



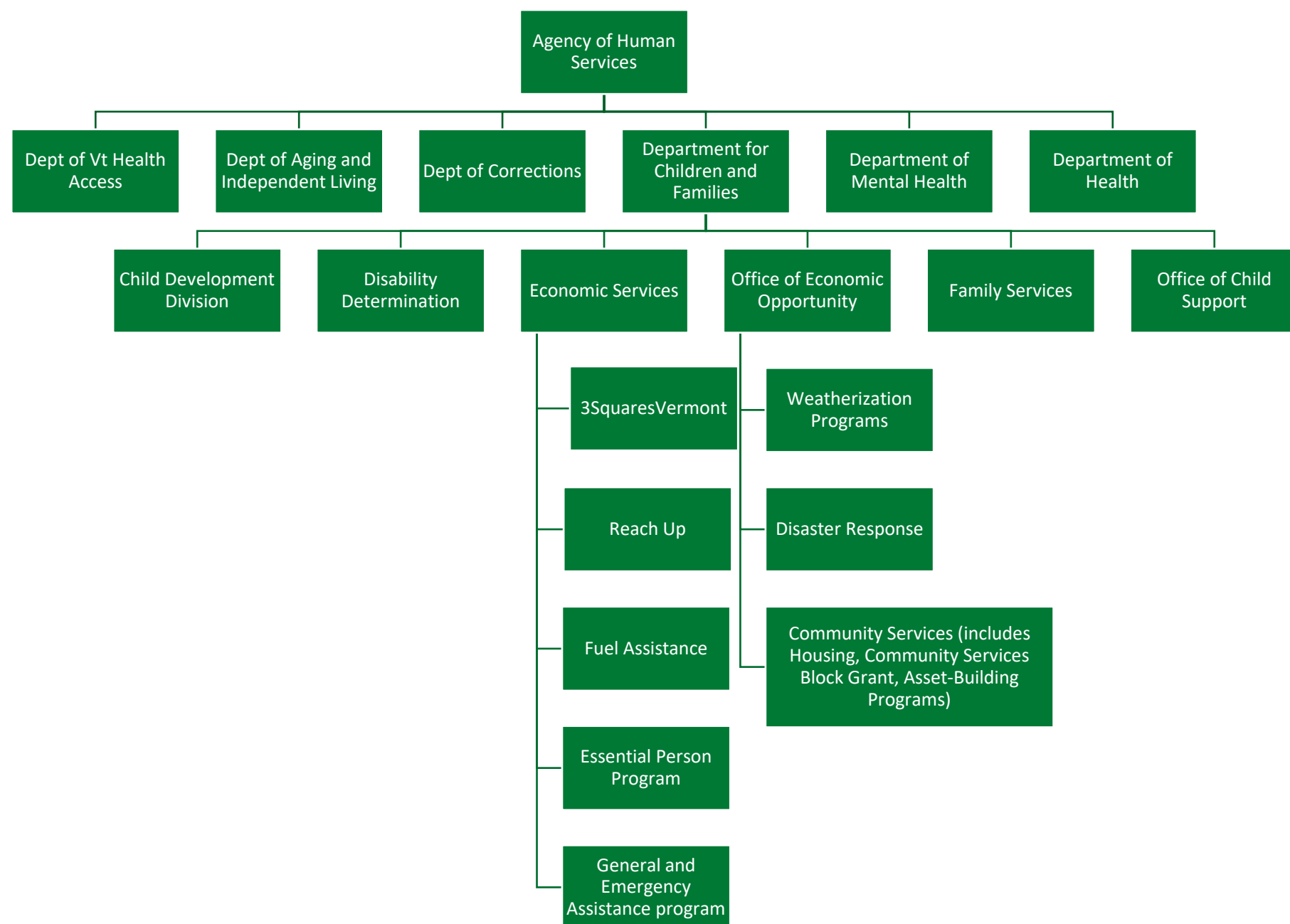
DCF Emergency Housing Overview

Chris Winters, Department for Children and Families Commissioner

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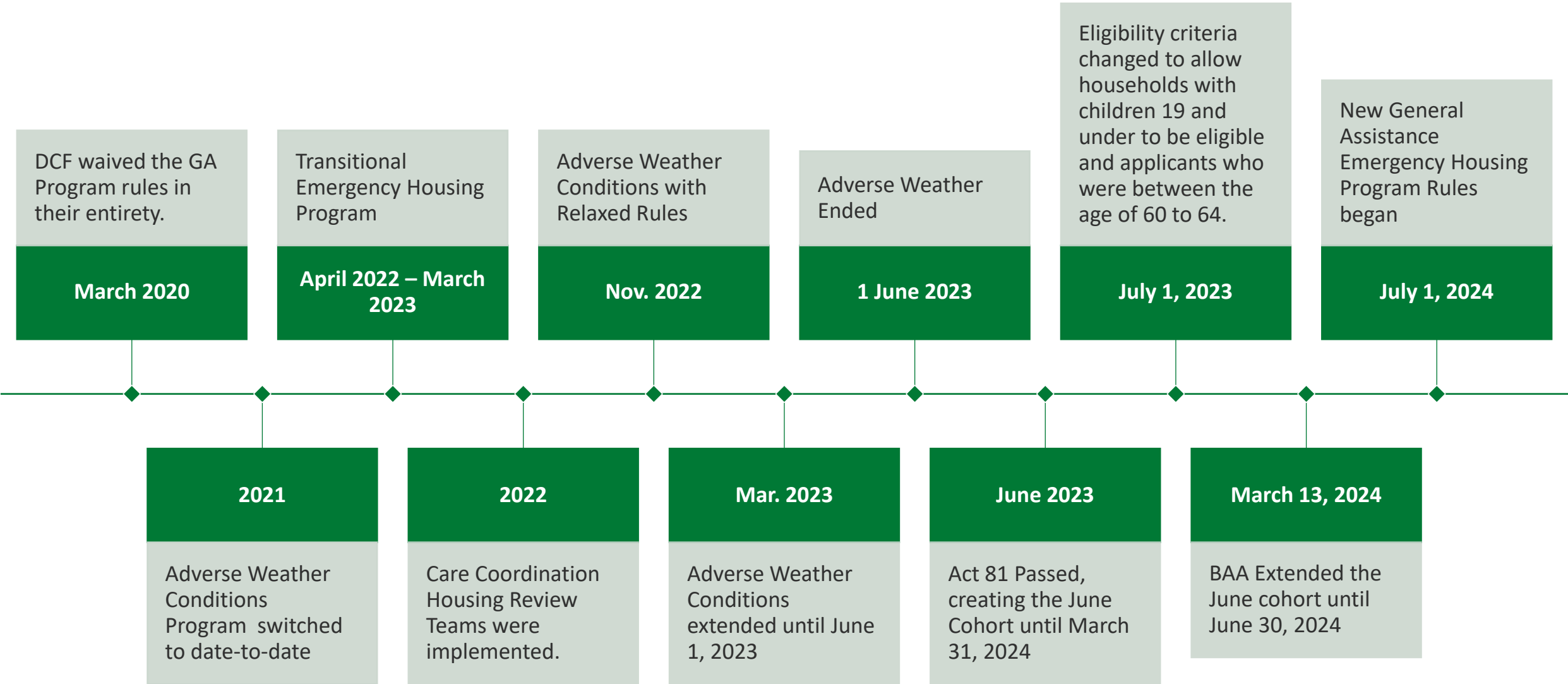
Divisions and Offices within DCF



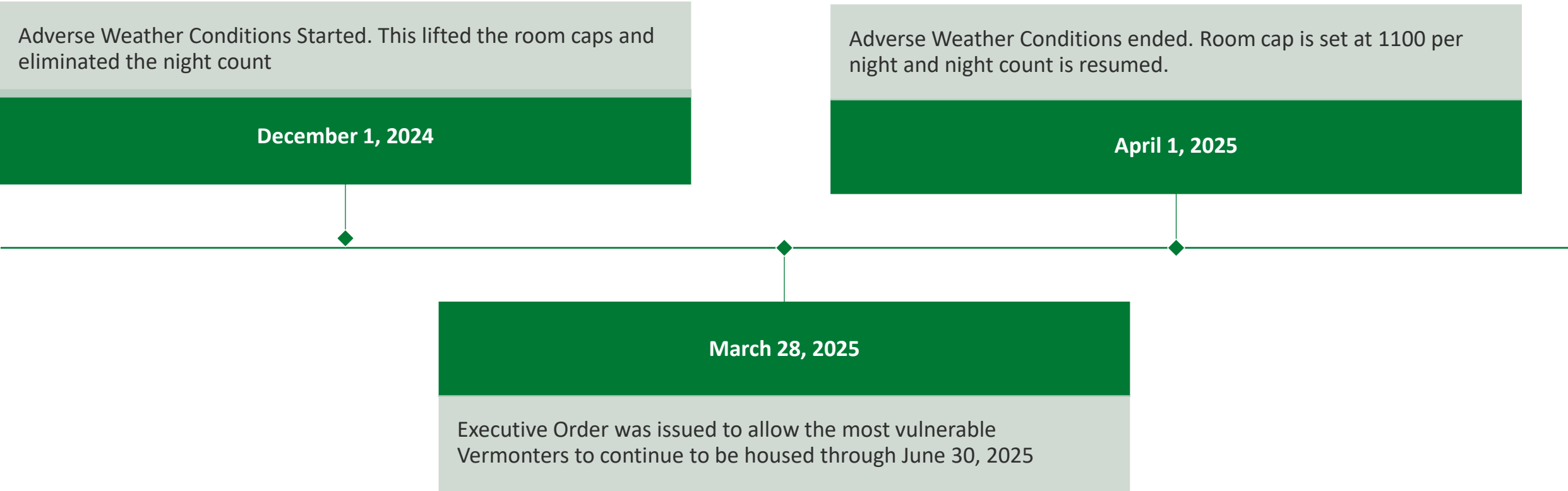
Housing Support in Economic Services Emergency Housing Assistance Program

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

The General Assistance Emergency Assistance Housing Timeline



The General Assistance Emergency Assistance Housing Timeline Continued



Program overview prior to 2020

In person applications and interview only.

Homelessness was verified.

Eligibility was determined based on categories:

Catastrophic (84 days)

- Fire, Flood, Death of a Spouse or minor child
- Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence
- Constructive Eviction - No Cause
- Court ordered eviction

Vulnerable (28 days)

- SSI/SSDI Recipient
- Age 65+
- Pregnant in 3rd trimester
- Children under 6 years old
- Points: Disabled Vet, Open Family Services Case, SSI/SSDI Applicant, discharged from hospital stay, discharged from DCF Custody w/in last 3 years, RU Recipient, Probation or Parole

Adverse Weather Conditions (night to night)

- Each year an Adverse Weather Conditions policy was published outlining the weather criteria and program rules
- Typically, from mid-November to sometime in April (no defined start/end date)
- Relaxed eligibility criteria to include anyone homeless, not just those categorically eligible, and no limit on number of nights (nights used during this time did count towards 12-month maximum number of nights)
- Period of Ineligibility if refused shelter bed

If a shelter bed was available, the applicant was required to accept it and was sent to the shelter for intake.

Program overview during COVID

In March 2020, during the State of Emergency due to the COVID outbreak, a law change allowed DCF to waive the General and Emergency Housing program rules. This change was necessary to keep people safe during the Global Pandemic.

What this meant for the program:

In person and phone applications were available.

In person and phone interview were available.

Homelessness was not verified; the applicant just had to need shelter.

No eligibility criteria, everyone who needed shelter was helped.

The program continued to change throughout the year to accommodate new recommendations and guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

2020 to 2021

Act 91 (2020) was the first law to expand access to the GA Emergency Housing Program. DCF waived the GA program rules 2600, in their entirety, including the eligibility requirements due to the State of Emergency during the COVID-19 outbreak.

DCF continued to modify the waiver and variance of rules for the GA Emergency Housing Program through spring of 2022 to decrease the spread of the COVID-19 virus. During this time, shelters were closing and people had to distance from each other.

2021 to 2022

Act 74 (2021) provided authority to implement the Adverse Weather Conditions program which allowed for a date-to-date time period instead of night to night.

Act 83 (2022) directed DCF to make emergency housing available through June 30, 2022.

Act 80 (2022) directed DCF to implement the transitional housing program funded through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The Transitional Housing Program operated from April 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023.

2022 to 2023

Act 3 (2023) appropriated funds to DCF to continue housing certain categories of individuals through June 30, 2023 and to continue housing all other individuals under the AWC policy through May 31, 2023.

DCF planned to restore the pre-pandemic General Assistance Emergency Housing Program rules starting July 1, 2023.

July 1, 2023, a change to eligibility criteria was implemented based on the Governor's executive order which included families with school-aged children up to 19 years of age to be eligible for assistance.

July 1, 2023, additional changes to the eligibility criteria were expanded to include all pregnant individuals and elderly individuals between the age of 60 and 64.

2023 to 2024

Act 81 (2023) created the Emergency Housing Transition Benefit from April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024. Individuals who were authorized for emergency housing on June 30, 2023, became eligible for the Emergency Transition Housing Benefit also known as the "June Cohort".

March 13, 2024 (BAA) extended housing through June 30, 2024 for the June Cohort and households eligible under regular GA rules, including those who were eligible based on a documented disability/health condition.

Program overview transitioning out of COVID

State Fiscal Year 2024

In person and phone applications were available.

Interview by phone or in-person was offered.

Homelessness was verified.

Eligibility was determined based on categories:

Catastrophic (84 days)	June Cohort (July 1, 2023- June 30, 2024)	Vulnerable (28 days)	Adverse Weather Conditions (date to date)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire, Flood, Death of a Spouse or minor child• Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence• Constructive Eviction - No Cause• Court ordered eviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everyone who was eligible under a BAA category and receiving emergency housing assistance on the night of June 30, 2023, was eligible for continued housing assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SSI/SSDI Recipient• Age 60• Pregnant• Children under 18 or 19 if still attending school.• Points: Disabled Vet, Open Family Services Case, SSI/SSDI Applicant, discharged from hospital stay, discharged from DCF Custody w/in last 3 years, RU Recipient, Probation or parole	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependent upon weather November 15th to December 15th and March 15th to April 15th. For many years, AWC was called night-to-night.• Non-weather dependent December 15th to March 15th• Homeless households• Ineligible if refused shelter bed or other alternative housing

If a shelter bed was available, the applicant was required to accept it and was sent to the shelter for intake.

Program overview now

Act 113 – State Fiscal Year 2025

In person and phone applications are available.

Interview by phone.

Homelessness is not verified.

If a shelter bed is available, the applicant must accept it.

Eligibility is determined based on the household, or a member of the household must be:

- Age 65+
- Has a disability (SSI, SSDI, Medical Variance form)
- Child(ren) age 19 and under
- Pregnant
- Has experienced the death of a spouse, domestic partner, minor child that caused the housing loss.
- Has experienced a natural disaster that caused the housing loss.
- Court ordered or constructive eviction (no fault of the household)
- Experienced domestic or similar dangerous violence that caused the housing loss.

Length of assistance:

- 80 Day Limit during non-adverse weather: Participants in the program will only be allowed a total of 80 days to stay in motels/hotels from July 1 - November 30, 2024, and April 1- June 30, 2025.

Room Limits:

- There is a room cap of 1,100 hotel/motel rooms per night during September 15 – November 30, 2024, and April 1- June 30, 2025. This means that even if you are eligible for emergency housing, we will not be able to house you if all 1,100 rooms are occupied.
- No room caps will be imposed from December 1, 2024, - March 31, 2025.

Program overview now

Executive Order 03-25 – State Fiscal Year 2025

The Executive Order creates two priority eligibility groups: (1) families with children; and (2) households with a medically vulnerable individual.

For Families with Children:

Families with custody of children under the age of 19 receive priority for emergency housing. The Executive Order lifts the 80-day limit, allowing eligible families to remain housed through June 30, 2025. This change helps ensure stability and minimizes disruption for families during the school year.

Pregnant

Women in the third trimester of pregnancy, or who will enter the third trimester between 4/1/25 and 6/30/25 are eligible to remain housed through June 30, 2025.

This requires medical verification from the healthcare provided. Verification can be:

- a letter from their medical provider include the due date,
- submit a medical record that include the due date, or,
- complete one of 2 different forms that are utilized by other programs that include the due date.

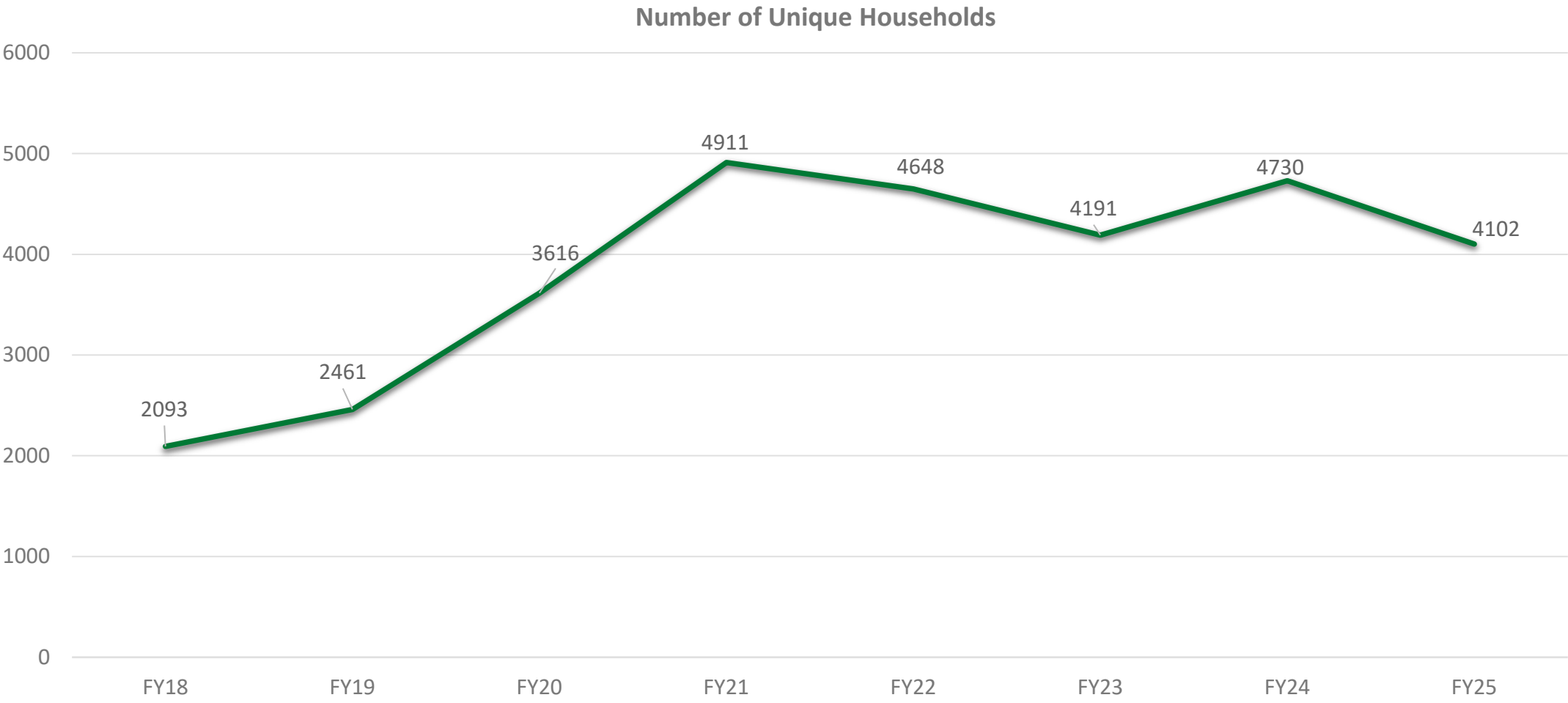
Medically vulnerable

Defined as individuals who:

- are homebound,
- require a lifesaving device that needs electricity,
- are undergoing cancer treatment,
- are receiving treatment for severe heart/liver/kidney disease, or
- are receiving home-based nursing services.

This requires medical verification from the healthcare provided unless the client has been deemed medically vulnerable by AHS clinical staff based on information that is know to the agency.

Households Residing in GA funded Hotel/Motels Annually



Note: FY25 data is through March 24, 2025

Total Cost of GA Hotel/Motel rooms Annually



Note: FY25 is projected as current costs are still being incurred.

FY23 costs were significantly higher due to the operation of the Transitional Housing Program.

Housing Support in the Office of Economic Opportunity

Housing Assistance at OEO

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/oEO/resources/awards>

- Housing Opportunity Grant Program (including Federal HUD Emergency Solutions Grant funding)
- HUD Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Grants
- Family Supportive Housing & Permanent Supportive Housing Assistance (Medicaid)

Additional Investments:

- One-time
 - HOME Family Voucher Program with Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity
 - Housing Stabilization & Retention Services Program with Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity
 - Landlord Relief Program with Vermont State Housing Authority
 - Housing Planning Capacity Grants with the Cities of Barre and Rutland
- ERAP Housing Stability Services – ends June 30, 2025

Housing Opportunity Grant Program

Provides funding to:

- Operate emergency shelter
- Operate transitional housing (where appropriate)
- Rapidly re-house individuals and families
- Prevent those experiencing a housing crisis from becoming homeless

Housing Opportunity Grant Program (Continued)

Provides funding to:

- Implement coordinated entry to streamline client access to resources
- Provide flexible financial assistance
- Administer the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Awards Summary: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/oeo/resources/awards>

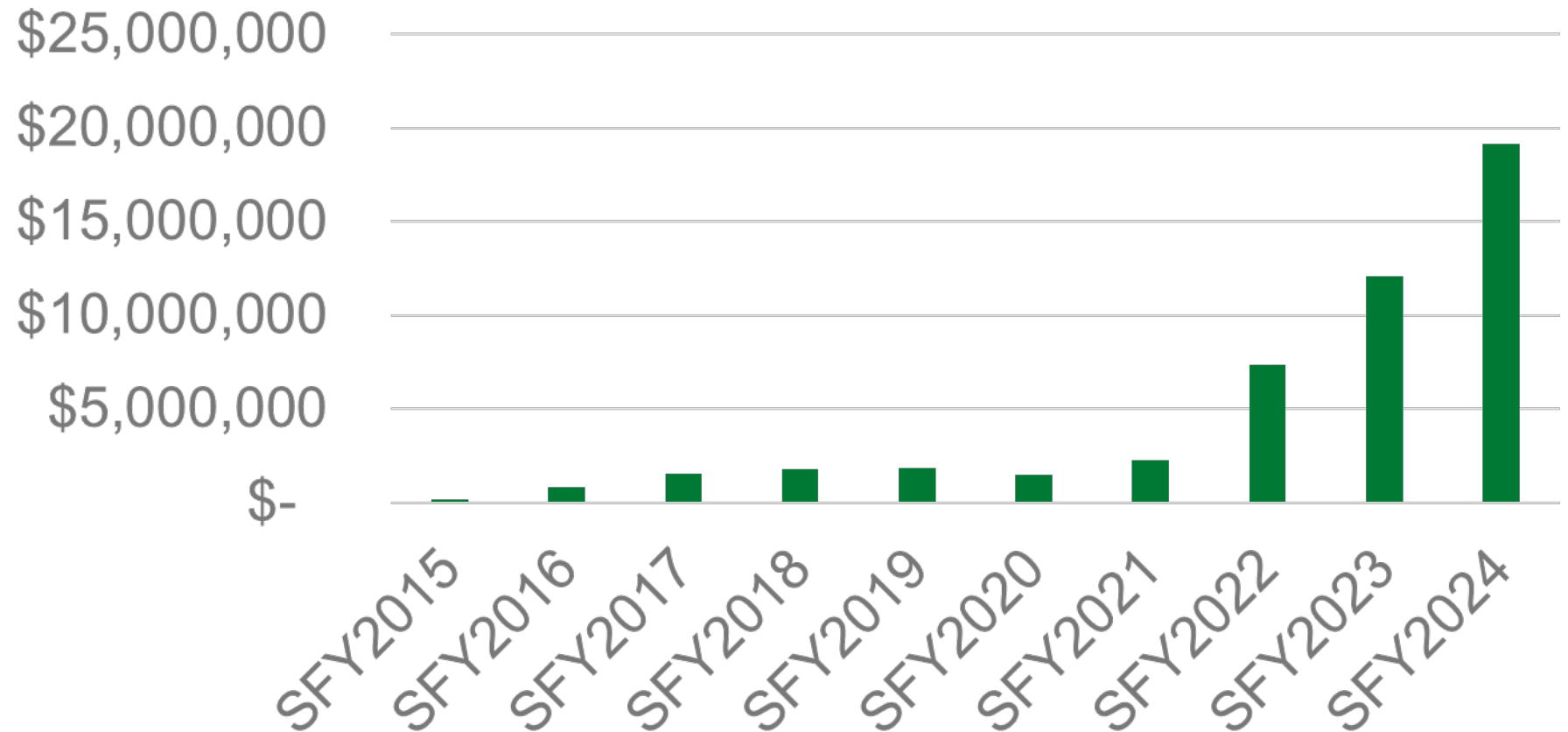
Housing Opportunity Grant Program SFY25 Awards

Approximately \$38.9 million awarded to 35 non-profit organizations

Awards Summary: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/oeo/resources/awards>

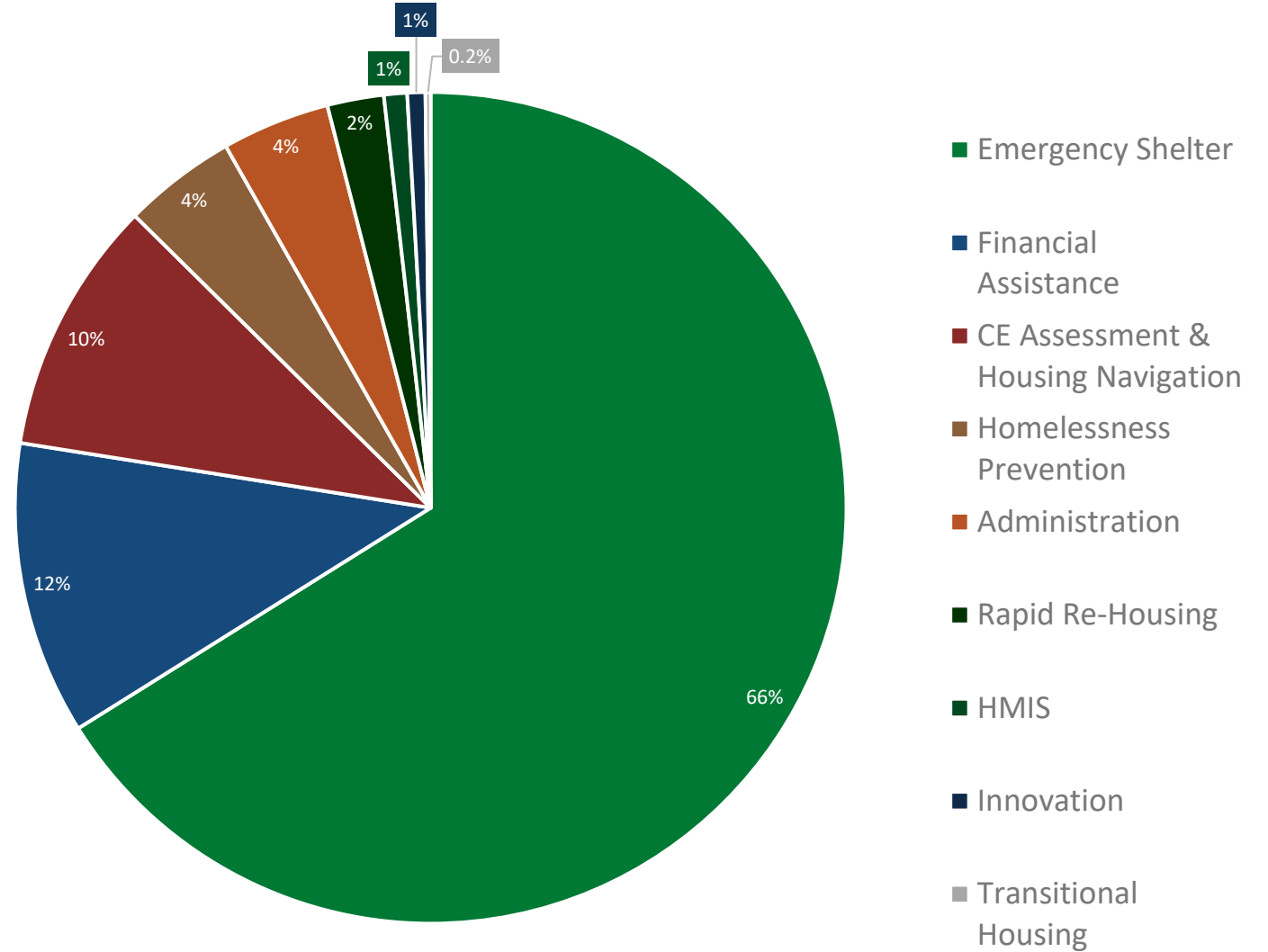
Expense Growth

Housing Opportunity Program Growth Over Time



Housing Opportunity Grant Program SFY25 Awards

SFY25 HOP Funding by Activity



Emergency Shelter Capacity

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

County	Total Current Household Capacity
Addison	62
Bennington	31
Caledonia	35
Chittenden	192
Franklin	32
Lamoille	28
Orleans	7
Rutland	24
Washington	123
Windham	74
Windsor	48
Grand Total	656

Shelter Breakdown

Operations:

- 92% operate year-round (4 seasonal shelters)

Facility type:

- 65% are semi-congregate
- 23% are non congregate
- 12% are congregate

Special Population:

- 23% are focused on those experiencing domestic violence

Household Composition:

- Young Adults (18-24) 14%
- Families with Children (<18) 14%
- Adults Only (18+) 35%
- Both Families & Adults 37%

Shelter Capacity Growth

January 2020 (pre-covid)

- 562 households (180 seasonal)

May 2020

- 160 households

February 2024

- 548 households (45 seasonal)

April 2025

- 656 households (70 seasonal)

34% increase in year-round shelter capacity since 2020

20% increase in year-round shelter capacity since 2024

Shelter Capacity Growth

Anticipated Growth:

- Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity will take over operations at the state-started Williston Family Shelter in May 2025, operations will continue in Williston until the shelter will shift to a permanent location at the end of 2025.
- Champlain Housing Trust is finishing renovations on a building that Spectrum Youth & Family Services will start operating at the in June as a young adult shelter.
- Discussions underway for additional acquisition and renovation projects to increase shelter capacity across the state. These projects include significant real estate transactions or renovations under negotiation.

Appendix to follow

