

# Winter Shelter Planning During the Pandemic

This resource was designed for system leaders and planners to help congregate shelters maintain reduced capacity to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Communities should maximize **Alternative Spaces for Winter Sheltering** and increase **Diversion Strategies** to reduce the need for congregate shelter.



## 1 Supporting Alternative Spaces for Winter Sheltering

- Utilize hotel/motel rooms or other non-congregate shelter options
- [Increase Alternative Sheltering Options](#)
- Expand medical respite programs
- Maintain active outreach to encampments to ensure survival and safety. Provide the following:
  - Assistance in winterizing tents
  - Food and water
  - Hygiene and disinfection supplies/equipment
  - Connections to non-congregate shelter or housing

## 2 Strengthening Diversion Strategies

- Expand Diversion programs that help people resolve housing crises instead of entering the homeless system
  - Flexible cash assistance
  - Connections and mediation with family/friends
  - Connection to benefits and community based resources
- Consider a dedicated hotline to triage needs

## 3 Sustaining Congregate Shelters at Reduced Capacity for COVID-19

- Congregate shelters must have referral options and resources to maintain reduced capacity
  - Maintain low barrier access
  - Provide funding for short term motel vouchers for people seeking shelter to maintain reduced shelter capacity
  - Provide transportation to alternative shelter space

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