

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding COVID-19 for Homeless Providers

Shelter-In-Place Order

Question: How does the stay-at-home order apply to homeless shelters?

Answer: Homeless shelter efforts are considered essential services and therefore should stay open. The continued functioning of local homeless shelters is critical to the collective work to fight this pandemic. For further guidance, follow the CDC web page [Homeless Guidance for Homeless Service Providers](#).

Question: How does the stay-at-home order apply to street outreach efforts?

Answer: Street outreach efforts are considered essential services and therefore should continue.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued interim guidance for responding to COVID-19 among unsheltered homeless. The full CDC guidance for responding to COVID-19 among unsheltered homeless can be found at [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Homelessness Interim Guidance](#).

Question: How does the stay-at-home order apply to case managers?

Answer: Case Manager efforts are considered essential services and therefore should continue while still following guidelines for social distancing. If your program allows, here are some options we've seen across the state that practice social distancing while being creative for providing needed outreach:

- Making calls to clients to check in and ask about needs, dropping food and other supplies at the door.
- Continuing to operate a food pantry (if already a service in the community) - either stagger appointments or have a pick-up space outdoors that allows for social distancing.
- Continuing conversations and planning for easing tensions amongst both staff and clients; encouraging everyone to have a safe space and to try and give grace to others as we are all trying to work through this pandemic together.
- Moved to a teletherapy format using virtual means for communication which are accessible to clients and provide HIPPA compliance (if in depth counseling is being offered).

- Consider offering incentives for employees who can take on responsibilities outside of their usual role. Consider training admin staff for assistance in the shelter setting.
- Move to a “house parent model” or “in-house case management” where staff would stay in the shelter and alternate being on duty in order to cover shifts.

Hotels & Motels

Question: Are hotels and motels to remain open- Executive Order 2020-21?

Answer: Governor Whitmer signed the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order (EO2020-21) that directs all Michigan businesses and operations to temporarily suspend in-person operations if they are not necessary to sustain or protect life. This FAQ from the Executive Office of the Governor provides additional clarification as to how this order applies to hotels and motels. Specifically, that hotels and motels provide temporary or permanent housing/shelter to otherwise needy individuals and therefore may remain open. The full [Executive Order](#) and [FAQ](#) document is available online from the Executive Office of the Governor.

- In general, hotels and motels may remain open, but must limit functions and operations.
 - Under the order, workers at hotels and motels are critical infrastructure workers to the extent they “provide temporary or permanent housing for... shelter ... for ... otherwise needy individuals.” For purposes of the order, the term “otherwise needy individuals” includes anyone residing in a hotel or motel at the time the order was issued or anyone seeking shelter during the current pandemic. Hotels and motels may also remain open to the extent they are used for COVID-19 mitigation and containment efforts and to serve critical infrastructure workers.
 - Hotels and motels may therefore remain open, but they may only engage in activities providing shelter and basic needs (such as carry-out/delivery/room-service food) and, in engaging in those activities, they must limit guest-to-guest, guest-to-staff, and staff-to-staff interactions as much as possible and must adopt all other mitigation measures required by section 5(c) of the order. They may not provide additional in-house amenities such as gyms, pools, spas, entertainment facilities, meetings rooms or like facilities, or provide in-house dining.

Quarantine Pay

Question: Is there anything in place that allows for the provision of quarantine pay for staff who are out for reasons related to the COVID-19?

Answer: On March 18, 2020, the President signed the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), which includes the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. This Act allows certain employers and

employees to utilize emergency sick leave pay for individuals who are quarantined. The Act's effective date is no later than 15 days after the date of enactment, which was March 18. Most sources identify the effective date as April 2. Grantees who fall under this Act would be able to charge the emergency sick leave expenditures to their grants. Providers are strongly encouraged to review the Act themselves and consult with appropriate human resource and legal representation for determination of if they are an eligible employer under the Act and if their staff are eligible employees under the Act. MDHHS is not able to make that determination.

Family and Medical Leave Rights

Question: What do homeless providers need to know about the Families First Coronavirus Response Act?

Answer: The Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc. (CAPLAW) has released a newsletter [Paid Leave Under COVID-19 Response Act: What CAAs Need to Know](#) which outlines how FFCRA affects homeless providers.

The **Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCEDSV)** has released a question and answer document outlining the impacts specific to DV and SV agencies called [Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Expanded Family and Medical Leave Rights Impact on DV/SV Agencies](#). MCEDSV's document is not intended to be used as legal advice.

Homeless Youth and Runaway Programs

Question: The 90-day stay lifted for other programs; are we lifting the timeframes for Homeless Youth and Runaway (HYR)?

Answer: Homeless Youth and Runaway programs receiving funds from MDHHS for these services may request an extension to timeframes by emailing the HYR Specialist, Lynn Nee at neel@michigan.gov. The request must include the client's HMIS number (no names), the start date of service, the original end date, the proposed new end date, the reason for the request for the extension, and a plan to achieve a safe exit for the youth on the proposed new end date. Requests will either be approved or denied within 24 hours. Costs associated with these extensions may be charged to the MDHHS HYR grant in accordance with the organization's written and organizationally approved allocation process.

Additional Resources

[Michigan Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Response](#)

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness Coronavirus \(COVID – 19\) Resources for Homeless Assistance Providers](#)