

# Dane County Exec. Parisi: County looks to extend Pandemic Emergency Hotel Shelter Program as new COVID variants arrive, County proposal adds \$3 million to support those who struggle with homelessness

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Today, County Executive Joe Parisi announced Dane County will extend its Pandemic Emergency Hotel Shelter Program to further help those experiencing homelessness and at higher risk of severe illness if they contact COVID-19. The \$3.1 million in additional funding is required to provide non-congregate shelter and related post-program supports through September 30, 2022, and isolation and quarantine shelter through February 28, 2023.

“This program has helped hundreds of Dane County residents socially distance and get connected to helpful resources,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “This \$3.1 million extension in our Emergency Hotel Shelter Program will allow us and our partners to continue providing the space and services our most vulnerable residents need to recover from and limit the spread of COVID-19, while we also work toward permanent housing solutions.”

Preventing exposure to and spread of COVID-19 among households experiencing homelessness has been a pillar of Dane County’s pandemic response. Beginning in March of 2020, Dane County has funded non-congregate hotel shelter operations and assisted with other congregate shelter expansions to quickly create critical social distancing in the community’s homeless shelter system. Partners have

included numerous hotels to provide rooms, the City of Madison, Public Health Madison-Dane County, and frontline agencies.

Hotel shelter has also been critical to providing isolation and quarantine shelter for households experiencing homelessness that do not have a place to isolate and recover. The number of households served has varied in this program with COVID-19 case surges. More than 110 people were served at one time during the Omicron variant's peak in the Fall/Winter of 2021/2022. Numbers have started to climb again recently with the arrival of new variants in our community.

More than 400 unique households have been served by both programs since the pandemic began and more than 250 households have exited hotel shelter into housing through various housing supports and programs in the community.

The \$3,123,950 extension will continue non-congregate shelter for people experiencing homelessness who are at higher risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19 and quarantine shelter programs for people experiencing homelessness who are symptomatic/positive for COVID-19 or a close contact for a positive COVID-19 case.

\$700,000 of this total will go to amend an existing contract with Equitable Social Solutions, LLC to provide on-site services for non-congregate hotels shelter and payment of hotel room costs associated with the program. Guests will receive information on how to limit their exposure to COVID-19, receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and make connections to community supports such as housing, employment, medical care, economic assistance programs, or other needs identified by the shelter guest.

This program is funded by Dane County's allocation of local aid authorized in the 2021 American Rescue Plan. To date, Dane County has spent \$23.1 million on its Emergency Covid-19 Hotel Housing Program. The resolution authorizing this extension is expected to be approved by the Dane County Board in the coming weeks.