

# General Assistance COVID-19 Procedures

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## Telephone Requests for GA

- 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 client is currently at a hotel in Rutland – the call back request would be forwarded to the BDO Management Team

## Exceptions for housing applicants

- 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.

## Housing Application Call-backs

- ESD continues to accept applications over the phone
  - The BPS will complete the 201G
  - Signatures are not required
- Call-backs must be completed via a Genesys  line (Interaction Desktop), to record the interview.
- You must log in as “Outbound Calls” in order to prevent Interview or General Queue calls being routed to your line.

## COVID Tracker

The GA COVID tracker serves many purposes. We need to provide accurate and timely information daily.

### Meals

The COVID Trackers are collected each night and resorted by hotel to be shared with the feeding groups throughout the state.

### POI

These are captured as part of the COVID tracker. Please continue to communicate this information, following district protocol.

## Temporary Housing

### New Applicants

- Must be US citizen or legal alien
- Must be without shelter OR
- Must have a medical need to isolate or quarantine
- Must intend to live in Vermont if they are new to the state
- Must meet income and resource eligibility guidelines
  - Income: 185% of FPL by household size
  - Resources: Not more than \$2,250 in liquid resources per household
- In the previous 90 days, must not have voluntarily left a place they could have stayed
  - “Voluntarily” means leaving a place by choice, not causing eviction through behavior
- Appropriate shelter space must not be available
  - If an applicant states they are unable to stay at a shelter, contact shelter to see if an accommodation can be made to allow the applicant to accept shelter space
- In the previous 30 days, must not have refused shelter space or been asked to leave a shelter for not following rules
- Complete [203G-COVID](#) for applicants with income
- Complete [220GAD-COVID](#) for ineligible applicants

### Returning Applicants

- Must be US citizen or legal alien
- Must not be on a Period of Ineligibility (POI) for any reason listed in GA-120
- Must meet income and resource limits
  - Income: At or below 185% of FPL by household size
  - Resources: Not more than \$2,250 in liquid resources per household
- Must be engaging in ongoing housing case management and enrolled in Coordinated Entry (verification required)
- Appropriate shelter space must not be available
  - If an applicant states they are unable to stay at a shelter, contact shelter to see if an accommodation can be made to allow the applicant to accept shelter space
- In the previous 30 days, must not have refused shelter space or been asked to leave a shelter for not following rules
- Complete [203G-COVID](#) for applicants with income
- Complete [220GAD-COVID](#) for ineligible applicants

## Vermont Residency

- To be eligible for temporary housing, applicants must intend to live in Vermont
  - BPS should ask applicants new to the state if they plan on staying. If the applicant intends to stay, they can be housed. If the applicant is in Vermont for a temporary purpose, they are not eligible.

## Refusal of Shelter Space

- As shelters open at reduced capacity, applicants are expected to accept appropriate shelter space when available
  - If an applicant requests a reasonable accommodation due to a disability, contact the shelter to determine if arrangements can be made that would allow the applicant to stay there
  - If arrangements cannot be made, request a 218M or equivalent
- If an applicant refuses appropriate shelter space, they are ineligible for 30 days
- If an applicant is asked to leave a shelter for not following the rules, they are ineligible for 30 days
- These clients should not be added to the POI tracker

## Period of Ineligibility (POI)

- **The Period of Ineligibility does not apply to parent(s) or qualified caretaker(s) as defined in Reach Up rule 2230.1, if they have a child or children living with them 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 temporary housing grant.**
- Clients asked to leave a hotel/motel for violating GA-120 are subject to a Period of Ineligibility
  - First violation: 15 days
    - During the first POI, if a client's housing case manager contacts ESD and verifies the client continues to work on permanent housing, the POI may be shortened to 7 days
  - Subsequent violations: 30 days
  - If a client requests to be rehoused within 3 days of receiving a notice to vacate, house for 3 days. Do not house more than 3 days unless the client requests a hearing
  - If the client requests a hearing, house the client until ESD receives a recommendation (verbal or written) from the Hearing Officer
  - Any time during which the client was not housed prior to the hearing counts towards the POI (example: Exited 7/1, asks to be rehoused 7/3. The nights of 7/1 and 7/2 count towards their total POI)
  - If the client is housed pending the hearing, the POI begins when ESD is affirmed in the hearing
    - Any days the client was not housed after receiving their notice to vacate count towards the POI
- Clients will only be given a Period of Ineligibility if they violate rule GA – 120. Denials of a public benefit must be based on GA-120, not hotel rules.
  - For example, a client kicked out for having guests will not necessarily be subject to a POI. If the guests disturbed other guest's quiet enjoyment of the property, a POI will be imposed. If the guests were not disruptive and no GA – 120 violations occurred, a POI will not be imposed.

- Upon being asked to leave a hotel, the client should be served a Notice to Vacate by hotel staff
- The hotel or the Economic Services Department must provide the client with a Notice to Vacate. If the notice is not provided, ESD cannot enforce a POI
- If a hotel is unable to provide the client with the Notice to Vacate at the time the client is asked to leave the hotel, ESD will obtain the Notice to Vacate from the hotel as soon as possible, mail the Notice to Vacate to the client's last known address, and CATN that the notice has been mailed.
  - Alternatively, ESD may complete the Notice to Vacate and mail it to the client's last known address

### No-Shows and Abandoning Rooms

- Client(s) are ineligible for the duration of the grant
  - If questionable please send to GA AOps for review
- Do not add these clients to the POI tracker

### Housing Applicants in Separate GA Households Together

- To be housed together, applicants must both be eligible individually
- To determine eligibility, calculate income and resources separately
- Both applicants must be engaged in coordinated entry and housing case management
- 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

### Income

- To be eligible, household income must be at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Use gross income from the 30 days prior to application
- Income must be verified
- PUA benefits are not countable as income

Household Size	185% of FPL
1	\$1,969
2	\$2,659
3	\$3,349
4	\$4,041
5	\$4,731
6	\$5,421
7	\$6,113
8	\$6,803
9	\$7,495
10	\$8,187
Each Additional Member	+\$692

## Resources

- Combined liquid resources may not exceed \$2,250 per household
  - Liquid resources include but are not limited to: cash on hand; gift cards; checking accounts; savings accounts; debit accounts; savings certificates (CD); stocks; bonds; retirement accounts; trust accounts that are accessible to any member of the household
- If applicants are unable to access resources immediately, they may be housed until resources are available.
  - Applicants should be housed for short periods and are required to provide verification of their attempts to access resources and verification of when resources will be available.
- Verify only if questionable
- PUA benefits are not countable as resources

## Housing Case Management/Coordinated Entry

- Returning applicants must be actively working with a community partner to obtain permanent housing
- Returning applicants must be enrolled in Coordinated Entry
- This must be verified
  - Collateral call to community partner
  - Email from community partner
  - Letter from community partner

**Note:** Verification will vary by district. Please work with your local community partners to determine the best method of verification in your district.

## Fair Hearings

- 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\*\*\*

## COVID Housing Rules

[General/Emergency Temporary Housing Waiver and Variance of Rules Through March 31, 2021](#)

### Letters to Hotel Guests

[May 13<sup>th</sup> Letter to Guests](#)

[May 22<sup>nd</sup> Letter to Guests](#)

[May 28<sup>th</sup> Letter to Guests](#)

[June 4<sup>th</sup> Letter to Guests](#)

[June 4<sup>th</sup> Letter to Community Partners](#)

[June 22<sup>nd</sup> Letter to Guests](#)

[July 16<sup>th</sup> Letter to Guests](#)

[July 17<sup>th</sup> Letter to Guests](#)

[July 29<sup>th</sup> Letter to Guests](#)



## Non-Catastrophic General Assistance

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

### 230/230A Processing

BPS determines applicant must sign 230/230A to receive Non-Catastrophic General Assistance

- BPS explains 230/230A form to applicant during interview
- BPS notes in CATN that form was explained to applicant at time of mailing

BPS receives signed 230/230A form from applicant

- BPS emails case information to supervisor in office
- Supervisor prints signed 230/230A from Onbase, signs as department representative, sends form back to Onbase