



Department for Children and Families  
Commissioner's Office  
280 State Drive, HC 1 North  
Waterbury, VT 05671-1080  
(802) 241-0929 Fax (802) 241-0950  
[www.dcf.vermont.gov](http://www.dcf.vermont.gov)

# MEMO

---

TO: House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Sean Brown, DCF Commissioner

DATE: January 11, 2021

RE: BAA Testimony Follow-Up

---

## **Child Care:**

The ARPA Child Care Stabilization funding is dispersed in 12 monthly payments starting November 2021 and ending October 2022. Currently there are 925 providers who have applied and received funding, totaling 77% of eligible programs. The program is organized to have equal monthly payments throughout the duration of the grant. CDD tracks the amount we are obligating over the 12 months and once we hit our cap we will have to close the program to new applicants. An increase in new applicants who receive funding will not decrease monthly payments, and the State is prepared to pay out the full monthly amount to providers event at a 100% participation rate.

Of the 925 applicants for Stabilization funds, 808 programs indicated they will use funds to compensate staff and 509 indicated they will use funds for recurring bonuses for staff. These numbers are not unduplicated, and we will not know how they actually used the funds, and in what amounts, until they complete the final report in December 2022/January 2023.

Attachment: More information on the ARPA Child Care Stabilization.

## **Emergency Housing:**

The most updated GA Emergency Housing program rules are linked [here](#). The rules were updated November 4, 2021 to remove the income contribution rule to align with the Adverse Weather Conditions policy.

Follow-up questions from Rep. Taylor Small, DCF responses italicized.

1. With the current expanded access to the GA motel voucher program ending on March 1st, will all 1,300+ households participating in the GA motel voucher program qualify for the transition to ERAP?

*On March 2, the GA Emergency Housing program will still be serving Vermonters. The Adverse Weather Conditions policy will still be in effect (dependent on weather conditions) and serving participants through the expanded eligibility. We will be in the process of launching the new GA-ERAP transitional program that will help households transition in place with more stability during the length of the federal funding.*

*The households currently served by the GA Emergency Housing program will either still be in the GA Emergency Housing program or transitioning to the GA-ERAP Transitional Housing program.*

2. What are the eligibility requirements for households participating in long-term stays at motels through ERAP?

*We are still working on the eligibility criteria of the new GA-ERAP Transitional Housing program – both to support Vermonters, simplify the process for lodging establishments, and meet federal guidelines. As of now, participants have to meet the Agency definition of homelessness and meet income eligibility.*

*Other requirements from the federal government include an agreement between the occupant and the lodging establishment, income of 80% AMI or less, other income and resource documentation, and an in-person signature. Because we currently work with Vermonters to verify income, we believe we may be able to confirm the necessary 90-day verification (required by ERAP) from our data systems should we have the information from the applicant, thus simplifying the process for some applicants for some of the requirements.*

3. On March 1st, will the GA motel voucher program revert back to the rules put in place following the State of Emergency order being lifted?

*The rules put in place July 2021 continue to be in effect and will remain in effect through June 30, 2022. The GA Emergency Housing program will revert to the pre-pandemic rules on July 1, 2022.*

*The GA Emergency Housing program is currently operating under the Adverse Weather Conditions policy. On March 2, Adverse Weather Conditions policy continues but eligibility will return to the historical method of using weather forecasting to determine which days may meet those criteria.*

Follow-up questions from Rep. Kimberly Jessup, DCF responses italicized.

Regarding RRHI, do you know how much went out in total in CRF \$ for RRHI? I think of uses like bus ticket to a friend or relative's home or help with security deposit for utilities. Is this on track? Might you have other examples?

*Total CRF Spending for the Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative will be about \$2M, but these grants ended 12/21 and are still in the process of closing out. RRHI began in July 2020, spending on RRHI also slowed as other resources became available.*

*The Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative can cover a range of costs related to helping a household to safely exit from homelessness – including traditional costs such as rental assistance, security deposits, utilities, as well as transportation (including car purchase), program fees, debt, moving costs, essential home furnishings, home repair/renovation, and more. The crux of allowability is whether the assistance is necessary to help the household access a safe housing option. Households have always exited homelessness into a range of options. In many cases, Rapid Resolution is helping households to stay with family or friends – other times, it is part of helping a household to rent an apartment or a room. More than 700 households have received RRHI assistance.*

### **Food Programs:**

Historically, the Vermont Foodbank has not had funding included in the Department for Children and Families or Agency of Human Services budgets. Last year, the Legislature approved a one-time funding request in the Department's budget. We became aware of a request after the Budget Adjustment Act was finalized.

Follow up questions from Rep. Kimberly Jessup, DCF responses italicized.

1. Commissioner Brown mentions an "up" in 3Squares. This is followed by discussion of an extra \$5.7M (and I really appreciated your help in explaining that these dollars move on a monthly basis and lag in time.) The \$5.7 doesn't show in the 3Squares ups & downs (B. 322) that I have, so per the conversation, this is because it goes out directly into bank accounts, right?

*Correct, the \$5.7 million increase comes directly from the federal government (USDA) and then directly to recipients.*

*We will follow up with additional information on caseload information.*

2. It is interesting that the calculations are done on a monthly basis. What might be the rationale for doing it this way?

*This is how the USDA has outlined the funding process. Therefore, we apply to the federal government on a monthly basis and release the funding to eligible 3SquaresVT*

*recipients as soon as it has been approved. This program is dependent on the federal emergency order, therefore we only able to allocate in these shorter timeframes.*

3. I've been told that the "average" balance on an EBT card is around \$1,000 as there have been numerous pandemic-related supports. Can you help me understand this?

*We are preparing more information on average EBT benefit.*

**Residential Treatment:**

Funding amount to maintain Newbury facility and support for Becket is \$110,000. This funding is to provide consultation services with regard to the development of the residential treatment program and the physical site. The terms are 9/30/21 – 9/30/22.