

General Assistance and Emergency Housing Program



Miranda Gray, Economic Services Deputy Commissioner

Presentation to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee

Program overview now

Act 113 – State Fiscal Year 2025

Homelessness is not verified – applicant attests.

Vermont is a "shelter first" state - if a shelter bed is available, the applicant must accept it.

Language from statute:

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.

Accountability: Action Steps Since Last Session – GA Program

Monday, July 1 – 80-day limit begins

- Communication – hotels, clients, municipalities, agencies, community partners, internal
- Training
- Tracking
- Planning for room caps and exhausting 80-day limits

Sunday, September 15 – 1,100-room cap in effect

- Going into this date there were 1,420 rooms being used
- Massive call volume starting on a Sunday
- Communication, tracking, training and planning

Thursday, September 19 – Participants start reaching their 80-day limit

- Administrative procedure to prioritize higher risk populations (implemented on Monday, September 16)

Sunday, December 1 – Cold Weather eligibility begins - 80-day limit and 1,100-room cap suspended until March 31, 2025

Accountability: Action Steps Since Last Session – Shelter Expansion

Housing Opportunity Grant Program Annual Notice of Funding Opportunity

- Maintained & created new shelter capacity

\$10 Million Additional Shelter Expansion Capacity

- Prepare & issue Notice of Funding
- Outreach - Conversations with several cities and towns, Community partner awareness and town halls
- Review of proposals & issue awards
- Project tracking and implementation
 - Delays – providers, acquisition, proposal changes, workforce, federal approval, permitting

State-Operated Shelters

- Williston and Waterbury

Constant contact with affected communities and community partners

Accountability: Transparency, Communication and Engagement

[Website: Addressing and Preventing Unsheltered Homelessness | Department for Children and Families](#)

- Data updated weekly
- Past and present communications
- Resources
- Changing laws, rules, and procedures

ESD has worked with just over 5200 unique households between 7/1/24 and 12/31/24

In addition to all the below:

- Communications planning
- Meeting with hotel/motel owners and managers
- Municipal conversations
- Training
- Community partner town halls
- Coordination with shelter expansion and planning

Households By District

This is the current district data on all households in the GA Housing program as of 1/20/2025.

District Office	Rooms	Households	Adults	Children
Barre District Office	165	162	212	38
Bennington District Office	147	144	176	48
Brattleboro District Office	240	235	308	69
Burlington District Office	297	296	377	80
Hartford District Office	65	65	84	*
Middlebury District Office	*	*	*	*
Morrisville District Office	*	*	34	*
Newport District Office	28	28	*	*
Rutland District Office	240	232	300	105
Springfield District Office	67	67	81	18
St Albans District Office	71	71	83	14
St Johnsbury District Office	50	50	60	13
Total	1408	1388	1756	414

*Redacted due to count size

Households Eligibility Categories

This is the current eligibility data on all households in the GA Housing program as of 1/20/2025.

Approval Category	Count
Age 65+	93
Court Ordered/Constructive Eviction	34
Disabled (201G-VR)	365
Disabled (SSI/SSDI)	536
Domestic Violence	58
Families with Children	263
Pregnant	28
Death of a Spouse, Domestic Partner, or Minor Child	*
Natural Disaster	*
Grand Total	1388

Notes: The range of individuals in SSI/SSDI crosses a range of acuity and health challenge– it can be mental health, chronic health condition, or a physical disability.

As of 3/15/2024, disability can be verified by a licensed medical professional and Disability Variance Form can be submitted.

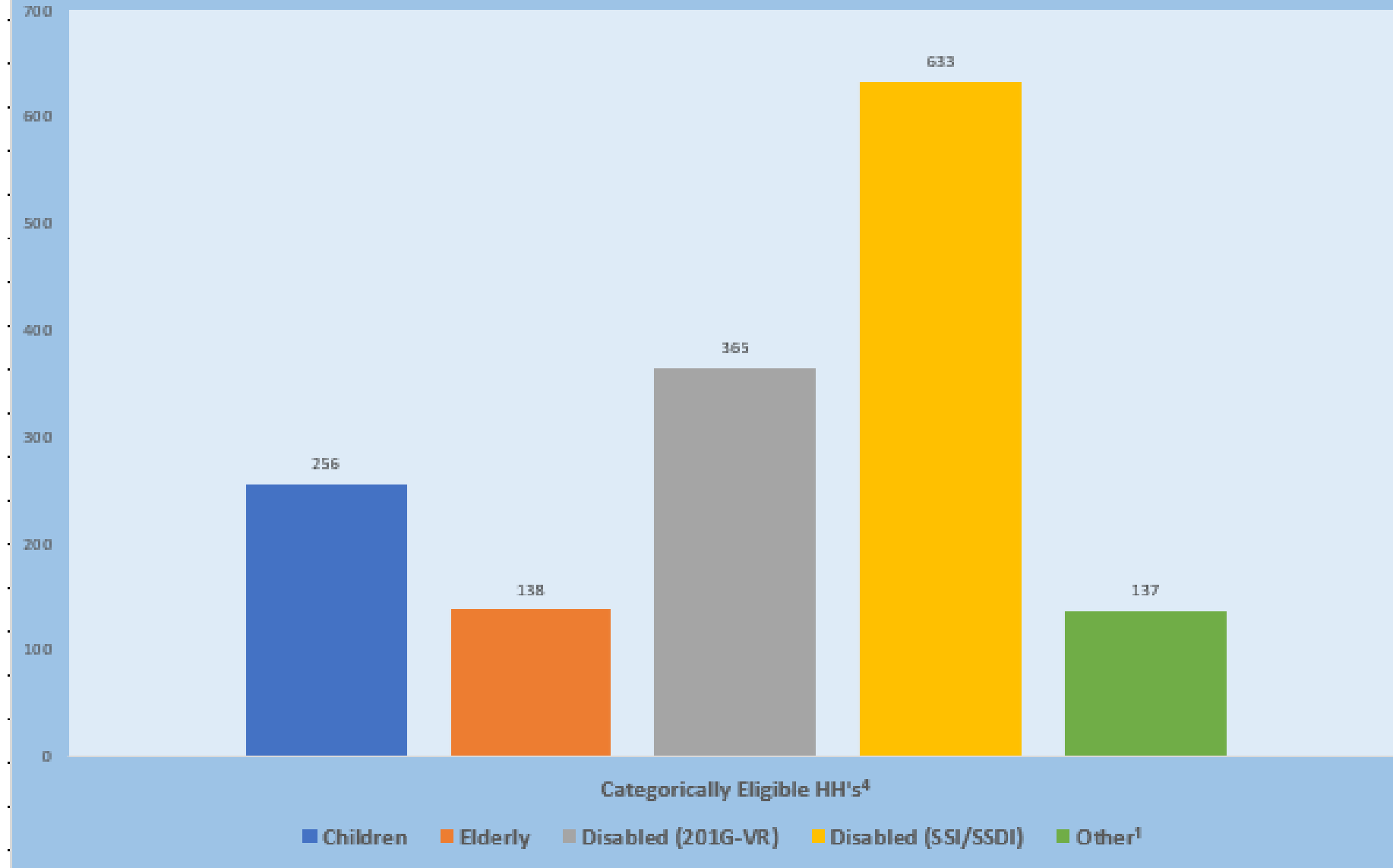
*Redacted due to count size

Eligible Households unable to be housed in December 2024

District	Households
Barre District Office	52
Bennington District Office	42
Brattleboro District Office	40
Burlington District Office	138
Hartford District Office	22
Middlebury District Office	*
Morrisville District Office	*
Newport District Office	16
Rutland District Office	81
Springfield District Office	18
St. Albans District Office	30
St. Johnsbury District Office	*
Grand Total	466

*Redacted due to count size

of Children, Disabled, and Elderly (Over 65)



Data is from 1/20/2025

Administrative Procedures for Act 113

During times where the number of eligible households exceeds 90% of the 1,100 per night room cap, or 90% of hotel capacity during time periods when the 1,100 per night room cap is not in place, the department will use the following procedure for providing emergency housing assistance.

High Risk Households

Households with a member who:

- Is a child 19 years of age or under.
- Is pregnant.
- Is experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, hate violence, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to violence against the individual that caused the household to lose its housing.
- Is 65 years of age or older.
- Is otherwise categorically eligible and includes a member who is 50 years of age or older.

Length of Authorization

- Granted in up-to 28-day increments.

Applying with ESD

- Can apply for emergency housing anytime.
- Can reapply for housing up to 10 days in advance of the end date of their current authorization.

All Other Eligible Households

- are those who are under the age of 50 and eligible because:
 - they experience the death of a spouse, domestic partner, or minor child that caused the household to lose its housing
 - have experienced natural disaster
 - They are under court-ordered or constructive eviction

Length of Authorization

- Granted in up-to-14-day increments.

Applying with ESD

- Can apply for emergency housing between the hours of 12pm and 4:30pm Monday through Friday.
- Can reapply for housing on the day their current authorization ends.

Procedure is available online:

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

Current Shelter Capacity

County	Total Current Household Capacity (point in time)	Additional Awarded Housing Opportunity Grant Program Projects Anticipated Online January - March (point in time)
Addison	62	
Bennington	31	
Caledonia	35	
Chittenden	177	Additional seasonal shelter capacity (an additional 30)
Franklin	25	Two new shelters (an additional 19)
Lamoille	28	
Orleans	7	
Rutland	23	New emergency shelter apartment capacity (an additional 5)
Washington	114	
Windham	68	Expanded seasonal capacity (an additional 6 in January and 6 in February)
Windsor	48	
Grand Total	618	66

New Shelters in 2025

- Funding in State Fiscal Year 2025 preserved shelter capacity created with one-time funds and created new shelter capacity in 8 counties around the state.
- This creates capacity for 684 households, compared to 519 households in January 2024. This includes the state operated shelters in Williston and Waterbury.
- Project details are available at [Housing Opportunity Grant Program SFY25 Awards Summary](#)
- The State continues to develop and support plans for additional shelter capacity and will provide updates in the monthly Act 113 report as awards are made and plans are finalized.