

SACRAMENTO SERVICES NOT SWEEPS COALITION [SSNSC]

SSNSC Members

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment: ACCE	First Steps Communities	Harm Reductions Services
JVMC Outreach Clinic	Loaves & Fishes	Maryhouse
Organize Sacramento	Sacramento Area Black Caucus	Sacramento Area Congregations Together: SacACT
Sacramento Central Labor Council	Sacramento Community Land Trust	Sacramento Food Policy Council
Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee: SHOC	Sacramento Homeless Union	Sacramento Housing Alliance
Sacramento Poor Peoples Campaign	Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness: SRCEH	St. John's Lutheran Church
Women's Empowerment		

NEED: We are in the midst of a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Sacramento Services Not Sweeps Coalition [SSNSC] feels, as does the Center for Disease Control [CDC], National Coalition for the Homeless, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, and Housing & Urban Development [HUD] that it is critical for communities to proactively address the unique needs of people experiencing homelessness in this health care crisis.

The Sacramento region has over 10,000 people experiencing homelessness on an annual basis, 70% of whom are outside due to lack of shelter and affordable housing in our community. We know that people experiencing homelessness are highly vulnerable to COVID-19 given that many homeless people already suffer upper respiratory diseases, weakened immune systems and aging, with 23% of the homeless population between 50 – 59 and 9% 60+.

CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL [CDC] HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS GUIDANCE [3/20/2020]

- Unless individual housing units are available, do not clear encampments during community spread of COVID-19. Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.
- Encourage people staying in encampments to set up their tents/sleeping quarters with at least 12 feet x 12 feet of space per individual.
- Ensure nearby restroom facilities have functional water taps, are stocked with hand hygiene materials (soap, drying materials) and bath tissue, and remain open to people experiencing homelessness 24 hours per day.
- If toilets or handwashing facilities are not available nearby, provide access to portable latrines with handwashing facilities for encampments of more than 10 people.

LACK OF CITY/COUNTY RESPONSE REGARDING HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS: The City and County have failed to respond to the sanitation needs of people experiencing homelessness in encampments. This includes port-a-potties; mobile shower and bathrooms program; handwashing/sanitizing stations and drinking water. We call for a broad-based community response that is lead by public health values and those most impacted by this crisis.

SSNSC PLATFORM:

- **City/County establish a \$1 Million Homeless COVID-19 Fund:** following the lead of the Mayor of San Francisco on March 10, 2020 who set up a \$5 million COVID-19 fund– the City, County and private partners should jointly fund a \$1 million Homeless COVID-19 Fund that would be used to “protect homeless people and people living in SRO’s from COVID-19” and is coupled with their Public Health Order. These funds would be used for basic needs and expanded public health interventions including cleaning resources for homeless shelters, room and boards, board and care homes, SRO’s, medical respites and skilled nursing facilities; expanded robust to homeless encampments and expanded resource information made available to navigation centers, shelters and encampments. To date the City has only allocated up to \$250,000 for this purpose while the County has not allocated any funds for this purpose.
- **Immediate Moratorium on Sweeps of Encampments by County Park Rangers, SPD and other Law Enforcement Agencies [for example CalTrans]– Immediately Implement the CDC Encampment Guidelines:** According to Park Ranger activity data, in 2019 they closed down 5,294 homeless encampments, or a monthly average of 440 camps closed. SSNSC is calling for an **Immediate Moratorium on Sweeps of Encampments** which displaces homeless people, making it hard to impossible for health outreach workers find to locate them again if they are sick from COVID-19. Additionally, the sweeps often mean the loss of personal property that includes medications and other life-sustaining items. This includes a moratorium on the “Sit/Lie” ordinance at City Hall. Since the CDC issued guidance, SSNSC members have documented multiple instance of law enforcement, including the Sacramento Police & Sheriff Departments continuing to harass people experiencing homelessness in certain areas.

- **Immediate Moratorium on City and County towing and ticketing RV's, cars and other vehicles that people are using for shelter;**
- **Stop the destruction of people experiencing homelessness personal property;**
- **City and County immediately provide \$1 million in funding to support a mobile bathroom, shower and laundry programs; port-a-potties; hand-washing stations; trash pick-up to encampments and drinking water:**
 - ✓ Goodwill has estimated that they can operate 2 mobile bathroom and shower programs [ADA compliant] while employing six homeless people for \$750,000 the first year, which includes capital costs of two trucks and two bathroom/shower units;
 - ✓ Additionally, Atlas Disposal can service trash pickup for a cost of \$811/month or roughly \$9,700 trash pickup per encampment, seven days a week. Thus for \$250,000 [including \$25,000 for trash bags for encampments] Atlas Disposal can provide full-service trash removal to 23 encampments on an annual basis;
 - ✓ Finally, the city and County need to add hand washing/hand sanitizer stations in areas where people experiencing homelessness are congregated, for example, Loaves & Fishes, Caesar Chavez Park etc.
- **Immediately open bathrooms in City and County parks on a 24/7 basis and staff them with attendants, creating a Homeless Sanitation Employment Program;**
- **Expand shelter and housing options for people experiencing homelessness:**
 - ✓ City and County Immediately Open Broadway/X and Meadowview Shelters and Implement the Safe Parking Program: These programs have already been approved and their opening needs to be expedited to provide as much shelters and safety to people experiencing homelessness as possible. Additionally, for the time being these shelters be designed to give people experiencing homelessness the needed "social distance" recommended by public health professionals;
 - ✓ City and County Immediately Open Sanctioned "Safe Ground" Encampments: The Safe Ground encampments would provide bathrooms, showers, hand washing/sanitizing stations as well as public health outreach [in addition to food, case management etc] again to aid in the containment and treatment of COVID-19 for people experiencing homelessness;
 - ✓ Expanded housing options to align with "social distance": The CDC along with public health officials are recommending that people keep a "social distance" to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, for most people experiencing homelessness this is not possible given the congregate nature of shelters and encampments. We highly recommend that the City/County significantly expand housing options, including motels, hotels and college dorms to create the needed social distance for people experiencing homelessness;
- **Immediate halt to evictions and foreclosures in the City and County so that Sacramento residents can follow the "stay at home" orders and ensure Sacramento's housing crisis does not grow exponentially with the COVID-19 virus;**
- **Community-based health and housing resources to be made available for people being released from hospitals, jails and foster care.**