

Memorandum

To: Housing and Homelessness Providers and Advocates
From: Ken Schatz, DCF Commissioner *KAS*
Re: Update on General Assistance Emergency Housing
Date: June 28, 2017

The purpose of this memo is to provide you an update on the challenges we are facing with the General Assistance Emergency Housing (GA) budget.

Program Update:

Over the last two years, I have greatly appreciated your work to create new alternatives to the General Assistance Motel Voucher program. Our collective hope has been to provide a better service delivery system to individuals and families who are homeless, and realize savings in the GA Emergency Housing budget. Since embarking on this project with all of you, we are happy to report that more than 16 GA funded community investments have been implemented in the past two years.

Due to a continued increase in homelessness in our state overall; spikes in a few key communities; a colder winter with more Cold Weather Exception eligible nights; and the projects not saving as much GA funding as projected - in FY17, we expect to spend nearly \$1M more than GA Emergency Housing was budgeted. Additionally, the legislature cut the GA Emergency Housing budget by \$150K in SFY18. The legislature provided \$600K in one-time funding to site warming shelters in the Barre and Rutland AHS districts and these will be challenging to implement. Excluding the one-time funding to site new seasonal shelters in the Barre and Rutland districts, the legislature budgeted approximately \$3.15M for GA Emergency Housing in SFY18. Of that amount, it is our hope that we can continue to invest \$1.5M in community-based projects.

With your help, we have made a few tough decisions and are faced with more on how to best help vulnerable Vermonters within the funds available. We are committed to investing GA funds in community investments that have demonstrated significant savings to the GA budget, specifically warming shelters. In some instances, GA investments have not yielded significant savings and we have chosen to end those projects. In addition, we have notified a number of community partners operating projects with GA funding that DCF is only able to commit three-months of funding at this time. While these projects include worthwhile approaches - such as specific supports for victims of domestic violence, master lease emergency apartments for families, and expanded shelter capacity - these investments did not yield the level of GA savings anticipated in the past year. These projects have shown strong outcomes for those served by intentionally having more flexibility to meet the needs of homeless Vermonters. We very much want to continue funding these programs as we appreciate their contribution to addressing homelessness.

With this memo, we would like to enlist your input on ways that we might proceed. Specifically, we are considering the options below to address the anticipated FY18 budget shortfall. It is our hope that we can extend our three-month commitment to a full year of funding for the programs referenced earlier in this memo:





- modifying the length and scope of GA benefits;
- calibrating the 'adverse weather events' to be a narrow exception to the eligibility rules (the legislature eliminated the 'Cold Weather Exception' replacing it with 'Adverse Weather Events'); and
- seeking assistance in creating cost effective warming shelters in Barre and Rutland this winter.

Data overview:

Attached, you will find unduplicated GA emergency housing utilization year-to-date data for FY17 and the GA expenditure data for FY16 and FY17. The expenditure data is broken out by ESD district and includes spending on motels as well as on GA Community Investments. Overall the spending on GA emergency housing has increased from \$4,011,326 to \$4,371,650. It is worth remembering that this past winter was colder than the previous, resulting in more cold weather exception (CWE) nights during FY17.

In addition to the GA usage data described above, please also find last year's list of GA investment projects. As local Continua of Care discuss the challenges presented, providers are encouraged to share demographic and utilization data to help inform local discussions.

Opportunities for input this summer and beyond:

We welcome your input and ideas for how we might proceed. If the decision is to modify the GA rules (applies to changes to eligibility or benefit scope for the vulnerable or catastrophic categories), this will happen through its own process of public comment and legislative approval. Partners will be able to participate in these processes. In the meantime, we would like to hear from you at this early stage in the process. Here are some meeting opportunities and an option to provide input in writing:

1. Survey Monkey – we will put out a link you can forward to your staff and partners for their input.
2. Members of the DCF Housing team will be attending the following regularly occurring meetings:
 - a. VT Coalition to End Homelessness (attended June 20, 2017)
 - b. Vermont Council on Homelessness (attended June 20, 2017)
 - c. Chittenden Homeless Alliance (July 6, 2017)
 - d. Affordable Housing Coalition (July 12, 2017)

We are happy to attend these meetings more than once and/or arrange for an additional opportunity for input. Also, please free to connect any members of the DCF Housing Team with questions or to discuss your thoughts and suggestions. Thank you.

DCF Housing Team

Commissioner's Office:

Ken Schatz, Commissioner

Karen Vastine, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner

Economic Services Division:

Sean Brown, Deputy Commissioner

Richard Donahey, Operations Director

Geoffrey Pippenger, GA Program Chief

Office of Economic Opportunity:

Sarah Phillips, Director

Emily Higgins, Community Services Program Administrator



State of VT July 2016 - April 2017

Family Household Grants Unduplicated By District

				Catastrophic		Auto Vuln							
St. Albans ADO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	29	36	45	13	4	0	0	9	0	0	3	0	543
Burlington BDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	114	138	181	63	11	0	6	21	0	1	12	3054	665
Hartford HDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	32	41	57	12	3	0	3	10	0	1	3	0	509
St. Johnsbury JDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	23	26	38	15	2	0	1	2	0	0	3	0	307
Brattleboro LDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	31	40	58	0	8	0	7	10	0	0	6	0	477
Barre MDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	89	101	157	36	8	0	10	19	0	0	16	0	2887
Newport NDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	17	20	24	7	1	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	355
Rutland RDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	130	170	220	29	24	0	19	47	0	2	9	0	3376
Springfield SDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	36	48	68	9	8	0	2	11	0	2	4	0	687
Bennington TDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	69	87	131	15	9	0	5	31	0	2	7	0	1750
Morrisville VDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	43	56	78	11	14	0	1	12	0	1	4	14	1130
Middlebury YDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	15	18	24	7	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	461
STATE	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	628	781	1081	217	92	0	59	184	0	9	67	3068	13147

State of VT July 2016 - April 2017

Single Household Grants Unduplicated By District

				Catastrophic		Auto Vuln							
St. Albans ADO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	62	65	0	10	12	0	5	0	0	0	35	18	468
Burlington BDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	554	569	0	135	13	1	83	0	5	0	317	5022	4215
Hartford HDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	59	63	0	12	2	0	27	0	0	0	18	0	741
St. Johnsbury JDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	22	22	0	7	1	0	6	0	0	0	8	0	259
Brattleboro LDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	186	196	0	0	13	1	44	0	0	0	128	0	2889
Barre MDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	193	206	0	37	4	0	36	0	1	0	115	0	2892
Newport NDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	28	30	0	4	1	0	5	0	0	0	18	0	285
Rutland RDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	233	245	0	64	28	1	64	0	0	1	75	0	5076
Springfield SDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	51	57	0	15	2	1	18	0	2	0	13	0	811
Bennington TDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	100	108	0	9	5	1	24	0	0	0	61	0	1479
Morrisville VDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	49	51	0	14	4	1	6	0	0	0	24	0	809
Middlebury YDO	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	44	47	0	20	2	1	9	0	0	0	12	0	709
STATE	# Households Granted	# Adults	# Children	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights
TOTALS	1581	1659	0	327	87	7	327	0	8	1	824	5040	20633

State of VT FY 2017 by Month												
Household Grants Unduplicated												
		Catastrophic		Auto Vuln								
July	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	249	143	30	0	42	28	2	4	0	777	3091	
August	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	286	156	34	3	56	35	0	2	0	1148	3570	
September	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	223	96	32	1	56	33	3	2	0	638	2292	
October	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	213	79	37	1	69	22	3	2	0	807	2101	
November	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	326	80	37	1	61	34	1	1	111	600	2363	
December	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	563	69	34	3	53	28	0	2	374	922	4094	
January	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	587	88	38	1	61	39	3	1	356	672	4859	
February	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	554	70	35	0	59	16	1	2	371	823	4706	
March	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	583	69	43	1	65	24	0	1	380	935	4740	
April	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	174	66	47	1	35	20	2	1	2	822	2013	
May	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS												
June	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS												
STATE	# Households Granted	DV	Other	65+	SSI	Under 6	Preg 3rd	Other	CWE	# HP Nights	# Nights	
TOTALS	3758	916	367	12	557	279	15	18	1594	8144	33829	

*Title of this chart changed from "State of VT July 2016 - April 2017"

FY 2017

District	Motel Sub-Total		GA Community Investment Expenditures	Total Expenditure
St. Albans	\$87,898		\$0	\$87,898
Burlington	\$333,014		\$277,405	\$610,419
Hartford	\$104,343		\$110,506	\$214,849
St. Johnsbury	\$75,551		\$89,936	\$165,487
Brattleboro	\$232,063		\$301,631	\$533,694
Barre	\$484,914		\$198,500	\$683,414
Newport	\$120,804		\$0	\$120,804
Rutland	\$707,200		\$446,010	\$1,153,210
Springfield	\$176,049		\$0	\$176,049
Bennington	\$246,521		\$116,875	\$363,396
Morrisville	\$121,468		\$0	\$121,468
Middlebury	\$94,760		\$46,200	\$140,960
	\$2,784,587		\$1,587,063	\$4,371,650
<i>Note: Motel Spending includes estimate expenditure for June 2017</i>				

FY 2016

District	Motel Sub-Total		GA Community Investment Expenditure	Total Expenditure
St. Albans	\$67,264		\$0	\$67,264
Burlington	\$303,718		\$325,141	\$628,859
Hartford	\$290,559		\$94,340	\$384,899
St. Johnsbury	\$139,222		\$91,004	\$230,226
Brattleboro	\$446,050		\$122,973	\$569,023
Barre	\$422,990		\$126,882	\$549,872
Newport	\$113,144		\$0	\$113,144
Rutland	\$1,044,999		\$0	\$1,044,999
Springfield	\$40,253		\$0	\$40,253
Bennington	\$195,053		\$0	\$195,053
Morrisville	\$36,615		\$0	\$36,615
Middlebury	\$116,933		\$28,800	\$145,733
	\$3,222,186		\$789,140	\$4,011,326

SFY18 General Assistance Community Investments to Decrease Reliance on Motels

Awards Under Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP)

AHS District	Organization	Total General Assistance Funds	Project Description
Addison	Charter House Coalition	\$ 24,000*	3 rooms of seasonal emergency shelter capacity for families
Addison	John Graham Housing & Services	\$ 22,200*	2 2-bedroom year-round crisis units for families (including DV survivors) in Middlebury, with leveraged services
Barre	Capstone Community Action	\$ 138,000*	6 2-bedroom year-round crisis units for families, with services
Barre	Good Samaritan Haven	\$ 35,000*	14-bed seasonal emergency shelter, with limited services
Barre	Washington County Youth Service Bureau	\$ 25,500*	2 1-bedroom year-round crisis units for youth, with services
Bennington	Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless	\$ 60,000	10 new year-round emergency shelter beds (shelter expansion), with limited services New Shelter: January
Bennington	Project Against Violent Encounters (PAVE)	\$ 56,875	5 new rooms of year-round emergency shelter and motel pool for to serve all District victims fleeing DV New shelter: December; Motel pool: January
Burlington	Community Health Centers of Burlington (Safe Harbor)	\$ 277,405	35-bed seasonal emergency shelter, with services
Brattleboro	Groundworks Collaborative	\$ 39,600*	3 2-bedroom year-round crisis units for families, with leveraged services
Brattleboro	Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)	\$ 30,000*	.5 FTE position for motel-based housing specialist
Brattleboro	Women's Freedom Center	\$ 199,819*	Motel pool, and services to serve all District victims fleeing DV
Hartford	Upper Valley Haven	\$ 110,506*	4 2-bedroom year-round crisis units for families, with services
Newport	Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA)	\$ 17,500*	2 2-bedroom year-round crisis unit for families, with leveraged services
St. Johnsbury	Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA)	\$ 66,166*	10-bed seasonal emergency shelter, with services
Rutland	Open Door Mission	\$ 12,010	7 beds seasonal overflow capacity on site
Rutland	Rutland County Women's Network	\$ 434,000	4 additional year-round emergency shelter rooms, motel pool, and services to serve all District victims fleeing DV
	TOTAL AWARDS	\$1,548,581	

* partial/full continuation of SFY16 project