County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
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Public Health Division

Press Release

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County Releases Guidance for Homeless Services Providers

SANTA CRUZ – The County of Santa Cruz has released important guidance for homeless service providers as it takes steps to increase sheltering capacity for unhoused County residents impacted by COVID-19.

The guidance includes important contact information, care practices and prevention strategies, and has been shared with service providers throughout Santa Cruz County. According to the 2019 Point-in-Time Count, 2,167 Santa Cruz County residents are homeless, including 1,700 who do not have access to shelter.

"Like all Santa Cruz County residents, our homeless population is vulnerable to COVID-19 but represents a particular area of concern due to their inability to safely isolate if symptomatic," Santa Cruz County Assistant Administrative Officer Elissa Benson said. "Any communitywide mitigation to minimize the impacts from coronavirus must include plans to safely allow unhoused individuals to isolate and recover."

Gov. Gavin Newsom has allocated $50 million to house homeless individuals impacted by COVID-19, and has identified nearly 1,000 potential sites across California for isolation placements. An additional $100 million is being allocated to local governments throughout the state for shelter support and emergency housing.

Santa Cruz County is in advanced negotiations to secure 90 hotel/motel rooms for isolation purposes, and is exploring additional capacity under leadership of the County Administrative Office and Human Services Department. The County is also working in close coordination with the state on additional sheltering capacity.

For local information on COVID-19, go to www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text "COVID19" to 211211. Residents may also call (831) 454-4242 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday-Friday.