

Seventh Day Adventist Shelter Site FAQ

5.18.20

GENERAL

What is being planned for the Seventh-day Adventist site in Mid-County?

The State is providing Santa Cruz County with travel trailers to provide immediate sheltering-in-place support for people experiencing homelessness (PEH) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The County Shelter & Care Task Force, which is managing the local COVID-19 Homeless Response, is working with the Central California Conference of Seventh Day Adventist Church to plan the use of the site for an emergency shelter-in-place 24/7 trailer-based housing program. The trailers will be used for Transition Age Youth (TAY) (ages 18-24). The site will be accessible only by shelter-in-place participants and professional staff. On-site services will be provided, as well as 24/7 security, a 10pm – 7am daily quiet period and access only by car or shuttle vehicle.

How many trailers will there be?

The County has received ten (10) travel trailers to be used at the site. The emergency use agreement would allow up to a total of fifteen (15) in the event additional trailers are procured.

Why Transition Age Youth (TAY) and who are they?

TAY are youth, ages 18-24. As young adults, they have different needs than older adults, including housing programs that are not co-mingled with adults. The supports they need are unique to their age group. Many of these youth are enrolled in school at Cabrillo College, work in entry-level jobs at grocery stores or other essential community services that continue to operate during the COVID-19 emergency. Many homeless TAY in our community have aged out of foster care and don't have stable parents or other adults in their lives to assist them with the usual parental supports young adults need in their transition to adulthood. They were selected for this trailer-based shelter-in-place model because there are no existing TAY-specific shelter programs in Santa Cruz County. For the TAY Trailer site, some transition age youth have partners who are over the age of 24. They will be considered part of the household and permitted to shelter in place together.

Why was the Seventh-day Adventist site selected, rather than state parks or other sites?

The Seventh-day Adventist site was selected primarily for two reasons: 1) its location is centrally located in the county, and 2) more importantly, its infrastructure supports water, power and sewer for the travel trailers that are being provided by the State. The County requested use of closed State Parks. However, the State did not approve this request. Space at the County Fairgrounds was evaluated, but it has been reserved for use as isolation and quarantine capacity in the event there is a large COVID-19 outbreak within a congregate living setting, such as a shelter or in the farmworker community. Other sites were investigated and did not meet the infrastructure needs of the program.

When is the program expected to begin?

The site is anticipated to be operational by the end of May, pending delivery of the trailers by from the State of California, site configuration and activation of security, food, and other programmatic services.

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How long will this program be available at this location?

The site will operate until the County Health Officer fully lifts the shelter-in-place orders.

What is the property owner charging for the use of this property?

The Central California Conference of Seventh Day Adventist Church will charge \$600 per trailer space per month.

How will this program be funded?

The State is providing emergency homelessness funding and the County is seeking additional FEMA reimbursement. Additionally, community-based nonprofit organizations that are a part of the nationally recognized HUD-funded Youth Homeless Demonstration Program will transition some of their services to the trailer site for the duration of the sheltering program. These organizations will utilize their existing federal funding to support social distancing, safe activities and provide services that focus on goal setting, education, job and housing search, health, mental health, wellness and more.

How big are the trailers?

A variety of travel trailer sizes will be used, ranging in length from approximately 21 feet to approximately 29 feet.

Will there be tents in addition to trailers?

No tents will be used.

Will RV vehicles be included in the program?

No. Only state-provided travel trailers will be used.

How will the community be involved?

Supervisor John Leopold has announced the formation of an ad-hoc Community Advisory Group that will provide input regarding the opening and ongoing operation of the program. Additional details about the advisory group will be announced shortly.

Will information and updates be provided to neighbors?

Supervisor Leopold will provide updates via his weekly email newsletter, as well as through social media. Constituent meetings and Advisory Group meetings may be held as well.

Will there be a phone number or email where neighbors can email their questions and concerns?

Yes, neighbors may contact the Program Site Manger via email and phone once the program has launched. In addition, Supervisor Leopold's office may be reached at (831) 454-2200 or via email at john.leopold@santacruzcounty.us or angela.chesnut@santacruzcounty.us.

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TRANSITION AGE YOUTH PROGRAM INFORMATION

How many people will this program serve?

The trailer-based program will be limited to no more than 30 individual participants. A proposed Phase 2 includes use of cabins for up to 20 additional persons experiencing homelessness that are actively engaged in employment programs. Phase 2 is subject to completion of a secondary agreement with Central California Conference of Seventh Day Adventist Church, and assessment of the trailer program operations, including input and consideration from the Community Advisory Group.

How are youth connected to education and employment through this program?

Each shelter participant has individualized case management to support them with their education and employment goals. The Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) initiative is made up of multiple community organization partners including the County Office of Education and its Sueños job training program, Community Action Board and its job training program, and Cabrillo College. These programs continue to engage with the youth remotely to support them in gaining skills, applying for employment, and/or to enter or maintain their college status.

YHDP has received a grant from the Santa Cruz Community Foundation to secure technology devices to use for these purposes (e.g. online courses etc.). Even in this challenging time of employment in our community, some youth have secured employment and maintained their college status. Examples include employment at grocery outlets, other retail, and county emergency service positions.

SAFETY, SECURITY AND HEALTH

Who is going to staff this Shelter-in-place program?

Staffing for site will include service providers from community-based nonprofit organizations who have existing relationships with the program participants, as well as professional licenses and expertise in working with this population. Additionally, County Emergency Service Workers with diverse training and backgrounds will support the operation of the shelter-in-place site. The staffing ratio will always be a minimum of two (2) staff per twenty (20) program participants (including overnight).

The Site Manager has master's level training and 5 years of experience supervising residential and shelter programs for youth and families. Master's level licensed therapists will be accessible through the Encompass TAY program and will provide services when/if needed. Other staff include those with bachelor's degrees in related fields.

In addition to program staffing, the security plan, reviewed and approved by the Sheriff, provides for 24/7 on-site security staff provided through a professional, contracted local security firm.

How will fire safety be handled?

State laws, Santa Cruz County ordinances and fire regulations will be enforced at the site. Firearms, weapons, and fireworks are prohibited. The site is served by six fire hydrants, 300,000 gallons of water stored on site. The Central Fire Chief's office will conduct a site inspection to ensure fire safety upon

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opening. Additionally, the Fire Chief's office will conduct a safety orientation for staff and shelter participants. Program staff will observe and reinforce all fire safety ordinances. Smoking will be permitted only in a single designated area, which will include receptacles for safe disposal and elimination of fire risk. Shelter guests not abiding by this rule will be exited from the program.

What kind of security will be provided on site?

The security plan, reviewed and approved by the Sheriff, provides for 24/7 on-site security provided by a professional, contracted local security firm. Upon opening and throughout the duration of the program, 24/7 contracted professional security services will be on site. There will be no walk-on or walk-off access permitted on the site. The site will benefit from the countywide increase in Sheriff patrol services implemented by Sheriff Hart, including an increase from approximately nine deputies per shift to about 22, and from 15 to 17 on duty at night. The Sheriff's Office will generate weekly crime data reports for the campground site and surrounding neighborhoods for the duration of the program.

Has this program been reviewed by the County Sheriff, Fire Department, Public Health Department or Environmental Health Department?

The Sheriff has reviewed and approved the project proposal and will respond to incidents that are beyond the scope of the 24/7 security service. The County Fire Chief has reviewed and approved the project proposal and will conduct a site visit prior to opening to ensure fire safety and support provision of fire safety training for staff and program participants. Santa Cruz County Public Health and Environmental Health staff will visit and review the site prior to opening to confirm compliance with all safety and health criteria related to COVID-19 and all other critical issues.

Will registered sex offenders be allowed?

No. Program participants are pre-screened, and registered sex offenders are not eligible for the program.

Will illegal drugs be allowed onsite?

No illegal drug use will be permitted. Legal substances such as alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco will be permitted in designated areas for those participants who are 21 or older.

Will health care be available on site?

No health care will be provided onsite. Shelter participants will be supported to access health and behavioral health services via telehealth visits.

What hygiene facilities will be available?

Each trailer has a bathroom, including toilet and shower. Two hand-sanitizing stations will be placed on the site for use by shelter participants and staff. Coin-operated washers and dryers at the site will be available to shelter participants.

Will people be tested for COVID-19 before arriving?

No. Based on guidelines from U.S. Centers for Disease Control and California Department of Public Health, and per the County Health Officer, participants will be monitored for symptoms.

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If COVID-19 infection is suspected or confirmed, how will that be managed?

Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms will be assisted to access their primary care provider for consultation and advice. Individuals with symptoms will be isolated at the site until an infection has been ruled out. In the case of a confirmed test or confirmed contact with a person known to be infected, the participant will be transferred to one of the County Shelter & Care Task Force Isolation/Quarantine (hotel) sites in the county.

Will there be a needle exchange program?

No. There will not be a needle exchange program.

OPERATIONS

How and when will shelter participants come and go from the site?

As a shelter-in-place program, participants are expected to remain on-site most of the time per County Health Officer orders. Participants may leave for the same reasons housed community members may leave their homes including essential services, employment, exercise and education. Participants must enter and leave the site by car, bike, or shuttle vehicle. No one will be permitted to walk in or out of the site. For participants who do not have a car or bike, a shuttle vehicle will be available to transport clients to/from the nearest bus stop. Shuttle service times will be aligned with the bus stop schedule (located near Old San Jose Road/Porter Dr. and Soquel Dr.), arriving 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive, roughly every 60 minutes. This will result in up to 9 shuttle trips per day. The on-site security guard will monitor vehicle activity and ensure that only shelter participants and staff are permitted to enter the site. No visitors will be allowed to enter the site.

Will there be quiet hours?

Yes. Quiet hours will be from 10pm – 7am daily, aligning with the existing Seventh Day Adventist policies for the site. There may be limited travel on and off the site during quiet hours for the purpose of work-related travel or in the event of a medical emergency.

What services will be offered to participants?

Local non-profit social services providers Encompass Community Services and Community Action Board will provide onsite management and programming. The activities that staff will offer will be in compliance with physical distancing guidelines and will support the development of independent living skills, including but not limited to employment support, budgeting, education resources, exercise and search for permanent housing.

How will food service be managed?

Food services will be coordinated through the County of Santa Cruz Emergency Operations Center for provision of three prepared meals a day and snacks. Participants will also have small fridges and microwaves in their trailers to be used to prepare and store additional food items.

Who will be responsible for trash and sanitation?

Seventh Day Adventists' facilities staff will provide and oversee trash and sanitation maintenance.

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Will pets be allowed?

Pets will be allowed; however, participants will be expected to keep their pet or service animal on leash, maintained, and under their control at all times.

What will happen when the shelter-in-place order is fully lifted?

The contract with Central California Conference of Seventh Day Adventist Church ends when the shelter-in-place order is fully lifted. Operation of the shelter site is expected to end within two weeks of the shelter-in-place order being lifted. Program staff and housing navigators will continuously work with youth throughout the program and after the site is closed to find and secure permanent housing. Locally operated, federally and State-funded programs offering rental assistance, rapid rehousing and host homes are all potential housing solutions for the TAY population.