



October 28, 2021

## SNAPS In Focus: Evaluating Our COVID-19 Preparedness

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) strongly encourages local homelessness providers and community leaders to enhance and expand infection control measures, including by re-implementing measures that may have been rolled back. HUD administers grant programs funding hundreds of projects that serve individuals experiencing homelessness. The Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Continuum of Care (CoC) programs provide services, housing, and critical lifesaving resources like emergency shelter. The emergence of the Delta variant has caused high COVID transmission rates in communities throughout the country.

It is critical that homeless assistance providers operate using the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended interventions, such as social distancing, masking, and testing. Important indicators such as local hospital bed capacity, frequent or recurring outbreaks in shelters and housing programs, and limited Isolation and Quarantine availability may help communities prioritize their limited bandwidth.

During the onset and spread of COVID-19 throughout the United States, HUD has worked closely with the CDC to understand the unique threat COVID-19 poses to highly vulnerable populations. Many individuals meeting the CDC guidelines for “[people at risk for severe disease](#)” reside in HUD-funded projects. HUD and the CDC have worked closely to develop appropriate guidance to safely shelter and house people experiencing homelessness. For example, the CDC issued updated guidance [recommending that congregate shelter facilities](#), such as emergency shelters, implement a “minimum of six feet between client’s faces and align beds head-to-toe.”

Communities should examine their [COVID-19 risk mitigation approaches](#) and enhance, expand, or reimplement infection control measures if they were rolled back during the summer.

This may mean that a community will have to amend its local investment strategy and annual action plan to shift resources to increase the amount of ESG-CV resources used to implement infection control measures right now in order to save lives. ESG-CV grants may be modified to:

- Institute hazards pay for shelter and outreach staff
- Lease, acquire, and/or operate new [temporary shelter locations](#)
- Acquire a congregate or non-congregate building to be used as shelter
- Utilize more third party contracted services, such as cleaning and meal services to alleviate service providers of tasks unrelated to rehousing

Technical assistance (TA) is available to provide support in draft amendments, coordinate with ESG-CV recipients, and advise on how to implement infection control strategies during outbreaks. Submit a TA request by contacting your local HUD Field Office or going to the [HUD Exchange](#).



Thank you for all the hard work that you do to end homelessness in your community every day.

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