

## Homeless Leadership Council Consolidated Shelter Case Statement

To whom it may concern,

The Homeless Leadership Council (HLC) is composed of the executives of the metro area's largest homeless service providers: Catholic Charities of Denver, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, The Delores Project, Denver Rescue Mission, The Gathering Place, St. Francis Center, The Salvation Army, Urban Peak and Volunteers of America.

Our agencies are now beginning to see COVID-19 cases in our programs. The COVID-19 pandemic poses an emergent and severe health crisis for the homeless population in the Denver Metropolitan Area—a crisis for which our shelter and health systems are not adequately prepared. The National Alliance to End Homelessness published a report finding that [homeless individuals who contract COVID-19](#) are twice as likely to be hospitalized, up to four times as likely to require critical care and two to three times as likely to die from the illness as the general population.

Our respective agencies are committed to taking urgent steps in partnership with Denver's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE), and the Department of Housing Stability (HOST), to mitigate this situation and protect our staffs and those we serve.

The HLC is proposing immediate activation of a temporary consolidated shelter with the space required to scale accommodations that incorporate principles of social distancing and safety required to manage the transmission and impact of COVID-19 on the homeless population.

A consolidated shelter would serve the following functions:

- Decompression of existing congregate shelter space, which is often congested;
- Coordination of public, private and non-profit supply chains as well as urgent limited resources, such as public health efforts, emergency services, security and law enforcement assistance, healthcare staff and materials, sanitation supplies and food supplies;
- Deployment of a large, inter-agency workforce capable of sustained services throughout the crisis;
- Provision of universal screening and triage of symptomatic clients in order to mitigate widespread transmission, which would be difficult to contain across existing scattered-site congregate shelters that clients travel between.

The HLC is prepared to take immediate, emergency actions to temporarily vacate our agencies' day and overnight shelter programs, as well as mobilize staff and resources to support the operation and efficacy of a temporary consolidated shelter. Specifically, our agencies are prepared to reassign approximately 125 skilled full-time employees (FTE) and approximately 15 skilled part-time employees (PTE) (excl. VOA and CCH). We would also serve three meals per day to individuals accessing the temporary consolidated shelter.

The HLC unanimously agreed that an adequate and humane facility is essential to the operation and efficacy of a temporary consolidated shelter. An adequate and humane facility would require:

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Tuesday March 31, 2020

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- Sufficient square footage for social distancing;
- Industrial kitchens
- Accessibility and safety for women, LGBTQ individuals, youth and individuals with disabilities or medical needs;
- Worksite access in downtown Denver providing for clients and staff;
- Parking and public transportation access for clients and staff;
- Wireless internet;
- Appropriate space to accommodate a medical clinic(s), storage, showers, staff respite areas, shower and bathroom facility partitions to accommodate special populations and safe outdoor smoking.

In addition to the staff and resources that the HLC agencies would provide, the facilities' operations would need to provide additional resources, including:

- Adequate transportation to activated respite rooms and supplemental shelter;
- Janitorial support;
- Supplies (sanitation/linen/PPE);
- Screening/triage for symptomatic individuals;
- Public health resources in the building;
- Security and law enforcement;
- Prescription drug distribution;
- Laundry;
- Kennels for individuals' pets;
- Mental/behavioral health clinicians.