



## COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Homeless Service Providers

*This document will be updated periodically by All Chicago to share information related to the COVID-19 crisis with homeless service providers.*

**Last updated:** 4/13/2020

**Questions updated since last version:** 2, 3, 12, 13, 14

**Questions added since last version:** 15, 16

Question	Answer
<p><b>1. Information Access/Slack Channel:</b> How can I access information about COVID-19 as it is being shared with the community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Slack Channel:</i> All Chicago has created a free <a href="#">Slack</a> channel for homeless service providers to stay updated with information and share resources. The link to the Slack channel can be found <a href="#">here</a>, and can be shared widely. The Slack channel has subchannels for #covid-19-response (up-to-date information), #resources, and #provider-questions.</li> <li>• <i>Weekly Webinar:</i> All Chicago is partnering with DFSS to provide a weekly webinar to share information about COVID-19 response. The webinars will be occurring on Fridays at 1pm. Find information about the next webinar <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• <i>All Chicago Website:</i> All Chicago will be updating <a href="#">this page</a> of its website frequently with news and information. Sign up to get alerts here, too.</li> <li>• Please email questions to Chicago Department of Public Health at <a href="mailto:coronavirus@cityofchicago.gov">coronavirus@cityofchicago.gov</a> or call 312-746-4835. The Chicago Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. Phone lines are currently staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week. Please note that this call center cannot access COVID-19 testing results.</li> <li>• Find information posted to the Chicago Department of Public Health’s website <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Homelessness Prevention:</b> Who should I speak with regarding homeless prevention assistance?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 311 can connect people to the Homeless Prevention Call Center. Keep in mind, the Homeless Prevention Call Center is not open on Fridays and is working at a restricted capacity due to COVID-19. If you have difficulty reaching someone or accessing funds, please request a call-back from a manager as there are still ample funds available for Homeless Prevention assistance.</li> <li>• All Chicago is working with DFSS to increase the capacity of the call center and shorten wait times.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Shelter Placement:</b> Who should I speak with regarding shelter placement? Will</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 311 is currently taking calls for shelter placement. Residents can call 311 from any address. Please do not send clients to hospitals or police stations. If residents need a place to wait, they can request from any DFSS</li> </ul>

<p>transportation be available?</p>	<p>Community Service Center Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, due to social distancing, people may not all be able to come inside.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic Charities is coordinating transportation to shelter from any location in the city. <a href="#">Mobile Outreach is only available within the city limits of Chicago</a>. Although transportation is still being provided, it is operating at a reduced capacity due to reduced staffing resources. Salvation Army Shield of Hope (Emergency Homeless Assessment &amp; Rapid Response Center (EHARC)) is not currently accepting walk-ins. Families should contact 311 for shelter placement.</li> <li>• DFSS is working closely with partners to improve the 311 process. To report an issue with a client accessing shelter through 311, please email DFSS at <a href="mailto:DFSS-homeless@cityofchicago.org">DFSS-homeless@cityofchicago.org</a> with as much detail as you can provide including when the request was made, who you/the client spoke with, and what message you/the client received.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Shelter Quarantine Guidance &amp; Temporary Housing:</b>          What guidance is available for shelters serving individuals who need to be quarantined or isolated?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For questions about quarantine and isolation, please email questions to Chicago Department of Public Health at <a href="mailto:coronavirus@cityofchicago.gov">coronavirus@cityofchicago.gov</a> or call 312-746-4835. The Chicago Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. Phone lines are currently staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven-days a week. Please note that this call center cannot access COVID-19 testing results.</li> <li>• Please see the <a href="#">DFSS Shelter Guidance</a> Document.</li> <li>• CDPH is asking shelters and congregate programs to report when they have two or more confirmed, or suspected cases, of COVID-19 among residents and/or staff using the <a href="#">Case Report Form</a>.</li> <li>• Follow your agency’s Emergency Policies &amp; Procedures or create them if they need to be created.</li> <li>• For individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who are showing symptoms and awaiting test results and need to be quarantined or isolated, hotel rooms have been made available by the city of Chicago. Keep in mind, these rooms are available by referral only through their healthcare provider. For more information on this, <a href="#">please follow the link provided here</a>.</li> <li>• Temporary housing funding can be provided through the <a href="#">Chicago COVID-19 Homeless System Agency Emergency Fund</a>.</li> <li>• HUD has provided guidance on utilizing participant screening tools for shelter entry to limit exposure: <a href="#">please see link here</a>.</li> <li>• HUD and the CDC have provided guidance on non-congregate approaches to sheltering for COVID-19 homeless response: <a href="#">please see link here</a>.</li> <li>• All Chicago is monitoring guidance for shelters and will be providing information as it becomes available. Please monitor guidance coming from DFSS, CDPH, and HUD.</li> </ul>

<p><b>5. Provider Staffing:</b> How should providers handle staffing during COVID-19 to reduce exposure and in the case of staff exposure?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For questions about staff exposure, please email questions to Chicago Department of Public Health at <a href="mailto:coronavirus@cityofchicago.gov">coronavirus@cityofchicago.gov</a> or call 312-746-4835. The Chicago Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. Phone lines are currently staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven-days a week. Please note that this call center cannot access COVID-19 testing results.</li> <li>• At this time, agencies should follow guidance from DFSS, CDPH, and HUD.</li> <li>• OSHA has provided guidance on preparing workplaces for COVID-19: <a href="#">please see link here.</a></li> <li>• Staffing hazard costs and additional staffing resources can be provided through the <a href="#">Chicago COVID-19 Homeless System Agency Emergency Fund.</a></li> <li>• Starting April 2, All Chicago is convening a weekly peer-sharing webinar on Thursdays from 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. We encourage participation in this webinar so that peers may discuss strategies for staffing and financial needs. To register, please <a href="#">click here.</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Coordinated Entry System (CES) Access</b>  <b>Points:</b> Are Access Points available for clients to be assessed for housing at this time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients should not be directed to any physical location at this time for the sole purpose of completing a Standardized Housing Assessments. Assessments will be completed over the phone Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Assessments may lead to a future housing option but will not quickly solve a client’s immediate crisis. Please direct client’s call (312) 361-1707 for assistance. Keep in mind, this will remain in effect throughout April and due to the high volume of calls, you may experience a wait time.</li> <li>• Clients who are not currently engaged with a project will not be expected to update their assessments every 30 days in order to stay active with CES during this time.</li> <li>• Contact CES: Please find more information at <a href="http://www.csh.org/chicagoces">www.csh.org/chicagoces</a>. For more information, reach out to: Ben Darby (assessments) - <a href="mailto:bdarby@housingforhealth.org">bdarby@housingforhealth.org</a>, Jessica Smith (veterans) - <a href="mailto:jessica.smith@csh.org">jessica.smith@csh.org</a>, Matching team led by Sal Estrada - <a href="mailto:ChicagoCES@catholiccharities.net">ChicagoCES@catholiccharities.net</a>, All Chicago help desk (HMIS) - <a href="mailto:helpdesk@allchicago.org">helpdesk@allchicago.org</a>, Stephanie Sideman (other topics/feedback) - <a href="mailto:stephanie.sideman@csh.org">stephanie.sideman@csh.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Remote Case Management:</b> What recommended strategies are there for conducting case management and eligibility-level assessments like recertifications with clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional case management resources can be provided through the <a href="#">Chicago COVID-19 Homeless System Agency Emergency Fund.</a></li> <li>• Most funding entities are relaxing documentation requirements. Check with your funding entity to see which documentation requirements are being relaxed and to develop a plan to get the documentation you need to house participants during this time.</li> <li>• HUD has provided guidance that electronic signatures are acceptable forms of documentation. It is acceptable to use programs such as “DocuSign” to</li> </ul>

<p>during this time, for projects working remotely?</p>	<p>collect electronic signatures. It is also acceptable to ask someone signing a document to take a picture of the signed document and send the photo to you via email. Another strategy could be to make copies of emails, text messages, or phone conversations with clients confirming information that has been shared and indicating that a physical signature will be collected later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HUD also released a <a href="#">memorandum</a> on April 1, 2020, which allows the waiver of certain regulatory requirements in the Continuum of Care (CoC) grant program. The requirement in 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(F) that projects require program participants to meet with case managers not less than once per month is waived for all permanent housing- rapid re-housing projects for two months beginning on the date of this memorandum.</li> <li>• Mail and video options should be utilized as much as possible for communication purposes with clients and landlords.</li> <li>• All Chicago has published guidance about emergency protocols for <a href="#">recordkeeping</a>.</li> <li>• Starting April 2, All Chicago is convening a weekly peer-sharing webinar on Thursdays from 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. We encourage participation in this webinar so that peers may discuss strategies for virtual case-management. To register, please <a href="#">click here</a>. All Chicago will be working on providing additional guidance related to this question as peer-to-peer sharing is utilized more.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Supporting Client Needs:</b> How can we continue to support clients who are unable to travel or communicate via phone?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening clients for high needs and delivering services should continue during this time, and agencies are encouraged to share creative strategies.</li> <li>• Agencies are encouraged to participate in peer discussions about how to continue providing support to clients who have needs that reach beyond virtual case management. Starting April 2, All Chicago is convening a weekly peer-sharing webinar on Thursdays from 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. We encourage participation in this webinar so that peers may discuss strategies for virtual case-management. To register, please <a href="#">click here</a>.</li> <li>• Consider using emergency fund resources to assist clients who are having trouble accessing resources like phones, food, etc. Additional case management resources can be provided through the <a href="#">Chicago COVID-19 Homeless System Agency Emergency Fund</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Supplies:</b> Where can we access scarce needed supplies like PPE, cleaning supplies, etc.?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Chicago is working to get information and resources to shelters in partnership with the city and other colleagues.</li> <li>• The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has created <a href="#">this form</a> to manage the collection of donations of PPE and medical supplies in Chicago. To donate goods, <a href="#">click here</a>.</li> </ul>

<p><b>10. Financial and Staffing Impact:</b> How can agencies address the financial impact of the COVID crisis, as well as additional staffing needs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing and additional operating cost resources can be provided through the <a href="#">Chicago COVID-19 Homeless System Agency Emergency Fund</a>.</li> <li>• All Chicago has published guidance about emergency protocols for <a href="#">Housing Inspections</a> and <a href="#">Recordkeeping</a>.</li> <li>• Agencies are encouraged to take advantage of federal resources that are becoming available to address the financial struggles of organizations with fewer than 500 employees. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) makes organizations eligible for Paycheck Protection Program loans to meet payroll and associated costs. Loans are forgivable if criteria are met, including keeping staff on payroll from April 1 to June 30. The application is available, and agencies should apply quickly because it is a first-come, first served opportunity. <a href="#">More information is available here</a>.</li> <li>• Starting April 2, All Chicago is convening a weekly peer-sharing webinar on Thursdays from 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. We encourage participation in this webinar so that peers may discuss strategies for staffing and financial needs. To register, please <a href="#">click here</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11. Housing New People:</b> What strategies are being recommended for housing new people during the COVID-19 crisis?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants should still be housed during the COVID-19 crisis and providers are encouraged to identify and share creative methods of doing so.</li> <li>• Request access to the Housing Availability listserv by contacting: <a href="mailto:mfelt@allchicago.org">mfelt@allchicago.org</a>. Housing leads will continue to be sent during the health crisis. We have identified landlords and property managers that are continuing to house clients during this time.</li> <li>• All Chicago has published guidance about emergency protocols for <a href="#">Housing Inspections</a> and <a href="#">Recordkeeping</a>.</li> <li>• Starting April 2, All Chicago is convening a weekly peer-sharing webinar on 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. We encourage participation in this webinar so that peers may discuss strategies for virtual case-management. To register, please <a href="#">click here</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>12. Shelter Capacity:</b> Are shelters operating 24 hours? Does the city have a plan to attain more shelter beds?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelters have increased capacity to 24/7 so shelter in place guidance can be most effective. Any new individuals are taken to the emergency shelters DFSS has established.</li> <li>• Three temporary shelter sites are operational, providing roughly 400 beds for men, youth, and returning citizens. Another site with 200 beds for single women and families is opening as soon as staffing is in place. The City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is working to bring additional facilities online.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13. Program Extensions:</b> Will there be waivers from HUD, IDHS, and DFSS so those with program exits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFSS and the CoC are coordinating around local use of ESG funding, but for now, we do not want households exiting just because 12 months is up. You may also contact DFSS about this by emailing <a href="#">DFSS-</a></li> </ul>

<p>due to length of stay in Transitional Housing or Rapid Re-housing get extensions?</p>	<p><a href="mailto:homeless@cityofchicago.org">homeless@cityofchicago.org</a>. For questions about ESG-funded RRH, contact Margaret Smith at <a href="mailto:msmith@allchicago.org">msmith@allchicago.org</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HUD is working on additional guidance regarding possible waivers for these and other program requirements. Please stay tuned for guidance and ensure you have access to up-to-date information from HUD via the <a href="#">ESG and CoC listservs</a>. In the interim, HUD encourages recipients to work with landlords to keep program participants housed. Please reopen this question if program participants are at imminent risk of eviction.</li> <li>• All Chicago is also convening youth Transitional Housing providers to write a letter to HUD. If you are interested in participating in this effort, contact Elizabeth Perez at <a href="mailto:eperez@allchicago.org">eperez@allchicago.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>14. Hearing-Impaired Individuals:</b> How can hearing impaired individuals access 311 and Coordinated Entry assessments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Coordinated Entry Call Center (312-361-1707) is TTY-enabled, so a hearing-impaired individual may use this technology to connect with the hotline. Additionally, if a provider is assisting an individual, the provider may reach out to Salvador Estrada of Catholic Charities (<a href="mailto:saestrada@catholiccharities.net">saestrada@catholiccharities.net</a>) to schedule the assessment.</li> <li>• 311 can be reached with a TTY device.</li> </ul>
<p><b>15. Medicaid Waivers:</b> Is there information available on the waiver to bill Medicaid for housing people experiencing homelessness?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As of 4/13/20, the 1115 waiver has not yet been approved by the federal government. <a href="#">This notice</a> was released from the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) regarding changes to provider enrollment and billing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>16. Resources:</b> Where can I find out about resources that are assisting clients with needs during this time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please access the Resources document in the Chicago CoC Slack Channel <a href="#">here</a>. See question 1 for information about accessing the Slack Channel.</li> </ul>