COVID-19
Guidance for Homeless Shelters

Section 1: Preparing now is the best way to protect people experiencing homelessness, homeless service provider staff, and volunteers from COVID-19.

PREVENTING SPREAD
- Promote the practice of everyday preventive actions using health messages and materials developed by your local or state public health departments or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Have soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, tissues, trash baskets, and disposable facemask (for the ill) on hand.
- Identify clients who could be at high risk for complications from COVID-19.
- Discuss how you will report cases ahead of time with a contact person at your local health department.

PLAN AHEAD
Plan for higher shelter usage during the outbreak by reaching out to community leaders, local public health departments, and faith-based organizations about places to refer clients if your shelter space is full.
- Identify a space that can be used to accommodate clients with mild respiratory symptoms and separate them from others.
- Identify a list of key contacts at your local and state health departments
- Identify alternate care sites and healthcare facilities available for clients with confirmed COVID-19
- Include plans for increased absence caused by employee illness like extending hours, cross-training current employees, or hiring temporary employees.

AFTER PERSONS SUSPECTED/CONFIRMED TO HAVE COVID-19 HAVE BEEN IN THE FACILITY
- Close off areas used by the ill persons and wait up to 24 hours before beginning disinfection.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons, especially frequently touched surfaces.
- Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process.
- Staff should clean hands often, including immediately after removing gloves and after contact with an ill person, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.