

For Immediate Release, May 30, 2023

**Vermont Legal Aid Files Class Action Lawsuit to Stop
Termination of GA Emergency Housing Program**

Rebecca Duprey, Michael Grout, Brittany Plucas, Cassandra Fraser-Brown, Peter Corliss and others similarly situated, v. Vermont Agency Of Human Services, Jenney Samuelson, Secretary of the Agency of Human Services, Chris Winters, Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families; Vermont Superior Court, Washington Unit, Case No. 23-CV-02299

Vermont Legal Aid, Inc. has filed a lawsuit in the Vermont Superior Court, Washington Civil Division, to stop the Agency of Human Services (AHS) from terminating General Assistance Emergency Housing Program benefits for thousands of Vermonters.

GA emergency housing has provided shelter in motels across Vermont for people experiencing homelessness throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. AHS is now terminating the GA program in violation of Vermont law and without sufficient regard for the core principles of due process. Terminating this program is expected to unhouse approximately 2800 Vermonters, including children, elderly people, and people with disabilities, over the next two months.

The lawsuit seeks an immediate injunction from the Court to prevent the termination from taking effect and to bar AHS from terminating benefits for residents of the motels on June 1 and July 1 (Governor Phil Scott has stated that 28 days will be added to the July 1st deadline, for certain program participants, but this policy has not been formally implemented as of today). The lawsuit targets the failure of AHS to provide proper notice to program recipients that the program was ending. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit found out they had to leave their motel room by the motel staff, or by word-of-mouth from other motel residents. The lawsuit also targets the State's failure to re-establish the rules of the program after they were waived during the pandemic.

“These are fundamental violations of due process and Vermont law,” says Attorney Laura Gans, lead counsel for the plaintiffs, “and real, vulnerable Vermonters will be gravely harmed.”

For more information, please go to <https://www.vtlegalaid.org/news>

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