COVID-19
Pierce County

As of March 24, we have
138 positive cases: one death
Four publicly declared confirmed positive cases in shelter guests in the two largest single adult shelters.

Tacoma Pierce County Public Health Dept., the City of Tacoma, and Pierce County update our Coalition to End Homelessness at least weekly and work directly with individual shelters.

Shelters

1. **Shelters have changed hours, restricted entry, closed day shelters, reduced outreach, added COVID-19 leave for staff, furloughed staff who could not redeploy to shelters - there are no open day centers in Pierce County for single adults. Congregate shelters are not adding beds - they are trying to implement social distancing to protect guests.**

2. **Every task shelter staff do is harder. Staff are tired and scared - for themselves and for their guests. Volunteers are gone.**

3. **Shelters are told "to find" quarantine and isolation spaces in settings where guests already sleep head to foot.**

4. **Shelters meet daily with Pierce County and the City of Tacoma to go over supplies and protocols. Pierce County has set up a one-stop shop to order supplies but supplies have apparently been stalled at the state level. One congregate shelter has NO masks.   All shelters desperately need masks, gloves, gowns, and hygiene supplies.   Shelters should be treated as health care facilities and be prioritized accordingly.**

Responses to Social Distancing

1. **CCS Nativity House has <u>rented 60 hotel rooms</u> for the most at risk 60+ year olds not showing symptoms and able to live in a single hotel room. Hotel rooms protect both those most vulnerable to the virus and the staff. The program has an important side effect of economic development and job preservation - the hotel staff have jobs; the food service employees have jobs. And paychecks.   The guests are safer. The shelter staff are safer. I would expand to include the children living in cars and encampments. The Governor could commandeer hotels.**

2. **The Governor could implement a <u>statewide no sweeps policy and direct law enforcement to provide outreach </u>to unsheltered people to try to bring those displaying symptoms and those in high risk categories inside.**

3. **Federal, state, local governments bring additional congregate spaces, staff, supplies, and funding TO the shelters NOW.**

Tuesday, March 24, 2020
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Shelters Need
Centralized responses to common needs

Operating capital to cover the increased staff and outside vendor costs of dramatically increased facility cleaning; to cover relief staff for those that become ill; to replace unpaid volunteers.

A service delivering individually packaged meals to shelters.

Gift cards in $25 increments so non-shelter DV clients can get essential products to run their households. Cards can be mailed to clients.

Funders to mirror City of Tacoma and not require currently funded grantees to compete for 2021 funding and Pierce County's release of the Homeless Housing Program funding 3 months early.

Shelter Staff
Should be considered as either health care staff or first responders re benefits - free childcare, testing priority, etc.
Receive 2 weeks COVID-19 related paid time off
Be placed in hotel rooms for quarantine, isolation, rest and recovery as needed for staff who test positive and costs associated with maintaining their household in their absence covered.

We Have
Strong advocates, good media coverage, social media organizing and response, United Way and the foundations creating a relief fund.

We All Need
To also protect the homeless response system - the breadth of official and unofficial shelters, all types of shared housing and supported housing programs, providers, outreach and support staff.
Government to act faster. This is on-the-ground urgent.
Robust Rental assistance programs to come on-line by April 1.
A Statewide mandate: no foreclosures, no utility shut offs, no fees related to the no eviction policy
A decent shelter-focused communications platform that can be easily replicated locally.

Thank you - please contact me for additional information.