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GA MOTEL UPDATE: Court Denies Request for Temporary Restraining Order; Allows Termination of GA Emergency Housing Assistance to Continue

Today, the Vermont Superior Court denied Vermont Legal Aid, Inc.'s request for a temporary restraining order to stop the Agency of Human Services (AHS) from terminating the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program benefits for approximately 800 Vermonters as of June 1, 2023, and approximately 2000 more people in July.

Judge Tomasi agreed with Vermont Legal Aid attorneys that the imminent removal of people from their motel rooms and subjecting them to homelessness constitutes irreparable harm. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough to grant the restraining order allowing people to stay in their rooms. However, because the hearing today was just about the temporary restraining order, the lawsuit will continue. Judge Tomasi ordered the State to respond to the complaint by July 1.

"We are obviously very disappointed with this decision, but the Court acted quickly to schedule this hearing and acknowledged that homelessness is an imminent threat to our clients," said Attorney Laura Gans, lead counsel for Vermont Legal Aid. "We continue to pursue all remaining legal remedies as this case unfolds."

AHS has promised to restart the clock on July 1 for GA participants, reversing their previous position that they would retroactively apply time limits to people who have been in emergency housing during the past year. AHS has also promised to expand eligibility for families with children and has promised to provide notice to everyone whose eligibility may be ending in July.

Anyone currently in GA emergency housing should contact the Economic Services Division and request immediate reassessment to determine if they meet expanded eligibility requirements.

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