

Sacramento Homelessness COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

Transitioning to Permanent Housing

Brought to you in partnership by Sacramento County, City of Sacramento, Sacramento Steps Forward and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

TEMPORARY ACTIONS TO PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE

Since early April and at an unprecedented speed, the COVID-19 Homelessness Response Team (Team) has opened nearly 600 preventative quarantine/medical isolation units (aka temporary COVID-19 shelters) to shelter persons experiencing homelessness testing positive or most-at-risk of severe COVID-19 illness or death.

Sheltering services, including meals, security, and connection to basic medical services, have enabled participants – many of whom are high-risk with complex and severe presenting issues – to begin to stabilize and look toward their next steps to transition out of homelessness into permanent housing.

Working together, the County of Sacramento, City of Sacramento, and Sacramento Steps Forward (SSF) as the Continuum of Care (CoC), have also organized additional support to ensure Sacramento's 400 emergency beds in congregate settings are safe for clients and have implemented widespread testing in shelters, encampments and at the quarantine units. Together with community partners, we have deployed additional outreach and daily living support (e.g., sanitation, water, meals) to persons living unsheltered in encampments.

This first phase of our COVID-19 response was about saving lives and ensuring safety for our most vulnerable neighbors. Taken together, we have invested over \$15 million to mitigate the impact and slow the spread of COVID-19 in this most vulnerable population.

NEXT PHASE: FACILITATING PERMANENT HOUSING STABILITY

The next phase of our COVID-19 response shifts the focus from temporary to permanent solutions. We have set the ambitious goal of rapidly moving most households from the temporary COVID-19 shelters into permanent housing with supports for ongoing stability, or interim housing and shelters when that is not possible.

This next phase presents both an unprecedented challenge and a welcome opportunity to significantly impact lives and health over the long term. Over \$10 million in additional funding is being allocated for re-housing.

Specific re-housing strategies we are implementing include:

- **Connecting clients to existing and expanded re-housing programs.** Everyday Sacramento providers provide practical help in securing, paying for, and maintaining permanent housing. These programs will play a critical role in rehousing households currently staying in quarantine and isolation units.
- **Problem solving and navigation.** A collaborative navigation team – comprised of SSF navigators, DHA staff, and Goodwill staff onsite at the temporary quarantine and isolation shelters – will be working with clients not connected to re-housing programs to identify immediate problem solving solutions and other pathways to permanent housing and stabilizing services.

Participating Re-Housing Programs

Supportive Services for Veteran Families
City's Pathways to Health + Home
County's Behavioral Health Re-Housing Services
CoC's Shelter Plus Care
County Flexible Housing Pool (expanded)

- **Targeted matches to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for high-acuity individuals.** For those individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and qualifying for PSH through Continuum of Care or other housing developments, the Team will assist with documentation and placement.
- **Landlord engagement.** The Team is asking rental owners, including affordable housing and public housing, to partner and is seeking master-lease opportunities to expand the inventory of housing
- **Philanthropic and charitable support.** The Team is seeking flexible funding that would allow us to provide additional supports, such as move-in kits and furniture, as well as landlord incentives, which are generally not eligible using governmental funding sources.

Because most of the programs through which we will be able to rehouse people during this effort provide limited-term assistance, some of these placements will be viewed as “bridge” housing until housing with longer-term supports can be secured. Future longer-term solutions for households needing them could include placement in permanent supportive housing or assistance using a housing choice voucher.

While not immediately available for COVID-19 shelter guests, the broader community is pursuing development of additional housing for persons experiencing homelessness through the State’s HomeKey program. SHRA and the City of Sacramento have made applications to the State for four developments.

OPPORTUNITIES

This urgent effort over the next several months brings an increased focus and learning on re-housing that can benefit our homelessness response system broadly beyond the COVID-19 emergency.

New Partnerships	New partnering will help clients not only connect with housing but with services essential for ongoing stability, such as In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), disability advocacy, employment, mental health, drug/alcohol.
Client-Focused Collaboration	Partners will work across agencies to remove barriers and identify individualized support to ensure progress toward housing and stability.
Equity	Systemic disparities have led to a disproportionate number of Black individuals in our homeless population. We also know persons of color, especially Black, indigenous, and Latino people, are at greater risk of the serious impacts of COVID-19. We intend to use an equity lens and to deepen our practice to foster racial equity.
Transparency	As with the first COVID response phase, the Team will make regular reports on re-housing progress, partner contributions, and lessons learned.
Housing Commitment beyond COVID-19	Recognizing that individuals may need longer assistance or deeper supports, the Team is developing strategies with re-housing providers to transition clients to permanent supportive housing and deeper assistance, as needed.



SPECIAL NOTE

If you are symptomatic, contact your healthcare provider.
 If you had no healthcare provider prior to this crisis, call **211** to be connected to healthcare.



Email covid-19@sacstepsforward.org for additional information.