

## General Assistance Housing Cold Weather Exception (CWE) for the 2016-17 Season

In harsh winter weather, eligibility for temporary shelter through Vermont's General Assistance (GA) and Emergency Assistance (EA) programs will be relaxed to encourage persons who are homeless and without adequate financial resources to seek safe shelter.

- A. Eligibility for temporary housing will be relaxed when any of the following conditions exist - or are anticipated to exist within the hours of 6 p.m. – 6 a.m. - based on the town in which the district office is located.
1. Temperatures or Wind Chill are less than 20 degrees (F); or
  2. Temperatures are less than 32 degrees (F) with a higher than 50% chance of precipitation reported.
- B. To ensure that CWE is consistently applied throughout the state, the following practice will be used:
1. Each morning the General Assistance (GA) program team will review the forecast, using National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - Weather Service, for the entire state and determine where CWE will be in effect for that day.
  2. The GA program team will post CWE criteria for that day on the Economic Services Division (ESD) Internet by 8:00 a.m. If prior to a weekend, holiday or the weather forecast warrants an extended authorization, multiple days will be posted at one time.
  3. To ensure consistency, the Economic Services Division will use the forecast for the town in which the district office is located. All towns served by that district office will have their CWE based on the determination made for that district office.
- C. The GA income contribution requirement outlined in Rule 2652.3 and Interpretive Memo facing Rule 2652 dated 7/30/2014 applies to the CWE.
- D. If a household applying for or granted temporary housing under CWE loses their temporary housing at a shelter, hotel or similar establishment for not following the rules of the establishment, the household will be ineligible for further temporary housing for 30 days beginning with the date of ejection from the shelter, motel, or similar establishment.
- If a household applying for temporary housing under CWE refused available shelter space or did not show up at the shelter in time to accept available shelter space, the household will be ineligible for further temporary housing for a period of 30 days beginning with the date the applicant refused available shelter space or did not show up at the shelter in time to accept available shelter space.
- Also if a household does not apply at an ESD office the following business day after being housed by 211, the household will be ineligible for further temporary housing until they apply at the ESD office.
- E. Although there is no cap on the number of nights temporary housing can be authorized under CWE, nights received under CWE will count toward the maximum number of nights that can be received under catastrophic criteria (84 nights in a 12-month period) or vulnerable populations (28 nights in a 12-month period).