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Vermont 2-1-1 to Resume 24-Hour Coverage

Waterbury, VT— On December 6, 2019, Vermont 2-1-1 (VT 211) will once again be providing 24-hour referral services, including emergency housing placement. Vermont’s Agency of Human Services (AHS) is renegotiating the current contract with VT 211 to resume their 24-hour referral services for general human services including General Assistance emergency housing eligibility.

Under the terms of the agreement, beginning on December 6, 2019, VT 211 will provide the expanded services to take calls 24 hours per day, 7 days per week through a combination of additional staff and a contract with New England Call Center for coverage in the hard to staff hours of 12:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. This amended agreement will provide 24-hour VT 211 call center services for general human services through June 30, 2020 and for General Assistance emergency housing eligibility through April 30, 2020. After April 30, 2020 General Assistance emergency housing eligibility will return to its current schedule of 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. This new agreement will help VT 211 expand their capacity to provide increased call center services within Vermont and reduces their overall need for out-of-state coverage.

VT 211 has struggled to find and maintain out-of-state vendors to provide call center coverage for nights, weekends and holidays. As of October 1, 2019, VT 211 has not been able to staff its support line between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. or at all on weekends and holidays. Recently, VT 211 has been able to provide coverage until 10:00 p.m. However, the service most impacted by this reduction in hours has been the General Assistance emergency housing program. Accordingly, the Department for Children and Families Economic Services Division (DCF-ESD) has been providing extended emergency housing placements to ensure vulnerable Vermonters have had housing through the recent cold spells. DCF-ESD will continue this practice until 24-hour referral service is restored.

“While we wish we could have had a solution sooner, we are content with this outcome because it’s important to provide this service for Vermonters,” said Sean Brown, Deputy Commissioner of the Economic Services Division in the Department for Children and Families. “This is especially true during the winter months. We recognize VT 211’s partnership and dedication to providing this ongoing service to Vermonters.”

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