

Department for Children and Families
Economic Services Division
280 State Drive
Waterbury, VT 05671-1020

Agency of Human Services

[fax] 802-241-0460
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Date: June 21, 2024

Subject: Important Rule Changes to the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program Beginning July 1

Starting July 1, 2024, the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program will operate under new rules that might affect your eligibility. This letter highlights the most important changes. The emergency rules are not yet final, but the draft linked here includes most of the proposed changes we expect to be in the final rules:

<http://tiny.cc/hnvqyz>

The final rules will be available closer to July 1st, 2024.

Several things about the application and authorization process have changed because of the new law. This may be confusing at first for those already used to the current process. Our eligibility determination team will be happy to explain these new changes to you and walk you through it the first time. Here are some important things you need to know and can expect the next time you apply for assistance:

- 1. Application Process:** This has not changed. You can still apply the same way you do now, by calling or going into a district office.
- 2. Interview:** This has not changed. You can still complete an interview with a representative of the Department, in person or by phone.
- 3. Authorization Periods:** You can stay in a motel for the length of the authorization period. Your stay might end sooner if shelter space or another place to live becomes available, regardless of whether you accept the available housing placement. If you are exited from a hotel/motel for misconduct (e.g., violent criminal behavior, non-violent criminal behavior that jeopardizes the health or safety of other hotel or motel guests or staff) you might not be eligible for more help.
- 4. At the Time of Application:** You may be offered placement in a motel or hotel room if there is no immediate space available at a community-based shelter. Vermont is a “shelter first” state, meaning we will refer applicants to community-based shelters if there is open space.
- 5. Transfer to Shelter:** When space becomes available at a community-based shelter, you will be asked to move from the motel or hotel room to the shelter.



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- 6. Request for Accommodation:** This has not changed. If you need special accommodations, you will need to provide documentation from a medical provider specifying the required accommodation.
- 7. Contribution Requirement:** This has not changed. You are required to contribute 30% of your gross monthly income towards the cost of emergency housing assistance.
- 8. Housing Search Obligation:** You must actively search for and accept any available alternative housing placements, which can be; placements with family or friends; permanent housing solutions, including tiny homes, manufactured homes, and apartments; residential treatment beds for physical health, long-term care, substance use, or mental health; nursing home beds; and recovery homes.
- 9. Housing Tasks:** Each month, applicants will be assigned tasks to help move toward permanent housing. The assignment can include any of the following activities: completing the coordinated entry assessment, engaging with a state agency or state-contracted service provider to secure an alternative housing placement, addressing barriers to permanent housing (for example, obtaining identification documents, social security cards, or birth certificates for all household members), or applying for a permanent housing voucher.
- 10. Notification of Decision:** This has not changed. If approved, you will receive a verbal decision. You can also request the decision be sent to you in writing. The written notice will include the type of assistance, authorization period, check-in and check-out dates if applicable, and the date you need to apply again. If denied, you will receive a written decision listing the reason for denial and your appeal rights.

If you would like help planning for the changes that are coming, please call ESD at 1-800-775-0506 and we will help connect you to local resources.

Additional information about addressing and preventing homelessness, including previously sent letters about rule and law changes can be found on our website:

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/Addressing-and-Preventing-Unsheltered-Homelessness>

