

Community Meeting 6/20/2024

The General Assistance Emergency Housing Assistance, Emergency Rules section 2652.2 and 2652.3 were published for public comments on ESD's website and [are linked here](#). Updates were made based on the comments and the revised version of the rules will be posted once they are filed. The following is a brief summary of the changes that were made based on submitted comments:

- Added section entitled "Rights of People with Disabilities"
- Add a section entitled "Appeal Rights"
- Added the following terms to the definitions section:
 - Application
 - Verification
 - Termination
 - Denial
- Added a list of which information requires verification and the acceptable verification for each item
- Updated the Period of Ineligibility section regarding households being exited for breaking hotel rules to the misconduct language utilized in the cohort rule
- Added language about the ability to utilize an authorized representative
- In addition to the rule changes, ESD is also revising the denial notice for emergency housing

Exception requests: ESD does not have the authority to offer an exception to anything that is stated in statute, including:

- Population eligible
- The maximum 80 days outside of the period between 12/1/24 to 3/31/25
- The 1100 hotel room cap begins September 15th, 2024.

Below is the summary of the rules, which replaces all portions of the existing General Assistance rules related to housing unless explicitly stated in emergency rule:



Section 2652.2 - Emergency Housing Assistance

- **Eligibility Criteria:**

- Lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- No access to an alternative housing placement.
- Households must include a member who meets one of the following criteria:
 - 65 years or older
 - Documented disability
 - 201G-VR is being updated in accordance with the statute.
 - Affected households will be notified the first time they apply after July 1st that the new form will need to be completed before their next application.
 - Child 19 years or under
 - Pregnant
 - Experienced the death of a spouse, domestic partner, or minor child that caused the household to lose its housing
 - Experienced a natural disaster
 - Under court-ordered or constructive eviction
 - Experiencing domestic violence or other dangerous conditions or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a household member that caused the household to lose its housing

- **Shelter:**

- ESD will refer households to shelter when shelter space is available in district.
 - If a household needs an accommodation to access the shelter, a 218M form should be completed and reviewed with the shelter to see if the shelter can accommodate the household's needs

- **Period of Ineligibility**

- 30 days for refusing a shelter bed
- 30 days for not checking into their hotel/motel
- 30 days from the date of their exit by a hotel/motel or shelter if the household is asked to leave due to any of the following:
 - Violent criminal behavior.
 - Non-violent criminal behavior that jeopardizes the health or safety of other guests or motel staff such as the sale, distribution, or manufacturing of illegal substances.
 - Repeated non-violent criminal behavior such as theft or disorderly conduct.



- **Provisional Housing:** Conditional assistance for up to four days pending verification (once in a 30-day period)
- **Housing Search Requirements:**
 - Households must search for and accept alternative housing.
 - Department and household develop a schedule of activities to secure housing.
 - Monthly verification of housing search efforts required.
- **Night Caps**
 - Maximum of 80 cumulative days in a hotel/motel within a rolling 12-month period, beginning July 1st, 2024.
 - Night caps are not in place during the time period of 12/1/24 to 3/31/25
- **Room Cap:**
 - Cap of 1,100 rooms per night starting 9/15/24
 - No cap from 12/1/24 to 3/31/25
- **Prioritization:** Priority may be given to households with children, pregnant individuals, elderly, or disabled members if the number of rooms being utilized approach the 1100 cap or, during winter months, the natural cap of available rooms.
- **Income Contribution:** No Changes from current practice. Clients are required to contribute 30% of their gross monthly income towards the cost of emergency housing assistance.
- **Resources:** No Changes from current practice. Clients must exhaust all available resources to them before assistance can be provided.

Households can expect the following each time they call for assistance:

- ESD worker will interview the client to determine their eligibility for housing
 - If a shelter bed is available, the client will be referred to shelter
 - Verification will be reviewed
 - The ESD worker will have a conversation with the client about what activity related to securing alternative housing is most appropriate
 - That activity will be assigned and need to be verified within the next 30 days in order for subsequent housing applications to be approved
 - If approved, the worker will tell the client which hotel they have been authorized at and the check-out date of the authorization
 - If the application is denied, the household will be provided with a denial notice.
 - During the call, the worker will advise the client of the Period of Ineligibility, the date they should reapply, the income contribution if applicable, and any activities that must be completed prior to being granted additional housing.

By understanding these expectations, Vermonters can better navigate the application process and comply with the requirements to receive emergency housing assistance.

