

**8/30/2024 Bobbie Jean Brown: Public Comment for the General Assistance
Emergency Housing Task Force**

Dear Members of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force,

My name is Bobbie Jean Brown and I am at Budget Inn in Barre.

I have been utilizing any and every program and opportunity that has been offered to me since being at the motel. Some of these have really helped and improved my life, however I am now finding out I am not considered a "priority" to the administration. It's not right. How does that make me feel? It makes me feel like everything I have worked for is for nothing if I am not a priority now.

I have worked so hard and kept myself accountable while using every opportunity to find housing. On top of this I have been sober for almost one year and I want more than anything to stay that way.

Whatever changes are made everyone deserves to have shelter; everyone deserves to find a home. We are working so hard, it is not our fault that we can't find housing in 80 days and on top of that, you are saying that if people are not a "priority" then they maybe can't use their 80 days.

**8/30/2024 Jerome Webster: Public Comment for the General Assistance
Emergency Housing Task Force**

Dear Members of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force,

I am Jerome. I don't know how I would breathe outside and I am not considered a priority category by the administration. Also my 80 days would run out on September 27th, but I won't even be able to use those days because I am not considered a priority by the state. I want you to know what is happening to those of us in the program.

My prior housing was not livable, It had no water and other things, so I had to leave it. You can not stay with friends without putting their housing at risk so I had no choice but to come into the program.

I rely on oxygen because I have arteriovenous malformation (AVM). It takes oxygen from your lungs. I had the lower left part of my lung removed. My oxygen regulator machine needs to be plugged in as well as my portable. I also suffer from congenital heart disease. I've had multiple operations on my heart. I have a pacemaker, stents, and shrinking valves. I need another heart surgery because blood flow is being restricted. I also need multiple lung surgeries each year because of the AVM. The AVM causes my lungs to leak oxygen. This operation repairs this. Basically they are plugs that fill the holes that leak oxygen and keep me alive longer. This program allows me to get out of the bad weather.

Being inside keeps me breathing. The program has been a life saver.

When I heard that I was not considered a priority by the state, I felt like I had been let down. My first words when I heard this were "how am I supposed to breathe?"

People experiencing homelessness should have shelter until they have permanent housing. People with serious health issues have to worry about their health needs being met due to being homeless. They can not be met without shelter. What is happening right now is people with health issues that don't meet the "priority" criteria have to worry about how they are going to survive after they leave. No one should ever have to experience that. And even if we were priority, my ability to survive does not change in 80 days.

Right now I am living day by day not knowing the near future on how I am going to survive with this new policy that came out and that makes me feel angry and let down.

Thank you for your time.

8/30/2024 Heather Story: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force,

My name Heather Story and I am at Cortina Inn in Rutland.

My life was normal, my previous landlord turned my housing into AIRBNB. I have always rented with good references and no financial issues, and then I lost my home.

If I was an adventurer I could deal with this, but I do not have experience camping or surviving outside, nor do I feel I would be safe physically or mentally living outside. Every person should have shelter until they can have housing.

8/30/2024 Jessica Fairweather: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force,

My name is Jessica Fairweather and I am at Cortina Inn in Rutland. I struggle with diabetes, severe anxiety, and more medical issues that if I were outside would put my life in immediate danger. I still have stitches from my right foot amputation 3 months ago that need to stay, sanitary, clean and safe to prevent even more life threatening illness or complications.

I just want a home, I don't want to still be homeless or at a motel, I just want a home that everyone deserves to have. If I end up outside I will not make it.

Any new program and recommendations should keep people sheltered until they find housing. Lives are valuable, including mine.

8/30/2024 Karey Magoon: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force,

My name is Karey Magoon, and I am at Sunset Motor Inn in Morrisville. I became homeless after my housing was flooded in Montpelier, we lost everything.

When the 80 days ends, I am extremely afraid to be outside in an area where I don't know anyone and have no connections. I do not feel safe, everyone's safety should be important.

Hearing about the 80 days makes me frantic and anxious, and then I hear about "priority categories", and I feel even more unsafe, anxious, and at risk.

Everyone deserves shelter and stability until they can find permanent housing.

8/31/2024 Debarah Johson: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

My name is Debara Johnson and I am at Shady Lawn Motel in White River Jct. I became homeless after experiencing a no cause eviction. Economic Services told me I was not eligible to be part of the housing program because of this eviction, which led me to contact End Homelessness VT.

If I were to end up outside when my 80 days ends, I will die. There is no way I could survive with Stage 3 COPD, on oxygen and with multiple other health and mobility issues.

I have applied to apartments and for housing on my own and I have worked with supportive housing agencies, but even when I find an apartment I am scared I won't be able to afford the rent and then I will end up homeless all over again. I am not the only one this is happening to.

Changes NEED to happen, with shelter and with housing.

8/31/2024 Brian Parker: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force,

My name Brian Parker and I am at Sugarhouse Motor Inn in New Haven, VT. I was put out of work due to medical issues that have needed surgery and continue to need surgeries, I could no longer afford rent so I became homeless.

If my 80 days ends and I end up outside, I will not survive. Even in the summer when it is 70 degrees out it is even hotter in a tent. My doctor and nurses have told me with my surgeries, they will not do them if I cannot keep wounds clean and sanitary, and that not having the surgeries would also result in my life ending. On top of this I have COPD and struggle to breathe, I simply would not survive on the street.

I have stayed on top of everything I have been asked or required to do and I have still not found housing, whatever changes are made should make sure people are sheltered to save their lives so they have a chance at finding housing.

9/3/2024 Tyrone Perry: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear GA Housing Task Force,

My name is Tyrone Perry and I had been staying at Econo Lodge in Rutland. I was able to check out of the motel in order to preserve some of my 80 days of shelter.

I applied to and tried to work with Homeless Prevention... but after I did my part I never heard back from anyone.

Now I have found out the hotel never ended my voucher and I am fighting to get my days back. Hotel owners need to be held accountable when things like this happen. It is not right that hotel owners are believed over us, the people who need housing, as if their word is more valuable than ours.

9/3/2024 Chelsea Jones: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear GA Housing Task Force Members,

My name is Chelsea Jones and I am at Quality Inn in Rutland, VT. Becoming homeless was out of my control, I did everything I could to make sure my children were safe. My oldest daughter is in a wheelchair and if we end up outside after our 80 days, would get infections, bladder stones, and if she got too cold she could lose her legs completely due to circulation issues.

Hearing about the 80 day rule put my family through so much stress and anxiety, we have done everything we can to find housing and now we have yet another obstacle in front of us that is threatening our lives.

Living in a motel is not ideal, but at least we are sheltered. There needs to be affordable housing for everyone, and until that happens no family should be put outside.

9/4/2024 Tianna Briggs: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Task Force Members,

I am Tianna Briggs I have very few days left of my 80 days. I have 5 children and I am pregnant and soon we will have nowhere to go. I was evicted for non-payment. I had paid the rent, but, didn't have tools to fight it. I was raised in foster care and aged out. I don't really have family support for after my eviction and my mom has significant schizophrenia and a TBI.

When I heard about the 80 day limit, I felt like I was at a loss. I thought that my family was safe and then it felt like my whole family and world was falling apart. What are we supposed to do when there is no housing, there is no where for us to go. I feel defeated. No one has come to support us. We had good support at one point with David at AHS who unfortunately passed away and after he died, no one came to help us anymore. When our days run out we will be living in a tent or out of a car.

My recommendation for any new program is don't leave us feeling defeated and alone. Keep all people sheltered. We didn't cause this. This is one of the biggest heart dropping things to hear "well we don't know what we can do for you". I live in fear of DCF taking my children for the crime of being in poverty and experiencing homelessness and for the state's decision to end our shelter. I know what it is like to grow up in the system and that is not what I want for my children and it is not what we deserve.

9/5/2024 Tina: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force,

My name is Tina. I am a domestic violence survivor, and I am currently homeless. When my 80 days ends, I will be vulnerable and unsafe all over again. Without the necessary resources, which have been incredibly difficult for me to access, I will continue to be homeless with my life at risk.

I feel completely neglected ever since I have reached out for help and shelter to escape the dangerous situation I was in. No person should be at risk like this and then have the only shelter they can find taken from them on top of it!

9/16/2024 Sheena: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

My name is Sheena, I am at Quality Inn in Rutland. I became homeless after fleeing domestic violence to keep my daughter safe. Since being at the hotel, I was able to get a part time job and I have tried to connect with resources to get housed but I have had a very difficult time finding help completing applications or even getting an intake appointment before my 80 days ends. When our 80 days ends, both my boyfriend's life and my life will be severely at risk. My daughter struggles daily due to the abuse she has gone through by her own family, she can not lose her parents now too. We are the only ones she has left. We both have medical issues, living outside could then cause risk to our lives.

If my boyfriend were to have a seizure outside, he could severely injure himself on pavement. I have Deep Ven Thrombosis and could easily freeze to death or lose my legs being in the cold, being outside. I feel that everybody should be treated equally, I should be treated the same way everyone who has housing is.

Administration should do the work in making sure resources and housing are actually available and accessible for everyone, right now many people are judged and turned away... which can then put their life at an even higher risk.

9/16/2024 Marlisha: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

My name Marlisha and I am homeless in Rutland. My son and I became homeless after escaping a violent and dangerous relationship. I have tried to connect with Homeless Prevention for close to a year and I still can barely get ahold of them, but they are the only resource I have been connected with.

When my 80 days ends.. I have nowhere to go. My son has nowhere to go. Families and people ending up on the street with nowhere to go will only make every other epidemic Vermont has get ten times worse. We will not be safe.

Every person deserves shelter until they find housing or a safe place.

9/16/2024 Teddy Tiller: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

My name is Teddy Tiller and I am at Travel Lodge in Brattleboro.

When my 80 days ends, I will have nowhere to go and will end up outside. I am currently working hard to be able see my 2 year old son more, being outside and living in a tent is a huge barrier to getting that time or being closer to my son.

Not being considered a priority when I am holding a job, working to be a part of my community, and working to better my family is a huge problem that I feel will make all the work I have done and continue to do impossible to lead to success.

It seems like I am doing all the right things, why am I not being supported?

9/16/2024 Mark Adams and Jennifer Perry: **Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force**

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

Our names are Mark Adams and Jennifer Perry, we Days Inn in Burlington. We had an apartment for over 8 years and the landlord suddenly raised our rent from \$1600.00 to \$2500.00 a month, we could not afford this which led us to becoming homeless. When our 80 days have been used, being outside puts Mark's and our son's lives at an incredible risk.

Mark has been deemed Critical Care due to battling stage 4 liver cancer, he is in chemo and radiation treatment, which severely lowers his immune system and even the smallest cold could become life threatening quickly. Our son is 14, he just started high school, it is neither acceptable or safe for him to be living outside. Whatever changes are made, nobody should be fighting for their life and fighting for shelter at the same time.

9/16/2024 **Todd Webster Sr: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force**

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

My name is Todd Webster Sr. and I am at Cortina Inn in Rutland. My son and I became homeless after a no cause eviction that was completely out of my control.

When my 80 days are used, my life will be at immediate risk. I struggle daily with diabetes, have refrigerated insulin, and without shelter and electricity.... I would not survive.

On top of this, I have a 19 year old son that suffers from anxiety stress disorder. He can not work, he is barely able to go outside, without me he would be lost and I do not know if he would survive.

For me, becoming homeless was not something I had control over, I have been actively looking for housing ever since, this is not what I want for my son or myself. It is hard

enough to survive through this, and now we are at a life threatening level of risk due to being given 80 days.

9/16/2024 Amy Mason: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

My name is Amy Mason and I am at Extol Inn in Rutland. I became homeless after my Section 8 apartment was condemned and I could not find another apartment to rent. After September 15th, because I am considered "Non-Priority" I might not even get to use my full 80 days.

Even if I did use the full 80 days, when that ends my life is at an immediate risk. I have multiple medical issues that have caused me to have trouble walking or standing, I have refrigerated medication that I can not live a normal life without, and to top of it off I have open wounds from a recent surgery that are not healing correctly. I need to keep those wounds clean and taken care of which I can not do living in a tent.

I have consistently tried to work with Homeless Prevention and any other resource I have found but with my medical problems I need resources that can actually help me find housing and will answer my calls.

How can they do this? How is this right to do to anyone?

9/16/2024 Tasha Linteau: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

My name is Tasha Linteau and I am at Quality Inn in Rutland. I became homeless after escaping a very violent relationship. Hearing that I am not considered a priority to Economic Services is not only confusing and upsetting but extremely concerning as I have been in contact with Economic Services month after month but they failed to tell me anything about these categories or about what will happen on and after September 15th.

Even if I am allowed to use my full 80 days, if I were to end up outside after that my health will start declining all over again and I will have even more barriers to get into the apartment I have found and have been approved for. I am waiting for that apartment to be ready for move in which should happen on or just after the 15th, and now I am told I won't be able to remain sheltered when it is most critical for me to be. On top of this I have severe mobility issues due to needing two knee replacements that I can not get while on the 2nd floor of a hotel, the apartment I found is a first floor apartment however if my health declines right before I am able to move in it will then push my surgery back even farther.

This is not okay to do to anyone, everyone deserves shelter but even more than that everyone deserves to be informed and given the correct information.

9/16/2024 Sammi: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Members of the GA Housing Task Force,

My name is Sammi. I am a domestic violence survivor, I am also a veteran and I am currently homeless.

Hearing I am "non-priority" makes me feel like I am considered less human than other people who are equally vulnerable. I knew what I signed up for when I signed up to fight for this country, but I did not know when I came home I would still just be considered a number... and a negative one at that.

These rules are inhumane, every human deserves dignity, and these rules put a vulnerable population at an even higher risk.

9/16/2024 Jennifer Towne: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Task Force Members,

My name is Jennifer Towne and I am at Cortina Inn in Rutland. I became homeless in July of 2023 after I was sexually assaulted by a neighbor and additionally my building was being condemned. This was completely out of my control and I had nowhere to go.

I have been living at this motel with my now EX fiancé, just this past week our relationship turned violent towards me and I am now on my own. Any housing resources we had connected with were done with him and involve his name so I now have to start all over, but my 80 days does not start over to give me any safe time to do this. I also am now told I am not a priority to Economic Services, with everything I am going through right now... that leaves me with very little hope.

80 days is in no way enough time for someone to recover from losing their home, connect with housing resources, and find available housing. There should not be one person on the street or outside when so many of us are doing everything we are asked and trying so hard to get our lives back to normal. No one chooses to be homeless or stay homeless.

9/16/2024 Katherine: Public Comment for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Task Force

Dear Task Force Members,

My name is Katherine. I have been in and out of the hotel program due to landlord problems that were out of my control making my apartment unlivable. When I got back into my apartment it was not long before I was homeless again due to domestic violence. When I am put outside due to not being a priority to Economic Services... all the hard work I have done and all the progress I have made goes down the drain.

I will have to start all over and while trying to start over with resources, housing applications, and more I will now be unsafe and my life will be at risk.

If connecting with resources is a requirement in order to have safe shelter, no person should be put outside when they are still trying to get connected to those resources and when they do not have any housing leads.