Priorities for Actions and Funding for Responding to Threat of COVID-19 for People who are Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness

(Note: Not in an order of priority, actions and funding are likely needed across all of these areas.)

Rough Draft 3-12-2020

1. **Establishment and operation of auxiliary and additional spaces for sheltering people and to accommodate social distancing or self-isolation protocols**
   - Homelessness services organizations need to consult with public health officials to differentiate and define their roles in supporting strategies ranging from social distancing to quarantine.
   - Need funding for costs for acquiring/leasing sites and for staffing and operating them in alignment with recommended practices per https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5985/infectious-disease-toolkit-for-cocs/
   - Consider wide range of options, from community centers, faith facilities, vacant stores, sprung structures, motels, other appropriate sites
   - Need to review and likely waive some policies, regulations, and restrictions on use of funding to make such uses and quick action possible

2. **Supporting exits from temporary sheltering facilities when people no longer need to be there, when it is time to close them down, and to avoid discharges back into unsheltered homelessness**
   - Funding for staff and services and financial assistance – with focus on rapid rehousing, problem-solving, and access to existing supportive and affordable housing units

3. **Equipping organizations with medical supplies and equipment, hygiene and cleaning supplies and equipment, etc… necessary to support personal hygiene practices, sanitation at existing and new facilities, and social distancing and self-isolation practices**
   - See the following for examples of such supplies: https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Eligible-ESG-Program-Costs-for-Infectious-Disease-Preparedness.pdf

4. **Training for outreach and encampment engagement staff**
   - Including hygiene and safety protocols, but also referral processes into existing and new sheltering facilities and into health care services, facilities, and medical care
   - See https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5985/infectious-disease-toolkit-for-cocs/ for helpful information

5. **Training for staff working in existing and new sheltering facilities**
   - Including hygiene and safety protocols, but also referral processes into other programs and into health care services, facilities, and medical care
   - See https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5985/infectious-disease-toolkit-for-cocs/ for helpful information

6. **Enhancing connections between homelessness services systems and public health system**

- May need to consider designating specific staff positions to focus on coordination, information exchange, referral processes, etc…

7. **Strengthening and refining coordinated entry processes and policies to address medical crises and to help contain spread of infection**
   - Changes may need to be made in prioritization processes to: address populations most vulnerable to COVID-19 (e.g., older adults, people with most relevant underlying health conditions); facilitate exits from temporary facilities that need to be closed and avoid discharges back into unsheltered homelessness; prioritize people currently unsheltered; and other strategies
   - May need to designate specific staff to determine these changes and to educate providers

Relevant Tools and Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Steps Healthcare Facilities Can Take Now to Prepare for Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)](#)

- [Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)](#)

- [Interim Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for US Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19),](#)

Department of Housing and Urban Development

- [Webinar Recording: Infectious Disease Preparedness for Homelessness Services and their Partners](#)

- [Infectious Disease Toolkit for CoCs](#)

- [Questions to Assist CoCs and Public Health Authorities to Limit the Spread of Infectious Disease in Homeless Programs](#)

- [Specific Considerations for Public Health Authorities to Limit Infection Risk Among People Experiencing Homelessness](#)

- [Eligible ESG costs for Infectious Disease Preparedness](#)

National Healthcare for the Homeless Council

- [Coronavirus Resources](#)

Resources from Local Jurisdictions

- [Sanitation and Hygiene Guidance for Homeless Service Providers](#) (Seattle & King County)

- [Sanitation and Hygiene Assessment Tool for Homeless Shelters, Day Centers and Encampments](#) (Seattle & King County)

- [Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Homeless Shelters](#) (New York City)