

## DCF Housing Open Office Hours

Monday July 31, 2023

- DCF provided testimony today to Joint Fiscal Committee by AHS: [Pandemic-Era Hotel/Motel Housing Reporting - Presentation](#) and the link to slides is here <https://lifo.vermont.gov/assets/Meetings/Joint-Fiscal-Committee/2023-07-31/bb8f8697a7/Pandemic-Era-Housing-Reporting-Official-Slides-7.31.pdf>
  - Report from VHCB to the JFC committee on their response to homelessness, <https://lifo.vermont.gov/assets/Meetings/Joint-Fiscal-Committee/2023-07-31/96316352a7/VHCB-Act-81-July-Report.pdf>
  - And here is DHCD's report to Joint Fiscal Committee <https://lifo.vermont.gov/assets/Meetings/Joint-Fiscal-Committee/2023-07-31/d907f2ff3f/Act-81-JFC-Information-Request-Response-DHCD.pdf>
- Update from DCF regarding procedure around exits:
  - Not exit anyone from the June 30 cohort who goes to a hospital level of care for any reason (physical, mental health, detox etc.) for any amount of time.
  - Not exit anyone from the June 30 cohort who goes to a residential level of care for any reason (physical rehab, mental health, substance use) for 14 days or fewer. If they go for more than 14 days of treatment/rehab then they will be exited from the cohort per language around residential care in Act 81.
  - Questions
    - Does ESD maintain the same hotel room during the treatment or are they moved? ANSWER: No, the room is not maintained. The client would need to call back to be rehoused when they exit the hospital or residential level of care.
    - If a person was in the hospital by then goes to residential treatment does that then start the 14 day clock? ANSWER: Yes. It is important for the household to be in touch with ESD so days can be tracked accurately.
- Additional Questions
  - How is the time being tracked for those who are in the June cohort? ANSWER: Days are tracked differently for the June cohort. When they exit that cohort they may apply to the General Assistance program and if eligible they would start with 0 days.
- Update from DCF regarding the Economic Services Phone Lines – Economic Services did get staffing to support the phone lines but hiring is challenging and it takes time for training. The last week of the month and first week of the month are challenging as all benefits are reviewed month. The more folks can be encouraged to reach out the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weeks of the month the better as that will reduce wait times on the phone. It now takes about an hour to do what used to be done in 15 minutes given the complexity of the program as it is now. ESD will continue to explore ways to streamline the work as they can given the requirements of H171.
- Update from AHS Secretary's Office on Care Coordination:
  - <https://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Guidance-for-Vermont-Flood-Recovery-Health-and-Safety.pdf>
  - AHS is in the process of negotiating a contract with a bidder to provide staff to support ongoing screening as part of the larger care coordination work that had been done by the Care Coordination Teams. The hope is that staffing will be in place by the end of

August. In the interim the contracted VCCI Nurses and Rescue Inc. are supporting the work statewide.

- Questions:
  - A agency reported from Hartford that people are going around and doing a screening, was that Rescue Inc? ANSWER: Rescue Inc. has uniforms, letters, and are able to explain their role. If you can provide Renee will details she can check to confirm it's the right group [Renee.S.Weeks@vermont.gov](mailto:Renee.S.Weeks@vermont.gov).
  - Is the bidder Life Intervention Team? ANSWER: Life Intervention Team did not respond to the bid. More information will come later in August.
- Question & Answer?
  - Are there any updates regarding data/dashboard that you can share? ANSWER: AHS is working on a large dashboard regarding homelessness that will be shared and Dave Riegel is the best point of contact [David.Riegel@vermont.gov](mailto:David.Riegel@vermont.gov) . There is information regarding the June cohort being updated on the website <https://dcf.vermont.gov/Addressing-and-Preventing-Unsheltered-Homelessness>. There is data included in the testimony (showed some of it briefly).
  - Regarding the Coordinated Entry assessment with the June 30 cohort, what is the plan to identify those who have participated in CE and make sure that information is getting back to Economic Services? ANSWER: Economic Services has received an initial list from ICA and Economic Services is then working on a way to get that on an updated basis, anticipating ESD will have to share a list with CE Lead Agencies and then collect updates but that is still being explored. It is hoped that the additional staffing will be able to support this process for both ESD and the CE Lead Agencies.
  - Can you provide more guidance around the 48 hour rule when someone is offered housing? ANSWER: Households have 48 hours to accept the housing or not. The hope is that the panel managers will be available to help track it. It will rely on the person offering the housing to track the time and the decision. Offers are made in writing, there is a process in writing through Coordinated Entry. It is important to have informal, early conversations early with households so that when the formal offers are made it is relevant to the household. This has been reviewed with CE Lead Agencies and they can help support discussions locally.
    - Follow up, the decision has to be made within 48 hours but the "exit" takes place at the time of renewal. That is when ESD will be confirming any acceptance of offers and when a decision would be made regarding renewing the authorization or not.
  - If you are sending information about people moving in and out of hotels, you can email the AHS - DCF ESD GAH Management [AHS.DCFESDGAHManagement@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.DCFESDGAHManagement@vermont.gov)
  - The intention of this meeting was to support community providers through a time of quick changes. With input, it seems like weekly is no longer needed. It may make sense to pursue a monthly call in addition to other venues where information can be shared. It is anticipated that a call will be scheduled for August and then decisions made from there. Other tables such as the VT Coalition to End Homelessness may be utilized in the future. Look out for more details on the next meeting, expect one call in August. Meeting information will be distributed through the two COCs. To sign up for the VT

Coalition to End Homelessness listserv go to their website  
<https://helpingtohousevt.org/>.