



Alameda County
Health Care Services Agency



Alameda County
Social Services Agency

PROJECT ROOMKEY: ALAMEDA COUNTY OPERATION COMFORT & OPERATION SAFER GROUND

Protecting the Health & Safety of Our Community

Hotel rooms provide a safe environment for isolation and recovery.

Statement Regarding COVID-19 Hotel Resources

COVID-19 is a public health crisis in our county and the nation, and poses a significant threat to people experiencing homelessness in our community.

The California Department of Social Services (CSDSS) secured two hotels to provide isolation housing *immediately* for people experiencing homelessness affected by COVID-19. CDSS contracted with Abode Services to provide wraparound support and with the hotel owners for operations staffing. Alameda County Health Care Services, Social Services, and General Services Agencies worked together to establish referral procedures, medical screening and support, and transportation resources for the sites.

Alameda County agencies will continue to work together with cities through their emergency response systems to add additional sites to serve as many people as possible, utilizing available resources from Federal and State government. The information applies to the properties currently available and may apply to new sites as they open.

Alameda County remains committed to reducing racial and ethnic disparities in our efforts to prevent and end homelessness. An initial racial/ethnic analysis of target population data helped inform our approach outlined in this document. Data on emergency hotel resource utilization will get collected in the County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and all individuals served will have an opportunity to complete a standardized Coordinated Entry System (CES) assessment for access to other resources for persons experiencing homelessness in the County.

Immigration status does not impact a person's eligibility for either emergency housing target population and immigration status data will not be collected. Language line and interpretation resources will be made available at the sites.

Changes to meet specific evolving needs and address disparities may occur and County staff will update information and guidance as needed. Updated information on hotel and other short-term housing resources related to COVID-19 can be found at: <http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov.aspx>

Eligibility and Referral Processes for Isolation and Social Distancing Emergency Housing

Households and individuals referred to the state-funded emergency hotels and additional designated hotels for homeless individuals must live in one of the following situations at the time of referral:

- Living on the street or places not meant for habitation
- Emergency shelter
- Transitional housing program for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Exiting a health care or other institution with no identified residence at time of discharge
- In a congregate living facility (in the last 90 days) with no way to self-isolate and living in one of the aforementioned categories prior to entering the facility

**Individuals referred must fall into one of two target population groups:
1) COVID+/Presumptive Infection; or 2) High Risk**

The State hotels beds and any additional county beds for homeless individuals will prioritize households and individuals in the first group for available hotel and emergency beds and will shift target population plans based on evolving information about housing needs for the first group.

The following page contains additional information about the two target population groups.

Population #1: COVID-19+/Presumptive Category (Operation Comfort)

The first target population for emergency isolation and quarantine housing includes homeless people (defined above) who test positive for COVID-19, present with symptoms and signs consistent with a possible COVID-19 infection, or who have had verified contact with a person with a known COVID-19 infection. Referrals for this target population come from a list of approved referral agencies including hospitals, acute care facilities, clinics, emergency shelters and homeless outreach teams throughout the county. The list of approved agencies can be found at <http://www.acphd.org/media/562754/list-of-approved-referral-agencies.pdf>

If you represent an agency not on the list of referral agencies and you have a client or know of a homeless person that falls into one of the categories above, please contact one of the referring agencies in your area or contact Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Monday to Friday from 9 am – 4 pm at: (510) 891-8950 or covidachch@acgov.org

Please note that individuals must meet the definition of “homeless” given above to meet eligibility criteria. People living doubled up or in overcrowded living situations do not qualify for these rooms.

Prior to acceptance into emergency housing resources, referred persons in this target will get screened by a medical triage clinician. If the clinician determines they meet eligibility criteria and medical appropriateness for the site, then designated staff will arrange for safe transportation of the eligible person to the designated site.

People in this population housed in emergency housing will be discharged from these sites within three days of the end of their defined period of isolation or quarantine, and will return to their previous living situation unless another option has been made available. Upon admission to emergency housing, individuals will receive notification regarding their estimated length of stay. Referring agencies are strongly encouraged to hold available housing slots for individuals to return to at the end of their isolation or quarantine period.

Population #2: Homeless and High Risk (Safer Ground)

To the extent space remains available, social distancing and safe emergency housing resources with private accommodations will be utilized for homeless persons not in target population #1 who are at high risk of developing acute disease or complications from COVID-19 exposure due to personal risk factors and their current living situation. Alameda County currently defines this group as persons over the age of 65 and/or persons with a variety of specific health conditions including certain heart, lung, blood, neurologic disorders, pregnancy and other conditions. Persons eligible for rooms in this target population get identified by the Health Care Services Agency through a review of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and health care data. These lists will result in targeted outreach to shelters, service providers, and regional housing resource centers (HRCs).

The initial list of individuals prioritized for this target population has already been generated from available data and is in use by Alameda County Health Care Services (HCSA) agency staff members. HCSA staff are putting public alert notifications in HMIS for clients in this target population.

As a result, no direct emergency housing referrals for this population will be accepted at this time. Individuals and providers working with homeless individuals should link individuals to other existing resources through Alameda County’s Coordinated Entry System (CES). Updated information on making CES referrals can be found at: <https://everyonehome.org/main/>

Additional Information

The emergency housing units for both target groups are private, individual rooms with separate entrances. Services, meals and security are provided. Residents must agree to isolate/quarantine or shelter in place prior to admission. All partners involved in this effort remain committed to implementing the precautions necessary to ensure the health and safety of homeless guests and staff members working at identified sites.

As more spaces get secured and the situation unfolds, the process for prioritization and outreach to identified individuals may change. The County will release information updates and other COVID-19 emergency housing policy and program changes through e-mail notifications and informational updates and posts at the following website:
<http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov.aspx>

Thank you for your interest in supporting and helping people in Alameda County currently experiencing homelessness. We appreciate all of the cities, agencies and individuals collaboratively working with us to get this response in place.