



City Manager's

COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Wednesday, April 22, 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.

Increasing shelter, testing for vulnerable populations

As you know, we've made a concerted effort on our own and in partnership with Alameda County to thin out the numbers of people in our shelters. We've done this with the lens of protecting the most vulnerable. This not only increases social distancing in our existing shelters, but also allows those more susceptible to severe illness to be in a hotel environment that further reduces potential exposures.

Last week, we identified 46 people who fit in those vulnerable categories. Of those, 22 accepted the offer to move to Oakland. This week, another 9 accepted the offer, bringing us to a total of 31.

The lack of a vaccine or medical treatment for COVID-19 means that it will spread in our community. The goal is to implement policies and practices that reduce exposures to others.

Increasing shelter for isolation and quarantine has been a key element of our effort to reduce exposures among the unhoused.

Shelter

We have or are in the process of expanding shelter and housing capacity for the unhoused in several ways:

- Transporting medically unhoused people to hotels in Oakland, a county-wide resource that allows our residents to receive supportive services the county is best suited to provide.
- Preparing 18 trailers for quarantine or isolation of Berkeley residents.
- Re-configuring the YAP shelter.

North County Safer Ground

In addition, EOC staff are working with Alameda County staff to set up the 113-bed La Quinta hotel in Berkeley as an isolation site for unhoused people who have not tested positive and are not symptomatic.



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This hotel would be made available for homeless people in Alameda County, with an emphasis on Berkeley. The County will lease and pay for the hotel and the City of Berkeley will help support operations and medical intake.

There is still a lot to work out, but our hope is to have the hotel occupied in early May.

Increased Testing Capacity

We launched our testing site in partnership with LifeLong Medical and UC Berkeley targeting essential City employees. But we also had a specific goal of testing those without access to healthcare, with the unhoused specifically in mind.

Over the past week, we have had positive tests of asymptomatic people, which were expected with increased capacity. The individuals who tested positive are in hotels.

We have positive tests of some asymptomatic unhoused people. There is no evidence of an outbreak in any shelter.

While news reports have identified a specific site, City Staff will not be confirming. Shelter operators may do so.

Resources

Safety for refuse, recycling workers

We put out [a community message today](#) to encourage habits to increase safety for City employees and others who collect refuse, recycling and green waste. It provides guidance for how to handle all elements for curbside pickup and resources for bulky waste and other drop-off materials.

Governor Announces Hospitals can resume scheduled surgeries

[Governor Newsom announced](#) that hospitals can resume scheduled surgical procedures (such as heart valve replacements, angioplasty and tumor removals, and key preventive care services, such as colonoscopies) which were deferred as the health care delivery systems prepared for a surge of COVID-19 patients.