The Vermont Department for Children and Families extends an open invitation to participate in a statewide meeting regarding the General Assistance Housing Program. Additional information about the stakeholder input process is posted on the DCF website at http://dcf.vermont.gov/GA_Housing. On the website there is a link to a videotaped message from Commissioner Dave Yacovone about DCF's commitment to re-envision the GA Housing Program to better serve Vermonters who are at risk of homelessness. Please take a few minutes to look and listen.

WHEN: Thursday, August 9, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Gifford Hospital, Randolph
Maple Leaf/Red Clover Conference Room
Directions: http://www.giffordmed.org/directions.shtml. Look for the Conference Center Entrance from the main parking lot or use the main entrance.

WHO: Open to all who have an interest in homelessness in Vermont.

WHY: The Vermont Department for Children and Families spends in excess of $1.6 million each year to temporarily house homeless individuals and families. Most of this money is spent on local motel rooms. While this is a strategy that may be necessary to meet crisis needs, motel rooms are not adequate, especially for families, for more than a few days. For many families it takes much longer than that to secure a safe and affordable rental unit. Last year over 500 families (with and without children) sought emergency housing assistance for the second year in a row, and over 70 families received housing assistance for the third year in a row. How can we meet the needs of these families so they are not facing homelessness year after year?

Contributing to the challenge of meeting Vermonters’ temporary housing needs is the highly restrictive nature of the General Assistance program rules. It’s clear to DCF and many others the rules need a thorough review and updating to better meet the needs of the homeless population and to help address the underlying reasons for homelessness.

DCF is seeking information and ideas from community partners about how to meet Vermonters' temporary housing needs efficiently, effectively, and in a timely manner.
WHAT: At the meeting, DCF will ask participants to tell us what they think about:
- Characteristics of the current system of services and assistance that keep people from moving towards housing stability.
- Services and assistance that can help people achieve housing stability.
- Ways of determining eligibility that consider people's risk of homelessness.
- How to prioritize need in light of resource constraints.
- How best to manage the application and eligibility determination processes.

PRE-REGISTRATION:
Please pre-register by Wednesday August 1 with Luciana DiRuocco at luciana.diruocco@state.vt.us or 802-871-3385. Please provide your name, e-mail address, organizational affiliation (if any), and any requests for disability-related accommodations.