

To: Homeless Service Providers and Community Stakeholders

From: Department of Homelessness & Supportive Housing

Re: Updates to shelter and SIP rehousing operations

Date: August 24, 2021

Given the surge in COVID-19 cases caused by the Delta variant and the recent news from FEMA about the extension of federal reimbursement for local COVID-19 expenses, including non-congregate shelter, HSH would like to update you on our Shelter-in-Place (SIP) rehousing efforts and shelter programs.

### **SIP Rehousing: Progress Update**

To date HSH has demobilized four SIP hotels. The vast majority of guests were placed in rehousing options or transferred to another SIP hotel to await rehousing placement. During the two most recent demobilizations, approximately 2% of guests exited to congregate shelter during the demobilization process and less than 10% of guests declined multiple offers of housing and shelter placements and returned to the streets or left to an unknown destination.

HSH has received many questions about the public SIP Rehousing dashboard. This dashboard is being revamped and will be made available to the public again shortly.

### **SIP Rehousing Policy Updates**

As we move to rehouse people out of SIP hotels and demobilize the hotels in anticipation of the end of the program by June 2022, HSH has moved a limited number of people who were ineligible for permanent housing to congregate facilities to help achieve the goal that no one has to return to the streets when their SIP hotel closes. Given the Delta variant, HSH paused the relocation of COVID vulnerable guests from SIP to congregate facilities two weeks ago. As of August 19, HSH has paused all exits of guests from SIP hotels to congregate settings until the end of the calendar year. HSH will continue to work with DPH to monitor the situation with COVID-19 and will adjust practices to align with health guidance.

HSH will continue to work with SIP guests and service providers to rehouse as many guests as possible into permanent housing. This work will not stop as it is critical to continue to house people and end their homelessness.

In light of the ongoing threat posed by the delta variant, HSH has made a decision to rehouse all COVID vulnerable guests who entered the SIP system after November 2020 (as well as those who entered the program before November 2020). This group had previously been considered part of the “non-rehousing cohort” to be exited to shelter.

HSH will continue to rehouse SIP guests and we will continue to demobilize SIP hotels gradually between now and the end of fiscal year. This work takes time and needs to be done in a thoughtful and client centered way that focuses on rehousing. Even with the news of the extension of FEMA funds until the end of the calendar year, HSH must continue to demobilize the program in anticipation of the pending



guests and demobilize sites.

There has been a slower than anticipated start to the SIP demobilization process, in part due to decisions made to slow that process to ensure the safety of COVID-vulnerable individuals in SIP. As a result, the final wind down of the SIP system will be pushed several months out beyond what was assumed in the FY21-22 budget. We are currently re-running our financial projections to understand the impact of this more precisely, but we anticipate that the additional three months of FEMA funding will result in little to no net General Fund savings.

### **Congregate Shelter**

Congregate shelter continues to be a critical tool in providing alternatives to unsheltered homelessness. HSH will continue to operate congregate shelters and will continue to expand capacity, in alignment with public health guidance. Shelter referrals will continue to be managed through a centralized process.

HSH has added approximately 170 beds to the congregate system over the past 2 months and will add more capacity this fall.

As of today, HSH will pause intake into shelter for 14 days **whenever 2 positive COVID-19 cases are detected** in a congregate shelter. Previously this pause had taken place after 1 positive case was detected but this policy has caused significant vacancies in the shelter system. DPH has updated their guidance to pause after 2 cases.

If you have questions about how these policy changes impact a program that you are operating, please contact your HSH program manager.

