amount appropriated in this section, the Sergeant at Arms
4 may use up to \$500,000 for the costs to purchase any equipment or implement
5 upgrades or space transfers recommended in the assessment described in
6 subdivision (1) of this subsection (a).

7 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
8 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary for
9 addressing the health and safety of legislators, staff, and the public in the State
10 House and other legislative space for the purpose of COVID-19 mitigation.

11 (c) On or before July 10, 2020, the Sergeant at Arms, in consultation with
12 the Department of Buildings and General Services, shall contract with an
13 independent third party for a short-term and long-term space and health and
14 safety needs assessment for the Legislative Branch for COVID-19 mitigation.

15 The assessment shall include:

16 (1) recommendations for health and safety infrastructure measures
17 needed to protect staff, legislators, and the public, mitigate COVID-19, and
18 meet social distancing requirements in the State House, and any other
19 Legislative Branch space;

1 (2) short and long-term options for use of space or development of
2 additional space in the Capitol Complex for legislators, committee meetings,
3 and legislative staff offices, including 133 State Street; and

4 (3) short and long-term options for use of space for legislators,
5 committee meetings, and legislative staff offices Statewide.

6 (d) On or before August 19, 2020, the Sergeant at Arms shall submit the
7 assessment described in subsection (a) of this section to the House Committee
8 on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions. The
9 assessment shall include cost estimates for the recommendations and options
10 described in subdivisions (a)(1)-(3).

11 (e) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Sergeant at
12 Arms may enter into a contract with an independent third party for the
13 assessment described in this section without the need to competitively bid such
14 contracts. For the purposes of the assessment, the public health risk posed by
15 COVID-19 shall be deemed to be an emergency situation that justifies the
16 execution of sole source contracts pursuant to Bulletin 3.5, the State's
17 Procurement and Contracting Procedures.

18 Sec. 27. LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY;

19 CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

20 (a) The sum of \$250,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
21 Fund to the Office of Legislative Information Technology in fiscal year 2021

1 for legislative information technology equipment, including any networking
2 set-up required for the State House or new legislative space, camera and video
3 set-up, and purchasing hardware, such as laptops and tablets.

4 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
5 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary for
6 addressing upgrades to the State House information technology infrastructure,
7 the potential transition to a new legislative space to meet social distancing
8 requirements, to support a remote work environment for legislators and
9 legislative staff, and to ensure remote public access to legislative meetings
10 resulting from the COVID-19 emergency.

11 * * * Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusion * * *

12 Sec. 28. OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL’S STRATEGIC PLAN
13 FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROJECT; CORONAVIRUS
14 RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

15 (a) The sum of \$30,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
16 Fund to the Office of the Attorney General in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of
17 the Office’s Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusion project.

18 (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from
19 the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section:

20 (1) is necessary because race-based disparities and implicit bias continue
21 to persist throughout the State of Vermont; and

