



Economic Services Division Community Meeting

**Presented by: Miranda Gray, Deputy Commissioner,
Economic Services Division, DCF**

Economic Services' Mission and Vision

Our mission:

To provide high quality service while administering programs to improve economic well-being for Vermonters.

Our vision:

Vermonters thrive with a sense of independence and connection to their communities.

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd>

ESD Legislative Updates

H.938 - An act relating to establishing the Vermont Homelessness Response Continuum

The bill aims to replace Vermont's current reliance on emergency hotel/motel housing with a structured statewide "continuum" of homelessness services

H.657- An act relating to enabling unaccompanied homeless youth to obtain certain services without parental consent

- The bill removed the Reach Up Asset Limit.

Big Bill- There are several changes being proposed that are ESD related

LIHEAP

Vermont's 25-26 Heating Season

- We are wrapping up another successful season. Through February 2026, we have served just under 15,000 Seasonal Fuel Households and another approximately 22,000 Household with a fixed benefit. (Roomers, Housing Subsidy cases, and the eligible HR1 Households with an elderly or disabled member.) The average Seasonal Fuel benefit was projected to be \$1123 this year.
- Our Crisis Fuel Program is administered by the 5 Community Action Agencies and have served just under 1700 Households with LIHEAP funds looking at just 3 months of data (December and January) and the average assist is around \$490.
- We continue to use LIHEAP funds to also support other services like Weatherization, Furnace repair and replacement as well as Fuel Tank repair and replacement to the sum of around 3.7 million per year.
- Vermont's LIHEAP Block Grant will end up being \$22,497,306, once we receive the remaining 10%. In addition, we received our final payment from the Infrastructure Grant of \$527,105, giving us a grand total of \$23,024,411
- Another important announcement to share within the Utility Discount Program, is Green Mountain Power is offering a 2nd arrearage forgiveness component. This is allowing Households to get squared away.

3SquaresVT Time Limited Benefit Work Requirements

Implementation of 3SquaresVT Work Requirements (Effective March 1)

- Vermont began implementing federal work requirements for 3SquaresVT following passage of HR1 last summer
- Initial benefit closures occurred in March; additional closures are expected in the following months, though at lower levels
- Closures may occur when individuals do not meet work requirements or do not report a qualifying exemption

Outreach & Support Efforts

ESD is actively expanding communication and support for impacted households, including:

- Robocalls, text messages, and emails
- Call center phone messaging
- Social media outreach
- Partner messaging and Community Partner Guide : [Community Partner Guide](https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/3SquaresVT%20Guidance) ([https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/3SquaresVT Guidance](https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/3SquaresVT%20Guidance))
- Informational inserts with closure notices highlighting possible exemptions and employment & training resources
- Communication efforts will continue to help Vermonters understand requirements and access available supports

Protecting EBT Cards from Fraud

Vermont EBT card transactions are blocked in certain geographic areas to prevent fraud, with locations and details posted on the DCF website

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/ebt>

These temporary protections help stop stolen card numbers from being used to drain Vermonters' benefits, one of the most common types of EBT fraud nationwide

Customers can call ESD to remove the restriction – card will work in that area in about 15 minutes

ESD will be sending text messages and making robocalls to customers to inform them about these restrictions – date TBD but planned for early April

Updates to the EBT card brochure are also in progress

Protecting EBT Cards from Fraud

All Vermont EBT Transactions are restricted in (in-store, ATM, and POS):

- California
- Nevada
- Brooklyn, New York
- Garner, North Carolina
- Raleigh, North Carolina
- Duluth, Georgia

Online EBT purchases are restricted for all delivery locations in all states except:

- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New York
- Vermont

Additional city-level online restrictions apply for delivery locations in:

- Brooklyn, New York
- Garden City, New York
- Staten Island, New York

DCF website is the source for the current restricted locations

IE&E Noticing Project Update

Project: To build a more secure Customer Communication Management System (CCMS) notice generating solution.

Impact: Minimal, this is primarily a technical project to move our notices to a newer solution, however there are some...

Opportunities!

- Resolving pain points
- Improving accessibility
- Faster updates to content

End of General Assistance Emergency Winter Housing

Emergency Winter Housing ends on April 1, 2026.

On April 1,

- ESD is limited to 1100 rooms statewide.
- Households are limited to 80 nights, beginning 7/1/25.
 - Nights used between 12/1/25 and 3/31/26 do not count towards the 80-night total.
- Households that have used more than 80 nights since July 1, 2025 (not including nights used from 12/1/25 through 3/31/26) will no longer be eligible for housing.

General Assistance PNI Utilization

Personal Needs and Incidentals (PNI) is a benefit offered by the General Assistance program.

This benefit can assist eligible Vermonters with:

- Groceries (PNI) - A cash benefit to assist eligible Vermonters with household items such as soap, toothpaste, and personal care items.
- Room and Board - Room and board payments on behalf of eligible Vermonters.
- Home Ownership/Rent - Mortgage or rent payments on behalf of eligible Vermonters.
- Room Rent - Room rent payments on behalf of eligible Vermonters.

How To Apply

Visit an ESD district office and request an application for General Assistance or contact the Benefits Service Center at 1-800-479-6151.

Stay Connected

Sign up to join our listserv to receive meeting invites and updates about ESD programs:

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/newsletter>

Questions?

Please raise your virtual hand, or type your question in the chat

Next Meeting: June 2026

Thank you for joining us!

Stay Connected

Have a question to a presenter, please contact them at:

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Stay Connected

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