

Community Meeting
September 11, 2024

Update on Notice of Funding

- The Notice of Funding Opportunity was initially released May 31, 2024.
- The Office of Economic Opportunity received 14 applications for \$35 million in projects. The review committee met in July, reviewed, prioritized 6 applications.
 - One project in Chittenden County received two applications for the same property.
 - Additionally, two projects from Champlain Housing Trust for the St. Albans community.
 - 1 in Rutland from the Rutland Housing Trust.
 - There are two seasonal shelter projects for this winter where OEO is supplementing funding.

Question/Answers

- The group asked how many beds coming from the funding, and are there any new beds scheduled to open 12/1?
 - Two of the projects are seasonal capacity that will be coming online this winter, likely before 12/1.
- The bulk of the \$10 million in OEO funding is going to renovation, acquisition and construction projects.
- The group asked if funding was anticipated to continue beyond the initial grants and if the state anticipates operating costs being funded going forward?
 - The budget line labeled “Grants” covers homeless assistance.
 - It is too early in the year to anticipate next year’s budget.
- <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Emergency-Shelter-Report-9.1.2024.pdf>

Act 113 Updates

- 1,100 Room cap goes into effect on 9/15/24
 - ESD is currently housing a little over 1400 households, room cap will limit the number of households able to access Emergency Housing.
 - ESD will be open for housing calls from 8am to 4:30pm on Sunday 9/15
 - ESD will post weekly if the administrative procedure is in effect on the following pages:



- <https://dcf.vermont.gov/Addressing-and-Preventing-Unsheltered-Homelessness#Comms>
- <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/crisis-housing>
- Review of Resource Handout
 - The resource guide is intended for households that are denied Emergency Housing due to the room cap or because the household has reached their 80-day maximum. The resource guide contains information on lead agencies, emergency shelters, and additional resources.
 - Lead agencies requested the chance to edit phone numbers on the resource guide before it is distributed to program participants.
 - The Resource handout will be available at district offices
 - The resource handout will be sent with denial notices

Questions and Answers

- How is ESD ensuring that emergency departments do not experience a spike in visits due to households exiting the Emergency Housing program?
 - Part of the reason for the meeting is to make sure everyone is aware of capacity and limitations under Act 113.
- Estimated number of households losing housing due to statewide capacity limit.
 - About 1400 households are currently accessing Emergency Housing, about 300 may no longer have access to a room after September 15, 2024.
 - ESD has taken action to limit this to the best of our ability. ESD pushed the income contribution to the middle of September with the hope that doing so will minimize some of the impact for that 4-day period between September 15 and September 19, 2024.
- Where should households be referred when shelters are already full?
 - If shelter space is not available, households should call ESD to apply. The first step for households is to apply for Emergency Housing.
- Does any organization in the Burlington area provide camping equipment to households?
 - CVOEO may be able to provide some camping equipment.
- Will the 1,100-capacity limit be in effect in the winter?
 - The capacity limit does not apply from December 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025. The 80-night maximum is also waived during this period.
- How many households will be exited after using 80 nights?
 - Starting September 19 and continuing through the middle of October a significant number of households will exhaust their 80 nights.
 - Less than 300 households exhaust their 80 nights on 9/19, that number decreases every day. ESD expects a gradual decrease from the middle of September through the middle of October.
- A household is running out of 80 nights on 10/1 and has very high medical needs.
 - Unfortunately, ESD can only offer 80 nights of Emergency Housing. It would be beneficial for the household to be working with field services and local agencies on options other than Emergency Housing.
- If a household is denied due to the capacity limit or because they have used 80 nights of Emergency Housing, are they made aware of AWC?
 - This is a regular part of conversations ESD has with households accessing Emergency Housing.

- If a household has reached 80 days, can an exception be made due to disability or other factors?
 - No, the capacity limit is included in Act 113 and ESD must follow the law.
- How many of the 300 households losing rooms due to the capacity limit include children?
 - ESD expects very few or no households with children to lose housing due to the capacity limit taking effect on September 15.
- Are there enough seasonal beds to provide winter shelter?
 - The short answer is no, but we will have to see how this unfolds and what the need is. Households will continue to exit homelessness due to work of community partners.
- Reviewing the Act 113 Implementation Report, service providers believe that on September 19, 382 households will reach their 80-night maximum. By 10/8, an additional 1056 households will hit 80 nights. Is this accurate?
 - Correct, but it changes every day and is closer to 900 than 1056. All numbers have gone down slightly, the number of households hitting the 80-night maximum is not quite as high as reported on August 29.
 - DCF can look at the data to determine what can be shared. DCF's ability to share data is dependent on how many households are sheltered in the community.
 - Service providers would like to know which county the people will be in when they exit the Emergency Housing program. Additionally, service providers would like to understand who the households are.
- Service provider's understanding is that there has not been connection with many cities and towns across the state, but feel those conversations are important. There is concern regarding children in schools. How is AHS engaging with municipalities and schools?
 - DCF review connections with the Agency of Education and communications with schools.
- On September 15, ESD will be open from 8:00 - 4:30, should households call ESD on that day?
 - Yes, households should call ESD if they have a 9/15 check-out date. Want to preserve capacity for households with 9/15 check-out date.
- Where should individual adults be referred once shelters are full?
 - DCF views this as a community effort and hopes that households can access resources that are available in different areas throughout the state.
- After September 19, should households call ESD?
 - Yes, if they have not used 80 days.
- There will be a day when all HHs in program use 80 days, we haven't hit 12/1. Is there a time when we won't be spending the full budget on the program? What's the monitoring of the spend? If there's extra money, can we extend 80 days?
 - Unfortunately, ESD cannot extend 80 days, that's law. We do monitor the budget on a monthly or more frequent basis. Will not be at 1100 from 9/15 to 12/1, under cap early to mid-October. Some households choosing to preserve nights. Churn, about 300 households per night. We don't have enough rooms for everyone, 500 approved/no avail in August. Monitoring thru monthly act 113 reports

- Conversations are challenging in hotels with people who have nowhere to go. Is there an idea for a meeting or support for service providers that are going through these conversations daily?
 - Have service providers had conversations about how the state can provide support?
- How does DCF plan to notify the public when the Administrative Policy on Prioritization is in effect?
 - The Administrative Procedure on Prioritization will be posted on public-facing websites on a weekly basis. The Administrative Procedure will be posted on The Preventing and Addressing homelessness page and on ESD's public benefits page.
- Should community partners expect regular meetings with DCF? Is AHS interested in hearing on the ground feedback from providers?
 - This is the last meeting in series. DCF proposes extending the series to include monthly meetings through Adverse Weather Conditions.