

General Assistance COVID-19 Procedures

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New Applicants

(Initial Housing Application)

Temporary Housing EH-700, FH-701, EH701.1, EH-701.2

- Telephone interviews: ESD continues to conduct telephonic interviews.
 - Call-backs must be completed via a Genesys line (Interaction Desktop), to record the interview.
 - You must log in as “Outbound Calls” to prevent Interview or General Queue calls from being routed to your line.
- The district where the individual/family geographically resides, (i.e., Address in CASE/D), will be the district office that “holds” the case.
- This is the district where the management team that receives the call will forward the case.
 - Example: Mailing address is Burlington General Delivery, it is a YDO case, and the guest is currently at a hotel in Rutland – the call back request would be forwarded to the BDO Management Team
 - If an individual/family reports they intend to remain at the new location, the case will transfer to the “new” district.
 - Management Teams should communicate between districts if there is the potential for duplication on COVID Trackers.
- If an applicant is found eligible and hotel capacity is limited, the BPS should make 5 attempts to house the applicant. These attempts must be documented in CATN. If space is not available, deny application: “The GA Emergency Housing program cannot assist with the item you requested.”

COVID Screening Questions

- In the past 14 days:
 1. Have you been in contact with any person who is infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)? YES OR NO
 2. Have you had any of the following symptoms –cough, high temperature, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing? YES OR NO

Shelter Space

- Shelter first: ESD will not house if **shelter space** is available (**EH-725**).
 - If the applicant has a physical or mental disability and cannot stay in a shelter:
 - First check with the shelter to see if the shelter can make special arrangements/ a reasonable accommodation.
 - If the shelter is not able to do accommodate the applicant, the applicant's health care provider or anyone with knowledge of the disability must document the reason they cannot stay in a shelter on the form 218M or equivalent. We do not mandate the form, only the information on the form.
 - If an applicant did not accept available shelter space or was asked to leave a shelter for not following shelter rules, they are ineligible for 30 days from the day they were asked to leave the shelter (**EH-725.1**).
- **Districts may approve 218M forms if they are not questionable. GA AOps will review 218M forms for denials and modifications.**

Vermont Residency

- Must be living in Vermont voluntarily and not for a temporary purpose (**EH-715**).
 - Ask applicants new to the state if they plan on staying. If the applicant intends to stay, they are potentially eligible. If the applicant is in Vermont for a temporary purpose, such as a temporary visit, they are not eligible and should be denied.
 - **There is no requirement that applicants be a US citizen or legal alien.**

Causing One's Own Loss of Housing

- **Must not have caused their own loss of housing within the past 90 days** – unless they left for health or safety reasons (**EH-730**).
 - Causing one's own loss of housing includes, but is not limited to, violent behavior, a Relief

from Abuse (temporary or final order) that prevents you from returning to your home or leaving housing where you could have stayed.

- The 90 days begins the day the applicant leaves their housing.
- Verification required: collateral call to where applicant was staying, letter from health inspector, verification from landlord.
- If the applicant's disability was a factor in causing loss of housing, a reasonable accommodation can be requested. Send to AOps.

Categorical Eligibility

- **Households must meet one of the following *Categories* (EH-720):**
- A family with a child or children under the age of 18, or who are 18 or 19 and attending secondary education full-time or an equivalent level of vocational or technical training.
 - Verification required:
 - check ACCESS, check OnBase for a 216, any source that reliably verifies custody.
 - Children must be in the household.
 - Families with children may request housing beyond 84 days in 30-day increments. This is an exception and should be sent to GA AOps.
- A household that includes a person aged 60 or older.
 - Verification required:
 - check ACCESS or request ID.
- A household that includes a pregnant person.
 - Verify if questionable:
 - check ACCESS- CATN or PREG panel, collateral call to healthcare provider, letter from healthcare provider.
- Lost housing due to a natural disaster such as a flood, fire, or hurricane.
 - Verification required:
 - news article, news report, report from the Red Cross.
- Fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to violence against a household member that cause them to reasonably believe that they are at risk of further harm if they remain in the unit, or if the relevant incident occurred within your home.
 - **If housing in a district where there is a Community Investment please deny the application or explain and ask them to withdraw and direct them to the Sister Agency to be housed.**

- **If the applicant is asked to leave a hotel while housed by the sister agency, a grievance should be filed with the sister agency.**
- Verification required:
 - a relief-from-abuse restraining order or order against stalking or sexual assault; observable physical evidence of abuse;
 - corroboration of domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, or stalking from police, hospitals, court officials, physicians, nurses, or any other credible sources;
 - a determination of abuse by staff at a domestic violence shelter or organization; a waiver of the Reach Up requirement to cooperate in pursuing child support (seerule2235.2);
 - or a deferment or modification of the Reach Up work requirement due to the effects of domestic violence (see rule 2363.1).
- A Town Health Officer, the Division of Fire Safety, or another governmental entity has declared your rental unit has safety violations that make it unsafe for you to live there. The report must be dated within the last two weeks or the inspector must confirm that the unit is still unsafe for you to live in (examples of unsafe living conditions that might appear in a report: are: no water, if water was provided; no heat, if heat was provided; an unvented heating system; failed septic system; or structural failure)
 - Verification required:
 - Copy of inspection, copy of lease if there is one.
 - Applicant must verify they were living in the residence. If the applicant was not on the lease, the applicant must provide other verification of tenancy, such as an electric bill in their name, checks that were deposited by the landlord for the rent amount, etc.
 - Verification MUST be from a government entity. Verification from a private tradesperson is not acceptable.
- The landlord has willfully caused, directly or indirectly, the interruption of any utility service being supplied to the household for more than a temporary interruption for emergency repairs, or if the landlord directly or indirectly denies access to or possession of the rented or leased premises, except through the proper judicial process.
 - Verification required:
 - collateral call to the landlord or property manager, documentation from local

authority. If the landlord caused the issue and refuses to verify, seek alternate verification sources.

- A household that includes a person with a disability, includes someone who receives SSI, SSDI, VA disability benefits, Medicaid for the Aged, Blind and Disabled (MABD), or whose health care professional provides documentation that the individual is unable to work due to a disability for at least three months (when the disability significantly impairs activities of daily living (ADL) or those enrolled, or likely eligible for Choices for Care, Developmental Services, CRT, Brain Injury program, Attendant services, [you may request housing beyond the 84 nights, 30 days at a time, if actively working with a service provider to find permanent housing (See EH-755)].
 - Verification required:
 - 210A or letter from a provider
 - Applicant must be unable to work due to a disability for at least 3 months.
 - 210A questions 6 (How long do you expect this illness, injury or condition to last?) and 9 (If this individual is unable to work at his or her usual occupation, could he or she work in any other type of employment?) must be completed.
 - Verification of receipt of SSI, SSDI, VA Benefits, or Medicaid for the Aged, Blind and Disabled (MABD)
 - ADL/ Process for Determining Disability:
 - When applicant indicated that their disability significantly impairs their activities of daily living (ADL) or those enrolled, or likely eligible for Choices for Care, Developmental Services, CRT, Brain Injury program, Attendant services grant for 2 weeks and email GA AOps with the case name and information and supporting documents and GA AOps will connect with DAIL Nurse CM.

Income Eligibility

- Gross monthly income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) **(EH-735)**.
 - Income before any deductions such as taxes, child support, etc.
 - Verification required.

Resource Limit

- No more than \$2,250 in available resources **[EH-705(4)]**. This includes everyone in the household **(EH-745)**.

- Verification required only if questionable.
- After the initial period of emergency housing, if you apply for additional emergency housing, you will need to have taken steps to access other resources such as cash value of life insurance, sale of stock, bonds, or mutual funds, or other reasonably accessible resources to meet your housing needs. This does not include any type of retirement accounts. Future emergency housing applications will be evaluated in relation to whether you have taken reasonable steps to access these resources. If you have not taken steps to access these resources, your application will be denied.
- This does not include any money contributed as part of the Vermont Match Savings Program, an ABLÉ Account or PASS plan.

Housing Case Management/Coordinated Entry

- For the Department to continue to house in a motel, returning applicants must work with a housing agency to find long term housing **(EH-750)**.
 - New applicants should be referred to housing case management. They will be required to verify they are working with a case manager when they reapply.

Period of Ineligibility

- Inform eligible applicants that certain behaviors may result in a Period of Ineligibility.
- **If asked to leave a motel**, clients will not be eligible to be placed in a motel by the Department **(EH-765)**:
 - For a first violation, the POI is 15 days,
 - For a second and any other violations, the POI is 30 days.
- For list of violations, refer to POI section of procedures.
- **If a guest is asked to leave a hotel and requests a fair hearing, they should be housed pending the hearing.**

Grant Periods

- Households can receive up to 84 days of emergency housing from June 1st 2021 through June 30th, 2022. The 84 days begin once the applicant is subject to these rules.
- Can be granted in up to 30-day increments if they are eligible, or until income is received.
 - For applicants with income, house until income is received if the applicant must contribute toward their own housing.

Worksheets, Denials, and CATN

- Complete 30% Income Contribution Calculator for cases where the applicant must contribute toward their own housing.
- Complete 220GAD-EH for ineligible applicants.
- Applications do not need to be entered in ACCESS.
- CATN any action taken.
- Approval letter, only upon request.

No-Shows and Abandoning Rooms

- Applicant(s) are ineligible for the duration of the grant
- If questionable please send to GA AOps for review

Applicants Who Are Reapplying for Emergency Housing

COVID Screening Questions

- In the past 14 days:
 1. Have you been in contact with any person who is infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)? YES OR NO
 2. Have you had any of the following symptoms –cough, high temperature, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing? YES OR NO

Shelter Space

- Shelter first: ESD will not house if **shelter space** is available (**EH-725**).
 - If the applicant has a physical or mental disability and cannot stay in a shelter:
 - First check with the shelter to see if the shelter can make special arrangements/ a reasonable accommodation.
 - If the shelter is not able to do accommodate the applicant, the applicant's health care provider or anyone with knowledge of the disability must document the reason they cannot stay in a shelter on the form 218M or equivalent. We do not mandate the form, only the information on the form.
 - If an applicant did not accept available shelter space or was asked to leave a shelter for not following shelter rules, they are ineligible for 30 days from the day they were asked to leave the shelter (**EH-725.1**).
- **Districts may approve 218M forms if they are not questionable. GA AOps will review 218M forms for denials and modifications.**

Period of Ineligibility

- The list of behaviors that result in a POI have changed, please refer to the POI section of procedures or rule EH-765.
 - The first POI **cannot** be reduced to 7 days under EH-765
- Confirm whether or not the applicant is on a Period of Ineligibility
- **If asked to leave a motel**, clients will not be eligible to be placed in a motel by the Department (**EH-765**):
 - For a first violation, the POI is 15 days,
 - For a second and any other violations, the POI is 30 days.

- **If a guest is asked to leave a hotel and requests a fair hearing, they should be housed pending the hearing.**
- For list of violations, refer to POI section of procedures.

Income Eligibility

- Gross monthly income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) **(EH-735)**.

Resource Limit

- No more than \$2,250 in available resources **[EH-705(4)]**. This includes everyone in the household **(EH-745)**.
 - After the initial period of emergency housing, if you apply for additional emergency housing, you will need to have taken steps to access other resources such as cash value of life insurance, sale of stock, bonds, or mutual funds, or other reasonably accessible resources to meet your housing needs. This does not include any type of retirement accounts. Future emergency housing applications will be evaluated in relation to whether you have taken reasonable steps to access these resources. If you have not taken steps to access these resources, your application will be denied.
 - This does not include any money contributed as part of the Vermont Match Savings Program, an ABLE Account or PASS plan.

Housing Case Management/Coordinated Entry

- For the Department to continue to house in a motel, returning applicants must work with a housing agency to find long term housing **(EH-750)**.
 - Verification required: collateral call to community partner or recent CATN.
 - Applicants not working with a case manager should be denied until they have met with a case manager.

Grant Periods

- Households can receive up to 84 days of emergency housing from June 1st 2021 through June 30th, 2022. The 84 days begin once the applicant is subject to these rules.
- Can be granted in up to 30-day increments if they are eligible, or until income is received.
 - For applicants with income, house until income is received if the applicant must contribute toward their own housing.

Worksheets, Denials, and CATN

- Complete 30% Income Contribution Calculator for cases where the applicant must contribute toward their own housing.
- Complete 220GAD-EH for ineligible applicants.
- Applications do not need to be entered in ACCESS.
- CATN any action taken.
- Approval letter, only upon request.

No-Shows and Abandoning Rooms

- Applicant(s) are ineligible for the duration of the grant
- If questionable please send to GA AOps for review

Period of Ineligibility (POI) (EH-765)

- ***This rule does not apply to parent(s) or qualified caretaker(s), as defined in Reach Up rule 2230.1, if you have a child or children living with you who are under the age of 18, or who are age 18 or 19 attending secondary education full time or an equivalent level of vocational or technical training and who are included as part of the household in the current emergency housing grant.***
- You will not be eligible to be placed in a hotel/motel by the Department for a period of time if you are asked to leave a hotel/motel for:
 - Violent Criminal Behavior
 - Attempted violent criminal behavior
 - Theft of a \$75 or greater value from Hotel/motel or guests
 - Creating safety hazards (examples: disabling smoke detectors, placing tape over a smoke detector, using appliances or heaters which create a fire hazard, blocking exits, disabling any type of alarm)
 - Threatening other guests or motel staff, or having guests that threaten others
 - Sale or distribution of illegal substances
 - Destruction of property (intentional damage or misuse)
- POI Violation period:
 - For a first violation, the POI is 15 days
 - For a second and any other violations, the POI will be 30 days
- Any Period of Ineligibility incurred prior to July 1st, 2021 will not count after July 1st, 2021 for applicants in housing on May 31st, 2021.
- **If a guest is asked to leave a hotel and requests a fair hearing, they should be housed pending the hearing.**
 - **Any nights not housed by ESD pending a fair hearing count toward the POI.**
 - ***Example: Guest is asked to leave on Monday. Spends Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday night outside, requests a hearing on Thursday. Housed by ESD on Thursday pending the hearing. The POI should be shortened by 3 days to account for the 3 days the guest was not housed. A 15 day POI would be reduced to 12 days, a 30 day POI would be reduced to 27 days.***
- For list of violations, refer to POI section of procedures.
- Refer to June POI desk aid for additional help

Housing Applicants in Separate GA Households Together

(EH-760)

- Individuals who are not members of the same applicant household **(EH-705)** may request to be housed together in the same hotel/motel room
- House no more than two separate applicants together
 - Separate applications need to be completed and be approved for a motel voucher individually *(unless they have a reasonable accommodation to have a caretaker reside with them)*
- Each applicant must indicate at the time of the interview that they would like to be housed with the other individual. *If the Department has safety concerns it may choose to house the applicants separately.*
 - Each applicant must continue to meet all program requirements
 - The applicants' income will be considered together and calculated as one household for the purposes of determining the 30 percent income contribution **(EH-740)**
 - Be sure to grant under the same HH each time and CATN both cases
 - ERAP months count for all applicants, not just the applicant in who's name the room is reserved
 - Refer to housing together desk aid and review housing together letter.

Income

(EH-735)

- Must have gross monthly income at or below 185% of FPL
- Gross income (before things like taxes are taken off) from **all sources.**

# People in Household	Maximum Gross Monthly Income (185% of FPL)	# People in Household	Maximum Gross Monthly Income (185% of FPL)
1	\$1,969	6	\$5,421
2	\$2,659	7	\$6,113
3	\$3,349	8	\$6,803
4	\$4,041	9	\$7,495
5	\$4,731	10	\$8,187

For each additional person add \$692.

30% Income Contribution

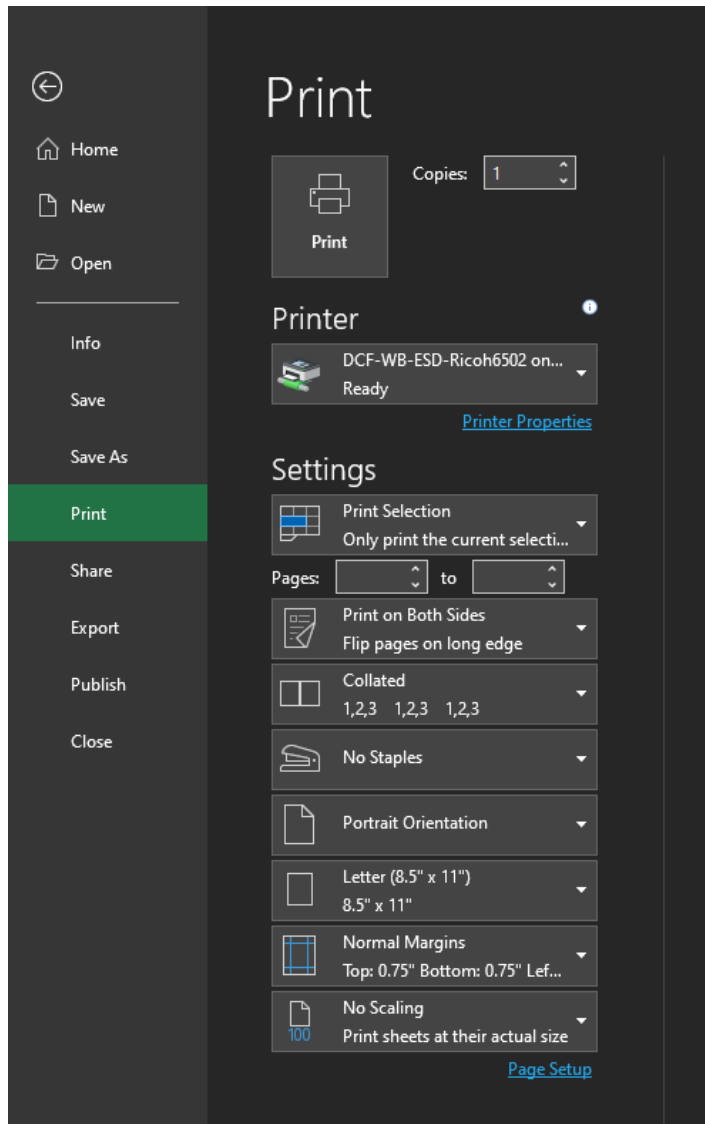
(EH-740)

- Applicants with net monthly income, as calculated under Reach Up, less than or equal to the Reach Up basic need standard for a household of their size do not need to contribute toward the cost of their own housing.
- Emergency housing applicants with net monthly household income greater than the Reach Up basic need standard for a household of the same size shall be required to contribute 30 percent of their net household income toward the cost of emergency housing.
- Applicants with net monthly income, as calculated under Reach Up, greater than the Reach Up basic need standard for a household of their size must contribute toward the cost of their own housing.
- If 30% of the applicant’s net income divided by the average motel rate is less than the cost of two days at the average motel rate, the applicant is not required to contribute toward their own housing.

Number in Assistance Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 or more
Basic Needs	\$585	\$771	\$1011	\$1209	\$1418	\$1560	\$1803	\$2012	Add \$193 for each additional person

- How it works:
 - Applicants will be housed until the day income is received.
 - When income is received, ESD will not house applicants for the number of days they are responsible for.
 - This is calculated using the Reach Up net income rules. Use the Income Contribution calculator on the ESD calculator.
 - 30% of net income is divided by the average motel rate in the district, rounded down to the nearest whole number. This is the number of nights the applicant is responsible for.
 - If an applicant from one district is housed in another district, use the higher of the two averages.

- Applicants do not need to provide proof they have paid for any nights and may choose not to pay for any. ESD will not house them during this period.
 - Applicants responsible for less than two nights do not have to contribute toward their own housing.
- How to use the Income Contribution Calculator
 - Enter gross wages and net self-employment on Line 1.
 - Enter any payments for dependent care for a non-household member on Line 1a.
 - Enter any Alimony and Child Support paid on Line 2b.
 - Select the \$250 disregard on Line 1c if the applicant has earned income.
 - The subtotal will appear on Line 1d.
 - Disregard 25% of remaining income. The calculator will do this for you on Line 1e.
 - Enter any dependent care costs for an incapacitated adult on Line 1f. This is rare.
 - Line 1g displays net earned income.
 - Enter any unearned income on Line 2
 - **COUNT \$77 OF SSI INCOME only. If an applicant receives less than \$77 of SSI, count the actual amount.**
 - Enter any alimony, child support payments, or utility allowance payments received on Line 2a.
 - Line 2b displays net unearned income.
 - Line 3 displays net income. **This must higher than the Reach Up Basic Need Standard for their household size in order for the applicant to be required to contribute toward their own housing.**
 - Enter the cost of the average hotel night in the district (located on motel list on the ESD Intranet).
 - Use the Number of Nights the Applicant is Responsible for
 - Select the 30% Income Calculator in Excel
 - Go to File > Print
 - In Print Settings, change the first setting below “Printer” to “Print Selection”. Print the calculator, send to onbase.



Resources

(EH-745)

- You may not have more than \$2,250 in available resources [EH-705(4)]. This includes everyone in the household.
 - After the initial period of emergency housing, if you apply for additional emergency housing, you will need to have taken steps to access other resources such as cash value of life insurance, sale of stock, bonds, or mutual funds, or other reasonably accessible resources to meet your housing needs. This does not include any type of retirement accounts. Future emergency housing applications will be evaluated in relation to whether you have taken reasonable steps to access these resources. If you have not taken steps to access these resources, your application will be denied.
 - This does not include any money contributed as part of the Vermont Match Savings Program, an ABLE Account or PASS plan.
 - All trusts should be sent to AOps for review
 - Special needs trusts are not countable resources

Housing Case Management/Coordinated Entry

(EH-750)

- Returning applicants must work with a housing agency to find long term housing and be enrolled in Coordinated Entry
 - Verification needed: Collateral call, email or letter from a community partner, CATN from recent HRT meeting

Fair Hearings

- Please refer to the Expedited FH process
 - All fair hearing requests should be emailed to the Fair Hearing Coordinator for submission to the portal
- Social Security numbers must be redacted from documents, leaving only the last four of the SSN(for example, xxx-xx-1234)
- Clients should be housed pending a hearing ***ONLY IF THEY ARE CONTESTING A PERIOD OF INELIGIBILITY*****(EH-765)**
- **Make sure to note whether this is the applicant's first violation or a subsequent violation.**

COVID Tracker

- The GA COVID tracker serves many purposes. We need to provide accurate and timely information daily.
- POI
 - These are captured as part of the tracker. Please continue to communicate this information, following district protocol.

Non-Catastrophic General Assistance

The following is in addition to standard non-catastrophic GA procedures.

230/230A Processing

1. BPS determines applicant must sign 230/230A to receive Non-Catastrophic General Assistance
2. BPS explains 230/230A form to applicant during interview
3. BPS notes in CATN that form was explained to applicant at time of mailing
4. BPS receives signed 230/230A from applicant
5. BPS emails case information to supervisor in office
6. Supervisor prints signed 230/230A from Onbase, signs as department representative, sends form back to Onbase