



## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

# Checklist for Homeless Service Providers During Community Re-opening

Across the United States, some states and local areas are preparing to reopen businesses and community centers after closing. Even if COVID-19 cases have decreased in your area, quick spread of this disease in homeless shelters or encampments is possible. Protection of clients and staff remains necessary. During this time, continue to refer to the guidance for [homeless service providers](#) and [unsheltered homelessness](#). This checklist was designed to provide homeless service providers – many of whom have remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic – with a reminder of important considerations for service delivery as the surrounding community reopens.

### **Stay aware of the local COVID-19 situation and communicate clearly with clients and staff**

- Reinforce your connection with [local](#)  and [state](#) health departments.
- Look for guidance updates on the [CDC homeless resources page](#).
- Place posters in strategic places to provide instruction on [handwashing](#) and [cough etiquette](#) , use of [cloth face coverings](#), and [social distancing](#).
- Maintain communication with your staff and clients about [job stress](#) related to COVID-19 and ways to cope with that [stress](#).

### **Maintain basic prevention strategies for clients and staff**

- Keep physical distance between people (Review [social distancing measures](#)).
- Wear [cloth face coverings](#). Launder face coverings regularly.
  - Wearing clothing face coverings may be difficult for individuals with sensory, cognitive, or behavioral issues. They are not recommended for children under 2 years or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.
- Improve access to [handwashing](#) facilities for clients and staff. Ensure sufficient supplies (including [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol) are available and reinforce hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Continue to [clean and disinfect](#) facilities regularly.
- Work with your local health department to identify the best ways to continue protecting people who are unsheltered or staying in encampments.
- Identify ways to make COVID-19 prevention strategies sustainable for the long term. If the strategies you have been using are not sustainable, identify adjustments needed to continue to prevent transmission.

### **Continue to connect clients to care**

- Continue to evaluate clients for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and connect them to medical care.
- Work with community coalitions to maintain systems to safely isolate, quarantine, or provide [medical respite](#)  for people who have been exposed or are suspected or confirmed to be positive for COVID-19.

- Continue taking [additional precautions](#) for clients and staff who are at [higher risk for severe illness](#).

## Provide services while being aware of changes in the surrounding community

- If you have closed or have stopped providing some services, consider how to resume those services safely, using the basic prevention strategies outlined above. In particular, restart mental health and substance use services as quickly as possible when prevention strategies are in place.
- If alternate sites (such as hotels) that were providing rooms to help decompress shelters or encampments will no longer be available, coordinate with your community coalition to establish plans for housing those clients to avoid large influxes of clients into crowded settings.

## Additional Resources

[General COVID-19 information](#)

[Guidance for Homeless Service Providers](#)

[Guidance related to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness](#)

[Resources for people experiencing homelessness](#)

[Information for youth experiencing homelessness](#)

Page last reviewed: May 16, 2020

Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)