Governor Newsom Takes Emergency Actions & Authorizes $150 Million in Funding to Protect Homeless Californians from COVID-19

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California is working across government to get homeless Californians – among the most vulnerable to spread of COVID-19 – safely into shelter & housing

Governor signed executive order granting local flexibility on spending and building shelters

State purchased 1,309 trailers and leased first two hotels to provide emergency isolation units for homeless individuals

SACRAMENTO – Governor Gavin Newsom today took a series of significant, additional actions to protect Californians experiencing homelessness from COVID-19. The State of California is providing emergency aid to local governments and implementing emergency protective measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among this particularly vulnerable population, many of whom have no option to self-quarantine or isolate.

"People experiencing homelessness are among the most vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19," said Governor Newsom. "California is deploying massive resources to get these vulnerable residents safely into shelter, removing regulatory barriers and securing trailers and hotels to provide immediate housing options for those most at risk. Helping these residents is critical to protecting public health, flattening the curve and slowing the spread of COVID-19."

Today's actions include:

- **Emergency Funding:** Governor Newsom directed the first allocation of the $500 million in emergency funding recently authorized by the Legislature for COVID-19 related activities – $150 million for local emergency homelessness actions. To deploy this first funding allocation, the state will provide:
  - $100 million directly to local governments, for shelter support and emergency housing to address COVID-19 among the homeless population, and
  - $50 million to purchase travel trailers and lease rooms in hotels, motels, and other facilities in partnership with counties and cities to provide immediate isolation placements throughout the state for homeless individuals.
- **Executive Order for Local Flexibility:** Governor Newsom signed an executive order providing flexibility to local governments to spend their emergency homelessness funding on immediate solutions tailored to combatting COVID-19 and its impacts on the homeless population. The Governor also waived certain regulatory barriers for any shelters or facilities built with this emergency funding.
- **Public Health Guidance for Homeless Shelters:** The California Health & Human Services Agency issued official public health guidance to homeless service providers statewide about social distancing measures in shelters, access to hygiene supplies, health screening protocols, and isolation protocols for people with COVID-19 or those demonstrating symptoms. That guidance is available here.
- **Purchasing Trailers:** The state is immediately procuring 1,309 travel trailers from FEMA and private vendors to provide quarantine capacity – moving people out of shelters and into isolation placements, focused on people with COVID-19 or those demonstrating symptoms. The purposes of this emergency protective measure is to protect healthy people in those facilities and create capacity in the existing shelter network. These trailers will be deployed to California's largest population centers.
- **Leasing Hotels & Motels, in Partnership with Counties:** The state provided California's counties with tailored lists of hotels and motels that are potentially available to lease for the next several months. The state is also offering to contact

hotels and negotiate leases, if a county requests that assistance. In total, the state has identified over 950 hotels across 53 counties that are potentially eligible for participation in the state's leasing program. The state and counties have already begun outreach to these hotels and motels now, and when we identify a willing partner, we initiate lease negotiations with the owner.

- **First Hotel Leases:** Yesterday, the state executed hotel leases for the first two properties and is transferring control to Alameda County. This includes a total of 393 rooms in Oakland. These rooms will be put to use as emergency protective measures by the local governments as isolation capacity for homeless individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are symptomatic, or otherwise at significant risk.

Unsheltered people living on the streets and those living in large shelter settings are particularly susceptible to COVID-19. The state has previously issued guidance that people 65 years of age and older and those with underlying medical conditions are particularly susceptible to having serious health impacts as a result of the virus, including higher mortality rates.

On Monday, the Governor issued an executive order that authorizes local governments to halt evictions for renters and homeowners, slows foreclosures, and protects against utility shutoffs for Californians affected by COVID-19. This order was in part a preventative measure to ensure that low-income Californians do not lose a safe roof over their head as a result of an eviction related to a loss of income or sickness due to COVID-19. The Governor hopes to see other local efforts to protect renters, low-income homeowners, and small businesses, following the leadership of local jurisdictions such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, and San Jose, which have already implemented or are working towards local measures.

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