

SHARED PRINCIPLES & AGREED FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONSE TO PEOPLE LIVING UNSHELTERED 2020-2021

This framework is meant to be able to generate wide support, uniting the Mayor, Council, and people who work closely with those directly affected by these policies. Its success depends upon sustained public and private adherence to these agreed-upon principles; mutual support; consistent communication lifting up these intentions; and the deployment of adequate, flexible resources. It is designed to be put into practice right away, and sustained through 2021.

- (1) United front: Mayor, Councilmembers and providers lend their support to a common framework, and release and spend necessary resources to implement these principles in practice
- (2) We commit to a plan of action to do the most we can under current conditions, with new, significant, one-time resources, intending to earn support across the spectrum of stakeholders for this approach
- (3) Principles:
 - relocate at least 500 people from miserable conditions on the streets into safe and sustainable lodging, without coercion, enforcement, or camp removal as the framework;
 - focus lodging and enhanced shelter offers on people facing greatest barriers, a group that is disproportionately Black and Indigenous; and on situations with greatest impact on neighborhoods and city as a whole (public safety; impact on struggling businesses and vulnerable neighborhoods; public health, including COVID vulnerability; public disorder; law violations); and
 - in recognition that our city cannot currently offer enough placements, improve the ability of those who will remain encamped in public spaces for the near term to care for themselves, connect with available supports, and shelter in place. This specifically includes a comprehensive and frequent trash removal and sanitation strategy.
- (4) Set expectations: many if not most people living unsheltered in Seattle will remain in that situation over the next year.
- (5) Consistent messaging:
 - COVID requires approach that promotes and protects public health, precludes dispersals
 - Dispersals don't reduce the number of people living unsheltered, and exacerbate difficulties of providing/continuing services to people living outside
 - The only way to reduce the prevalence of people living unsheltered is to afford people access to a sustainable lodging situation that matches their circumstances (attention to initial placement as well as to sustainability of that placement). For some this is solely a matter of affordability, for others this is a matter of affordability, help in gaining access, and having appropriate supports in place and available as needed.
 - Sustainable lodging for a particular person means accommodation that is accessible, adequate, and consistent with basic standards of shelter or housing, including support for hygiene, sanitation, food preparation, security, peace, privacy and dignity; and without barriers that mean the individual will be turned away or excluded. Due to COVID19, congregate shelter is not generally an appropriate setting.
 - Seattle does not have, and will not have, enough such placements to match all or most of those living unsheltered over the next 15 months

- (6) Sheltering in place: for those who, we know given lack of enough alternatives, will remain unsheltered, sheltering in place in viable conditions is a priority and part of the City's mission. The City will take responsibility to provide:
- sanitation and access to hygiene facilities
 - trash removal and water
 - health promotion and harm reduction (sharps containers, health outreach in through Public Health)
 - community dynamics
 - help address obstructions and behavior through thoughtful and respectful dialogue and problem-solving, engaging both unsheltered and housed residents, addressing specific neighborhood needs and priorities, rather than through removal and dispersal
 - on occasion, it may be necessary to assist people to shift to another location because they are in an untenable place (e.g., property that is about to be an active construction site, or blocking access to a business). This is expected to be rare. In these situations, the approach will be to problem-solve (sometimes rapidly but preferably with a reasonable time period in which to prepare and plan), helping people identify and move to another location, which may be another outdoor camp site. This is not because people should be left to live in public, but in recognition that in the near term, no matter what we do, many will be.
- (7) Lodging increase: the City will make it possible for 500 or more additional people to shift to secure, sustainable lodging over the next 15 months while we await a larger influx of PSH, including by using hotels
- The skilled community-based providers themselves will screen and match individuals to the best lodging resource for their situation and needs; lodging availability will be transparent and known to those doing actual outreach and screening work
 - Bridge Shelter, Navigation Center and tiny homes are a good match for many people, not all--but openings are rare
 - If there is an increase in tiny home availability on this timeframe, that will assist with some individuals; however, some people won't go to/not appropriate for tiny homes, or need a level of care beyond what is available in present tiny home scenarios
 - hotel use is possible, immediate and attractive to many on the street -- very few people decline
 - hotels rooms must be prioritized for people with greatest barriers, a group that disproportionately includes Black & Indigenous people; and those whose situations are most impactful for neighborhoods or city as a whole, related to disorder or health concerns, or the need to de-intensify the jail
 - insisting on race equity, ensuring resources do not skew toward white individuals disproportionately
 - staffing model for hotel programs must be realistic in light of the complex behavioral health needs of many participants, and the lack of available alternatives sites or programs to address those needs
 - rapidly hear what about appropriate providers' situation would have to change to make this possible; make those changes ASAP, including providers whose mission is to work with culturally defined populations and people with high levels of behavioral health challenges (both are essential for success)
 - issues that may need to be addressed to create capacity include

- workforce, workforce, workforce: compensation, COVID staffing ratios (plan for possible staff absence of up to 3 weeks without warning), adequate staff positions to support more intensive care teams to support people with complex behavioral health needs

This approach has been co-signed by Chief Seattle Club, Urban League, REACH/Evergreen Treatment Services, Downtown Emergency Service Center, Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness & Public Defender Association /CoLEAD.