

## **General Assistance Housing Adverse Weather Conditions (AWC) for the 2023-2024 Season**

In harsh winter weather commencing November 15, 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 beginning November 15, 2023 through December 15, 2023 and March 15, 2024 through April 15, 2024, **weather dependent**. Eligibility for temporary housing will be relaxed December 15, 2023 through March 15, 2024, **independent of weather forecasts**.
- B. Eligibility for temporary housing will be relaxed (11/15/23-12/15/23 and 3/15/24-4/15/24) when any of the following conditions exist - or are anticipated to exist – for at least three (3) hours within the hours of 6:00pm-6:00am 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 projected.
- C. To ensure AWC is consistently applied throughout the state, the following practice will be used:
  - 1. The General Assistance (GA) program team will review the forecast, using National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - Weather Service, for the entire state to determine where and when AWC will be in effect. The ESD public website will have updated determinations and statuses regarding AWC conditions.
  - 2. To ensure consistency, ESD will use the forecast for the town in which the District Office is located. All towns served by that District Office will have their AWC based on the determination made for that District Office.
- D. Temporary housing may be authorized in increments up to 30 days.
- E. The GA income contribution requirement outlined in Rule 2652.4 applies to AWC.
- F. If a household applying for or granted temporary housing under AWC 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 AWC 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.

If a household applying for temporary housing has refused available housing, the household will be deemed ineligible for a motel voucher per requirements to exhaust other housing options in Rule 2652.2

If a household does not check in at an ESD District Office or call ESD at 1-800-775-0506 the following business day after being housed by 211, the household will be ineligible for further temporary housing until they apply at an ESD District Office.

- G. Although there is no cap on the number of nights temporary housing can be authorized under AWC, nights received under AWC 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).
- H. Consistent with ESD's participation in Coordinated Entry, District Offices and the GA Housing Unit should complete a Housing Crisis Referral form for each applicant requesting housing under AWC and forward those referrals to the local continuum of care's Lead Agency.