

Services to End and Prevent Homelessness COVID-19 Update

Montgomery County Continuum of Care has been working with all of our providers to ensure services continue in a safe manner to our most vulnerable clients. We know that people experiencing homelessness are often older and have underlying health conditions that put them at high risk of experiencing complications from COVID-19. This applies to individuals in permanent housing programs as well with an added concern about the loneliness that results from isolation. For some, their PSH case manager may be the only person they see. On the family side, we need to the economic impact closures may have on people. Finding and sustaining regular work hours will be difficult. We are all working together to relieve the stress and anxiety people may be feeling.

For more information about the virus and Montgomery County's response, click [here](#). We are working to follow guidelines issued by the CDC, HUD, and our national partners such as CSH and the National Alliance to End Homelessness. As the response is continually evolving, we will make sure to provide updates as this page, as they become available.

As concern over COVID-19 in our community has grown, Montgomery County Health and Human Services, Services to Prevent and End Homelessness and its partners have pursued several strategies — and offered significant emergency resources — to help limit the spread of infection among neighbors experiencing homelessness.

So far, we have done the following:

- Scheduled to keep adult hypothermia shelters open through at least April
- Procured and distributed cleaning and safety supplies to all adult and family shelters (additional supplies will be distributed as they become available)
- Provided continuum of care organizations the authority to expend funds necessary to respond to the crisis
- Identified locations for individuals experiencing homelessness that are required to quarantine
- Conducted additional outreach to street homeless to educate them on COVID-19 and provide resources
- Implemented check-in calls every other day to among CoC providers to ensure all organizations working within the continuum have the most up-to-date information and resources
- Developed guidelines for shelters around COVID-19 – available [here](#)
- Developed home visit guidelines – available [here](#)
- Working with all providers to update their continuity of operations plans

We have undertaken these critical steps as those with underlying medical conditions or older are more at risk of developing serious complications from this virus. We know that those communities are disproportionately represented in our homeless community.

March 20, 2020

The following service updates are provided on behalf of Services to End and Prevent Homelessness.

In order to protect the health of Montgomery County residents, and comply with orders from the State of Maryland, the following service modifications will be introduced beginning Friday, March 20, 2020. The following services will transition to primarily provide services and conduct eligibility screenings through phone, fax, online applications, and email. **Walk-in services will only be provided in the case of emergency and/or for families with minor children seeking emergency shelter.** Individuals that come directly to any of the offices will be provided with information and given the opportunity to schedule a phone interview or submit documents via mail, email, fax, or drop-box. On-site services will be limited to emergencies only.

(These changes do not apply to the following programs: Housing Initiative Program, Rapid Re-Housing, Healthcare for the Homeless, Homeless Services for Single Adults, Homeless Services for Families, and Continuum of Care Operations. Those programs remaining fully operational).

To request an appointment, please reach the programs at the following numbers. Phone lines are open between 8:30 am to 5 pm. Calls outside of those times, will be returned the next business day.

Housing Stabilization Services. Provides emergency housing needs, including homelessness prevention services and housing related financial assistance with eviction, foreclosure, and utility disconnection. To request a phone interview, please call one of the following offices. Document drop-off stations are also available at each office location. Some benefits

- **Germantown- 12900 Middlebrook Road, PHONE 240-777-4448, FAX-240-777-4187**
- **Rockville-1301 Piccard Drive, PHONE 240-777-4550, FAX-240-777-4254**
- **Silver Spring- 8818 Georgia Avenue, PHONE 240-777-3075, FAX-240-777-3154**

Office of Home Energy Programs. Provides utility grants and shut-off prevention to eligible households. Applications can be completed online at [MyDHRbenefits.dhr.state.md.us](https://mydhrbenefits.dhr.state.md.us). Hard copy applications, and a document drop box is also available at **1301 Piccard Drive 4th floor**. Document drop-off stations are also located at each of the housing stabilization offices. Documents may also be sent to <mailto:ohep@montgomerycountymd.gov>. Phone appointments can be requested by calling **240-777-4450**.

Rental Assistance Program. The Rental Assistance Program has extended all benefits scheduled to renew between March-May 2020 to continue through July 2020. This will provide staff and applicants additional time to respond to document requests and process applications. During this time, documents can be dropped off, or mailed to **1301 Piccard Drive, Rockville 20850**, or emailed to <mailto:rap@montgomerycountymd.gov>. Phone interviews can be requested by calling **240-777-4400**.