

Urgent Need: help for homeless Ohioans enduring the COVID-19 epidemic

Not everyone can follow the advice to just “stay home” when they’re feeling ill. Ohio has approximately 300 emergency homeless shelters and similar programs that urgently need more resources to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Please support the [COHHIO Pandemic Emergency Fund](#) to ensure our frontline responders get the cleaning supplies, medical equipment, extra staffing and additional space they need during this crisis.

COHHIO is working with Ohio’s regional homeless systems (continuums of care) to direct your 100% of donations to the Pandemic Emergency Fund to support local homeless agencies in Ohio that desperately need financial help to prepare for and limit the spread of the coronavirus among this highly vulnerable population.

Emergency shelters and street outreach programs are on the frontline of the response and are struggling to meet basic needs while trying to prevent the spread of the virus and identify people who become symptomatic.

75% of surveyed providers do not have sufficient sanitation and hygiene supplies.

- Shelters are struggling to quickly:
 - adapt existing shelter space (e.g. additional handwashing stations), as well as new spaces with their facility, to accommodate social distancing and ability to provide space for isolation and quarantine.
 - Add critically needed medical support to increase ability to meet the health needs of shelter residents.
 - Provide alternative shelter through motel/hotel assistance for households at high risk due to age and/or medical condition and to provide isolation and quarantine space when the shelter facility doesn’t have space
 - Provide adequate nutrition increased needs due to children being out of school and childcare, community feeding programs closing, and understaffing as volunteers say home.
- Shelters and outreach are also trying to meet crisis needs to help families and individuals avoid entry into the shelter or exit more quickly by providing access to flexible funding for rent, utilities, and other needs.
- Street outreach programs continue to connect with homeless Ohioans who are living unsheltered but are not equipped to meet needs of the most vulnerable people who are unable to meet their basic needs which are further complicated by the COVID-19 epidemic.
- Shelters and outreach are also incurring unexpected costs associated with staffing due to shortages caused when older staff and parents can’t come to work – this includes

overtime wages, increased hourly rates to compensate for potential risk and extra duties.

Homeless assistance programs always operate on lean budgets with limited cash reserves, so the COVID-19 epidemic is severely stretching their ability to stay open and respond effectively.

Funds are immediately needed

Help homeless assistance programs purchase these **essential supplies**:

- Disinfectant cleaning products
- Disinfectant wipes
- Diapers and baby wipes
- Disposable gloves and masks
- Hand soap and sanitizer
- Oral rehydration fluids and over-the-counter medications like pain relievers, fever reducers, and decongestants
- Sheets, blankets and bedding
- Thermometers
- Toilet paper, paper towels and tissues

Help homeless assistance programs purchase **food assistance to fill gaps** that cannot be filled through donated food, including infant formula.

Provide **alternative shelter** through motel/hotel assistance for households at high risk due to age and/or medical condition and to provide isolation and quarantine space when the shelter facility doesn't have space.

Meet **crisis needs** to help families and individuals avoid entry into the shelter or exit more quickly by providing access to flexible funding for rent, utilities, and other needs.