

## **FAQ Outdoor Emergency Shelters: April 10, 2020**

### **What are the Outdoor Emergency Shelters?**

Outdoor Emergency Shelters are temporary tent villages that will provide adults experiencing homelessness access to a supportive environment, as well as regular meals, water, hygiene amenities and restrooms.

They will offer people living without shelter a safer and healthier place to stay throughout the duration of the City of Portland's COVID-19 state of emergency.

In accordance with CDC and Public Health guidelines on physical distancing, tents at each site will be placed within 12'x12' spaces, and tents will be uniformly spaced to create at least 10 feet of separation between each tent.

Each site will have a fence and a designated point of entry to protect residents' privacy and to keep the sites secure.

In addition to restrooms and handwashing stations, each site will also offer drinking water, a phone charging station, a cooking area and regular trash service. A shower truck will service all three sites.

The sites will share a health coordinator who can respond to basic first aid and behavioral health calls 24/7.

The City of Portland will be providing tents, as well as sleeping bags and cots. Each tent will be on a platform.

### **Why are they necessary?**

Living without shelter is traumatizing and life-shortening even when our community isn't facing a pandemic. That's why local governments, service providers and advocates work all the time to help people into shelter and housing.

But during an outbreak like COVID-19, that work is even more urgent.

While many people with COVID-19 will have only mild to moderate symptoms and recover without medical intervention, that may be less true for our neighbors experiencing homelessness. They tend to be older or have more underlying health conditions, both of which put them at higher risk of serious symptoms and potentially fatal infections.

Creating these Outdoor Emergency Shelters — providing places to wash hands, go to the bathroom, and sleep and spend time at safe distances — is another way the community can step up and limit the spread of this illness among those who are most vulnerable.

Because COVID and the need for physical-distancing has forced libraries, cafes and day centers to either close or shorten their hours, limiting access to showers, meals, bathrooms and more, these sites will also fill an important service gap in the community at the same time as they offer safer places to sleep.

### **Where will these shelters open?**

At this time, the City of Portland has identified three properties, two in the Central Eastside and one in downtown. The east sites are at SE Water and SE Main and at SE Water and SE Salmon. The west site is at NW Broadway and NW Hoyt.

### **What's the timeline for creating and then opening these sites?**

The goal is to stagger open all three sites as soon as late next week. Some construction work may start by the end of this week.

### **Who will these shelters serve?**

These sites will serve adults, either singles or people in partnerships, currently living without shelter in Multnomah County. Families or people younger than 18 won't be able to access these sites.

People will also be able to bring their pets.

### **How many people will each site serve?**

Each site will host 45 tents. Because some tents will host partners, the number of people served at each site may be larger than 45.

### **What is the intake process for residents?**

Spaces will be available by reservation only. JOIN is collaborating with community partners for the intake process.

### **Will walk-in or drop-off access be accommodated?**

No. These sites won't be able to accommodate people who walk up seeking a space or anyone who might be dropped off without a reservation.

### **Will guests be allowed to use their own tents and sleeping bags? Will they be able to store belongings?**

No. To maximize use of space, the City of Portland will be providing new tents and sleeping bags for all guests. Guests at each site will also be able to store their belongings, including any tents or bedding they may have been using before coming to the Outdoor Emergency Shelter.

**How will these sites be organized to support physical distancing as well as hygiene and sanitization procedures?**

- **Public health guidance:** Each site will adhere to guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Multnomah County Public Health.
- **Strict cleaning and personal hygiene protocols:** Staff will regularly disinfect all communal property and shared spaces. Disinfectants and handwashing stations will be provided at the gate. Handwashing stations will also be provided next to portable toilets. Staff will also educate people about safe handwashing and sanitization practices, and explain why hygiene and sanitization are important for everyone's health and safety.
- **Sharing information about symptoms:** Anyone who develops respiratory symptoms must report them soon as they are aware of them. People with symptoms will be screened and referred to medical motel shelters as needed, just like someone who develops symptoms in an indoor shelter.
- **Visitor policy:** Like at other shelters in the community, guests will not be able to invite visitors into the space. Guests will be able to come and go from the sites as they need, just like at other shelters, but they will be highly encouraged to practice safe physical distancing at all times.

**Who is responsible for ensuring safety and providing services at these sites?**

JOIN is working with the City of Portland and the Joint Office of Homeless Services to provide tents and sleeping bags, and access to handwashing stations, toilets, trash service, showers, nutritious meals, and mental and physical health services.

JOIN and the Portland Police Bureau are working together to create a collaborative public safety plan.

JOIN has created an organizing committee, which currently includes organizers and workers from JOIN, Afro Village, Coalition for Communities of Color, Dignity Village, Gather : Make : Shelter, Ground Score / Trash for Peace, Hygiene4All, Portland Street Medicine, Portland People's Outreach Project, Right 2 Dream Too, Street Roots, Sisters of the Road, The Equi Institute, and the PDX Trans Housing Coalition.