

S.36

An act relating to modifications to the use of certain Coronavirus Relief
Fund appropriations

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

* * * Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program;

Extraordinary Relief; Transfers * * *

Sec. 1. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 136, Sec. 7, as amended by 2020 Acts and
Resolves No. 154, Sec. B.1121, is further amended to read:

Sec. 7. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; HEALTH CARE PROVIDER
STABILIZATION GRANT PROGRAM

* * *

(e) Extraordinary relief to long-term care facilities; adult day programs;
transfer authorized. Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the
contrary, the Agency of Human Services may:

(1) disburse funds appropriated by this section to any long-term care
facility in urgent need of extraordinary financial relief in the event of a
COVID-19 outbreak in the facility;

(2) disburse funds appropriated by this section to any adult day service
provider during the remainder of fiscal year 2021 if the Agency determines
that the funds are necessary to ensure the provider's sustainability and funds
are available for this purpose; and

(3) transfer funds appropriated by this section to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for distribution to health care providers receiving financial assistance through the Economic Recovery program.

(f) Reports.

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* * * Housing * * *

Sec. 2. DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES; HOUSING
FOR HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS;
CONTINUED USE OF FUNDS IN FISCAL YEAR 2021

In light of the extension of time to use monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund pursuant to Sec. 1001 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260, the Department for Children and Families may continue to use monies remaining from the Coronavirus Relief Fund appropriation to the Department in 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 137, Sec. 12, for programs and services that support safe, stable housing opportunities for Vermont households experiencing homelessness as a result of the COVID-19 public

health emergency and related administrative costs during the remainder of
fiscal year 2021.

Sec. 3. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 137, Sec. 11(a)(4) is amended to read:

(4) Rental assistance; eviction protection. ~~\$25,000,000.00~~
\$27,800,000.00 to the Department of Housing and Community Development
for a grant to the Vermont State Housing Authority, which shall administer the
distribution of funds to landlords on behalf of tenants in need of rental
arrears assistance.

* * *

Sec. 3a. HOUSING; RENTAL ASSISTANCE; APPROPRIATION

Of the \$200,000,000.00 available to the State for emergency rental
assistance pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L.
No. 116-260, Sec. 501, the amount of \$10,000,000.00 is appropriated to the
Department of Housing and Community Development to provide rental
assistance to Vermonters in need, consistent with the requirements of the Act.

* * * Broadband Access * * *

Sec. 4. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 137, Sec. 13 is amended to read:

Sec. 13. COVID-RESPONSE ACCELERATED BROADBAND
CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

* * *

(n) Any unexpended funds under the Program as of December 20, 2020 shall be returned to the State Coronavirus Relief Fund. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Commissioner of Public Service is authorized to continue disbursing funds under the Program for any broadband project contracted for prior to December 20, 2020 and not completed on or before December 30, 2020. The Commissioner shall retain any remaining balance of funds appropriated under this section and shall not disburse them for any other purpose without specific authorization from the General Assembly.

* * *

Sec. 4a. COVID-RESPONSE TEMPORARY BROADBAND SUBSIDY
PROGRAM; EXTENSION

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the COVID-Response Temporary Broadband Subsidy Program established under 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 137, Sec. 13(d) be extended for an additional two months covering the period beginning on January 1, 2021 and ending on February 28, 2021.

(b) To accomplish the purpose of this section and notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the Department of Public Service is authorized to use \$275,000.00 of the unobligated balance remaining from the appropriations for broadband programs under Act 137 and 2020 Acts and

Resolves No. 154 to extend the COVID-Response Temporary Broadband Subsidy Program to cover the period from January 1, 2021 through February 28, 2021.

* * * Everyone Eats * * *

Sec. 5. AGENCY OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT;
EVERYONE EATS

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to continue funding the Restaurants and Farmers Feeding the Hungry Program, known as Everyone Eats, through the end of fiscal year 2021 to the extent that sufficient Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds are made available to meet Program needs.

(b) The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall use the excess receipts authority under 32 V.S.A. § 511 to make interdepartmental transfers from the FEMA account to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for the purpose of funding the Everyone Eats Program through the end of fiscal year 2021.

* * * Access to Justice; Judicial Filing Fees * * *

Sec. 6. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 120, Sec. A.49(a)(9) is amended to read:

(9) Agency of Human Services: ~~\$300,000~~ \$375,000 is appropriated to the Agency of Human Services to be granted to Vermont Legal Aid for increased costs of providing access to justice services in response to the

COVID-19 pandemic. Up to 50% of this amount shall be used to cover the cost of per use electronic judicial filing fees though ~~December 30, 2020~~ March 31, 2021 to ensure all court users have timely access to justice as the judicial system resumes operations relying on greater digital remote online processes to ensure public health and safety after closure due to COVID-19.

* * * Front-Line Employees Hazard Pay Grant Program; Reporting * * *

Sec. 7. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 136, Sec. 6(f) is amended to read:

(f) Each covered employer that receives a grant shall, not later than 90 days after receiving the grant ~~and in no event later than~~ or by December 15, 2020, whichever is earlier, report to the Agency on a standard form provided by the Secretary the amount of grant funds used to provide hazard pay to eligible employees and the amount of any remaining grant funds that were not spent; provided, however, that the Agency may allow a grace period for reporting, in the Agency's discretion. All unspent grant funds shall be returned to the Agency pursuant to a procedure adopted by the Secretary.

* * * Prioritizing Use of Non-CRF Funds; Legislative Intent * * *

Sec. 8. PRIORITIZING USE OF NON-CORONAVIRUS RELIEF

FEDERAL FUNDS; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to use federal funds from sources other than the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), including federal funds provided to the State in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L.

No. 116-260, instead of using CRF monies whenever possible in order to apply CRF monies to other eligible purposes in light of the extension for using CRF monies from December 30, 2020 to December 31, 2021 in Sec. 1001 of the federal act.

(b) On or before February 28, 2021, the Secretary of Administration, in consultation with the Commissioner of Finance and Management and the Secretaries of Human Services and of Commerce and Community Development, shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations regarding the application of federal funds from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260, for eligible expenditures previously covered using CRF monies that were appropriated for emergency housing, rental arrearage assistance, utility arrearage assistance, nutrition assistance, and other social or human services purposes identified by the Secretaries and Commissioner.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage, except that, notwithstanding 1 V.S.A.

§ 214:

(1) Sec. 1(e)(1) (extraordinary relief to long-term care facilities) shall take effect retroactively on November 1, 2020;

(2) Secs. 1(e)(2) (adult day programs) and 6 (judicial filing fees) shall take effect retroactively on December 1, 2020;

(3) Sec. 1(e)(3) (transfer authority) shall take effect retroactively on July 1, 2020; and

(4) Secs. 4 (broadband access) and 7 (hazard pay reports) shall take effect retroactively on December 15, 2020.