




Department for Children and Families
Commissioner's Office
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MEMO

TO: Municipal and Town Leadership, Community Action Agencies, Homeless Shelter and Service Providers, Parent Child Centers, Youth Service Agencies, Other Community or State Organizations, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Hospitals and Health Care Partners, Affordable Housing Providers, Designated Agencies, Area Agencies on Aging, SUD Treatment & Recovery Providers, Local Continuums of Care/Homeless Coalitions, Faith-based organizations

FROM: Chris Winters, Commissioner, Department for Children and Families 

DATE: May 22, 2023

RE: **Interest in Resources and Support for 2023 Homeless Response Efforts**

Preface

The General Assistance (GA) Emergency Housing Program has been supported by federal funding for the duration of the pandemic. The program was greatly expanded to create non-congregate sheltering opportunities, and since 2020, the Department for Children and Families has served a record number of households experiencing homelessness. As the federal funding comes to an end, the GA Emergency Housing Program will narrow eligibility during warmer months to pre-pandemic criteria, while maintaining expanded eligibility during winter months. Expanded "Adverse Weather Condition" eligibility will end on June 1st, with additional eligibility restrictions ending July 1. See attached Appendices for data on the number and type of households anticipated to exit the Emergency Housing Program by AHS district.

There are several efforts underway to provide households with resources and supports to identify alternative safe housing. At the same time, the Department recognizes that there are more than one hundred Vermonters already experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and there is a significant potential to see the unsheltered population expand over the coming months.

Unsheltered homelessness is closely connected to declines in physical health, mental health, substance use and other conditions. Preventing and addressing unsheltered homelessness is a high priority for communities and the Department.

Purpose

The Department aims to partner with local leaders to strengthen and accelerate local efforts to prevent and address unsheltered homelessness. There are significant new ongoing and one-time resources anticipated. This memo seeks to identify partners from a variety of sectors who seek to implement immediate response efforts, and to better understand the interest and resource needs that the State may be able to support. Specifically, we invite local leaders to:

- Submit a Letter of Interest to identify immediate funding or resource needs. We encourage organizations to submit letters as early as possible. While Letters of Interest will be accepted, reviewed and approved on an ongoing basis, the Department requests Letters of Interest by June 1, 2023 to support statewide planning. This invitation for Letters of Interest, is in addition to (not in place of) the Department's Housing Opportunity Grant Program application process.
- Contact the local Agency of Human Services Field Directors to join local homeless/housing coalition or task force meetings: <https://humanservices.vermont.gov/about-us/field-services>

The Department is interested in funding and/or supporting the following:

1. New community center/day shelter capacity to provide regular daytime access to shelter, services, showers, food, clothing, computers, *etc.*;
2. New emergency shelter capacity, including but not limited to, temporary congregate shelter facilities;
3. Medical respite shelter capacity to support households experiencing homelessness who have subacute medical care needs but no longer require inpatient or emergency care; other specialized shelter capacity to support households who require assistance with daily living or have significant, complex mental health needs;
4. Street outreach services to engage and connect people experiencing unsheltered homelessness with shelter, housing and services;
5. Expansion of transitional and permanent supported housing programs to prevent unsheltered homelessness for individuals exiting mental health or substance use treatment and/or re-entry following incarceration;
6. Planning and coordination for immediate efforts to prevent and address unsheltered homelessness, as well as planning and coordination support to expand and coordinate longer-term emergency shelter needs in communities; and/or
7. Other critical needs related to preventing and addressing unsheltered homelessness during 2023.

Letter of Interest Submissions

Interested organizations and leaders are invited to submit a cover letter and project description per the attached instructions by **June 1**.

Prior to submission, staff are available to answer questions and discuss proposals. Please submit all letters of interest and questions to 2023HomelessResponse@vermont.gov

The Department is hosting Open Office Hours in May and June where questions can also be directed:

Mondays May 22nd, June 5th and June 19th, 11am - Noon

Microsoft Teams meeting

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 297 463 576 013

Passcode: hSgBYs

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 802-552-8456](tel:+18025528456), 151619790# United States, Montpelier

Phone Conference ID: 151 619 790#

Instructions for Letters of Interest to Prevent & Address Unsheltered Homelessness in Vermont

Send to 2023HomelessResponse@vermont.gov

In a **Cover Letter** or Email, please include:

- Organization
- Point of Contact (name, phone number, email)
- Key Partners
- Geographic area to serve (AHS District, Geographic Area or Towns)
- Areas of Interest (#1-6)

Please include a brief Project/Proposal Description

Include a short summary or description of the proposed project, including any known or anticipated timeline.

- For day or overnight shelter proposals, please include estimated capacity. Please describe the shelter model, if known.
- For services, please include desired capacity or caseload (for example, projected households served).

Provide any additional information that would be helpful. Are these project components identified already? If so, please describe. If not yet procured or identified, please identify any support needed.

- Facility
- Management
- Staffing
- Programming or Specialized Services
 - Children or Youth
 - Medical, Mental Health and/or Disability Care
 - Other
- Consultant to Support Planning/Coordination
- Ancillary Services: Food, Security, Transportation

What is the anticipated funding need?

In addition to funding, please identify whether any of the following resources could be helpful:

- Site identification or State leased property
- State contracted staff or temp staffing
- Planning or development consultants – list or state supplied
- State supplied: food, security service, transportation
- Other specific needs or requests

Department for Children and Families - General Assistance Emergency Housing, May 2023 Households Enrolled by Eligibility

Agency of Human Services (AHS) District	Adverse Weather Conditions (All Household Members are 18 years & older)	Age 60 years & older	Death of a Spouse or Minor Child	Disability (SSI/SSDI)	Domestic Violence	Families with Children	Health Code Violations/ Constructive Eviction	Natural Disaster (Fire, Flood, Hurricane)	Pregnant	Grand Total
Barre District Office	92	10		78	4	43	6			233
Bennington District Office	68	4		76	1	36	4		2	191
Brattleboro District Office	70	5		76	4	25			1	181
Burlington District Office	169	14		83	4	54	14	1	2	341
Hartford District Office	35	4		41	4	8			1	93
Middlebury District Office	8	1		8		1			1	19
Morrisville District Office	11	4		12		5	1			33
Newport District Office	8	2		9		2				21
Rutland District Office	183	14	1	183	7	75	10	1	5	479
Springfield District Office	25	4		28		11	4			72
St Albans District Office	35	4		28	2	6	2			77
St Johnsbury District Office	26	6		24	2	20	1	1		80
Grand Total	730	72	1	646	28	286	42	3	12	1820

Adverse Weather Conditions ends on 6/1/2023	7/1 eligibility will change to Ages 65 yrs & older					7/1 eligibility will change to Families with Children ages 6 yrs & younger			7/1 eligibility will change to pregnancy in the third trimester	
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Note: GA Emergency Housing reverts to pre-covid rules and eligibility on July 1, 2023.

On July 1, some households will no longer be eligible due to having already used the maximum benefit (nights) available to them.

On July 1, households will be required to contribute 30% of their income towards housing.

The Department is committed to providing ongoing, additional data related to changes in eligible populations.