

Update on Homelessness Services in Your Community

PHYSICAL DISTANCING SHELTER SITES



City's Response to COVID-19 + People Experiencing Homelessness

As part of the City's response to COVID-19, the City of Toronto has opened more than 25 temporary response sites to provide additional space for physical distancing and for people to move indoors from encampments, providing approximately 3,000 spaces in temporary shelters and hotel programs. All locations are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and provide wrap-around support for clients.

While shelter residents and staff are priority groups to receive vaccinations to COVID-19 and many have already been vaccinated, the City plans to continue current response efforts, including services at temporary shelter sites to support physical distancing measures, until at least the end of 2021 as we continue to follow the guidance of the City's Medical Officer of Health and Provincial guidelines related to COVID-19 for congregate living settings.



Temporary Shelters for People Experiencing Homelessness

An operational plan to transition out of temporary hotel response sites is in development, and is dependent on a number of factors including:

- Any future changes to physical distancing public health guidance
- Hotel owners' willingness to extend leases, likely based on changes in the travel industry and any future increases in tourists, which could impact their interest in ending current leases;
- And most importantly, ongoing and increasing demand for shelter space, including the US border re-opening, and the need for additional space as part of the winter services plan.

Leases, where required, have already been extended until the end of 2021. Most hotel providers have indicated a willingness to extend leases to at least April 2022, to mitigate the need for transitions during the winter, and the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) is working to extend leases until April while the broader transition plan is developed. This planning work is still in its early stages and more details will be shared in the Shelter Infrastructure Plan to Council in the fall.

Request for Proposal Locations: Prior to the pandemic, SSHA operated a number of hotel locations, primarily serving families and refugees, the majority of which are now part of the COVID-19 response. These sites were selected through a request for proposal (RFP) and they may be available for use until the RFP end date in 2023 and 2024. We are developing a plan that will assess the future role of these sites in our shelter system. Please note that there is at least one RFP shelter hotel location within your Ward.

How will the community be engaged?

The City understands that many community members are interested in the future of these sites. Updates are expected this fall and will be provided to Council and on the www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters web page.