



NEWS RELEASE

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Statement on San Bernardino County's COVID-19 Homeless Response Plan to Help Flatten the Curve



The State of California has issued a directive for every county to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by creating interim housing solutions for California's homeless population. The homeless remain extremely susceptible to COVID-19 due to their inability to self-isolate or practice social distancing because of their current living conditions. There are more than 2,000 unsheltered homeless in San Bernardino County; approximately 300 are considered medically vulnerable because they are age 65, or older, and/or have serious underlying health conditions. We need to move swiftly to get these individuals off the streets and into housing so we can flatten the curve for all of San Bernardino County.

San Bernardino County has developed a COVID-19 Homeless Response Plan (Plan) that will utilize guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to identify opportunities to place homeless individuals in temporary housing. The Plan will focus on housing those who are at-risk due to age and/or underlying health conditions.

It is critical that we work together to stop the spread of COVID-19. This includes assisting the homeless who live in our communities and have no option but to seek help from others during this time of crisis. We must act quickly and decisively so we can lessen the impact of this pandemic and save lives.

San Bernardino County COVID-19 Homeless Response Plan

Overview

- The County of San Bernardino and the regional homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) are working together to identify sites to house unsheltered homeless persons meeting high-risk priorities and quarantine unsheltered homeless persons who are at-risk and/or COVID-19 positive.

Goal

- The goal is to identify hotels and motels throughout the region in multiple jurisdictions to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the unsheltered community. The County will also utilize travel trailers acquired from the State, located at a county-owned facility.
- The use of these facilities for the unsheltered homeless and medically stable COVID-19 patients will be secured for three (3) months and will terminate upon the rescinding of the State order.

Population

- The Homeless Coordinated Entry System (CES) and the Sheriff's Homeless Outreach and Proactive Enforcement (HOPE) team will help identify high-risk unsheltered individuals.
- Persons meeting the requirements of the hotel/motel use, can contact CES through Inland Empire United Way at 2-1-1 or the Sheriff's HOPE team number at 1-844-811-HOPE (4673).
- Each client entered into a hotel/motel room will be connected with a case manager through one of our current Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) or Homeless Partnership homeless service providers.

Services

- Off-site homeless services providers and Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) staff will provide case management services.
- The County of San Bernardino, in conjunction with Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) and Molina Healthcare, will organize meal services.
- Security will be provided 24/7 at each site where individuals are placed.
- Once the State order has been lifted, those homeless individuals that have not been connected to permanent housing will be diverted to the appropriate homeless services provider and returned to where they were originally staying as identified by the outreach team.

Supervisor Josie Gonzales is the Vice Chair of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and Founder/Chair of the San Bernardino County Interagency Council on Homelessness

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