



Act 143: The Vermont Homelessness Response Continuum

**Sandi Hoffman, Commissioner, Department for
Children & Families**

Act 143 Implementation

Timeline

- Signed into law June 16, emergency rules effective September 1
 - Less than three months to develop rules fundamentally overhauling how Vermont addresses homelessness.
 - [Administrative Procedures – Proposed Filing](#)
- Approaching implementation in stages:
 - Sept. 1 – Emergency rules focused on Level 4 (Hotels and Motels) operation and administration
 - SFY27 – Some work is ongoing throughout the year.
 - July 1, 2027 – Community agreements will be issued reflecting VHRC (no longer HOP framework)
 - Oct. 1, 2027 – Permanent rules focused on rest of VHRC and any lessons learned from Level 4 e-rules.

Act 143 Implementation – Responding to Concerns

Concerns raised are valid, and we take them seriously.

DCF is in the midst of a major system transition. We are not done adjusting the system, and a difficult implementation does not equal a failed program. We recognize this has been a difficult process, and will continue to learn, change, and grow through implementation.

Some of the concerns we have heard:

- Phone access and wait times
- Unclear communication between ESD and providers
- Confusion around seven-day housing plan period
- Duplicated assessments
- Permanent housing capacity
- Geographic displacement

Act 143 Implementation – Level 4

Approach

- Level 4 is not intended to be a re-creation of GA Emergency Housing
- Hotels as part of the solution, but not the default option
- Risk stratification (HOU-SING tool) to ensure the most vulnerable can access hotel rooms (700 during warm weather, 1000 during winter)
- Housing plans identify barriers to permanent housing and steps to address those barriers.
- Connection with case management to assist with housing plan and path to permanency.
 - NOFO for case management funding released September 8th
- Meets legislative intent of ensuring people experiencing homelessness receive meaningful support. Supports Governor's goal of reducing reliance on hotels for emergency housing.

How does the HOU-SING tool work?

Household calls
Economic Services
Division

ESD completes the
HOU-SING
assessment tool
through interactive
interview process.

Household's results
determine whether
and how long
household can enter
the Continuum

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Accessing Level 4 Services

- Households can access the ESD Housing Call Center during SOV business hours (M-F, 8am-4:30pm)
 - Complete application, initial HOU-SING assessment, housing plan. ESD Call Center also handles hotel placement calls.
- Assessment determines placement within VHRC priority and duration of placement if Level 4 is warranted (max 70 days)
- Extensions may be requested beyond 70 days for Level 4

Current Program Administration

Accessing Level 4 Services

- DCF is administering this program with a 50% reduction to proposed staffing model.
- Wait time reduction since September 1st.
- Staff were temporarily reassigned from across DCF and AHS to assist with intakes in the initial weeks.
- Six positions posted to administer program.
- Streamlining processes to create efficiencies.

VHRC Program Transition Data

Pain Points

- More than double call volume
 - September 2025 Total Calls: 6,166
 - September 2026 Total Calls: 16,282
- Wait times
- Hotel and Motel room unavailability
- Noticing challenges
- Extensions

Current Role of VT 211

Data and Accessing After Hours Services

- 211 remains a valued partner for DCF. Prior access to DCF systems remains unchanged.
- DCF is reaching out to other states to learn about the role of 211 elsewhere.
- Data analysis revealed very few calls that would have resulted in an issuance of a voucher.
- In consultation with 211 team, we were unable to identify any calls that would be considered an “emergency.”

Emergency Access to Services

Emergency After-Hours Access

- For situations that cannot wait until the next business days, avenues exist for prompt, emergency placements
- Domestic Violence: A 24-hour helpline exists. The Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence administers funding to local providers to support access to motels for people fleeing domestic and sexual violence when shelters are at capacity or not safe for a survivor.
- Fire & Natural Disaster: Local fire departments connect people with the Red Cross for hotel placement. For larger storm events, the Red Cross may set up shelters or place families in hotels.

Shelter Capacity & Growth

County	Total Current Household Capacity	Anticipated Additional Capacity in SFY27
Addison	73	4 year-round (DV-specific)
Bennington	31	
Caledonia	38	
Chittenden	203	26 seasonal
Franklin	40	
Lamoille	31	
Orleans	7	10 seasonal
Rutland	34	New family shelter anticipated January 2027 (approx. 16 households)
Washington	126	20 seasonal (exploring opportunities to make this capacity year-round)
Windham	58	40 year-round
Windsor	49	20 year-round
Grand Total	690 current capacity	126 additional (80 year-round, 56+ winter seasonal)

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Other Updates

- **Extreme Cold Weather Shelter & Municipal Funding Opportunities Available -**
<https://www.getwarmnowvt.org/>
 - Applications were due October 1st and currently under review
- **Case Management Notice of Funding Opportunity released September 8th** <https://dcf.vermont.gov/oeo/partners/funding>
 - Applications were due October 7th and currently under review
- **Shelter Development** grant with VT Housing & Conservation Board
<https://dcf.vermont.gov/oeo/partners/funding/shelterdevelopment>
 - Applications are being accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until funds are expended
- **Bridge Rental Assistance Program** grant executed with VSHA, currently focused on transitioning HOME & VRS households in 2026.

Act 143 Implementation – Community Input

Ongoing & Historic Input

- DCF met with community & state partners before the 2026 legislative session to gain insight on service needs:
 - CVOEO, NEKCA, COTS, Law Enforcement, Municipalities, Legislators, HHAV, DMH, DAIL, VDH-DSU, AHS
- DCF Staff regularly (historically and currently) attend HHAV & CCHA meetings and participate on Committees
- Bridge Rental Assistance Program: VSHA, CVOEO and other AHS partners
 - Informed by experience with HUD 811 application (DAIL, VSHA, VHCB, VHFA) and Family Unification Vouchers & Foster Youth to Independence Vouchers (Family Supportive Housing and Youth Development Program providers)
- Shelter Development: VHCB
 - Informed by experiencing and regular meetings with VHCB, VHFA, DHCD

Act 143 Implementation – Community Input

Specific Dates & Events

- July 21st – DCF presented Act 143 updates at HHAV
- August 6th – DCF presented Act 143 updates at CCHA
- September 3rd – DCF presented Act 143 updates at CCHA
- Sept 21st – OEO & CVOEO staff (in role as CE Lead Agency) met with Connecticut to learn about their Coordinated Access Network system.
- Sept 24th – OEO staff met shelter representatives to weigh in on shelter topics.
- Ongoing meetings through Dec to give updates/get feedback.
 - Homeless Prevention Center, Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless, COTS, CVOEO Samaritan House, John Graham Housing & Services, Good Samaritan Haven, Upper Valley Haven, Lamoille Community House, Groundworks

Act 143 Implementation – Looking Forward

Next steps

- Targeted engagement with stakeholders.
- Continued attendance at HHAV Balance of State and CCHA meetings to gain input and develop aspects of VHRC.
- Community Regional Meetings (see next slide for details)
- The Notice of Funding Opportunity for SFY28 will reflect program details for the additional levels.
- Development over the next year, implementation between July 1, 2027, and October 1, 2027.

Plans for Engagement

Late Fall Engagement Tour

In-person meetings with Commissioner, ESD Deputy Commissioner, OEO Director, and other staff. Hybrid option available

- Wednesday, October 21 at 9am: McFarland State Office Building, Room 315
 - 5 Perry St, Barre
- Friday, October 23 at 11am: Catamount Arts
 - 115 Eastern Ave, St. Johnsbury
- Wednesday, October 28 at 11am: Asa Bloomer Building, Room 266
 - 88 Merchants Row, Rutland
- Thursday, October 29 at 1pm: Spark Space Conference Room, Burlington Electric Department
 - 585 Pine St, Burlington
- Thursday, November 12 at 10am: Brattleboro Municipal Center, Selectboard Meeting Room
 - 230 Main St, Brattleboro

Questions?

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Accessibility Requests

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