

## **Creative COVID-19 Response Solutions**

**Updated 3/20/2020**

- Opening a campground to allow legal tenting in a place with facilities and providing more tents to discourage “co-tenting”.
- Installing portable toilets, washing stations, and trash services where people experiencing homelessness congregate and camp.
- Partnering with hotels and motels that have vacancies to house people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The funding source varies from Emergency Solutions Grant Funding to funding provided by a County Department of Social Services.
- Continuing to do regular street outreach which now includes education about COVID-19 symptoms and transmission prevention, dropping off supplies, and getting people phones for temporary use to be able to do video chat. Some street outreach teams have a doctor who can do tests on site if people exhibit symptoms.
- Shelters are opening their hygiene facilities to everyone regardless of whether they stay there.
- Communities are preventatively isolating people at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 in hotel/motels.
- A shelter is emptying out their family wing and turning those rooms into isolation rooms. They are working with a church that used to operate a family overflow shelter to re-open the overflow shelter at the church and move the families there. They are also looking at leasing trailers because both of the shelters have decent sized parking lots. They are talking to their local County’s Emergency Operations Center about getting generators for electricity for the trailers and wastewater cleanout. I have been told that FEMA has laundry trailers, so we are going to look into that.
- A community is increasing diversion to reduce numbers in shelter, speeding up referral pipelines to housing programs/exits, moving asymptomatic people to local churches, and keeping shelter as quarantine space. The community also has a PH Department that is paying for hotels for asymptomatic people to save shelter for quarantine and trying to identify funding for hotels for quarantine.
- A community is asking their local Public Housing Authorities to consider prioritizing people in shelter. They have asked landlords to work with us, have gotten some good prices on hotels, are getting creative with Airbnb, and are asking our local churches for space (Family Promise Model). Our staff will just take over in place of our regular volunteers.
- In one community, someone learned that our local University has extra residential facilities they can open quickly if needed.
- The City of Detroit has set up an entirely separate 100+ bed shelter for folks needing to be quarantined. The building they are utilizing used to house other programming, but it wasn't being used to full occupancy. (Something to consider: using space that is not always at full utilization and/or utilizing vacant space to serve as quarantine for people experiencing homelessness.)
- Shelters are screening people upon entry using temple thermometers, which are cleaned with alcohol after each use, and inquiring with returning guests on where they have been and with whom.

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- Shelters are trying to get access to tests so their medical street teams can test someone who may show COVID-19 symptoms at the shelter. They are leaning on their Mayor and Health Department. They are hoping this will minimize the need for people to use emergency shelters.
- A community was able to secure a designated truck/EMT for transport people with COVID-19 symptoms from the shelter so as to not overwhelm 9-1-1.
- The Oregon Convention Center is being turned into a homeless shelter:  
[https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/457494-372999-oregon-convention-center-to-become-homeless-shelter-pwoff?fbclid=IwAR2VWnSLtSuxDU6bENBpCdfAVmk1oQHgaQnqgN\\_pUbND7xkNReBMvQ-0gZl](https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/457494-372999-oregon-convention-center-to-become-homeless-shelter-pwoff?fbclid=IwAR2VWnSLtSuxDU6bENBpCdfAVmk1oQHgaQnqgN_pUbND7xkNReBMvQ-0gZl).
- Communities are asking their Public Health Department for:
  - Handwashing stations for encampments
  - Bulk purchasing of hygiene, sanitizing, and first aid supplies to pass out to homeless service providers
  - Calls out to the community for volunteers and supplies
  - Money to support operations
  - Overtime or bonuses for the limited staff who can work
  - Isolation options
  - Messaging specific to homelessness
  - Request Personal protective equipment
  - A specific number or contact to call for someone who may need testing and where to send them to get it
  - An assigned facility for quarantining if your group shelter doesn't have delegated available space for that
  - The local government to pay for all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to be placed in individual low-cost motel rooms for next 4 weeks, to prevent spread of virus throughout this vulnerable population, and so they can sleep well and thereby strengthen immune system, with case management funds to coordinate delivery of food and check on people
- Some communities are looking into establishing a COVID-19 emergency fund for providers to access.
- In the Seattle area, the county government bought an old motel to isolate coronavirus victims and let those who don't need hospitalization recuperate.
- San Francisco plans to lease motor homes that could be parked in the city's scenic Presidio park surrounding the Golden Gate Bridge as housing for the homeless under quarantine.
- San Jose is suspending its homeless camp eradication sweeps on the belief that forcing homeless people to move could heighten exposure to the virus.
- Los Angeles is considering whether to provide more "sanitation stations" to homeless encampments.