

Public Notice



Oregon Housing and Community Services

January 28, 2021

Re: State of Oregon COVID Response for People Experiencing Homelessness; Additional Information

Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

Over these past months we appreciate the strength, courage, urgency, and attitude of optimism to serve people experiencing homelessness. Thank you for all the work you are doing in your local community to support people experiencing housing instability during these unprecedented times.

Today we want to share with you additional resources, key information, answer some common questions and provide direction to assist you in your continued efforts to prevent and mitigate COVID-19 while delivering sheltering and other services in your community. The information below builds on our early communication that you can access [here](#). Furthermore, please continue to attend the [Statewide Oregon Unhoused Response & Recovery Network for COVID-19 and Wildfires](#) for the latest information.

Key lessons and takeaways from the Infection Control Consults (If you are a shelter provider, homeless service administrator, or otherwise related agency, you can request a Shelter Infection Control consultation from OHA Epidemiologists by completing this [simple form](#).)

- Ensure you are connecting with your Local Public Health Authority ([LPHA](#)) and making plans for when you may have a case in a staff or resident (see the [OHA Shelter Guidance](#) for more details).



- Do **NOT** require a negative COVID-19 test for entry to a homeless services site—this is not an effective strategy and prevents people from accessing the important services you provide.
- It is strongly recommended and best practice to screen staff and residents at least once every day for temperature and symptoms.
- Ensure you have taken steps to protect your staff that will be screening your guests.
 - Maintain physical distance of 6 feet. Perhaps use a table to ensure space is maintained, or
 - Consider using partitions or windows. This can be helpful in limiting exposure to respiratory droplets in **addition to a mask**, or
 - Wear full personal protective equipment (PPE) — gloves, face shield, mask. Ensure your staff have been trained in [proper use of PPE](#) and your LPHA can help you with PPE needs.
- Thermometers (even contactless versions) should be disinfected between every person.
- Keeping a record or log of the screening helps in tracking if any resident or staff becomes symptomatic and provides some accountability.
- Cloth, paper, or disposable masks must always be worn by guests and staff indoors, except sleeping areas or a private room. They should also be worn outdoors when people cannot stay at least six (6) feet apart.

If Staff or Residents have Symptoms

- Providers should ensure that staff are aware they need to stay home if they are sick. If staff do not have paid time off, they may be able to access financial assistance through the [COVID-19 Temporary Paid Leave Program](#)
- Staff should immediately help symptomatic individuals understand how to [isolate](#) themselves.
- Staff should help guests with symptoms of COVID-19 to identify options for testing and medical care if needed. Visit [this page](#) for COVID-19 testing in Oregon for those with insurance and free community events. Those without insurance may seek testing at a [Community Health Clinic](#).
- If you become aware of a COVID-19 positive individual (staff or guest) in your shelter notify your Local Public Health Authority ([LPHA](#)).
- If there are guests that were exposed to the symptomatic person, the facility, in consultation with their LPHA, may likely test all individuals exposed. This testing should be carefully planned and may be facilitated by the LPHA's, clinics, and/or shelter healthcare providers.



- Make sure that guests are aware that an initial negative test a few days after their exposure does not rule out COVID-19, and they will still need to be quarantine for at least 10 days.
- In addition to the testing this will also require some planning for your guests to quarantine, which might be at an alternative site. Your [LPHA](#) can assist you with planning this and have resources to help. This planning is also part of [Infection Control Consultations](#) and can be done proactively.
- Healthcare providers and clinics serving your guests can request rapid COVID-19 test kits from DHS/OHA COVID-19 Response and Recovery Unit Testing Branch by email: ORES8.AOCTestingBranch@dhs.oha.state.or.us.
 - Requires an active CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments) license.

A holistic and complete shelter and homeless service system requires experts and agencies across a continuum of services to collaborate to makes sure everyone is served. Please lean on us to be a thought partner and resource. We look forward to continued collaboration.

In solidarity,



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