



General Assistance Emergency Housing and Office of Economic Opportunity Shelter Programs

Presentation for
House Human Services Committee

General Assistance Emergency Housing (“motel voucher”)

General Assistance and Emergency Housing program has a Shelter First goal.

Provides emergency housing in a hotel/motel when no alternative shelter is available

Eligibility/access through Economic Services or 2-1-1 (after hours)

- “Catastrophic” up to 84 nights or “Vulnerable” up to 28 nights, depending on eligibility
- Adverse Weather Conditions during winter months
- Cohort, refers to a group of clients who were living in a hotel/motel on June 30th, 2023 and were granted an extension to stay in the hotel/motel through April 1st, 2024.

Catastrophic Eligibility

Fire, Flood, Natural Disaster

Death of a Spouse or minor child

Domestic Violence

Constrictive Eviction- No Cause, letter from housing inspector

Court ordered eviction (examples- non-pay of rent- no fault)

Clients must contribute 30% of their income toward housing.

As of January 15th, there were 210 household eligible for assistance.

Eligibility is up to 84 nights

Vulnerable Eligibility

SSI/SSDI Recipient

Age 65+

Pregnant in 3rd Trimester

Children under 18 or 19 if still attending school

Points- Disabled Veteran, Open Family Services Case, SSI/SSDI Applicant, Discharged from 48 hour inpatient hospital stay in past 30 days, Over 18 and discharged from DCF Custody w/in last 3 years, RU Recipient, On Probation or parole w/ DOC

Clients must contribute 30% of their income toward housing.

As of January 15th, there were 630 household eligible for assistance.

Eligibility is up to 28 nights

Adverse Weather Conditions

Started on 11/15/23

Weather dependent 11/15/23-12/15/23 and 3/15/24-4/15/24

12/15/23-3/15/24 eligibility will be independent of weather

Income Contribution and resources need to be exhausted

Period of Ineligibility for not following the rules, refused/did not accept shelter space

As of January 15th, 779 households were eligible for housing due to AWC.

Of the Adverse Weather Conditions households, 147 are families with children and 417 were households including a member with a disability (ESD definition of disability is SSI/SSDI). 53 of these households have an elderly member.

Capacity is very limited Statewide and updated information is posted [here](#)

Cohort Eligibility

Cohort, refers to a group of clients who were living in a hotel/motel on June 30th, 2023, and were granted an extension to stay in the hotel/motel as long as they complied with Act 81 until April 1st, 2024.

As of January 15th, there are 647 household housed under this criteria.

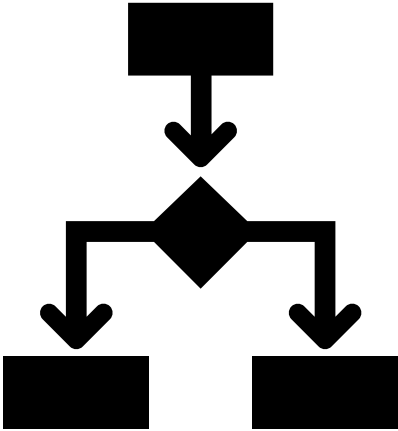
General Assistance Application Process

In-person or over the phone application

Interview with a Benefit Program Specialist

Homelessness must be verified

Determined eligible/ ineligible based on categories previously mentioned



If eligible, the person would be referred to a shelter if a bed is available

If eligible, but no shelter space if available, the Benefit Program Specialist will locate an available hotel room.

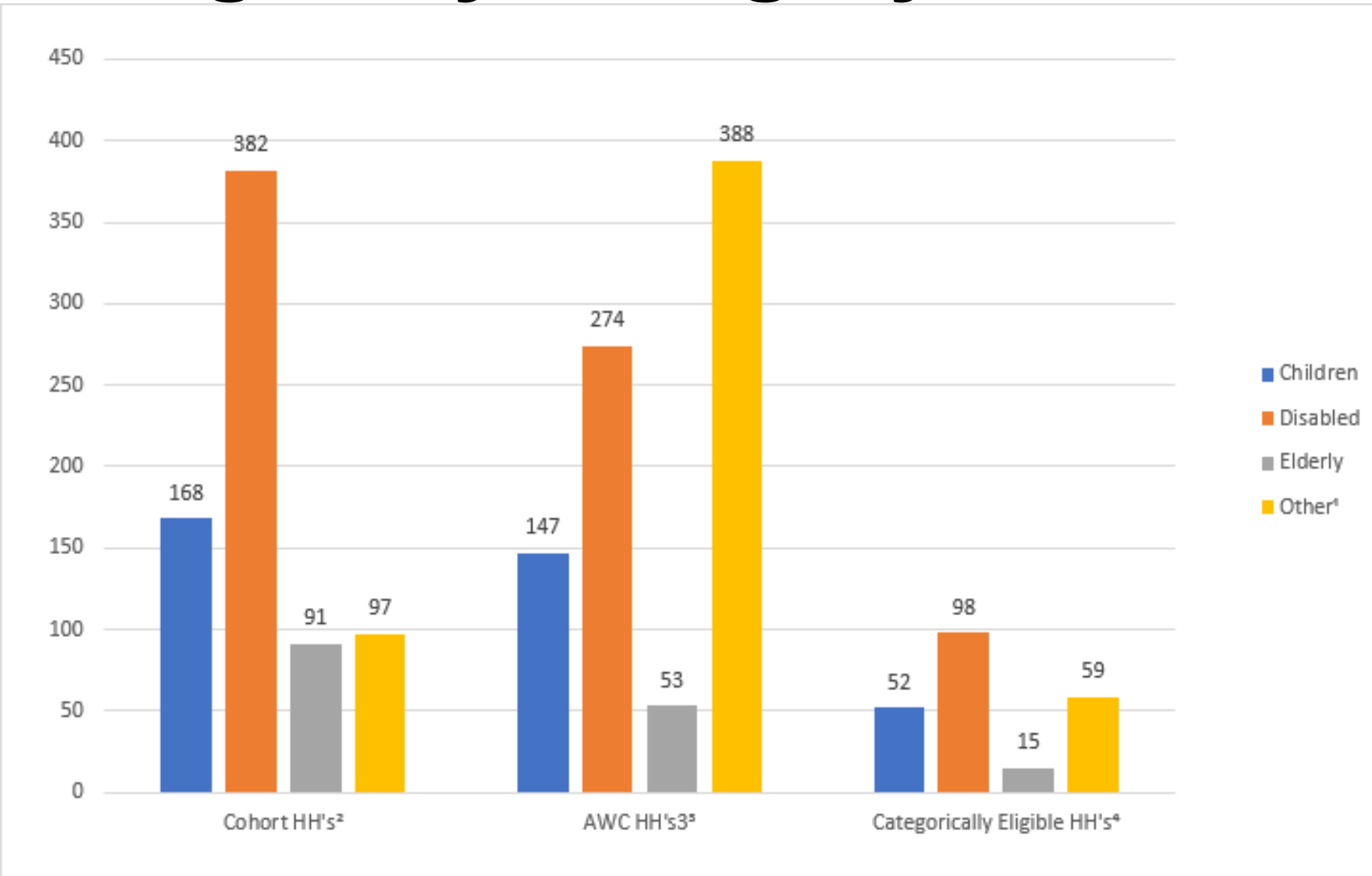
If the hotel agrees to accept the applicant, staff sends the hotel voucher with personal information and check-in and check-out dates.

Program Eligibility based on Category

This is the current data on all households in the GA Housing program as of 1/15/2024.

Eligibility Category	Total Eligible Households	Eligible Cohort Households	Eligible Non-Cohort Households
Age 60+	52	48	4
Death of a Spouse or Minor Child	1	0	1
Disabled (SSI/SSDI)	407	357	50
Domestic Violence	68	25	43
Families with Children	163	145	18
Health Code Violations/Eviction	129	61	68
Natural Disaster (Fire, Flood, Hurricane)	12	3	9
Pregnant	8	8	0
Vulnerable Population Points	0	0	0
Adverse Weather Conditions	779	0	779
Total	1619	647	972

Eligibility Category: (as of 1/15/2024)



¹ "Other" represents households with no children, no SSI/SSDI, and are under 65.

² Cohort Households are eligible through 3/31/24.

³ Adverse Weather Conditions are eligible through 3/15/24.

⁴ Households categorically eligible are housed for 28 or 84 days. The end date of their eligibility is based on their individual situation. Households that exhaust their 28 or 84 days prior to 3/15/24 will be eligible for housing under Adverse Weather Conditions.

****Note**** Household counts are duplicated if the household meets criteria under multiple categories. Example--the household has a member with a disability and a child they would be counted in each category.

ESD Call Volumes By Phone Line

Year	General Queue Avg. Wait Time	General Queue Avg. # of Calls/ month	Interview Queue Ave. Wait Time	Interview Queue Avg. # of Calls/ month	GA Housing Line Avg. Wait Time	GA Housing Line Avg. # of Calls/ month	Notes
2019	0:04	9,550	0:03	3,164	Did not exist	N/A	Most of ESD's work was done in person
2020	0:10	18,192	0:12	4,617	0:17	1,007	The start of the pandemic and the beginning of the GA Housing Line.
2021	0:08	17,530	00:19	4,932	0:36	1,347	A number of waivers were in place for verification and programs during the pandemic.
2022	0:30	12,102	0:29	5,114	0:36	5,403	See above, ESD was also running several unique GA programs including CCHRT which redeployed 15 ESD staff members to start providing case management to GA households.
2023	0:56	11,763	1:03	5,709	0:55	6,115	GA: THP ended in early spring, AWC was extended to May 31 st , June 30 th cohort established. GA Housing line calls could take hours, upon bringing on a contract the calls went to minutes.

Households By District

This is the current district data on all households in the GA Housing program as of 1/15/2024.

District Office	Total Eligible Households	Cohort Households	Categorically Eligible	Adverse Weather Conditions
Barre District Office	167	81	19	67
Bennington District Office	183	78	13	92
Brattleboro District Office	218	79	30	109
Burlington District Office	310	114	47	149
Hartford District Office	81	38	8	35
Middlebury District Office	18	6	5	7
Morrisville District Office	22	12	4	6
Newport District Office	24	7	5	12
Rutland District Office	399	180	33	186
Springfield District Office	60	25	10	25
St Albans District Office	71	17	11	43
St Johnsbury District Office	66	10	8	48
Total	1619	647	193	779

High costs for low return

The current hotel/motel program is expensive:

\$132 Average nightly rate the week of 12/26/2023

That's about \$4,000/month without providing any services.

Common services at shelters include:

Case Management	Ability to receive mail
Housing Navigation	Access to a computer
Warm meals	Connection to Recovery coaching
Laundry facility	Job Readiness workshops
Health/mental health care	Substance use treatment

Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP) Status update

New base funding for HOP grants was prioritized for:

- Emergency Shelter expansion
 - includes continuing Elmwood & Steps shelter projects launched with 1x funds
- Expanding staffing at shelters to address safety concerns
- Addressing inflationary cost increases to preserve projects
- Preserving projects where loss of funding would have reduced capacity

HOP Grant Status update, cont.

One-time HOP funding was prioritized for:

- Flexible Client Financial Assistance to help homeless or at-risk households stabilize in housing (e.g., security deposits, rental arrears, transportation, fees, etc.)
 - \$4.9m total with \$3.1m from one-time funding, a \$2.5m increase over SFY23 (which was also supported in part by one-time funding)
- Day shelter expansion to address unsheltered homelessness, including food
- Staffing to expand housing navigation services
- Expanding rapid re-housing

The Annual [HOP Award Summary](#) is available online:

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/oeo/resources/awards> (Updated November 14, 2023)

New Projects in Communities

Expanded Emergency Shelter Capacity

New/Expanded:

- 2 seasonal shelters --> year-round (Burlington and Morrisville Districts), 31 HH (9 new HH)
- New & Expanded projects, 12 HH (Rutland, Barre and Springfield Districts)
- New Since August: 15 HH Seasonal Shelter (Barre District); 4 HH Young Adult Shelter (Bratt District); 24 HH Shelter (St. J District); 30 HH Seasonal Shelter (Burlington District)

Under Consideration/In Development: 3 potential projects could add about 100 HH capacity statewide (Brattleboro, Rutland and Hartford) between **SFY 24-26**

Day Shelter Capacity

New/Expanded: 4 projects (Burlington, Barre, Rutland & Morrisville Districts)

Street Outreach Expansion

DMH: 6 projects, many multi-agency (Burlington, Rut, Benning, Barre, Bratt & St. Albans)

Emergency Shelter Capacity

County	Total Household Capacity
Addison	62
Bennington	30
Caledonia	19
Chittenden	164
Franklin	14
Lamoille	19
Orleans	6
Rutland	11
Washington	92
Windham	46
Windsor	34
Grand Total	488

Note: Vermont is a shelter first state. That means these beds are all filled before someone is offered General Assistance Emergency Housing.



April Temporary Shelters

- 5 Communities – Central Vermont, Burlington, Bennington, Brattleboro, and Rutland.
- Central Vermont
 - Active discussions with multiple providers
- Brattleboro
 - Active discussion with Winston Prouty (approximately 20 families (40-50 people) for 12 months)
- Bennington, Burlington and Rutland
 - As necessary, explore options such as Mobile Shelters or other short-term temporary options.

Summary of One-Time Investments (AHS)

Activity	Allocation
Administrative Salaries, Data Collection and Management	\$224,576
Homelessness Outreach and Support	\$1,550,000
Panel Management	\$2,135,000
Shelter Expansion and Rapid Re-housing	\$2,664,000
Shelter Planning Grants	\$480,000
Hotel Security	\$630,000
Temporary Shelters for Starting in April	\$2,316,424
Total	\$10,000,000

Summary of One-Time Investments (DCF – OEO)

Eligible Activity	Award Amount
Shelter	\$ 1,550,032.00
RRH	\$ 52,776.00
Financial Assistance	\$ 3,199,000.00
Homelessness Prevention	\$ 120,526.00
Coordinated Entry (Assessment, Housing Navigation)	\$ 69,016.00
HMIS	\$ 8,650.00
Total	\$ 5,000,000.00

Overall SFY2024 and Act 81 Budget Status

Year to Date Spend as of 11/30/23: \$15,979,394

Year to Date Hotel Authorizations 11/30/23: \$27,712,171

Authorization	Budget
Act 78	\$18,884,610
Act 81	\$25,395,141
Base	\$ 7,500,000
Total	\$51,779,751

Eligibility and contact information, and links to documents and resources, including a summary of the Letters of Interest can be found at the DCF website.

Resources

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/Addressing-and-Preventing-Unsheltered-Homelessness>