



**Special Communication to City of Burlington
Emergency Operations Center and Mayor
Regarding COVID-19**

To: Luke McGowan

From: Ian Jakus, Meagan Tuttle of City Analytics Team

RE: COVID-19 Actions by Cities for addressing closure of homeless and day centers

Date: March 17, 2020, 1:50pm

Updated:

Key Messages:

- King County, WA, San Francisco, CA and other locations are utilizing motels, RV's, tents, large public facilities (gymnasiums, etc), other mobile sites for homeless individuals determined to be in need of isolation/quarantine but who do not have a permanent/individual source of housing. It does seem that in some cases, individuals in isolation may be receiving medical, mental health care.
- San Francisco's emergency funding is being used to hire dozens of workers to regularly deep-clean shelters/supportive housing/SROs, keep shelters and Navigation Centers open 24/7, expand meal offerings to encourage occupants to stay indoors, and assist with food/sanitary kits that can be shared with unsheltered individuals. San Francisco and Los Angeles have also distributed hand washing stations and/or portable toilets to public locations and homeless encampments.
- National Alliance to End Homelessness recommends local governments carefully coordinate with CoC's, provide funding to homeless service providers to reduce transmission risk (see details below), and monitor local developments.

Key Resources:

- [A Collection of Contact info from around the Country for people responding/deploying services in other places \(from a webinar March 16, 2020\)](#)
- [COVID-19: What State and Local Leaders Can Do for Homeless Populations](#)
- [Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Recommendations for State and Local Govt](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to prevent and respond to COVID-19](#)
- [Infectious Disease Toolkit for COCs, Preventing & Managing Spread of Infectious Disease within Shelters \(HUD, March 2020\)](#)
- [HUD Guidance to Continuums of Care, March 2020](#)
- [New York City Guidance for Homeless Shelters](#)

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Summary of Guidance & Actions

City/State Actions to Support Emergency Isolation Housing and Prevent Homelessness Service Closures/Disruptions

- Chicago Coalition for Homelessness [Recommends](#) that local governments in Illinois:
 - Identify resources to create isolation/prevention housing with supportive services in hotels, federal/military facilities for individuals living on the street (prioritize those 60+ and with underlying health conditions), individuals in congregate shelters, individuals who are in sheltered and in vulnerable populations, and individuals who have contracted COVID-19 but are discharged and need to recuperate/isolate.
 - City-coordinated bulk buying of cleaning supplies to distribute to homeless shelters
 - Provide shelter, outreach, and healthcare staff with personal protective equipment
- On March 16, the [State of Washington Agency of Commerce](#) is immediately making \$30M in funding available to every county to support local governments in standing up isolation/quarantine housing, and sanitation needs related to the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes \$250K to each county as base, and then a formula to assign the rest based on point-in-time counts. Funding may be used for operations (such as short-term leases) or capital cost, and are suspending regulatory hurdles, giving explicit guidance to coordinate with the health department and start using the money.
- [King County, WA](#) placed two modular units, purchased a motel, and is identifying a fourth site for isolation and quarantine (capacity for up to ~215 individuals). Individuals can only be placed into these sites if public health has determined they need isolation or quarantine. Individuals receive transportation to the site, individual medical and behavioral health monitoring, meals and all basic needs. Some sites have enhanced medical capacity, and individuals with high needs are prioritized to those sites.
- San Francisco, CA allocated \$5 million for protecting the health of people in shelters, SROs, and on the streets. Much of this funding is being utilized to reduce exposure to the virus for people living in these locations, including cleaning and contagion mitigation protocols, expanded shelter hours, food, and some expanded employment opportunities (janitors, etc) to keep individuals indoors. They have also [distributed nearly two dozen handwashing stations and portable toilets](#).
- Los Angeles delivering hand washing stations to homeless encampments and implementing protocols for outreach workers to increase distance from clients on the streets

National Alliance to End Homelessness: What State and Local Leaders Can Do

Reducing high concentrations of highly vulnerable adults living in close proximity:

- **Targeting housing subsidies** and available affordable housing units to highest risk individuals experiencing homelessness (older adults in poor health and/or with respiratory conditions) and expedite take-up of resources (reduce time it takes to inspect units, process paperwork, etc.).
- **Providing short-term rental assistance** to help people quickly return to housing where they will be safe.

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- **Providing** help for homeless adults to reconnect with family or attain independent permanent housing, including:
 - limited flexible financial assistance (equivalent to 2 months of rental assistance)
 - Housing navigation services
 - Problem-solving and diversion services
- **Expanding temporary shelter capacity** to reduce both unsheltered homelessness and reliance on overcrowded shelters. This may include:
 - bringing new temporary housing options online (e.g. renting apartments that can be used for short-term shelter);
 - working with faith communities to bring unused space on-line for shelter;
 - extending “seasonal” shelter options; and
 - allowing shelters and day programs to increase hours of operation (e.g. allow emergency shelter to stay open 24 hours a day, or allow day shelters to operate 7-days a week).
- **Ramping up efforts to reduce barriers to shelter** and transitional housing programs. When homeless shelter programs do not admit pets, or provide shelter conditioned on following a service plan, vulnerable people will choose to forgo a bed and remain outdoors. We cannot afford to let safe beds go unused in the midst of this crisis.
- **Improving the hygienic conditions** where large numbers of people experiencing homelessness congregate. This may include providing funds to increase the sanitary conditions of building facilities (e.g. shelters or churches that regularly host lunch or dinner programs), or providing mobile services (e.g. handwashing stations) that allow unsheltered individuals to regularly wash hands and provide self-care. It may also include funding to allow for ongoing deep cleaning of shelter and food programs, which might require funding for maintenance personnel and cleaning supplies.
- **Expanding case management capacity** to help homeless individuals access health care screenings and services, including providing support services to homeless individuals who may need to be quarantined by local health officials as a preventative measure.
- **Reduce new entries into homelessness** by ensuring individuals exiting prison, jail and hospitals are connected to housing. Provide legal representation, social work services, and flexible financial assistance to prevent vulnerable adults and families from losing their housing.

HUD Guidance to CoC's

The local CoC the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance should be the lead entity in coordinating response and already be well into its response, and communicating the materials and instructions from HUD on how to respond, minimize spread etc...

- Released March 13: [Using CoC Funds for Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response](#)
- The HUD guide does say that CDBG funds can be used to buy supplies.

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- State public health agencies typically serve as the lead agency in health and medical emergency functions. They often coordinate staffing and healthcare volunteers, provide basic medical care, and coordinate alternative care sites or closing of shelter sites.
 - The states cold weather motel program could likely be expanded ([General Assistance Housing Adverse Weather Conditions](#))

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