



City Manager's

# COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

*City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley provided this update on the City of Berkeley's COVID-19 response to the City Council. The reports, which are issued most weekdays, can be viewed at [cityofberkeley.info/covid19-city-manager-updates](http://cityofberkeley.info/covid19-city-manager-updates).*

## **Moving the Unhoused to Safer Ground**

The highlight for the day came early: City staff drove 18 medically fragile people who are unhoused to the City testing site and then to a hotel in Oakland, where they are being housed and supported in a hotel staffed and operated by Alameda County. These efforts represent a monumental lift on multiple angles:

- this transport allows us to “decompress our existing shelters,” reducing people in our shelters and thereby reducing exposure.
- It particularly reduces risk to the most vulnerable unhoused – those with chronic conditions or over 65.
- It illuminates yet another benefit of the innovative City of Berkeley, UC Berkeley and LifeLong partnership to set up a testing site on our own
- It strengthens our relationship with the county to both COVID-19 and to our homelessness and provides a model for effective partnership

Not everyone who is unhoused will be interested. But this moves us forward in a significant way. A huge thanks to EOC Coordinator Katie Hawn for coordinating these efforts, Dr. Hernandez for her guidance and insight, and a wide array of staff who made this all possible. The drivers included HR staff who drove Aging Services vans!

## **Support for local businesses**

We continue to work with local businesses to help manage the current and long-term effects of COVID-19.

City staff are making great progress in reviewing the business continuity grant applications and have nearly completed their first review of the 1,000+ submittals, which was made possible through the guidance and support of Council. We are also working with businesses to connect them with [state and federal resources](#) and developing marketing campaigns to assist essential businesses that have adapted their business model to remain open.



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## Key Community Messages

### **Volunteering and donation opportunities**

The immense demands COVID-19 places on our community exceed what government is capable of alone. We've compiled a list of [ways community members can help support their neighbors](#). Help is needed in many areas, from delivering supplies to at-risk neighbors to donating supplies, money, or even blood to support relief efforts.

### **Looking after our mental health**

COVID-19 is difficult for all of us. Many people are struggling with anxiety, anger, difficulty concentrating, and similar mental health challenges. Berkeley Mental Health Division Manager Steve Grolnic-McClurg has shared advice on [steps we can all take to support mental wellness](#) for ourselves and our families in the face of uncertainty.

### **Support resources for the unhoused**

The most vulnerable in our community face the greatest threat from COVID-19. We've consolidated information on resources to support unhoused community members and homeless service providers on our website at [cityofberkeley.info/covid19-unhoused/](http://cityofberkeley.info/covid19-unhoused/).