

DCF Housing Open Office Hours

Monday, June 26, 2023

- Generally reviewed the impact of recently pass legislation (H171) on the GA Emergency Housing Program and shared updates.
 - Essentially the legislation creates a new program for the “June 30 cohort”, it has some requirements that are the same as the ESD General Assistance Emergency Housing Program but has some requirements that are unique to the new program program.
 - Unique aspects outlined in legislation:
 - May be eligible through April 1, 2024.
 - Expectations around engagement.
 - Those between 60-65 and those in their first and second trimester of pregnancy will be eligible and included in this cohort.
 - Transitioning into housing options within a designated timeframe.
 - Do not have access to return after a “period of ineligibility”
 - Must take housing options if offered within a set timeframe.
 - If someone is exited from this cohort, they cannot re-enter
 - Question – What does this mean if someone is hospitalized or in treatment? Answer - ESD is reviewing this legislation to explore how this can be operationalized.
 - Question – How will ESD know if people have been offered another housing option? Answer – ESD is working to operationalize this.
 - Reminder of the website/updates that are expected given the recent legislation - <https://dcf.vermont.gov/Addressing-and-Preventing-Unsheltered-Homelessness>
 - Requirements for ongoing data and reporting around this cohort in particular
- There may be an option for those who have a housing voucher as of June 30, 2023 – its possible that instead of being in the June cohort they could be housed under the Executive Order for 120 days DCF legal is reviewing how the Executive Order and H.171 interact.
- As of July 1, for all participants
 - Income contributions are required
 - Question – Concern about a discrepancy between the days that ESD is requiring a household to contribute and the cost being charged to the families by the hotels. Answer – ESD was notified of this today and is looking into this.
 - Participation with Coordinated Entry
 - Question – What are the options for those who may lose their housing the future? Answer – If it is a just cause eviction they may be eligible for 84 days. H 171 does not apply to them.
- Question – Concerns about the role of the hotels, how they are treating households, households being exited unfairly, etc. Answer – ESD does have direction now to negotiate with the hotels. ESD also reviewed the Fair Hearing option if households have concerns.
- Question - Concerns about those with extreme/complex needs that may not be able to stay within the program but don’t have other options. Or those who were exited at the end of May. Answer – OEO shared an update on the LOI process and updates around activities requested such as outreach, medical respite, and there was discussion about the new AHS model for team based care/complex care. Folks can still submit LOIs for now, at some point that process will end.

- Question – Concern about households who were housed outside of their originating community do to lack of motel capacity, what happens to them? Answer – For folks in the Balance of State there is the opportunity to be on multiple Coordinated Entry lists, this is more tricky with Chittenden. There are a lot of tracking requirements related to H171 and AHS is working on how to operationalize this. This will likely include the AHS Field Services Directors to assist with tracking.
- Question – Concern about discharges from hospitals. Information is not being shared, providers are not being made aware. Answer – The homeless health care capacity building community of practice supported by VDH has looked at this issue a lot in the past year. That group did a deep dive into medical respite and a set of recommendations will come, in the next month or two, regarding medical respite. This was also named in the Executive Order. The Department of Health is working on piloting medical respite and perhaps they can come and provide an update at a future meeting. Regarding communication/notification, unless a household explicitly acknowledges this to ESD or other providers, it may not be known that a household was just discharged from the hospital or has these needs. The complex care team is one avenue to explore communication during these transitions.
- Question – If someone was to call into GA today, what are their options? What is being communicated to households? Answer – ESD has to issue emergency rules and procedures need to be put into place to implement the recent legislation. Households will receive outreach this week regarding the latest legislation and options. If you hear of individual situations please reach out to your ESD Operations Director.
- **General confusion about the different categories/cohorts. Some frustration around the multiple changes over the past month or so. Request for information to be shared quickly and clearly.**
 - **DCF is committed to weekly office hours and recognizes the frustration around numerous changes and communication to both clients and partners. We are committed to continuing multiple methods of communication and always open to suggestions on ways to improve.**