



# Municipal Support Grant Program

## Program Description, Standards, and Guidance

SFY 2027 (2026–27 Winter Season)

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### About the program

The Municipal Support Grant Program (MSGP) helps Vermont municipalities support their unhoused neighbors during periods of extreme cold. The program is established under Act 143 of 2026 at 33 V.S.A. § 2209, Other emergency housing services.

The statute directs the Department for Children and Families, through the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), to provide grants to municipalities in areas of the state with a high volume of unsheltered homelessness. This includes communities underserved by traditional funding sources.

The purpose of the program is to better enable municipalities to provide life-sustaining shelter, services, or items for community members in need.

The MSGP is administered with OEO by Get Warm Now VT, a partnership of Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) and Green Mountain Justice (GMJ).

### What this guidance covers

This document describes the MSGP for the 2026–27 winter season. It covers eligibility, what grants support, activation, operating standards, reporting, and grant administration.

### Who qualifies

Municipalities that demonstrate a commitment and ability to shelter community members during a National Weather Service (NWS) Cold Weather Advisory during the 2026–2027 winter season are eligible to apply. A municipality can meet this commitment in any of three ways:

- Direct provision through an approved shelter. The municipality documents that it is currently able to shelter community members in an existing facility approved to operate under cold weather advisory conditions
- Direct provision through a proposed shelter. The municipality submits a plan to shelter community members in a proposed municipal facility potentially capable of operating under cold weather advisory conditions

- Collaborative agreement. The municipality submits a shelter agreement with a neighboring shelter provider to facilitate the transport and return of unsheltered community members to and from an approved shelter site

Further points on eligibility:

- High volume of unsheltered homelessness is an evaluation criterion, not a screening criterion
- A municipality whose locality already has an extreme cold weather shelter is eligible to apply. Coordination between the two operations is required, and the application includes a checkbox to flag the overlap
- There are no fixed regions, communities of any size from across the state may apply
- Applicants provide a ZIP code so their locality can be monitored

## **What the grants support**

Consistent with the statute, a funded program must include a commitment to shelter community members during a Cold Weather Advisory during the winter of 2026-2027. Beyond that, communities have flexibility to design a response that fits local needs. Eligible activities may include:

- Overnight emergency shelter operations and staffing
- Repairs and readiness work at a dedicated shelter facility
- Daytime warming and provisions at the same site as the overnight shelter
- Transportation supporting cold weather sheltering, including transport under a collaborative agreement
- Life-saving supplies such as coats, sleeping bags, and tents

Shelter means overnight shelter. A municipality's commitment to operate overnight shelter is what makes a proposal eligible. Once that commitment is in place, the other activities above may be funded whether or not a Cold Weather Advisory is issued, through the end of the state fiscal year on June 30, 2027.

Funds support existing facilities and existing operations. Day services and supplies are funded as part of a municipality's sheltering commitment, not as standalone programs. The program does not fund new facility construction.

## **Grant amounts**

There is no hard ceiling on a request. Proposals are considered on project criteria and community need, reasonableness, and available funds. OEO and Get Warm Now VT will work with applicants whose requests appear out of scale with the proposed response.

## **When municipal shelter operates**

The statute ties this support to an NWS Cold Weather Advisory. In Vermont a Cold Weather Advisory corresponds to roughly -20°F apparent (wind chill) temperature.

Operating during a qualifying advisory is mandatory for grantees. There is no opt-out.

Municipalities self-monitor NWS advisories for their locality. Most already carry this obligation under their Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP). The monitoring obligation is written into the subgrant agreement. The Department of Public Safety provides embedded support as a backstop.

## **A low-barrier approach**

Shelter provided under the program is low barrier and time limited. Consistent with the statute, it does not require a coordinated entry assessment or case management, and it carries minimal data reporting requirements.

The minimum data collected at intake is guest name and date of birth. Life safety comes first and tracking second. A guest may not be denied shelter for declining to provide information.

Get Warm Now VT provides templates for all reporting requirements.

## **Shelter standards and safety**

MSGP documentation and shelter operating standards mirror the Extreme Cold Weather Shelter Program (ECWSP) [[link to the ECWSP description](#)] as closely as practical. Municipalities receive the ECWSP standards and templates.

- Each shelter operates under a written plan covering guest rules, intake, staff roles, emergency contacts, de-escalation, and entry by law enforcement and outside medical personnel
- The municipal plan must not contradict the local LEMP
- Training is recommended, not required. Municipalities must be able to show that staffing provides safe care and operations, and staff qualifications are assessed case by case
- Get Warm Now VT provides training opportunities, templates, and coaching
- Where a shelter is not reasonably accessible to unsheltered residents, the municipality must provide transportation

## **Reporting**

- Activation report after every advisory night on which the shelter operates
- End of season reports are submitted through the web-based reporting system, which replaces email and spreadsheet tracking this year
- Reports retain enough detail to produce nightly census counts
- Critical incident reporting and financial documentation as set in the subgrant agreement

## **Grant administration**

- A senior municipal representative signs the subgrant agreement, meaning the mayor, select board chair, or city manager
- That signatory verifies that the proposal comports with municipal regulations and guidelines

- Payment terms, documentation requirements, and reporting deadlines are set in the subgrant agreement

## Relationship to the ECWSP

The ECWSP and the MSGP are separate programs with separate eligibility, activation triggers, and applications. The ECWSP funds community shelter operators and activates at a wind chill of 10°F or below. The MSGP funds municipalities and activates on a Cold Weather Advisory. A community may be served by both. Where both operate in the same locality, coordination is required.

For more information, email [contact@getwarmnowvt.org](mailto:contact@getwarmnowvt.org).

## Next

- DCF interim rules take effect September 1, 2026, and this guidance will be finalized to match
- Application materials, award criteria, and eligible expense detail posted at [GetWarmNowVT.org](http://GetWarmNowVT.org)
- Outreach and recruitment of municipalities
- Awards announced October 15, 2026
- Mobilization readiness November 15, 2026
- Operating season on or before December 1, 2026, depending on Vermont temperatures

## Document history

| Document title                                    | Date          | Summary of revisions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MSGP Basic Program Description                    | July 2026     | Working description shared with OEO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| MSGP Program Description, Standards, and Guidance | July 29, 2026 | DRAFT for OEO review, built from the approved program description, Act 143 § 2209, and July 2026 OEO meeting notes. Grant cap removed, three eligibility pathways, activation mandatory on Cold Weather Advisory, standards mirrored to ECWSP                                  |
| MSGP Program Description, Standards, and Guidance | July 31, 2026 | Revised after OEO review: eligibility hinged on the municipal shelter commitment rather than on activation, funding available through the end of the state fiscal year, day services and supplies clarified as part of the shelter commitment, activation paragraph simplified |