

Memorandum

To: Senate Committee on Appropriations;
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare;
House Committee on Appropriations;
House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs;
House Committee on Human Services;
Joint Fiscal Office

From: Sean Brown, Commissioner

Date: April 21, 2021

Subject: Emergency Housing Workgroup Proposed Plan for SFY22

Please see the attached General Assistance Housing Proposal for SFY22 and the corresponding proposed budget language. These are provided for your review and consideration. The content of both documents has been agreed upon by the members of the legislated working group described below. Any places where there may have been disagreement have been noted as such.

The Agency of Human Services (AHS) and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) convened a General Assistance working group with members as outlined in Sec. E.321.1 of H.439 as passed by the House. Along with staff from AHS and DCF, the working group included community representation from Vermont Legal Aid, the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, the Community Action Partnership, and the Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. AHS Secretary Mike Smith and Deputy Secretary Jenney Samuelson led the workgroup through eight meetings this month to identify a path forward for the motel voucher program in SFY22.

We believe this proposal provides a thoughtful, collaborative approach to transition from the pandemic-expanded emergency housing program to a model that accounts for the anticipated shortage of motel capacity and the need to protect our most vulnerable Vermonters. This proposal lays the groundwork for ongoing planning towards a sustainable emergency housing system for SFY23 and beyond.

DCF and members of the GA working group are available to answer questions or testify as appropriate. Please contact Luciana DiRuocco, luciana.diruocco@vermont.gov, to schedule testimony. Please contact Geoffrey Pippenger, geoffrey.pippenger@vermont.gov if you have any questions about this proposal.

